

PEAK 2001 ANNUAL REPORT

Introduction

PEAK is an advisory group, which assists the Porgera Joint Venture (PJV) to enhance its physical and social environmental management and performance. The primary objective is to provide transparency of Porgera's environmental issues (physical and social) to external scrutiny and ensure that mine closure issues are adequately addressed. Members of PEAK are drawn from a wide range of external stakeholder organisations including the Papua New Guinea government, scientific and social research organisations and Papua New Guinea and Australian NGOs.

After an independent detailed review of the Porgera's riverine environmental impacts by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) in 1996, PEAK was tasked with overseeing the implementation of those recommendations. PEAK also reviews PJV's environmental report and Porgera's annual environmental reports. It is also tasked with ensuring that environmental issues raised by external stakeholders are addressed by the PJV.

Summary of Achievements

Several significant achievements were made in 2001. Given the changes that have taken place since its creation, it was agreed that PEAK's roles and functions should be reviewed in 2001. This was accomplished and PEAK's terms of reference were amended to include mine closure issues. Although PEAK has been involved in addressing social issues, the new emphasis in the terms of reference gives PEAK a new direction and added responsibility for the future.

In accordance with one of PEAK's focus on community health, PJV Medical Centre, as part of the World Alliance Project, undertook several health patrols into the Strickland River region to monitor the health status of the people and administer services. It was reported that malaria and filariasis continue to be prevalent in the area, with tropical ulcers, skin diseases, TB and enteric parasites also being common. The patrols provided health awareness, trained village health workers, dispensed medicine to the sick and ensured that appropriate immunisations were carried out.

An independent medical research team, led by an Associate Professor from the James Cook University, visited villages in the Upper Strickland River region doing research on tropical diseases, administering immunisation and looking into an alleged breakout of an undetermined tropical disease. A preliminary outline of the research team's findings was reported to PEAK in October and the final report will be submitted in early 2002.

Meetings

During the year, PEAK had two meetings one in Port Moresby and the other at the Porgera Mine site.

Reports

PEAK was able to review several reports during the year. Among others, the following were submitted to the Komiti.

Tiumsinawam and Wankipe Dietary Study

A survey was carried out by Dr. Peter Sapak in Tiumsinawam and Wankipe villages, on the Strickland and Lagaip Rivers respectively to determine the dietary behaviour and pattern of the people. In total 26 households were surveyed and 332 meals were recorded. Generally two meals, breakfast and dinner, were eaten per day. The main diet of this group of people was found to consist of kaukau and banana roasted over open fires. It was discovered that fish and game meat were not eaten on a regular basis and turtle meat was seasonal. It concluded that given the conditions prevailing, the geography and available resources, the diet in terms of nutritional intake of the community was satisfactory.

Porgera Mine Closure Planning Process

A draft Mine Closure Planning Process was presented to the Komiti. The current plan is that the open pit will be exhausted in 2006 and the milling of the low-grade stockpiles will end in 2011. By 2013, site decommissioning and rehabilitation will have been completed.

Consultation with stakeholders will become an integral part of the closure planning process. Biophysical and social issues will be addressed in the closure process.

The Draft Mine Closure Plan is scheduled to be completed in year 2002.

Co-disposal of Mine Waste studies

These studies are in response to recommendation 17 of the CSIRO Report, which recommended the possibility of containing all or part of the tailings solid and waste rock on site. Prior to these studies, a risk assessment exercise, which identified potential risks, was carried out. Under these studies the focus was on co-disposal methods of tailings disposal which included a cost benefit analysis study. While co-disposal appears technically feasible, the capital and operating costs appear prohibitive and more research is being encouraged.

Different methods of storing CIP tailings have been trialed at Porgera. The second phase of this study, with the aim of determining the consolidation and drainage properties of different mixtures of tailings and waste rock, is currently under-way.

Porgera Rehabilitation/Revegetation Plan

The requirements of the plan were discussed. Targeted areas will be characterised on the basis of their physical conditions and chemical qualities. This will assist in determining the best bio-stabilisation species, defined required rehabilitation end points and how to monitor and evaluate progress.

At Porgera land above 2,400 metres will need to be returned to natural forest, as it is not suitable for food gardening. For this to happen more local species need to be trialed.

The Rehabilitation Plan will be completed in December 2001.

Membership

During the year there have been several changes made to the memberships of PEAK. The Chairman Yati Bun resigned and was not replaced during the reporting period. Pawa Limu, as representative of the Office of Environment & Conservation, was replaced by Gunther Joku, First Assistant Director - Environment Division, Office of Environment & Conservation. All other members remain the same.

It should be pointed out that PEAK membership has been expanded to encourage more PNG NGOs to participate. Four new members have agreed to join and their membership will be ratified at the first meeting in 2002.

Major Issues

While PEAK will continue to focus on waste discharge, tailings disposal and sediment behaviour in the river system, the social issues in relation to mine closure will become increasingly important.

Progress against CSIRO Recommendations

Progress was made during 2001 in the implementation of the CSIRO recommendations to PJV. The matrix of PJV's response to the recommendations was updated in October 2001 following PEAK's review and acknowledgment of the progress made on the implementation of the recommendations. This matrix has been posted on the PEAK website.

Future

It is anticipated that PEAK will increase its membership from PNG NGOs during 2002. It is also anticipated that PEAK will begin the process of broadening its focus on mine closure issues.

The Komiti