

SABL probe astounded

By Luana Paniu

ONE man and his daughter are the sole shareholders of a Gulf Province landowner company that holds vast tracts of forests purportedly on behalf of their clansmen.

The SABL Commission of Inquiry was further astounded to learn the two-person company does not have any existing files with the Department of Lands and Physical Planning under the Special Purpose Agriculture and Business Leases.

The Commission of Inquiry was told a Mr Roddey Ila Kwaru and his daughter Avira hold 50 shares in trust for the landowners of the SABL in the Malalaua sub-district of Kerema.

A company search to assist the Col with its investigations revealed both family members hold the shares in Koaru Resource Owners Limited on behalf of some 2500 to 3000 clansmen.

In an amazing twist, their SABL was one of the missing nine files from the DLPP that could not be found and produced. The DLPP's Registrar of titles was also unable to produce its titles file either with the revelation that no Land Investigation Report could be provided.

Commissioner Alois Jerewai asked why this was the case prompting Mr Kwaru to clarify that he and his daughter were holding the shares in trust for all the landowners of the project area.

Mr Jerewai further queried if there was a trust bid to which he can hold this shares in trust for the landowners.

While Mr Kwaru produced a recently prepared Statutory Declaration of Trust which stated that the shares were held in trust by the Resources Landowners, Mr Jerewai was not satisfied.

Mr Jerewai said this was not a satisfactory manner of holding shares in trust on behalf of the landowners and that a proper trust bid be properly executed by landowners and State officials.

The Inquiry heard that Koaru Resources Owners Company Limited - of which Mr Kwaru is chairman - has subleased to Malaysian owned Pacific International Resources PNG Limited since 2008 for a term of 90 years over portion 323 Milinch Kukipi between Malalaua and Kerema in the Gulf Province over a total of 59,400 hectares.

It was also revealed that no development is taking place at present although under the agreement, benefits of a proposed oil palm project will include land rentals of K60,000 per annum from the developer and for the first 10 years after the Oil Palm Project, landowners will receive 10 percent of net profits with entitlements to 15 percent net profits after another 10 years.

Mr Jerewai, clearly not pleased, quipped: "That's if profits are declared at all!"

Mr Jerewai referred to two developments in which no or poor returns had been received by landowners.

In East Sepik the South Seas Tuna Corporation in which the East Sepik LLG was promised under the project agreement of at least 5 percent of the profits but no profits have been declared so far and the term of 12 years is about to expire, he said.

He also mentioned the Lihir Gold mine project where for the past 15 years there has never been a declaration of profits.