

Media Release

13 March 2026

A small place to play, a powerful step toward healing

Through its ongoing partnership with Bel isi PNG, the Santos Foundation has supported the construction of a children's playground at a safe house for women and families experiencing gender-based violence in Papua New Guinea.

Recognising that many communities face the ongoing challenge of gender-based violence, the need for a playground was recognised to assist children by giving them a supportive space to feel safe and heal.

Santos Foundation CEO Jodie Hatherly officially opening the playground acknowledged the vital role Bel isi PNG in protecting women and children and addressing the impacts of gender-based violence in PNG.

"We hope this playground can offer a safe, child-friendly space that supports wellbeing, brings a sense of steadiness and hope, and gives children the chance to simply be children in a space free from violence," Ms Hatherly said.

"For many families rebuilding their lives after trauma, moments of normalcy can make a difference."

In addition to the playground, the Santos Foundation contributed to the practical improvements of the Safe House with upgrades of drainage, refurbishments to the adjoining hauswin, and the installation of two water tanks to capture runoff.

The initiative was further supported by Brian Bell, which donated three large bags of toys valued at more than PGK 1,000, as well as ongoing support through its partnership with Bel isi PNG. Santos Foundation also contributed clothing and books.

Since opening in 2018, the Safe House has assisted 1,671 clients, reflecting both the critical need for refuge and the ongoing challenge of family and sexual violence in the city.

The safe house accommodated 271 clients in 2025, a 15% increase from 2024, identifying that the demand for safe, confidential spaces remains high, and capacity is often stretched as staff work to support every person who arrives.

While the safe house maintains strict confidentiality to protect its clients, the excitement of the children was unmistakable. Their anticipation was well known at the Safe House as an employee described how the children had watched the playground take shape with excitement, often telling staff how eager they were to play on it - a small but powerful reminder of what hope can look like in their everyday lives.

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