

PJV has measurable effect on Strickland River system

By SHEILA LASIBORI

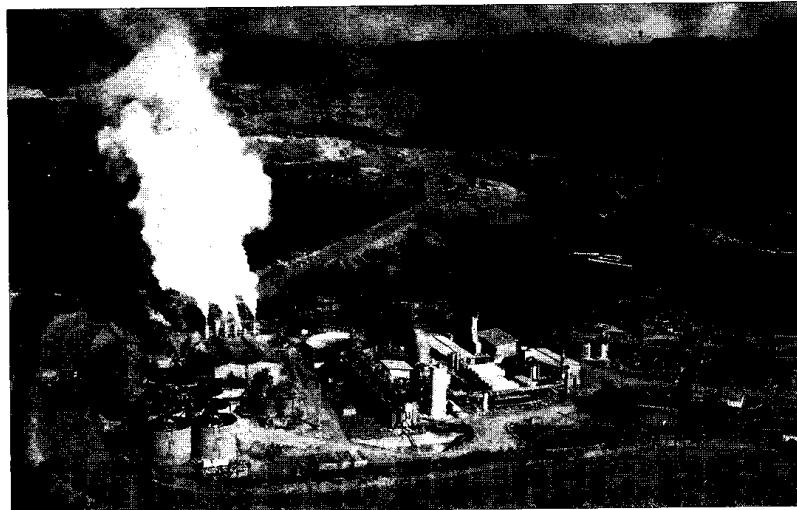
The Porgera Joint Venture, owner and operator of the Porgera gold mine in Enga province, has had a measurable effect on the Strickland River system.

The effects are most noticeable and of most concern close to the mine, particularly in the Porgera Lagaip rivers, it was stated in an Environmental Report Card, a first of its kind on the health of the river systems in relation to Porgera mine operations.

The Report Card was produced by Porgera Environmental Advisory Komiti (PEAK), the independent committee overseeing the overall environmental and social sustainability of the Porgera mine's operation.

PEAK was established as an independent committee in 1998 to review the response of PJV to the recommendations made by a Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) study in relation to the operations of the mine and impacts on the ecosystems waterways.

Also at the launch on Monday were Mines Minister Sir Puka Temu, managing director for Mineral Resources Authority (MRA) Kepas Wali, Greg Anderson chief executive officer of PNG Chamber of Mines and Petroleum, and Barrick Gold Corp's corporate affairs director



Aerial view of Porgera mine from north www.jamieson-group

for Australia and Pacific Dr Ila Temu.

In Sir Puka's statement which was read by Mr Wali, PEAK was acknowledged for the Report Card and expressed congratulatory sentiments to PEAK and its international consultants (Brisbane-based International Water Centre) for preparing the Report.

"It is certainly the first Report Card on the environment impacts of a mine in PNG and probably a first in the world.

"The Report Card does an excellent job in summarising the large amount of complex technical data collected by PJV and communicated it in an understandable way to the community.

"The key findings are clear – the mine is having a measurable effect on the Porgera and Lagaip rivers close to the mining operations, but the rest of the river system is generally in good health," Sir Puka speech read.

The Report also stated in its findings that there were a few concerns further down the river system. "We can conclude that the system was quite healthy in 2008 (when most of the data were collected)," Peak said.

The assessment by PEAK was important because the mine discharges tailings and waste rock to the Porgera/Strickland River system, and the community needed to be reassured that this practice was not damaging the river system.