



Aspen looks to provide a different style of healthcare in PNG

BY LAUREN BARRETT

PLANS are afoot for Aspen Medical's transition to establishing a permanent presence in Papua New Guinea, company managing director Glenn Keys tells *PNG Resources*.

The privately owned Australian healthcare provider which operates in nine countries was recently in Cairns for the Australia PNG business forum and trade expo to let delegates know they will soon be open for business in PNG.

The company, which provides a range of services including 24/7 medical evacuation services, 24/7 e-medicine consultation, pre-employment medical assessments, drug and alcohol testing to the resources, defence, humanitarian and government industries, is currently in the process of constructing a medical clinic in Port Moresby, with its completion imminent.

Mr Keys told *PNG Resources* Aspen would start with a conservative model, setting up the clinic and expanding its services as the customer base grows.

Aspen, which boasts Santos, Shell, Chevron, BG and Origin Energy as its customers, is by no means walking into PNG blind.

"We've been working in PNG one and off for quite a number of years," Mr Keys said.

Over the last five years on and off, the company has taken on a range of contracts in PNG in the oil and gas and defence sector but Mr Keys believes the time is right to establish a permanent presence in the country.

"We are making sure that the service we provide is really suited to the environment but also providing the sort of game changing capability we've been able to deliver customers around the world," he said.

Mr Keys said the company had taken the time to understand the country, meaning it was "not walking in with any preconceptions or cookie cutter solutions."

"PNG is quite unique. It's a complex country with a lot of different dynamics to it," he said.

"We don't want to make any assumptions, we want to go where customers need us."

Mr Keys said the company and its global team of more than 2,000 people were passionate about preventative health and not just sitting around waiting for someone injured to walk through the door.

"If we can do preventive health, that's not only good for business and the customer but everyone that works for them," Mr Keys said.



Glenn Keys

The company focuses on a number of crucial areas including disability, with its program proving instrumental in providing development employment opportunities to the Pacific Island disability group in the Solomon Islands.

Indigenous health and empowerment as well as maternal and child health were also key areas for the company and one which it will look to tap into in PNG.

"Women are such a focal point of village and community life so we've always been big in maternal and child health," Mr Keys said.

With a strong corporate social responsibility network, Aspen will also look at local engagement in PNG to provide CSR work.

While Mr Keys remained coy on the specific markets it was looking to work in in PNG, he said Aspen would go wherever the greatest need and demand was

"I think we'll be able to deliver a very different style of health care service in PNG that has been done today," Mr Keys said.

"We have a very diverse business but we are very focused on high quality health care in areas of high demand."

With a flurry of activity occurring in PNG's resources sector, Mr Keys admitted this would present opportunities for the business.

"We are one of the largest providers of health to the oil and gas industry in Australia," Mr Keys said.

"A lot of our customers up there [PNG] are our customers here.... we most definitely see



Aspen Medical working in PNG.

that as a really supportive market."

With the company having undertaken a multitude of work in challenging environments such as Africa, Mr Keys said PNG's remote and sometimes unforgiving terrain is an "operating environment that we are very comfortable in."

With details of the formal launch of Aspen's presence set to be provided exclusively to *PNG Resources*, Mr Keys said he was excited for the company and at a personal level to be making such a big commitment to PNG.

"Our commitment to the region is a sign that we think it's a great market with great opportunities that we can deliver something different in." ●