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PNG Air Expands Fleet as Ok Tedi Mining Ltd (OTML) Landowners Take Ownership of New ATR Aircraft

Landmark aviation investment marks a new chapter in landowner participation, fleet modernisation, and national connectivity.

PORT MORESBY, Papua New Guinea – PNG Air, Papua New Guinea's People's Choice airline, PNG Air is proud to announce a significant milestone in the nation's aviation sector, with OTML landowners taking direct ownership of three new ATR aircraft currently in production at the ATR manufacturing facility in Toulouse, France.

The landmark investment was highlighted during a visit by Prime Minister Hon. James Marape to the ATR factory in Toulouse, where the first of the three aircraft has already departed the facility and will be managed and operated by PNG Air upon delivery. The remaining two aircraft were inspected by the Prime Minister and senior government representatives as they progress through the final assembly.

PNG Air's Board Chairman, Mr. Augustine Mano – who also serves as Managing Director of the Mineral Resources Development Company (MRDC) – accompanied the Prime Minister during the Toulouse visit. MRDC has played a central role in facilitating landowner participation in the aircraft acquisition, reflecting the company's continuing mandate to translate resource revenues into long-term economic opportunities for Papua New Guineans.

"What makes this investment especially significant is that it is being driven by Papua New Guineans themselves. The involvement of OTML landowners as direct owners of these aircraft is a power statement about the growing confidence of our people in taking ownership of the industries that shape the future of the country. This is the kind of partnership – between landowners, industry, and government – that will define Papua New Guinea's aviation sector for decades to come." said Brian Fraser, Chief Executive Officer, PNG Air.

PNG Air has been at the forefront of ATR operations in the South Pacific since introducing the 600 series type in 2015 as part of a major fleet modernisation programme. The airline currently operates ATR 72-600 aircraft and is progressively expanding its ATR fleet to encompass both the ATR 72-600 and ATR 42-600 models. The smaller ATR 42-600 is particularly well suited to the operationally constrained regional airports found throughout PNG, opening up routes and communities previously underserved.

The ATR fleet has delivered measurable improvements across PNG Air's entire network: enhanced passenger capacity, superior fuel efficiency, reduced emissions, and significantly improved operational reliability across some of the world's most demanding terrain.

The Toulouse visit also provided an opportunity for PNG Air's Board Chairman Mr. Mano and Prime Minister Marape to hold discussions with ATR's CEO and ATR's senior leadership team on regional aviation connectivity, fleet modernisation strategy, and the continued strengthening of the partnership between ATR and Papua New Guinea's aviation sector. ATR – Avions de Transport Régional – was established in 1981 as a joint venture between Airbus and Leonardo and is widely recognised as a global leader in regional aircraft manufacturing.

PNG Air looks forward to welcoming the new aircraft into its operational fleet and to continuing its role as the People's Choice airline of Papua New Guinea.

About PNG Air

For nearly four decades, PNG Air has proudly connected the people of Papua New Guinea with safe, reliable, and affordable air services. Listed on the Port Moresby Stock Exchange since 2008, the airline is majority-owned by Papua New Guinean institutions — including the MRDC Group, Pacific Balance Fund and NasFund — and supported by approximately 2,900 local shareholders.

PNG Air currently operates more than 460 flights each week across 22 destinations, providing essential passenger and cargo services that support economic development, community connectivity, and national unity. In 2024, the airline carried over 150,000 passengers, underscoring its pivotal role as a true national connector.

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