

Frieda Mine, ask the people what they want Post-Courier 3.11.2025



SIX members of Parliament are in favour of the Frieda River gold and copper project going ahead. They include West Sepik Governor Tony Wouwou, Works minister Solan Mirisim, Public Service Minister Joe Sungi, Forestry Minister Salio Waipo, Wewak MP Stanley Muts Samban and Aitape Lumi MP Anderson Mise.

They are all from the West and East Sepik provinces.

It seems none of these MPs has ever worked in a copper or gold mine.

The only person who has had experience working at Ok Tedi mine in Western Province is East Sepik Governor Allan Bird.

Bird witnessed first-hand the good and the bad of open-cut mining.

If the Greater Sepik MPs want a clearer understanding of the threat posed to the Sepik River, they should call a meeting with Bird.

Jumping around Parliament with a position paper on the Frieda mine might seem like a positive belief that the mine will solve all of the problems of the Greater Sepik region.

Our advice to the six MPs is not to get too emotional. Do not get carried away in trying to please the Prime Minister and the Pangu government.

Instead go home this Christmas, and ask the opinion of your voters.

Ask the people if they agree to a mine that will likely muddy the Sepik River, affect their environment, and impact their lives.

They don't have to look far for an example. Over the border in Western Province is the Ok Tedi mine, which has, over the course of its operation, completely killed all life in and on the banks of the Ok Tedi River.

In a scientific conference in Tabubil, a lead Ok Tedi scientist was asked by an Australian professor if the Ok Tedi River was dead.

The PNG scientist responded: 'It is dead.'

The professor asked: 'How long do you think it will take to return to its normal self?'

The room fell silent when the PNG scientist laid it plain and simple: 'It will take a hundred years, maybe more.'

That is the likely scenario for the Sepik River, too.