
Hela Provincial Hospital Board takes reins of the Hela Hospital

PNG Media Release

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Tari, Hela Province.

Today, the Hela Provincial Hospital Board officially took over operation of the Hela Provincial Hospital. The recently-appointed Board visited the Hospital, assuring patients, staff and the wider community of the facility's preparedness to serve the more than 300,000 locals who rely on it.

The Hela Provincial Hospital farewelled Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), which has been delivering a wide range of medical services in the area since 2008. The Government recently provided the Hospital with additional funding and raised it to a provincial-level status, meaning that the Hospital will now be delivering additional services throughout the Hela Province.

"Through the coordination and cooperation of key partners and the Hela Provincial Government, we have been able to take over operation of the Hospital seamlessly from MSF. Essential medical services are now up and running, so we can continue to support the Hela community," stated Peter Botten, Chairman of the Hospital Board and Managing Director of Oil Search. "I'm proud to be a part of this effort and thank those who have contributed to the solutions we now have in place."

Since its appointment in November, the new Board has begun recruiting for the 200 positions needed to deliver the increased level of services expected. A skilled Tari-based team, which includes a surgeon, anaesthetist and obstetrician from the International Voluntary Service Organisation (VSO), is now in place to deliver the much-needed essential services.

"We will ensure the Hela Provincial Hospital's facilities and standard of care will continue to attract and maintain high-calibre staff and expertise," said Mr Botten of the Board's longer-term vision. "We will also ensure that hospital staff have the support and training to make the Hela Provincial Hospital one of the best in the country."

In early March, Oil Search and the Oil Search Foundation signed two Public-Private Partnership agreements, which are consistent with the guidelines required by the National Health Sector Partnership Policy, to support the Government's delivery of life-saving services in Hela. Under the agreements, Oil Search and the Oil Search Foundation will support partners in delivering solutions to critical issues facing the Hela Provincial Hospital and the Hela Provincial Government.

Oil Search is also providing technical expertise on drugs and medical supply systems and is supporting the human resources and finance functions until the Hospital team is fully operational. In addition, Oil Search is funding extra security, basic infrastructure refurbishment, the continuation of Family Support Centre outreach services and mentoring for the new Executive Team.

On Oil Search's involvement, Mr Botten said :

“Oil Search is PNG's largest company and investor and has built a very successful oil and gas business in this country. We recognise that a key element of our success has been our relationships with local communities and government. By partnering with government to deliver critical infrastructure and services, we are able to leverage the respective skills of government and the private sector, in true public-private partnerships, to deliver social development and infrastructure very effectively, while helping meet community expectations.”

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About Oil Search

Oil Search was established in Papua New Guinea (PNG) in 1929. More than 98% of its assets are in PNG, where it operates all of the country's producing oil fields, holds an extensive appraisal and exploration portfolio and has a 29% interest in the PNG LNG Project, operated by ExxonMobil PNG Limited. This world-class liquefied natural gas (LNG) development, which came on-stream in 2014, has transformed Oil Search into a regionally significant oil and gas producer with a long-term, low cost, high quality LNG revenue stream. The Company also holds a 23% interest in the proposed Papua LNG Project, operated by Total, which has the potential to become PNG's next major LNG development.

Oil Search is listed on the Australian and Port Moresby stock exchanges (OSH) and its ADRs trade on the US Over the Counter market (OISHY).

About the Oil Search Foundation

The Oil Search Foundation is a development partner in Papua New Guinea delivering signature programmes and grant management solutions to support the national development agenda in the areas of health, leadership and education, and women's protection and empowerment.

Established and principally supported by Oil Search, the Oil Search Foundation has a comparative advantage working in the Papua New Guinea Highlands and Gulf region.

As a development partner, the Oil Search Foundation concentrates on building partner capacity to deliver services, directing the country's resources towards national priorities that are most beneficial to communities, and engaging with stakeholders at all levels to support Papua New Guinea achieve its own development goals.