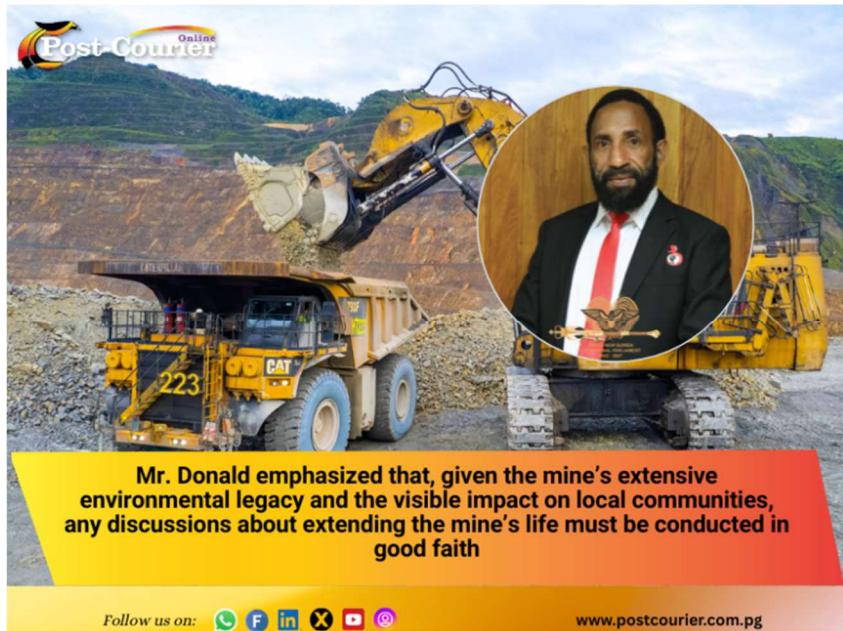


## North Fly MP raises concerns over Ok Tedi mine's environmental legacy

Postcourieronline 2 January 2026



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Member for North Fly James Donald MP, has voiced urgent concerns regarding the ongoing environmental issues and the lack of proper consultation with local landowners concerning the future of Ok Tedi mine's operations.

In a statement earlier this week, Mr. Donald highlighted that Ok Tedi Mining Limited (OTML) has failed to address persistent environmental degradation and has not secured the free and informed consent of the affected communities.

These issues, he stated, undermine the social license necessary for the mine to continue legally and socially.

The concerns stem from a recent court case initiated in the National Court in November 2025 by landowners whose environment has been severely impacted by the mine's waste disposal practices, particularly into the Fly River and its tributaries.

On 17 November 2025, the court granted an injunction halting any further legal arrangements that would allow the mine to operate beyond its current extension.

Landowners argued that recent consultations regarding the mine's extension were inadequate and failed to secure their genuine consent.

They have called for a re-evaluation process that is fair, transparent, and involves independent environmental experts to ensure their voices are truly heard.

The Ok Tedi mine, which has been in production since 1984, was forecasted in 2001 to have approximately ten years of remaining economic life.

However, with the consent of landowners, its operational timeline was extended to 2014 and subsequently to the end of 2025.

These extensions were formalized through legal agreements, most recently under the Mining (Ok Tedi Mine Extension (Eleventh Supplemental) Agreement) Act 2014. That agreement expired at midnight on December 31, 2025.

Mr. Donald emphasized that, given the mine's extensive environmental legacy and the visible impact on local communities, any discussions about extending the mine's life must be conducted in good faith. He pointed out the significant knowledge gap between OTML—

often more technically and financially resourced—and the semi-literate landowners, which complicates meaningful negotiations.

He further expressed concern over discrepancies between the environmental data reported by OTML and what landowners observe firsthand. “We need to know the actual levels of impurities in our river water, why there is sand build-up along the Fly River despite mitigation measures, and the causes of persistent flooding that damages our trees, sago crops, and forces communities to relocate. We also need to understand the levels of copper in our fish,” he said. “Are these issues being assessed according to the world’s best environmental practices? Landowners must be properly supported in these negotiations because it will take generations for the environment to recover, if at all, after the mine closes.”

He concluded by warning that unilaterally extending the mine’s operational life without genuine landowner consent would be seen as a grave disrespect and a violation of the principles that underpin sustainable resource development.

“Any extension must be based on the free and informed consent of landowners, especially considering the current state of their environment,” he stressed.