



## PORGERA LANDOWNERS ASSOCIATION

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Dated 04<sup>th</sup> of July 2013

Dear Sydney Morning Herald,

I am writing in response to Tim Elliot's "Shifting prospects" article in the Sydney Morning Herald on June 29. While I very much appreciate the perspective of young people in Porgera being shared with your readership, I feel the need to address an idea that you present at the end of this article. This idea is the notion that individual villagers should just "find another place to live".

In PNG, we are organized in a clan system and there is little land that is not claimed by a particular clan. We do not have the mobility that you enjoy in Western cultures and can only move to areas in which we have existing family. PNG is a country with over 850 spoken languages and many different cultures. Our ability to survive is therefore linked to each other and linked to our land, which we have held and defended from time immemorial.

The article acknowledges the fact that collective resettlement is one of the main demands that we landowners have of Barrick Gold, but then implies that people stay in Porgera because of the gold. Again, we cannot survive without the presence of our extended families, Barrick's current system of individually compensating family units when their homes become overrun with mine waste is creating long-term problems of over crowding, loss of agricultural lands,

Porgera is a human rights crisis zone, when it should be a land where the local people are rich with the benefits of having such wealth in our lands. We will not treat this problem as one which requires individual solutions, but will continue to push towards collective resettlement so that we can preserve our culture and stay within our clan system. There is no other alternative.

Regards,



Mark TonyEkepa