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Chamber and Rotary partner on 3.3 Million Masks Project

The PNG Chamber of Mines and Petroleum has partnered with the world's largest volunteer service club association, Rotary, on a humanitarian project to ship a total of 3.3 million medical-grade respiratory face masks, to medical workers in Papua New Guinea.

The Chamber, which represents major stakeholders in the mining and petroleum sector, received a donation of 3.3 million KN95/P2 respiratory masks from Rotary Australia, to distribute to medical workers in the country, through the National Department of Health, and the National COVID-19 Control Centre in Port Moresby.

The Chamber received funding donations from its members, to ensure the shipment of six 40ft freight containers, containing the masks, valued at around K5.5m.

The Rotary Clubs involved in this massive logistical project, are the Rotary Club of Greater Springfield in Brisbane, and the Rotary Club of Boroko in Port Moresby, along with Rotary Australia World Community Services (RAWCS).

Chamber Member, Ok Tedi Mining Limited were first to commit to the Mask Project, agreeing to facilitate the shipping costs of the masks to PNG.

Upon the landing and delivery of the first of the six containers of masks in Port Moresby, OTML Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Musje Werror, said, "OTML is pleased to work with the PNG Chamber of Mines & Petroleum and its members to deliver essential personal protective equipment to PNG during these unprecedented times, and we will continue to provide support where appropriate to combat COVID-19."

At the official handover of the first shipment to the National Control Centre (NCC) for distribution this week, Executive Director of the PNG Chamber of Mines and Petroleum, Albert Mellam, acknowledged the support of all the Chamber member companies who donated to the project.

"We have worked with Rotary Australia and Rotary PNG on this important project, and we acknowledge the support from our members who have given generously to this project which we hope will go a long way in helping to stop the spread of COVID-19 in our country.

Without the support of our members, the Chamber would not have been able to be involved in this project,” Dr. Mellam said.

Rotary PNG Representative, Suresh Shetty, who was present at the handover of masks to NCC, said the masks donation was one of several other initiatives the Rotary community in Australia and PNG, had committed to in the fight against COVID-19.

“On behalf of Rotary Australia, and Rotary Club of Boroko, we would like to say thank you to the Chamber and its members for helping us move these masks to PNG. Thank you also to Chamber Councillor and Rotarian, Mark McMonagle who helped us a lot in coordinating this project.”

Rotary Governor for PNG, Togaro Adiba, who was also at the handover event, was equally appreciative.

“We thank the Chamber of Mines and Petroleum and their members for this partnership, and we look forward to working closely with the Chamber in any future projects that we have, which will help contribute to the health of our people,” Mr. Adiba said.

NCC representative who received the masks, Megan Gaure, explained where the masks would be distributed to.

“These masks will be distributed to provincial health authorities, through our provincial control centres, to send out to all health facilities for the health workers on the frontline, who are treating COVID-19 patients,” Ms. Gaure said.

Sun Engineering Chief Executive Officer, Chamber Council Member, and passionate Rotarian, Mark McMonagle who was instrumental in coordinating this project, acknowledged the support from Chamber members.

“We would like to give special thanks to Rotary for the masks and to Musje Werror and OTML for committing to the shipping of the masks from Australia to PNG. We would also like to thank the below listed companies for their generous donations which covered port costs, road transport and logistics,” Mr. McMonagle said.

While the Chamber’s members play significant philanthropic roles in their own resource areas, they also give generously to assist in national aid and humanitarian programs, as members of the country’s mining and petroleum sector.

Pic Captions:

1. **[MASKS 1]** - NCC Representative, Megan Gaure, receiving the masks from Suresh Shetty of Rotary, and Executive Director of the PNG Chamber of Mines and Petroleum, Albert Mellam.
2. **[MASKS 2]** – Rotary, NCC and Chamber representatives, standing in front of the first shipment of pallets of KN95 masks.

3. **[MASKS 3]** – The first of six 40ft containers of KN95 masks being unpacked for storage in the NCC storage facility in Port Moresby. This storage facility houses all donated COVID-19 medical supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE) for distribution to all medical health facilities around the country.

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