

Panguna Committee Appoints Independent Environmental Assessor

[6 December 2022] The Panguna Mine Legacy Impact Assessment Oversight Committee have named Tetra Tech Coffey, an independent global consulting firm with more than 40 years of experience in Papua New Guinea, to lead Phase One of the Panguna Mine Legacy Impact Assessment following a competitive tender process.

Government officials and members of the community will join Committee members for an event on 6 December in Arawa to mark the commencement of the study.

Phase One will see Tetra Tech Coffey's team – including local and international experts in environmental, health, cultural and social matters – study acute impacts and risks that may have been caused by the Panguna Mine, with particular focus on the health and safety of priority community areas.

Tetra Tech Coffey will visit areas and communities surrounding Panguna mine in early December to meet key stakeholders and members of the community.

This trip will be followed by a series of visits throughout 2023 which will incorporate interviews with community members across different areas; water and soil sampling; assessment of Panguna Mine infrastructure, including levees; and assessment of river diversions and flooding.

Martin Brash, Independent Facilitator of the Panguna Mine Legacy Impact Assessment Oversight Committee, said the appointment of Tetra Tech Coffey marks an important milestone.

“We are very proud to formally launch the commencement of this work today, helping to progress this independent study that will begin to understand the environmental and human rights impacts of the Panguna Mine in Bougainville”

“Previously, Tetra Tech Coffey completed the Panguna Mine Legacy Impact Assessment Preparatory Phase which informed the priority areas for the Impact Assessment and subsequent on-ground investigations.

“We are confident this assessment will begin to understand the environmental and human rights impact of the Panguna Mine in Bougainville and anticipate the full report for Phase One to be presented in mid-2024,” said Mr Brash.

The full report will be provided to the Panguna Mine Legacy Impact Assessment Oversight Committee upon completion of Phase One. This report will include recommendations that provide clarity about what impacts need to be remedied.

The Committee includes representatives from the Autonomous Bougainville Government, the Independent State of Papua New Guinea, several landowner and community members from the mine-affected area, the Human Rights Law Centre, Rio Tinto and Bougainville Copper Limited.

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