



Women in Havaki community in Northern Province fetch water for cooking from the completed Water Security Project.

## Improved water security for Sohe communities

**Eighteen communities in the Sohe district in Oro Province received new water facilities which are improving access to water and hygiene and sanitation practices.**

More than 5,000 people now have easy access to clean water with new facilities, including tanks and covered community meeting spaces.

The project was a partnership between the Oro Provincial Government, the Kokoda Track Authority (KTA) and the Australian Government.

KTA CEO Julius Wargirai said the project was a true partnership demonstrated by the Oro Provincial Government and KTA commitment of a combined K500,000 towards its completion, with additional implementation support provided by the Australian Government.

“This partnership approach promotes sustainability and has positive impacts for communities,” he said.

“This water security project came at a critical time during the onset of COVID-19 – improving hygiene and infection control measures and creating hundreds of jobs for people suffering because of the loss of tourism this year.”

Each village received an additional 18,000 litres of water storage capacity, a community meeting space and participated in sanitation, hygiene and COVID-19 awareness delivered by health workers, teachers and village health volunteers. The project delivered a total of 324,000 litres of additional water storage in Sohe communities.

The program also promoted economic development, stimulated local businesses, and created

income generation through the water security infrastructure, employing over 200 local people and providing over K100,000 into the local Kokoda communities and households.

Local leader Robric Uzavo expressed that the water facilities have greatly improved the community life.

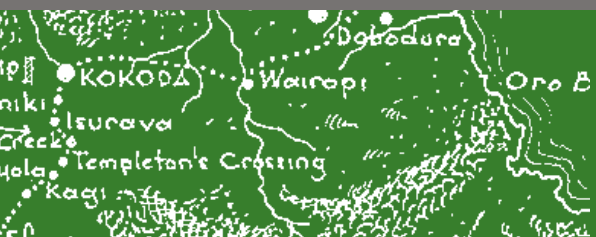
“This community project has helped a lot with locals involved in the work to contribute back to community. It just made our lives a lot easier now.”

Logistical support and technical expertise for the project was provided by the Kokoda Initiative – a partnership between Papua New Guinea and Australia that is improving livelihoods for people in the Kokoda Track region.

Australia is committed to working in partnership with PNG to improve the health, wellbeing and livelihoods of people in the Kokoda Track region – an important symbol of the partnership between PNG and Australia.

A similar water security project has also been completed in 18 communities in the Central Province.

*Disclaimer: Images where social distancing and mask wearing are not featured were taken prior to the current Covid-19 situation. Please be assured that all measures at being undertaken to keep our communities safe.*







# Ranger expansion to strengthen track management

The Kokoda Track Authority (KTA) is expanding its ranger team through a major training program supported by the governments of PNG and Australia.

The KTA Ranger Capacity Development Project will train 16 new rangers who will join the six existing rangers to manage and maintain the Kokoda Track, protect the region's rich biodiversity, and preserve its important cultural and military heritage.

KTA Acting Chief Executive Officer Julius Wargirai said that by increasing the number of KTA rangers, and improving their quality of training, the management of the Kokoda Track will be strengthened.

"Having more, well-trained rangers will improve the Kokoda Track region as a tourist destination and bring flow on benefits for local communities," he said.

"KTA rangers will have many different roles working in environmental protection, tourism promotion and military heritage management with the other Kokoda Initiative partners such as CEPA, TPA and the National Museum and Art Gallery. This makes for an interesting and exciting career.

"Some of their work is hands on – clearing vegetation, repairing the track and building footbridges – while other tasks are more strategic, like working with communities to identify local needs and planning projects."

A local leader from Kagi, Clement Daia, said the project is a good opportunity for Kokoda Track communities.



A ranger chain sawing fallen trees on the track during a track maintenance program.

A local leader from Kagi, Clement Daia, said the project is a good opportunity for Kokoda Track communities.

"A good number of young people have made their interest known in our communities and will apply for the new ranger positions," he said.

The Ranger Capacity Development Project is supported by the PNG-Australia Partnership through the Kokoda Initiative.

Training for the new rangers will include classroom and field-based components and will cover track maintenance, first

aid, chainsaw operations, reporting and monitoring of campsites, guesthouses and sites of military heritage.

The highest performing students from the basic training will be selected for a second year of advanced training which will include management and site interpretation skills, and advanced protection of military and environmental heritage. This will see advanced graduates awarded with an internationally recognised Certificate in Conservation and Ecosystems Management.

# Track radio upgrades to improve communication



TE PNG technician inspecting a track radio in Alola village, Northern end of Kokoda Track.

KTA Rangers, Kokoda Initiative officers and TE PNG technicians took to the southern end of the Kokoda Track in May to inspect community radios and the repeater station at Mt Fala.

In 2018, 24 VHF radios were installed at sites across the Track along with aerials, solar panels, batteries and USB charging stations.

The current plans include upgrading the KTA's existing radio network to maintain the critical means of communication for remote communities utilised by KTA rangers, school teachers, health workers and emergency contacts for trekking groups.

Enivilogo village chief Daniel Oribe said the radios help the community keep in touch with family members and other communities along the Track.

"Whenever the community needed to pass a message along to a relative in a neighbouring village what would have taken half a day's walk is now only a radio button push away."

Along with the inspections, the communities signed radio user agreements with KTA outlining expectations for community governance, access, use, care and maintenance of the radios.

A general maintenance on all track radios was carried out in August providing additional solar panels, batteries and USB charging ports to improve the service.



## Callan trains VHV's

**More than 20 village health volunteers (VHV's) took part in a program in March which trained them to provide screening, assessment and healthcare services to persons with disabilities.**

The training was facilitated by trainers from Callan Services for Persons with Disability National Unit in Sogeri, Central Province, and supported by the PNG–Australia Partnership through the Kokoda Initiative.

VHV's are now well equipped with the knowledge, skills and tools to identify disabilities and make referrals for further examination.

The training included detecting hearing and vision impairments and other physical disabilities using visual, audio and mobility assessments and questionnaires.

Callan's ear and eye trainer Br Desmond Taboeya said the VHV's will be the frontline volunteers working to assist people with disabilities in their communities.



VHV's doing hearing tests and ear checks in training

## NMAG catalogues Kokoda Collections



WWII artefacts including an Australian M3 Stuart light tank recovered from Buna on the Northern beachheads at the Northern end of the Kokoda Corridor

**The National Museum and Art Gallery (NMAG) is continuing to document and catalogue artefacts from the Kokoda Campaign.**

The NMAG holds a variety of World War II artefacts, including aircraft, a tank, cannons, mortars, machine guns and rifles, soldiers' personal effects and other small items recovered from Kokoda Track battlefields.

While large pieces currently reside near the NMAG entrance at Waigani, the bulk of the collection is in storage at Murray Barracks at Boroko awaiting a new home after the original Modern History Museum in Gordons was demolished to make way for a road in 2014.

While most recently recovered Kokoda Campaign artefacts remain on the Track in local museums or protective structures, some are held in storerooms inside the NMAG.

All World War II collections are being entered into the Vernon Database, a special digital system for museum collections used by the NMAG for its cultural and ethnographic objects.

While most of these collections have been listed, many await formal cataloguing.

NMAG officer Brenda Ilifanoa said it is a time-consuming process as each object is catalogued with as much detail as possible, which will take several years.

"It's worth the effort to safeguard these important pieces of our history," she said.



Small pieces of a Japanese field radio recovered from the Etoa Battlefield (upper Eora Creek) and housed at NMAG.

## Water security materials airlifted into Mt Koiari

**Eighteen communities in Central Province across the Kokoda Track region have each received two 9,000 litre water tanks to help provide easier access to clean water.**

More than 10,000 people across the Track region in Central and Northern provinces will have easy access to these water facilities after tanks and other facilities were airlifted to remote communities.

The water tanks are built and attached to a newly constructed meeting structure which will capture rainwater and improve sanitation and hygiene for local people.

The projects were a partnership between the Oro and Central provincial governments, Kokoda Track Authority and the Australian Government.

The complex operation involved the largest airlift conducted under the Kokoda Initiative – a partnership between PNG and Australia which for more than a decade has been improving livelihoods



Water tanks choppered into Mt Koiari

and health outcomes for people in the Kokoda Track region.

Over K3 million was injected into the local economy through the engagement of more than a dozen local companies to supply building materials, building contractors, transport and logistics services.

The project also employed over 400 local men and women to assist construction workers, providing much needed income at a time when the trekking industry has

been suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Glenda Denny from Daoi village was among more than 80 women employed as carriers and cooks. She carried timber from the drop off site to the project site.

"I am so happy because I worked to carry the timbers and I got paid," Ms Denny said.

Solance Stanley in Launumu village said the tanks have greatly helped her reduce her daily trips to and from the river.

"I can rest from walking down to the river every day and just fetch water from the tanks closer to the house" Ms Stanley said.

The major logistical exercise saw over 100 tonnes of building materials, water tanks and tools airlifted by helicopter and another 100 tonnes of cargo was delivered by road and sea.

The PNG Defence Force assisted with the use of Goldie Barracks rugby field to store materials to be airlifted into Mt Koiari.



# Kokoda Track Health workers ready for COVID vaccine rollout

Frontline health workers in the Kokoda Track region are ready to rollout COVID-19 vaccines after completing training with the National Department of Health in May.

The health workers from the Hiri and Central Province side of the Track completed a five-day training program in Sogeri which covered COVID-19 vaccine awareness and vaccine administration and cold chain management.

NDoH delivered the training with support from the PNG-Australia Partnership as part of preparations for the nationwide rollout of COVID-19 vaccines.

Immunisation is the most safe and effective way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and more than 1.3 billion doses have been administered worldwide.

Nursing Officer from the Sogeri health centre Cecilia Valamb said she feels ready to provide vaccines and immunisation information to remote communities which have limited access to health services.

“These COVID-19 vaccines can protect communities in the Kokoda Track region and across the country,” said Cecilia.



Nursing Officer and Sister in charge of Sogeri health centre Cecilia Valamb gets vaccinated before roll out.

“I feel confident we have the information and facts to share with them after this informative training.”

These health workers now understand how to manage the cold chain, how to administer the vaccine and how to advocate in the communities.

The COVID-19 training had also been delivered to frontline health workers in Northern Province, ensuring all Kokoda Track region communities can benefit from the vaccine rollout.

# KI members of Parliament discuss PNG-Aus partnership

The Kokoda Initiative Committee – a committee consisting of PNG Government members of Parliament, the Australian High Commission plus the KI agency leads for the Kokoda Track Authority, Conservation and Environment Protection Authority, Tourism Promotion Authority and the National Museum and Art Gallery met to discuss the on-going Kokoda Initiative Bi-lateral partnership.

The meeting was to discuss strategic developments under the Kokoda Initiative through the PNG-Australia Partnership including the draft legislation for the Kokoda Track Management Authority, considerations in relation to gazettal of the Kokoda Track Interim Protection Zone as a Protected Area and the Australian Department of Veterans Affairs Military Heritage Action Plan proposal.



Members of the Kokoda Initiative Committee

Minister for Environment Conservation and Climate Change, Hon Wera Mori MP, chaired the meeting. Minister Mori noted the importance of the Kokoda legacy in forging the bonds and friendship between PNG and Australia and welcomed Australia’s commitment to support the partnership of the Kokoda Initiative, with a focus on protecting the regions unique environmental, cultural and military heritage.

## FROM THE TRACK

Noelyn Wati  
Volunteer Teacher  
Bisiatabu Primary School



I am from Bisiatabu in Central Province. I’m a volunteer teacher at Bisiatabu Primary School and I teach elementary.

**How long have you been a (volunteer) teacher?**

I’ve been voluntarily teaching here for four years now. I took short courses under the administration of the Seventh Day Adventist community-based program and after completing these short courses I volunteered to teach elementary students.

**What inspires you to continue teaching?**

I like children and being around them and helping them to learn gives me the confidence to grow myself more especially in this profession.

Because of this, I am now taking FODE classes through the scholarship provided by Kokoda Initiative, doing year 12 at the FODE centre in Port Moresby.

On top of that, I get a fortnightly allowance by the school administration.

**What are your future plans?**

I am going to complete my year twelve this year and hopefully graduate next year with qualifications that will enable me to get into the National Education system and earn a place to teach lower primary.

