



Kokoda Initiative



Australian Government

Kokoda Nius - March 2018

Joint statement on the review of the Kokoda Track Authority



In December 2017, Prime Minister Peter O'Neill announced that an independent review would be undertaken into the Kokoda Track Authority (KTA).

The review will consider KTA's structure, mandate, responsibilities and accountability. Ministerial responsibility for the review lies with Minister for the Environment and Conservation, Hon. John Pundari, as the lead Papua New Guinea (PNG) Minister for the Kokoda Initiative (KI).

A taskforce has been established by the Chief Secretary to oversee the review process. The taskforce is chaired on behalf of the Chief Secretary by Deputy Secretary of Prime Minister and National Executive Council, Mr John Punde, and includes Secretary of the Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs, Mr Dickson Guina, Managing Director of Conservation and Environmental Protection Authority, Mr Gunther Joku, and CEO of the Tourism Promotion Authority, Mr Jerry Agus.

On 12 December 2017, the Chief Secretary's taskforce, in consultation with the CEOs of the Kokoda Track Authority and the Tourism Promotion Authority, agreed to terms of reference for the KTA review.

Following this agreement, the taskforce requested that the Australian Government fund the independent review, which Australia agreed to do. Requests for tender to conduct the review closed on 5 February 2018. Applications will be assessed by the selection panel and a successful candidate selected.

Once the tenderer has been appointed, the taskforce will continue to ensure that it adheres to the agreed terms of reference. It is essential that the review process be transparent, credible and comprehensive.

Upon completion under the agreed terms of reference, the taskforce will consider the independent review recommendations and report to Minister Pundari and the Kokoda Initiative Committee, who will take a submission to Government. The National Executive Council will then decide on the future mandate of the KTA and its resourcing. In the meantime, the KTA will continue to operate under its current Proclamation.

Ensuring the effectiveness and credibility of implementing agencies, such as the KTA, is critical to the delivery of the KI.

The KI is a partnership between the Governments of Papua New Guinea and Australia to support the people of the track, to preserve the military heritage of the track and increase the trekking experience, and to preserve the region's natural resources and cultural heritage.





Education Update

The Australian Government works hard to enhance the lives of people living along and near the Kokoda Track, and to ensure communities benefit from trekking.

The KI supports provincial and local-level governments to deliver health, education, and water and sanitation services. This support will remain a key part of Australian assistance, and the focus on infrastructure will continue.

Over time, greater emphasis will be placed on sustaining these investments, including partnering with local authorities, to check that facilities are staffed and materials and supplies are procured.

Since 2012, the Australian Government has supported skills development for education staff:

- 11 primary teachers completed a refresher course in Diploma in Primary Education;
- 24 elementary teachers obtained Certificates in Elementary Teaching;
- 113 members of school boards of management completed training in roles, responsibilities and planning for improved education outcomes;
- 69 elementary and primary school teachers were trained and certified in Creative Phonics, School Learning Improvement Plan, Reading Scheme and Classroom Library;
- In 2017, 46 teachers received in-service training on school planning and curriculum changes;
- Technical support was provided to the provincial and district education divisions in Oro (Sohe) and Central (Hiri).
- Education Standards officers for assessment/supervisory visits are now

a regular activity across all 63 schools within the KI focus area.

Between 2010 – 2017:

- 21 new double classrooms were built in schools across the track;
- Water taps and toilets were installed with new education infrastructures;
- Seven new furnished staff houses and four double classrooms were fitted with desks and chairs, with 9,000 litre water tanks attached to each building;
- Upgrades to four existing classrooms;
- In 2017, 35 boxes of School Basic Education Curriculum materials were distributed to Elementary Schools in the Koiari, Sogeri and Kokoda catchments. This included syllabus and teachers handbooks, benefiting over 2030 students.



Students at Depo Elementary School in Sogeri, Central Province, in their new double classroom, funded through the Hiri District Administration and Kokoda Initiative in 2015



Students and the Kokoda community celebrate the launch of eight new education buildings funded through the Kokoda Initiative in 2017



Mrs Botoko from Efogi Primary School, Mt Koiari, with her certificate after completing a teachers training supported through the Kokoda Initiative in 2015

CEPA - Protecting this special region

The Kokoda Track was the site for one of the most significant campaigns of World War II between Japanese and Allied Forces. Fierce battles were fought along the track, which passes through the Owen Stanley Ranges. The track has become a powerful symbol of the goodwill and enduring friendship between Papua New Guinea and Australia.

In recognition of this relationship, the Papua New Guinea and Australian Governments created the Kokoda Initiative in 2008. Its purpose is to promote the economic and social development of communities in the region, while also protecting the important heritage values of the track and the surrounding region.

The Kokoda Initiative is a partnership to protect the Owen Stanley Ranges for future generations. The Owen Stanley Ranges have some of the most significant biodiversity values in the Asia-Pacific Region and is one of seven areas submitted by the Government of Papua



New Guinea for tentative World Heritage Listing in 2006.

The Conservation Environment Protection Authority (CEPA) works through the Kokoda Initiative to protect this region through its gazettal as a Protected Area. The PNG Government will establish a community-based conservation area around the Kokoda Track and the Brown River/Naoro River catchment to protect the region, including the Kokoda Track.

CEPA also works with local and district administrations to ensure the area is sustainably managed by customary landowners. CEPA works with the Kokoda Track Authority, the National Museum and the Tourism Promotion Authority to promote and enhance the trekking and tourism industry.

To safeguard the environment and long-term livelihoods for communities living in the Protected Area, CEPA carries out a number of important activities:

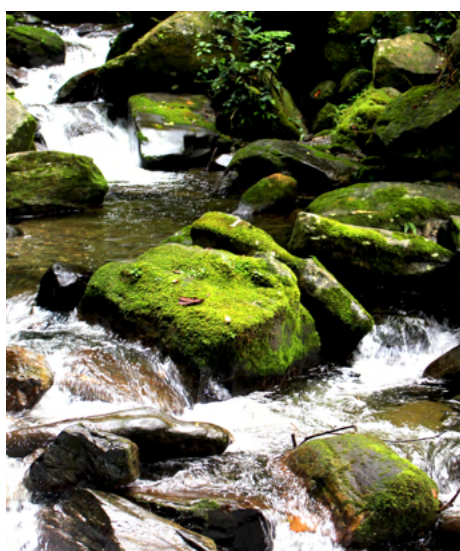
- A study of the region to identify and assess significant heritage values;

- Biodiversity and archaeological surveys;
- Military heritage and oral history surveys (in conjunction with National Museum and Art Gallery);
- Database development to capture biodiversity information;
- Social mapping to record information about relationships between people's settlement patterns, land use, ownership and social organisation, to make sure that land use negotiations are carried out with the authorised people;
- Developing a master plan to set out how to manage the special values and allow for sustainable development activities for customary landowners and local communities; and
- Developing a new national protected area policy and legislation for Papua New Guinea.

Under this system, customary landowners are fully involved in decisions relating to their lands and waterways. Protected areas will be managed to safeguard their special values and to enhance the sustainable livelihoods of customary landowners and other community members.

CEPA will shortly be visiting communities along the Kokoda Track and the surrounding region to discuss the process of declaring a Protected Area, and how it will be carried out with the full agreement of local communities.

The PNG Government will continue to support sustainable development in the region through the Kokoda Initiative, including creating work and opportunities through the tourism and trekking industry.



Safety Package Update

In 2017, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service rangers joined their Kokoda Track Authority (KTA) counterparts on a community project to boost land management and track maintenance skills.

Through the partnership, over six kilometres of track was regenerated and secured, and over K40,000 was injected into the local economy. The project also engaged 86 local community members to support onsite activities.

The KI engaged PNG Air Services to restore the Kokoda Automated Weather Observation Station, which included upgrading security features, replacing and remounting solar panels to prevent vandalism, and restoring the station's operating capacity.

The upgrade involved importing complex technical equipment to ensure accurate weather data can be accessed by pilots and air traffic controllers in Port Moresby.

The road from Sogeri to Owers' Corner is also maintained to a high standard to ensure vehicles can access the southern end of the Kokoda Track year-round.

An upgrade and expansion of the VHF radio network was completed in 2016 at a cost of K673,000. This included 21 new radio handsets to improve access to communication, and installing USB points and solar panels to allow charging of small electronic devices in villages.



A solar radio panel kit at Kagi village, Mt Koiari

Health Update

The Kokoda Initiative has provided support to health in the region since 2009.

This support has been provided through direct procurement of medical equipment, staff training, supervision, support and maintenance of solar-powered fridges for holding immunisation vaccines, infrastructure, water and sanitation and on-site mentoring and planning for outreach health patrols.

Five patrols a year visit 24 wards and 91 villages utilising Village Health Volunteers (VHV) as key members of the health team.

Every year this improved access to health services has resulted in:

- over 3,000 vaccines being administered to babies;
- over 230 antenatal checks for pregnant mothers;
- over 100 child-bearing age mothers vaccinated for Tetanus Toxoid;
- approximately 220 new female acceptors on various family planning methods, including pills and injections;
- active tuberculosis (TB) case finding that supports testing within the village, with confirmed TB positive cases starting treatment immediately. The local VHV supervises treatment at the village level and ensures a constant flow of TB medications along the Kokoda Corridor, with a 91% cure rate;
- malaria testing with positive cases treated immediately;



VHVs testing sputum for TB bacteria during an integrated health patrol in Naunumu village in Sogeri, Central Province in 2015.

- testing and counselling for sexually transmitted infections and HIV;
- an average of over 5,000 outpatients seen for a variety of illnesses.

Kokoda Initiative has been the key partner to support the development of the VHV program with 109 community-selected volunteers that receive six weeks full-time training, followed by ongoing support, refresher training and active involvement in health patrols and other activities.

During the shortage of drugs across PNG in 2017, the Kokoda Initiative invested K185,000 to buy and distribute six months' supply of the top 30 essential drugs to all health facilities within the Kokoda Track.



Above: A child is immunised at Kanga Elementary School in Oro Province

Below: KI supports training of VHVs and also provides them with basic health kits to help them with their voluntary health work in their communities



New health staff house at Kokoda Memorial Hospital, Oro Province. The new staff house was officially opened in November 2017 during Kokoda Day celebrations.

