



Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2019

## MEDIA RELEASE

### **LANDOWNERS LAUD AXIOM, CALL FOR BUSINESS LICENSE**

South San Jorge Landowner Trustees of the Axiom nickel mine project on San Jorge Island, Isabel Province have expressed delight at the positive feedback from the Ministry of Mines, Energy and Rural Electrification (MMERE) two-member team that inspected the company's mine site operation last Saturday.

The visit was conducted for the MMERE's mine's inspection team which included World Bank consultant Mark Walker by Axiom's San Jorge Mine Manager Michael James and General Counsel Dr Phil Tagini.

The mine's inspection team was part of the MMERE delegation that conducted consultations in Talise and Sepi for the new mining legislation Mineral Resources Bill, new National Mining Policy and proposed Minerals Advisory Centre.

Chairman of the South San Jorge Landowning Trustees, John Kabu said: "We are happy with the positive feedback from the mine site inspection conducted by the MMERE mines inspection team.

"The delegation has expressed satisfaction with Axiom's strict compliance with Solomon Islands laws and international best mining practices in its nickel mining operation on San Jorge and in its dealings with its stakeholders."

Mr Kabu said the commencement of Axiom's nickel mining operation on San Jorge in March this year was a milestone event for the landowning tribes of South San Jorge as it took them many years to identify and secure a credible mining investor.

He said the landowning tribes of South San Jorge are proud of Axiom's reputation as a mining company that strictly complies with the laws of Solomon Islands and best international mining practices and zero tolerance for corruption in the conduct of its mining operation and are optimistic that it will keep to its high operating standards till the end of its mining lease on the island.

Mr Kabu said the company's mining operation on San Jorge is a remarkable mining business model that other mining companies in the country and even the wider Pacific region can adopt.

He added that since Axiom commenced its operation on San Jorge earlier this year, it provided employment for landowners and created other economical spin-off opportunities.

The Chairman of the South San Jorge landowners said much more is anticipated not only for landowners but the whole of Isabel Province and the entire Solomon Islands should Axiom be granted a business license by the Isabel Provincial Government and commence full-scale operation.

He urged the Isabel Provincial Government, especially the next premier that will be elected in the provincial elections for Isabel Province next month and his/her executive to grant Axiom with a business license.

“Axiom has proven itself to be a credible investor and we - the landowning tribes of the company’s mining project site on San Jorge- do not understand why the current provincial executive is delaying the procession of a business license for such a credible investor.

“Axiom has been in the country and has been conducting mineral prospecting since 2008 in Isabel, how long does it take the Isabel Provincial Government to realise this commitment? Other mining companies that come in and have gone away but Axiom is still here.

“Not only that, Isabel Provincial Government has received assistances from the company in the past, like the Buala Hospital project and the Senior Secondary School project. As landowners we believe that the Isabel Provincial Government is denying our right and opportunity to fully benefit from a development that we have long aspired and waited for,” Mr Kabu emphasised.

Ends///

See photo inserted below:



Caption: Chairman of South San Jorge Land Trustees Mr Kabu (sitting far left) and fellow South San Jorge Land Trustees Thomas Tavake, Chief Nicholas Kuli and Spencer Bako with Axiom Officers Rebecca Smiley (standing far left) and Agnes Gaote'e (sitting far right).