

Clans hand over firepower



Four warring clans in Porgera, Enga province, surrendered their weapons last Friday, paving the way for peace to prevail in the valley. The Lorte and Kuala clans living along the boundaries of Porgera station and the Eno and Kakayuni clans in Lower Porgera surrendered more than 50 sophisticated weapons including a 308 rifle, two .22 shotguns, a single shotgun and several home-made guns. Members of the Kuala clan are seen handing over some of their high-powered guns to a police officer. Report on Page 5. – Picture by GRAYSON TAU APAKALI, Porgera Development Authority media officer

Four more warring clans surrender arms

FOUR warring clans in Porgera surrendered their weapons last Friday paving way for more peace in the valley.

Fights between Lorte and Kuala clans along the boundaries of Porgera station and Eno and Kakayuni clans in Lower Porgera surrendered more than 50 sophisticated weapons including a 308 rifle, two .22shotgun, a single shoot and home-made guns.

Kuala clan leader Leo Kuala said their fight stopped five years ago and they just came to give all their guns to the police to signify that they were brothers and they would not fight again.

Mr Kuala said though the gun fight was along the boundaries of Porgera station, both clans did not touch any Government or private properties including the Porgera Primary School, Porgera Vocational Centre, public servants houses and four churches (SDA, Lutheran

and Catholic) that were located in their area.

The Lorte clan leader said if they were to fight they would have done it but they received preventative order five years ago witnessed by Enga Governor Peter Ipatas, police, PJV and leaders and the community at large.

Porgera district law and order coordinator Aken Pululu, who was the master of ceremony, appreciated the initiative taken by the Kakayuni and Eno clans to come for the peace ceremony because they were far away in the border of Enga, Western and East Sepik and Sandaun provinces.

He said the fight between these two were guerrilla-type in the thick jungles for more than five years.

Both fights saw more than 50 people die and some thousands of kina worth properties damaged.

Porgera station coun-

cillor Joe Kuala urged all leaders in the valley to surrender their guns to the police.

He proposed that all leaders in the valley must sign a memorandum of understanding between themselves witnessed by the Barrick Porgera Joint Venture (PJV) and Government agencies to ban guns.

The councillor said the agreement would state that if someone fired a single gun shot, leader in that area would be held responsible.

"If the leader does not explain the gun shot, he should be locked behind bars," Mr Kuala said.

The special ceremony was witnessed by the members of the special police operations (*operation Ipili*), representatives from Barrick PJV, Porgera district administration, Porgera development authority, Church groups, councillors, magistrates, local leaders and more

than 3,000 people from the community.

Deputy commander of the special police operations, Samson Kua thanked the leaders of the four warring clans for their willingness to give up their guns and signing the peace agreement.

He urged everyone in the valley not to buy guns because it was for the policemen and not for ordinary citizens to kill one another.

Porgera-Paiala district operations mekim save (OMS) chairman Epotane Lawaipa said his team had been working around the clock to stop these tribal fights and most of them (tribal fights) continued despite preventative order issued by his OMS magistrates.

Mr Lawaipa thanked the special police operation for making the gun surrender.

He said life was back to normal because of the *operation Ipili* team and

he appealed to the Barrick PJV and the Government to extend it to more than two years so that people could change themselves.

Barrick PJV community affairs superintendent, Timothy Andembo, who is a local Porgeran, said there was tribal fight in the valley because there was hatred amongst them.

Mr Andembo said all these fights would stop if leaders and the people learn how to forgive their enemies from their hearts.

He said PJV would use the tax credit scheme money to maintain law and order in the valley but, most importantly, the people themselves had to change their attitudes.

The arms surrender ceremony last Friday was the third one this year as a result of the special police operations.

Last Friday's ceremony was organised by the Porgera district administration and the Porgera Development Authority.

Operation winds down

THE security call-out operation in Porgera Valley, Enga Province is winding down with good outcomes. The operation has achieved its purposes.

"Peace and normalcy had been restored in the once notorious Porgera Valley," said Phillip Kikila, Lagaip/Porgera Member.

Mr Kikila said the operation has resulted in a significant drop in illegal mining, tribal fights, road blocks, importation and consumption of alcohol, illegal gold buying and mercury trading which have all come to a stand still. "Even warring tribes have laid down their arms and have negotiated for peace and compensation for those killed," Mr Kikila said. The MP said this successful operation demonstrates that the Government still has powers and authority to control even the remote corners of this country. Due to financial constraints, the main contingent deployed in this call-out operation officially winded up their duties while a request for an additional K2 million is before the Minister for Treasury and Finance.