

03rd Quarter NEWSLETTER



WESTERN HIGHLANDS PROVINCIAL HEALTH AUTHORITY



IN THIS EDITION, WE WILL LOOK AT:

- CEO'S MESSAGE
- BOARD CHAIRMAN'S STATEMENT
- NEWS CORNER
- WHPHA STAFF STORIES AND MORE.



CONTACT US::



Mt Hagen, Western Highlands Province



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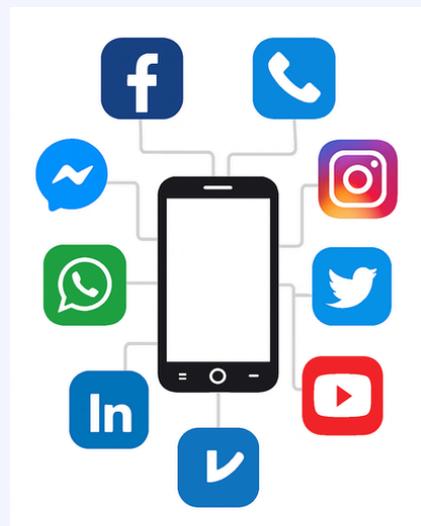
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A message from the Acting CEO's Desk



Jane Holden, Acting Chief Executive Officer, WHPHA

To all Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority and Stakeholders,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to our third (3rd) Edition of our 2025 Newsletter. This space is dedicated to celebrating the remarkable work we are achieving together, and indeed, there is much to be proud of.

As Acting CEO of the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority, I am deeply encouraged by the substantial progress we have made thus far in strengthening healthcare for our people and communities in the Western Highlands Province. Over the past quarter, we have taken bold steps to enhance patient care, launched vital development projects, and forged stronger partnerships to address the challenges before us.

These milestones are not the result of one effort alone, they reflect the dedication of our staff, the visionary leadership of our Board, the commitment of our SEM Team, and the steadfast support of our provincial government, partners, and community. Each of you plays a vital role in this journey, and I extend my heartfelt thanks for your energy, ideas, and unwavering commitment.

Together, we advance with purpose, enhancing services, fostering collaboration, and building resilient connections. Through every initiative and partnership, we weave a stronger and healthier Western Highlands for all.

Best regards,

Jane

Statement from Sam Koim, Chairman of the WHPHA Board

The Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority is proud to announce that we have once again secured the top national ranking in the country, retaining the Number One spot for the second consecutive year. This remarkable achievement places Western Highlands firmly at the top of health excellence across the country.

This is proof that disciplined governance, committed staff, and strategic direction can drive excellence even amid nationwide challenges. Rising from 8th place in 2022 to first place in 2023 and 2024 is nothing short of extraordinary. It shows that our people are united by purpose and guided by a clear strategy.

WHPHA has set the benchmark in maternal and child health, antenatal care, and immunization coverage. Despite drug shortages, supply chain issues, funding constraints and the unfairly huge demand on our health facilities by other Highlands provinces, WHPHA's resilience has kept it thriving. This ranking is not our destination but our starting point, and I am proud of what we have achieved, but I am even more excited by what lies ahead.

I thank acting CEO Jane Holden, the management team, frontline workers, clinicians, support staff, church health services, development partners, and community leaders for their collective effort, as this victory belongs to all of you. You are the heartbeat of this organization, and your dedication has positioned Western Highlands at the top of the country.

The WHPHA Board remains committed to strengthening governance, driving strategic reforms, and ensuring that every Western Highlander receives the quality of care they deserve. //



News Corner

By: Rita PEKI

Story #1- Commemoration of World Hypertension Day

Publication Date: May 17th, 2025

Most people with hypertension don't know they have it. That is why WHPHA's campaign matters. Read the highlights and learn how to protect yourself. **More read:** <https://www.whhs.gov.pg/2025/05/commemoration-of-world-hypertension-day/>

Story #2- Kelua SDA Church Donates to Mt Hagen Hospital

Publication Date: May 25th, 2025

The Kelua 2 Seventh-Day Adventist Church made a remarkable donation to Mt Hagen Provincial Hospital, delivering over 30 bags of fresh produce and hygiene essentials to support inpatients. **More read:** <https://www.whhs.gov.pg/2025/05/kelua-sda-donates-to-mt-hagen-hospital/>

Story #3- World Menstrual Hygiene Day Celebration

Publication Date: May 28th, 2025

<https://www.whhs.gov.pg/2025/05/world-menstrual-hygiene-day-and-world-nutrition-day-celebration/>

Story #4- WHPHA bids farewell to 45 retirees

Publication Date: June 03rd, 2025

The WHPHA recently held a heartfelt farewell ceremony at the Hospital Chapel to honour 45 retiring public servants who collectively dedicated 1,448 years to healthcare in Papua New Guinea—averaging 32 years each. **More read:** <https://www.whhs.gov.pg/2025/06/whpha-bids-farewell-to-45-retirees/>

Story #5- VHA Refresher Training

Publication Date: June 03rd, 2025

A total of 106 Village Health Assistants (VHAs) from across Western Highlands Province's four districts have recently completed a comprehensive refresher training, reaffirming their commitment to delivering frontline healthcare in their respective communities. **More read:** <https://www.whhs.gov.pg/2025/06/vha-refresher-training/>

Story #6 Litehaus donation

Publication date: June 19th, 2025

An Australian NGO recognized for donating laptops and desktops to schools in PNG for the past seven years, has made its first donation of 400 nurses' scrubs to Mt. Hagen Provincial Hospital **More read:** <https://www.whhs.gov.pg/2025/06/litehaus-donates-nursing-scrubs-to-mt-hagen-hospital/>

Story #7- Plastic surgery team visit to MHH

Publication Date: July 07th, 2025

A recent visit from the Plastic Surgery team from Pom Gen has brought life-changing relief to 25 patients in the Western Highlands Province. **More read:** <https://www.whhs.gov.pg/2025/07/plastic-surgery-team-transforming-lives/>

Story #8- PNG Core donates to Mt Hagen Hospital

Publication Date: July 14th, 2025

The PNG Chamber of Resources and Energy (PNG CORE) has donated K300,000 worth of essential medical equipment to Mt Hagen Provincial Hospital, furthering its commitment to healthcare support across PNG. **More read:** <https://www.whhs.gov.pg/2025/07/png-core-donates-to-mt-hagen-hospital/>

Story #9- Health Inspectors condemn 1.5t of Trukai rice products

Publication date: July 15th, 2025

Health Inspectors from the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority (WHPHA) condemned 1.5 tonnes of spoiled rice products at the Trukai Industries Depot, in Mt Hagen, last Tuesday. **More read:** <https://www.whhs.gov.pg/2025/07/trukai-industry-in-mt-hagen-requests-whpha-health-inspectors-to-condemn-1-5-tonnes-of-trukai-rice-products/>

Story #10- Recovery patient returns oxygen cylinder

Publication Date: July 17th, 2025

A 70-year-old woman from Mt. Hagen has expressed her gratitude towards the hospital staff after overcoming a months-long health battle. **More read:** <https://www.whhs.gov.pg/2025/07/recovered-patient-returns-oxygen-cylinder-to-mt-hagen-hospital/>

Story #11- Little Miracle Frank defies the odds

Publication Date: July 22nd, 2025

In 2019, Agitah and Frank from the Ogelbeng area welcomed their second child, Miracle Frank. Born prematurely at just 34 weeks and weighing only 1 kg, Agitah was filled with fear, convinced that her baby would not survive. "She was so tiny when she was born. I didn't think she would make it," she recalled. **More read:**

Story #12- Mt Hagen Judiciary celebrates Judicial Wellbeing Day

Publication Date: July 28th, 2025

Highlighting the vital role of wellness in the justice system, staff from the Mt Hagen court community recently gathered in a vibrant display of colour and energy to mark their Judicial Wellbeing Day. **More read:** <https://www.whhs.gov.pg/2025/07/mt-hagen-judiciary-celebrates-international-judicial-wellbeing-day-in-style/>

Story #13- Basic Emergency Care Training

Publication Date: August 18th, 2025

Mt Hagen Provincial Hospital hosted a series of Basic Emergency Care (BEC) courses from August 6th to 14th, aimed at strengthening emergency healthcare delivery across PNG. **More read:** <https://www.whhs.gov.pg/2025/08/basic-emergency-care-training/>

Story #14- WHPHA Launch Round 1 Polio Campaign

Publication Date: August 19th, 2025

The Western Highlands PHA has confirmed the province's first case of polio, sparking an urgent public health response. The virus was detected in a sample taken from a main sewer line in Warakum, Mt Hagen, raising alarm among health officials and prompting a province-wide immunization campaign. **More read:** <https://www.whhs.gov.pg/2025/08/whpha-launches-round-1-polio-immunization-campaign/>

Story #15- RPNGC and PNGAust Policing Partnership donation Publication Date: August 21st, 2025

A total of 106 Village Health Assistants (VHAs) from across WHP's four districts have recently completed a comprehensive refresher training, reaffirming their commitment to delivering frontline healthcare in their respective communities. **More read:**

<https://www.whhs.gov.pg/2025/06/vha-refresher-training/>

Story #16- Aust. Nurses collaborate with Mt Hagen Hospital nurses to enhance healthcare skills

Publication date: August 27th, 2025

Nurses at Mt. Hagen Provincial Hospital are now better equipped with new knowledge and skills to enhance their day-to-day nursing care with patients, thanks to the two visiting nurses from St. Vincent Hospital in Toowoomba, Australia. **More read:** <https://www.whhs.gov.pg/2025/08/australian-nurses-collaborate-with-mt-hagen-hospital-to-enhance-healthcare-skills/>

Story #17- New Radiology Dept. for Mt Hagen Provincial Hospital

Publication Date: September 01st, 2025

In a significant stride toward enhancing diagnostic services, the Mt. Hagen Provincial Hospital hosted a small yet groundbreaking ceremony for its new Radiology Department. **More read:** <https://www.whhs.gov.pg/2025/09/new-radiology-department-set-to-be-built-in-mt-hagen-provincial-hospital/>

Story #18- WHO Regional Director visits Mt Hagen Provincial Hospital to boost Polio Response and Primary Health Care

Publication date: September 03rd, 2025

Mt Hagen Provincial Hospital welcomed a high-level delegation recently, led by Dr. Saia Mau Piukala, the World Health Organization Regional Director for the Western Pacific. The visit aimed to strengthen the province's response to the recent polio outbreak and highlight the importance of community-driven health services. **More read:** <https://www.whhs.gov.pg/2025/09/who-regional-director-visits-mt-hagen-provincial-hospital-to-boost-polio-response-and-primary-health-care/>



Stories that matter

By Rita PEKI

Children's Outpatient Department (COPD)

For any parent, seeing their child sick is a frightening experience. However, at the Children's Outpatient Department (COPD), health care workers are working tirelessly to provide better, faster, and more effective care. In 2024, over 9,000 babies received treatment, and from these, only 5% had to return, proving that nurses under the medical team are very competent. Through aggressive audits, professional competency training, and incident reviews, we are giving every child the best chance at recovery. Ends//



Discharge Plan-Mt. Hagen Hospital Ensures Continued Care for Discharged Patients

The Mt Hagen Provincial Hospital has introduced an innovative Discharge Plan aimed at providing ongoing support for long-term patients with special needs even after they leave the hospital. To date, nurses have followed up with nearly 300 discharged patients through phone calls to check on their health, and many expressed happiness at feeling remembered.

This initiative has also had a positive impact on patients in the Medical Recovery Ward, resulting in the discharge of 16 special needs patients just last Monday. For those relying on oxygen support, nurses are proactively training their guardians on safe equipment management. This ensures that if any issues occur, the nurses can be alerted and can visit the patients' homes to assist.

With the hospital equipped with 308 beds, this plan not only supports ongoing patient care at home but also helps create space for new patients in need of inpatient services. This program highlights that recovery extends beyond the hospital and into the patients' homes and communities, ensuring everyone receives the necessary support for their recovery journey. Ends//



Stories that matter

By Rita PEKI

Talented hands

At Mt Hagen Provincial Hospital, nursing care comes with a creative twist. These talented nurses aren't just saving lives; they are transforming hospital events with stunning decorations, vibrant floral setups, and heartfelt designs that turn every occasion into something truly special.

Some of our hardworking nurses, have become the creative force behind the hospital's event setups, demonstrating remarkable skill in wall decorations, floral arrangements, and venue styling.

Specialist Paediatric Nurse Delma Zira, a respected member of the nursing staff, shared how her passion for decoration began. "I learned by observing mothers decorating during big events," she explained. "Over time, I developed the skills and began contributing to hospital functions."

This initiative reflects a strong sense of ownership and resourcefulness among the staff. Rather than outsourcing event decoration, the nurses have taken it upon themselves to create welcoming and visually uplifting environments for hospital gatherings.

"We believe in using our talents to support the hospital," Delma said. "There's no need to hire external decorators when we can do it ourselves."



Decorations done by Sr Delma Zira and the hardworking WHPHA team



Stories that matter

By Rita PEKI

Mt. Hagen Hospital: A New Approach to Healing

In a new advancement for public healthcare in Papua New Guinea, Mt. Hagen Hospital has become the first public hospital in the country to appoint a full-time chaplain, integrating medical care with spiritual support.

Since Reverend Daniel Ekka joined the hospital in 2022, the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority (WHPHA) has taken bold steps to redefine patient care. Twice a week, on Mondays and Wednesdays, from 8:00 to 8:30 AM, he is accompanied by doctors and senior clinicians who gather with patients for a fellowship session in different wards according to his schedule. This quiet yet impactful routine provides comfort, courage, and connection to those facing health challenges.

"It is amazing how much positivity this brings," Reverend Ekka remarked. "You see patients smiling and feeling stronger; it is truly uplifting."

But his mission does not stop at the bedside. From 12:00 to 1:00 PM on the same days, he conducts fellowship sessions for hospital staff in the chapel, encouraging them to embrace holistic care.

Reverend Ekka's journey to Mt. Hagen Provincial Hospital is rooted in decades of faith and service. Originally from Pabrabuk in Lower Nebilyer, he began his education at Kindeng Community School and later attended Kombolopa and Mendi Provincial High Schools. After a 4 years stint as a Sales officer in Lae's Paradise Foods Limited, he answered a higher calling, earning a Bachelor of Theology from Melanesian Nazarene Bible College (MNBC) and later a Master of Ministry in the Philippines.

For 21 years, he served as National Radio Ministry Director at MNBC, but felt a deeper pull toward ministering directly to the sick. "Doctors and nurses treat the body, but the Word of God heals the soul," he said. "This hospital has adopted a holistic approach, and I have witnessed remarkable changes in patients' lives."

While some patients may be hesitant, the majority welcome his prayers and presence. His daily visits have brought peace to the suffering and strength to the weary.

As WHPHA continues to champion this holistic model, Reverend Ekka hopes other hospitals will follow suit. "This is more than a job," he said. "It is a mission, and every smile, every prayer, and every moment spent with the sick is proof that we are doing something right."

WHPHA is demonstrating that healing is not just about medicine; it is about creating a supportive environment for patients in every way by integrating spiritual support into clinical settings. Ends//



Rev Ekka (right) talking to a patient at the Medical Ward



Rev Ekka prays with a sick patient at the Medical Ward



Rev. Ekka and WHPHA staff share hope and healing through morning devotion with patients

Staff Corner

Story of Thomas Tei and his 31 year journey with WHPHA

By Rita PEKI

A Legacy of Care: Thomas Tei's 31-Year Journey at Mt Hagen Provincial Hospital

In the bustling wards of Mt Hagen Provincial Hospital, where the flow of patients never seems to slow, one name has become a symbol of dedication and compassion –Thomas Tei. For 31 years, Thomas has served the people of Western Highlands Province with unwavering commitment and quiet strength, inspiring those around him.

Originally from Nenga in the Mul Baiyer district of Western Highlands Province, Thomas began his career in 1992 as a Community Health Worker (CHW) after graduating from Tinsley CHW School. Assigned to the hospital's theatre, he spent 9 years immersed in the demanding environment of surgical care, gaining invaluable experience in high-stakes situations where every moment counted.

However, Thomas was determined to advance beyond his initial role. He recognised the limits of his role and chose to exceed them. In 2004, he returned to school, this time at the Lutheran School of Nursing in Madang Province. By 2006, he had earned his Diploma in General Nursing and traded his blue uniform for white—a symbol of his new role and expanded responsibilities.

"It was amazing," Thomas recalls. "Being a CHW was fulfilling, but when I was given the opportunity for advancement, I took it to enhance my knowledge and provide better care to patients."

"I was one of the pioneers, alongside a few of my CHW colleagues who are now Nursing Officers like myself."

In 2007, he transitioned from CHW to Nursing Officer, marking the beginning of an impressive career trajectory, characterized by perseverance. In 2013, he furthered his studies at the University of Papua New Guinea, earning a Bachelor of Nursing in Operative Care, a one-year program that refined his skills in surgical nursing.

Thomas's leadership journey also blossomed; he became the acting Theatre Manager in 2015, Flow Manager in 2018, and was confirmed in the Theatre managerial role in 2020. Throughout each transition, Thomas remained focused on one primary goal: patient care.

"Working in a hospital is truly a privilege," he says. "You get to help the sick and give them hope."

That hope is needed more than ever. Mt Hagen Provincial Hospital faces a daily influx of patients, many arriving without referrals. The demand is relentless, but Thomas and his colleagues from other wards and units face these demands head-on, ensuring that every patient is seen, treated, and sent home satisfied.

"We have a strong workforce," he states. "We strive to assist each patient so that they receive care and can return home happily."

Thomas also credits the hospital's leadership for their patient-first approach.

"We have a committed CEO and great hospital manager who prioritize the needs of the patients. Their efforts ensure that essential services remain within reach, sparing families the burden of travelling outside the province for treatment.

As Thomas reflects on his 31-year journey, his story transcends mere career milestones; it transforms into a legacy of care, growth, and service. His dedication is a powerful reminder of why he chose this path: to heal, serve, and provide hope.

Thank you, Thomas, for demonstrating what it means to wear the white uniform with pride. Ends//



Mr Thomas Tei (first from right) and his team from the Theatre Unit



Picture of Thomas during his graduation in 2013 at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG)

Stories that matter

By Rita PEKI

News: Cataract Team Restores Sight to 58 Patients in Baiyer

In a recent six-day outreach from September 8th to 13th, 2025, the Eye Cataract Team from Mt. Hagen Provincial Hospital successfully restored sight to 58 individuals at Tinsley Baptist Rural Hospital in Baiyer.

This achievement is a result of the dedicated efforts of the Cataract Team led by Dr. Waimbe Wahamu, who is the Highlands Regional Ophthalmologist, and supported by a committed team including Dr Savingu, Eye Ward Manager Sr. Heather Nii, Mr Sam Rungwa, Sr. Judith Dupi, Mr Palange, and Mr Hanson.

They initially screened 120 patients; of these, 50 underwent cataract surgery and 8 received other eye procedures. The majority of the patients were between the ages of 50 and 70, reflecting the impact of age-related degenerative conditions.

Notably, among the patients was a 28-year-old woman who successfully regained full vision after surgery for a traumatic cataract, showcasing the team's skill and the collaborative spirit of the mission.

"This mission was more than just a medical outreach; it was a gift of sight and hope," said Dr. Wahamu. "Despite challenges with power supply and staff accommodation, our team worked tirelessly to ensure every patient received quality care."

Each cataract surgery took approximately 10 minutes.

This initiative was part of the Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority's (WHPHA) Jubilee Celebration, highlighting moments of service and dedication to rural communities. It demonstrated the significant impact of rural health interventions and the effectiveness of teamwork.

Some patients with complex conditions, including pterygium (external eye growths), blepharo-conjunctivitis (eyelid infections), and blocked tear ducts, were treated and scheduled for future follow-ups.

Additionally, a 70-year-old woman named Marianne Kerae, who had one artificial eye and one natural eye, faced challenges as her natural eye began to fail. She struggled to recognize faces or objects from a distance and often relied on her grandchildren for assistance in daily life. When the surgical team arrived, she seized the opportunity to reclaim her independence and now possesses two artificial eyes, allowing her to see clearly without needing help.

Dr Wahamu noted that limited awareness may have prevented more patients from attending, but praised the strong teamwork and unwavering support from WHPHA's acting CEO, Jane Holden, senior management and their leadership for their unwavering support towards the outreach program. Ends//



Dr Wahamu is doing an eye cataract surgery for a patient in Tinsley District Hospital, Baiyer, W.H.P

Stories that matter

By Rita PEKI

22 staff from WHPHA graduate from the Records Management Course

Twenty-two staff members from WHPHA have completed a two-week Records Management short course, marking a significant milestone in their professional development. The graduation ceremony took place recently, where participants received certificates of completion from the Somare Institute of Leadership and Governance (SILAG).

The course was designed to enhance public service delivery through effective recordkeeping and covered key topics such as developing and implementing records management systems, handling both physical and digital records, and ensuring confidentiality while complying with regulatory standards.

Acting CEO Jane Holden congratulated the graduates, acknowledging their dedication and personal investment in the program. Each participant paid K850 for the course from their own pockets, reflecting their commitment to excellence.

“The skills you’ve gained will not only improve your work but also strengthen the integrity and accountability of our organization,” Holden said during the ceremony.

Most participants were from WHPHA’s Corporate Services Directorate and expressed pride in their accomplishment. Alpha Ropkil, one of the graduates, thanked SILAG for offering the course and noted that the training would enable them to perform more effectively in their roles.

Long-serving WHPHA employee Miriam Kaki also commended the course trainer, Benny Manda, stating, “I now feel confident storing documents accurately and retrieving them with ease.”

The Records Management course emphasized the importance of records as tools for decision-making, historical preservation, and organizational accountability. Participants learned to manage the entire lifecycle of records, from creation and maintenance to secure storage and eventual disposition.

SILAG’s initiative reflects a broader effort to upskill public servants across Papua New Guinea, ensuring they are prepared to meet the evolving demands of governance and service delivery. Ends//



Group photo of all 22 participants after two weeks of attending the Records Management Course



WHPHA Staff, Ms Paula John (left) receives her certificate in Records Management from SILAG

In our next Newsletter, we will look at:

- **Staff and Patients' Stories during PNG's 50 Golden Jubilee celebration**
- **District Health Services**
- **World Heart Day Stories highlighting heart health and awareness**
- **Mental Health Awareness Week coverage and initiatives**
- **PMU Projects On-site updates and progress highlights**
- **Mental Health Programs and their impact on staff and patients**
- **Feature Stories of Staff showcasing dedication and achievements**
- **Stories of Hardworking Security Personnel and their role in healthcare safety**
- **Wellness Clinics promoting holistic health and preventive care**
- **Well Women's Clinic services and community outreach**
- **Antenatal Clinic support and maternal health initiatives, and there's more – each story a thread in the vibrant tapestry of healthcare in Western Highlands Province**

Got a Health Story Worth Sharing? We're listening and we want to share it with others.

Whether it's a patient journey, a community health story, or a life-changing outreach, your story can inspire others across Western Highlands Province.

Connect now with Ms. Rita Peki, our Public Relations Officer at Western Highlands Provincial Health Authority on:

📞 Call: 74351005

✉ Email: rita.peki@whhs.gov.pg

Let's celebrate the people, the progress, and the power of healthcare—one story at a time.

End of Quarter 3 Newsletter!