



**Santos**

# **PNG RESOURCES WEEK 2025**

## **TUBERCULOSIS PROGRAM**

### **“THE OTHER SIDE OF FEAR”**

**Dr Graham Low, Medical Officer**



# Presentation Overview

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# Introduction - Santos, Rural PNG & TB:

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- Tuberculosis (TB) is increasing in Papua New Guinea (PNG)
- High stigma, poor access to TB screening, diagnostics, and treatment - hindered by geographic barriers and financial constraints,
- Delays diagnosis and treatment initiation - as well high rates of treatment discontinuation.
- For TB - the triad of Stigma, fear and superstition can paralyse health service delivery.



# What is Tuberculosis?

- Tuberculosis (TB) is an Infectious airborne killer disease, transmitted via air droplets from infected persons when they cough or sneeze.
- One single TB case can infect up to 10-15 people in a year.
- Worldwide – stats show over 10 million people get TB annually, with 1.25 million deaths in 2024 alone, according to WHO.
- PNG – Est. TB Incidence is 432/100,000 people, one of the highest globally!
- According to NDOH – in 2024, 46,000 people were infected with TB. Translates to 126 people infected/day, with about 9-14 deaths/day!
- Huge call by the Health Minister – support the National Technical Policy Summit in August 2025. Develop strategies to eliminate TB in PNG.
- TB can be identified using special tests on – sputum, body fluids or tissues, or by using X-rays.
- TB is Treatable & Curable – using powerful antibiotics, for 6-months duration. Some forms of TB need up to 9-months treatment.
- TB is not the end of the world - Once Treatment is started, workers can resume work after 2 weeks.





# Santos TB Program

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## AIM: Reduction of TB at the workplace & within surrounding communities

- Delivery of inhouse TB services to our workforce, their dependents and our communities.
- Timely diagnosis and management
  - Increase early TB identification at the workplace
  - Minimise risk of transmission through early diagnosis
  - Reduced morbidity through faster recovery
- Easy and convenient access (including for FIFO workers)
- Reduction of Lost Work-days
- Increased employee satisfaction.





# Santos TB Program:

## PARTNERSHIPS:

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- In 2021, Santos, in collaboration with the National Department of Health and the SHP Provincial Health Authority, initiated free high quality TB services, including
  - TB screening
  - TB investigations
  - TB treatment
  - TB education and awareness
- Santos received certification by the National Department of Health to diagnose, treat and monitor patients on site, as a TB BMU.
- Inhouse investigations - including AI x-ray and state-of-the-art laboratory equipment.
- Testing consumables and TB medication are provided through NDoH
- Monthly reporting to PHA.
- Diagnosis and initiation of TB treatment for community cases and referral to the respective local health facilities if possible.





# Santos TB Program:

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## Current Progress:

- From 2023 – 2025 - demand for TB Testing doubled, then quadrupled.
- From just 10 tests/month to over 40 tests/month.
- From Feb 2021 - June 2025 - 435 people in total have been screened for TB.
- 34 cases of TB disease were detected, enrolled & commenced on treatment.
- As a result of close management and support of our TB patients, no patients were lost to follow up.
- Contact tracing – in the workplace and home through family screening also conducted on all patients to stop the spread.



# Conclusion:

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## Santos TB Program - The Other side of Fear:



- Tuberculosis (TB) – is an increasing health challenge in Papua New Guinea (PNG).
- Close collaboration between the corporate sector and government and local partners is essential
- Integration of TB services at the workplace, has a strong impact on health outcomes both within the workforce and the wider community by providing,
  - free,
  - easily accessible and,
  - high quality medical care.



# Recognitions:

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:**

- Santos Management.
- Santos Medical Teams.
- Santos Foundation.
- National Department of Health.
- Southern Highlands Provincial Health Authority.
- All patients, including children & guardians who consented for the use of their pictures.

**Thank you**

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