

Media Release

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Powering healthcare, strengthening early learning

Children in Paua are gaining a stronger start to their education, while families in Inu are benefiting from more reliable healthcare services, as the Santos Foundation marks the official opening of two community-led initiatives in the PNG Highlands.

Delivered in partnership with local organisations and communities, and with government support, the initiatives include an early childhood education centre in Paua, Hela Province, and a solar-powered mini-grid supplying reliable power to a health facility in Inu, Southern Highlands Province.

Both initiatives reflect priorities identified by communities and local partners, with a focus on strengthening access to essential services that support everyday wellbeing. The official openings were attended by community members alongside representatives from the National Education Department and the Southern Highlands Provincial Health Authority.

Santos Foundation Chief Executive Officer Jodie Hatherly said at the official openings that both initiatives highlight the impact of working alongside communities to deliver practical, locally led solutions.

“In communities like Paua and Inu, access to early learning and consistent healthcare services is vital for families and future generations,” Ms Hatherly said.

“These initiatives show what can be achieved when communities and partners work together on solutions grounded in local priorities. At the Santos Foundation, we support initiatives that respond to real needs and deliver lasting benefits.”

Ms Hatherly also acknowledged the ongoing commitment of local teachers and frontline health workers supporting their communities every day.

In Paua, the early childhood education centre, known locally as a Literacy Library, has been supporting children since last year and continues to provide a safe and inclusive environment where young learners can develop foundational skills through play and learning. The initiative is supported by Santos and implemented by Buk bilong Pikinini.

In Inu, more than 3,000 people are benefiting from strengthened healthcare services through a solar mini-grid supplying reliable power to the health centre. The system powers lighting, medical equipment and other essential services, helping provide more consistent healthcare for patients and supporting frontline health workers.

The initiative was delivered in partnership with USAID, the Southern Highlands Provincial Health Authority and the Evangelical Church of Papua New Guinea.

Kutubu Local Level Government President and Principal Landowner Moran PDL 5 John Pipi Kila welcomed the initiatives and their alignment with community priorities.

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“We thank the Santos Foundation and its partners for supporting initiatives that reflect the priorities of our communities,” Mr Kila said.

“Health and education are essential for strong communities, and this infrastructure will continue to support our people.”

The Santos Foundation continues to support inclusive, community-led development across its focus areas of health, youth opportunities, community development, and family and sexual violence prevention.

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IMAGES:

Image 1: Children in Paua are gaining a stronger start to their education.

Image 2: Keen little learners from the new Paua Literacy Library in Hela.

Image 3: The early childhood learning centre is enabling kids to gain an early start to education in some of Hela's remotest areas.

Image 4: Launch of the solar mini grid at Inu is supporting power to serve over 3000 in the area.

Image 5: An aerial shot of the Inu Health Centre solar mini grid that is supplying reliable power to the health centre.

About Us

The Santos Foundation's mission is to invest in partnerships and local initiatives that help communities thrive. We do this by focusing on activities that support our twin objectives to advance economic pathways and build resilient communities in the regions where Santos operates. We work with communities, local partners and donors to address societal trends and local needs across the four strategic pillars of Health, Youth Opportunities, Community Development and Family and Sexual Violence. Our approach aims to respect the political, cultural, social and legislative systems and frameworks of the countries in which we operate. We work to engage local leaders, align to national development priorities and foster opportunities for local businesses. To learn more about Santos Foundation, visit our website at www.santosfoundation.org