

MEDIA RELEASE



MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

The Hon Julie Bishop MP

The Hon Warren Entsch MP, Member for Leichhardt

5 September 2014

NEW PARTNERSHIP TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES IN PNG

The Australian Government will provide \$1.85 million to a two-year pilot program promoting economic and community development and disease prevention in Papua New Guinea's Western Province.

The program is the product of a new partnership between the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Cairns-based Reef and Rainforest Research Centre (RRRC).

Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop said the two year program would implement projects in the Central and Eastern Treaty Villages of PNG's Western Province, which shared a common maritime border with Australia and the Torres Strait.

"The program aims to increase the self-reliance of these communities by improving and sustaining their economic and social livelihoods, addressing disease prevention and promoting healthy behaviours," she said.

"This will include training and projects to improve food security, post-harvest fishery management, transport and communications, disaster risk reduction, water and sanitation, promotion of healthier lifestyles and disease prevention."

"This is a major step in the right direction," said Federal Member for Leichhardt Warren Entsch, whose electorate border comes within 4km of the PNG/Western Province coastline.

"The RRRC has established an outstanding relationship with the Treaty Village Association and has first-hand knowledge of the challenges of operating in the Western Province region.

"The first step in dealing with this crisis is having solid community engagement and a workable, practical plan - this is something that has been lacking in the past.

"I look forward to continuing to work closely with the RRRC, DFAT and my colleague Julie Bishop as we tackle this critical issue on our doorstep."

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