



# Kokoda Initiative



Australian Government

## Kokoda Nius - May 2018

### Update on the Kokoda Track Authority review



The review into the Kokoda Track Authority (KTA) commenced in May. An independent contractor was selected in April by a taskforce led by senior Papua New Guinea (PNG) government officials.

The contractor is a firm called TRC Tourism, which has extensive experience in developing and managing tourism industries in remote parts of Australia. Their preliminary report is expected to be submitted to the PNG Government in June.

TRC has experience assisting indigenous corporations in establishing sustainable

economic ventures on customary land in Australia. They are well-suited to working in PNG, because they understand customary land management issues.

TRC undertook community consultations in May on both the Oro and Central sides of the track. The consultations ensured that PNG perspectives were understood, respected and will be reflected in the final recommendations.

TRC also met with leaders, government officials, tour operators and other stakeholders to ensure they have the best possible understanding of the Kokoda

trekking industry and the needs of track communities.

The KTA review was announced last year by Prime Minister O'Neill and delegated to the Kokoda Initiative (KI) Secretariat in the Conservation and Environment Protection Authority to oversee. The Australian Government agreed to fund the independent review at PNG's request.

It is important that the review's independent findings be respected. A well-managed and transparent KTA is critical to ensure Kokoda Track communities can share the benefits of the trekking industry.

### Improving the radio network

With support from KI, a recent upgrade was completed on the track radio network repeater on Mt Fala to improve communications along the Kokoda Track.

The upgrade involved installation of new solar power systems and a secure cabinet for housing two VHF radio repeaters with solar regulators and power monitoring.

This upgrade is essential to the Kokoda Track radio network which is used by KTA rangers in the villages along the track

and by tour operators for the safety of trekkers.

In 2016, KI upgraded the VHF radio network at 24 sites.

The radio network is the only form of communication for many communities along the main track to Port Moresby and Kokoda.

The network is managed by KTA.



Upgrade of radios at Mt Fala

## TB training

A total of 56 Village Health Volunteers (VHVs) and 27 health workers took part in Tuberculosis (TB) refresher courses in March.

The courses were conducted in Kokoda and Sogeri catchments and focused on treatment support to patients, screening, testing and awareness.

The courses were delivered by the Oro and Central Provincial Disease Control Office with support from Kokoda Initiative.

A similar training program is scheduled to be held for health workers and VHVs in the Mt Koiari region in coming weeks.



*Health workers attend a training session at Kokoda Memorial Hospital, Oro Province*

## Drug supply



*Health worker, Agatha Francis, receives medicine supplies at Sogeri Health Centre*

Earlier this year, KI delivered essential medicine supplies to 12 health facilities along the Kokoda Track.

Facilities in Sogeri, Koiari and Kokoda now have stocks of the top 30 most commonly used medicines, including paracetamol and antibiotics. Antenatal and baby clinic books were also distributed.

This was the third resupply to track health facilities since July 2017. KI only supplies clinics on an as-needed basis. The National Government is responsible for drug supply.

## Health team completes immunisation patrol



*Patients waiting their turn to be seen at Madilogo village during the recent health patrol*

In March, three groups of health officials completed a two-week immunisation outreach patrol along the Kokoda Track.

The patrol teams covered 65 villages in three catchments – Sogeri, Mt Koiari and Kokoda.

Supported by the Kokoda Initiative, the patrols were conducted in partnership and led by the Oro and Central Health Administration, the Seventh Day Adventist Church and No Roads to Health.

Over 400 children under the age of five were immunised and outpatient services

were provided in each village, with a total of 1,437 patients seen and treated by health staff.

Antenatal clinics were also held, with 118 women receiving antenatal checks, safe motherhood awareness and family planning counselling.

The Kokoda Initiative has supported rural health patrols since 2009. As a result of ongoing patrols and well-trained health workers and VHVs, common diseases and infant morbidity has greatly reduced in the region.

## School buildings for Mt Koiari



*Manari Elementary School students and teachers in front of their new double classroom*

Elementary students in the Mt Koiari area of the Kokoda Track now have new classrooms with desks and chairs thanks to the support of KI.

Two new classrooms and a staff house have been built to provide around 100 elementary students in Manari and Boridi

with a better learning environment, and to attract and retain local teachers.

Two new staff houses were also built for Efogi and Kavovo Primary Schools, with maintenance work also carried out at Kagi Elementary School.

# Keeping the track safe



Community members from Manari village carry a log across Emuni creek to build a new bridge

In April, the KI facilitated construction of two log crossings along the Kokoda Track.

One crossing was constructed at Emuni Creek near Manari, and the other was at Eora Creek adjacent to the campsite.

The two projects are part of a larger regeneration and conservation program. Seven similar projects were funded under KI and constructed with local community support in March 2017.

Upgrade activities included log bridge

construction and maintenance, stone and rock step construction and the repair of post and rail safety fencing.

These activities directly inject funds into communities through paid employment.

The track is not only an important link between villages and the two major centres of Popondetta and Port Moresby, but is also the major source of income through the trekking industry.

# Supporting school inspections



Senior Standards Officer Mr Patrick Dimsock with staff at Vesulogo Elementary School during the school inspections

The KI has supported the inspection of 19 elementary and primary schools in the Sogeri area to assess performance and education standards.

The school inspections were carried out in early April by education officials from Central Province.

Each school was evaluated using the National Quality School Standards Assessments criteria set by the Department of Education.

Schools are assessed under four key criteria covering governance, environment, management and learning outcomes. Assessments include group discussions with head teachers, school board of management members and community leaders.

Like many schools in remote parts of Papua New Guinea, inspections are often a challenge due to limited resources and the inaccessibility of communities.

Based on an analysis of each school's results, KI will work in partnership with provincial administrations to provide targeted training and support.

A similar school inspection was carried out at 23 Kokoda catchment schools in December 2017, with Mt Koiari schools to be visited next month.

# Weather Station upgrade

The Kokoda Automatic Weather Observation Station (AWOS) was funded and installed by the Australian Government in 2012 to improve the safety of flights into and around Kokoda.

The system provides up-to-date weather information which is transferred via radio to pilots operating in the area. Weather information includes wind speed, temperature, visibility, atmospheric pressure and rainfall.

Unfortunately, the Kokoda AWOS has been vandalised on a number of occasions. Whenever this occurs, the AWOS system is unable to provide accurate weather information.

Vandalism therefore risks the safety of aircraft in the region and impacts community members and tourists.

In 2016, an AWOS was moved from Wewak to Goroka after repeated vandalism, leaving Wewak without vital aviation infrastructure and services.

If you see or hear of anyone damaging the AWOS, please tell the police immediately or report it to a local community leader.



Above: The AWOS team fixes the vandalised weather station in Kokoda earlier this year  
Below: Damaged parts of the antenna at Kokoda weather station



# NMAG moves forward with military heritage plan

The PNG National Museum and Art Gallery (NMAG) has a long-term Heritage Management Plan for the Kokoda Track and surrounding area.

A KI strategic partner, NMAG is the custodian of military heritage throughout PNG. Military heritage includes the surviving places, artefacts and stories left behind after World War II.

The Kokoda Track corridor has been chosen to pilot a military heritage management program that will eventually be expanded to other regions.

Military heritage items will be documented and preserved, and sites of interest will be developed to provide better access and information for residents and visitors.

Managing military heritage is important for Kokoda Track communities as they are able to learn about their area's history and pass on knowledge to future generations. It can also strengthen tourism in the

region by offering visitors opportunities to view important historical sites and artefacts, and learn about the war.

NMAG has assembled a Military Heritage Advisory Group to guide policy and implementation planning.

The advisory group is made up of PNG and international experts, including anthropologists, historians and museum professionals.

In October 2017, the advisory group came together for a workshop in Port Moresby to begin discussions on the various elements of the management plan.

Community consultations have also begun to seek the views of landowners, community leaders and other local voices on military heritage issues.

In November 2017, an initial consultation was carried out by NMAG staff at Kokoda Station, with other track villages to be visited throughout this year.



NMAG Publicity Officer, Emma Andy (right), consults with women leaders at Kokoda Station

## From porter to health worker



Vincent is now working as a community health worker at Efogi

Before becoming a health worker, Vincent Bogajiwai was a porter along the Kokoda Track.

After seven years carrying the backpacks of trekkers and seeing the need for health workers in communities, he decided to save his money and study nursing.

With support from KI and the Seventh Day Adventist Church, Vincent and his family were posted to Efogi Health Centre in the Mt Koiari area of Central Province earlier this year.

In total, KI supports 24 health workers and 12 health centres within the Kokoda Corridor. KI will increase the number of health patrols in coming months, with a focus on specific villages to support increasing childhood immunisation coverage.

## From the Track

### Bexie Dadi Village Health Volunteer



#### Where are you from and what do you do?

I am from Agutawa village in Kokoda. I am married with two children and am a subsistence farmer. I sometimes work as a porter to support my family and volunteer as a Village Health Volunteer.

#### How long have you been a VHV and what does it involve?

I have been working as a VHV since 2009. That was when KI recruited the first lot of volunteers to be trained.

I raise awareness on health issues in my community and take part in health patrols along the track. I was also previously the VHV coordinator for the Kokoda catchment in 2017.

#### What is your most memorable experience as a VHV?

In 2016, a pregnant woman in my village went into labour and I was the only one who could help her. My village is up in the mountains and the nearest health centre is about two hours' walk away. With my limited experience, I was able to help the mother deliver her baby. The mother and baby are both healthy, and the mother always thanks me when she sees me.

#### What are your plans for the future?

I will continue to work as a VHV and try to gain as much experience as I can. I hope to eventually apply to nursing college and train as a health worker, so one day I can come back and help my community.

#### Send your story ideas and photos to:

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