



Land access working group established

Grow PNG has established a land access working group in consultation with agriculture partners and stakeholders working in the Markham Valley in Morobe Province.

The Grow PNG team is holding consultations with the stakeholders and partners to identify issues and solutions around land access for agricultural use. This is the first working group formed last year. Other working groups will be formed out of the issues that are identified by the stakeholders.

Representatives of the land access working group are from the agribusinesses, smallholder farmer groups, government agencies, financial institutions and others that have an interest in the agriculture corridor in the valley.

The group held a meeting on February 5 and a number of issues were identified as high priority that are now being undertaken as work programs.

These include:

1. Production and publication of a PNG focused user guide for landowners and agribusinesses
2. Development of a potential new land dispute mediation service
3. Undertake a land audit to ascertain state land from customary land

Grow PNG Executive Director Ivan Pomaleu said under priority three which is land audit, Grow PNG is required to establish the status of state leases as well as create data base of incorporated land groups (ILGs).

PNG Focused User Guide for Landowners and Agribusinesses

The PNG focused user guide for landowners and agribusinesses aims to explain important issues so the agriculture stakeholders can understand, consider and apply good practices in areas such as:

- Negotiation process and framework
- Establishing and maintaining an ILG and
- Providing a sample/example of a benefit sharing arrangement for landowner groups that minimise internal disputes.

“The guide is intended to be a simple guideline and process that can be easily understood and followed by landowners. It will assist them understand their rights and opportunities for developing better commercial arrangements within and outside their clans. It will be designed to address key

issues that were found in the market and how those issues are affecting land accessibility,” Mr Pomaleu said.

Land Dispute Mediation Service

The potential new land dispute mediation service will support ILG Dispute Settlement Authority.

The main components of this work program are:

- Understanding and determining why the current land dispute mediation service is inefficient and costly
- Develop a justification for why an alternative land dispute mediation service mechanism is necessary
- Help articulate what a new land dispute mediation service could look like and
- Map out the work that is required to develop this mechanism and how much it could cost

“The work also involves sourcing funds to develop a business case for the potential new land dispute mediation service. Investment in the investigation may contribute to reducing cases locked up in the land court system,” Mr Pomaleu said.

LAND AUDIT

The land audit work program aims to determine the following:

- Types of leases on the Markham area
- Status of each lease and understanding its full implications and
- The areas of alienated land within the areas of the valley.

Mr Pomaleu said Working Group Formation and Facilitation is one of the four key activities for Grow PNG. The other three are Learning Events, Regional Forums and Data Collection and Modelling.

“The action-oriented working groups will collaborate around specific shared challenges and barriers to growth in the valley.

“The Grow PNG team will be working with the working groups on issues from land titling to infrastructure needs and skills development.”

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