

MEDIA RELEASE

Kamindimbiut people test new water system

On a recent visit of the Kalibobo Spirit to the Sepik River, specially imported Eco-Lab equipment was tested to convert the dirty Sepik water into potable, clear drinking water utilizing filters and membranes.

The Managing Director of MTS, Sir Peter Barter owner of the 'Kalibobo Spirit' and Chairman of the Melanesian Foundation said that three systems had been tested, firstly a large unit which can produce 2000 litres per hour which requires access to power to drive pumps and compressors fitted aboard the 'Kalibobo Spirit' or a complete village. The second unit is a smaller with 2 membranes utilizing a hand whale pump producing up to 200 litres per hour that would be suitable for a village water supply and the smallest unit was a hand pump and filter that could produce up to 50 litres per hour ideal for families. Sir Peter said both smaller units use appropriate technology that suit village needs and are simple to maintain. Both units tested at Kamindimbit over a four day period were well received by the people monitored by Sir Peter and the Ships Chief Engineer.

'gutpela masin, mi laikim tumus – dispela warer Sepik I gat mud, sapos Freida River mine I start, mi wori long Sepik warer is bagap no gud tru. Dispela masin, na warer tenk makim liaf long Sepik more better' Similar Comments were made by almost everyone in the village having seen the purification system work under village conditions.

Pita Kipma Committee and Benjamin Wally Chairman of the Community School said all the children for the first time carried a bottle of purified water to the school and it was evident that even over a short period of time the machines were being tested the difference in morale not only by the students, but the parents so much so that prior to departure from Kamindimbit Godfrey Tara, a village leader begged Sir Peter to leave the machinery to be left in the village.

Sir Peter told the people after spending 4 days in the village that the machinery was being tested both on Ramu and Sepik Rivers and further work was needed to make the system more suitable, some of the plastic taps used needed to be upgraded, various pre-filters may be incorporated to increase the capacity of water being produced and the ideal solution would be to see if solar pump could be used to supplement the hand-pump so the system could feed into a water tank so that in the event of a dry spell, the system would maintain good potable water year round.

The two systems tested in the village will be taken back to Eco Lab for checking and hopefully village systems will be marketed at an affordable cost. Sir Peter suggested that such a project could be funded with donor funds, or funds from the District Improvement Fund or Members discretionary fund, the family system will be affordable if mass produced enabling the people themselves to purchase the smaller unit.

Sir Peter said I have always been keen to see the Sepik and Ramu people have access to better quality water, I want to make it quite clear we have no commercial interest in the system itself, or do we want to profit through the development or sale of the finished product. The work in getting such a project to fruition will be one by the Melanesian Foundation working in conjunction with Eco-Lab in Australia and Singapore.

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