



Australian Government

# #PNGAusPartnership

## HIGHLANDS EARTHQUAKE FACT SHEET

AUSTRALIA IS SUPPORTING PAPUA NEW GUINEA IN ITS RESPONSE TO THE EARTHQUAKE IN HELA, SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS, WESTERN AND ENGA PROVINCES



The RAAF C-130J delivering supplies to the earthquake-affected Highlands

## HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

- The Australian Government has extended its sympathies to the people of Papua New Guinea, particularly in Hela, Southern Highlands, Western and Enga Provinces affected by the earthquake on Monday 26 February and ongoing aftershocks. The UN estimates that 270,000 people require humanitarian assistance.
- On 1 March, PNG Prime Minister O'Neill announced a State of Emergency in Hela, Southern Highlands, Western and Enga Provinces, and made available up to 450 million Kina (approximately AUD 180 million) for disaster relief, service restoration and the rebuilding of infrastructure.
- At the request of the Papua New Guinean Government, Australia has played a leading role in the international relief effort. The Australian High Commission is leading the coordination of Australia's response efforts.
- Australia's total humanitarian commitment to PNG's earthquake response is up to \$5 million.
- Australia will provide up to:
  - \$3 million to support the recovery effort, including livelihoods, shelter, water and sanitation through trusted NGO partners
    - Through a faith-based consortium, Caritas Australia are assisting 37,500 individuals with life-saving water, sanitation, hygiene and shelter solutions targeting those most vulnerable



- CARE Australia is supporting the immediate relief and early recovery needs of 33,311 individuals by providing water, sanitation, hygiene, livelihoods and gender/protection assistance.
  - A 15 person Australian Medical Assistance Team (AUSMAT) deployed between 26 March and April 9 to support Mendi hospital, and to support the provincial health department with emergency operations and planning
    - AUSMAT treated 1025 patients, including conducting 37 surgeries and assisting five births.
  - \$900,000 to support vulnerable women and children in the earthquake-affected areas, in partnership with UN Women, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and UNICEF
    - UNFPA distributed 1,200 dignity kits as well as clean birthing kits and reproductive health kits for the treatment of sexually-transmitted infections and the consequences of sexual violence.
    - SPRINT is supporting an estimated 13,230 individuals with sexual and reproductive health services and awareness activities.
    - UN Women are establishing local women and children’s learning and protection centres in 10 high need Local Level Government areas for nearly 70,000 women and girls (35,000 of reproductive age).
  - \$400,000-worth of electrical transformers to re-establish reliable power supplies in Hela and Southern Highlands Provinces
    - This will benefit businesses, health clinics, schools and family homes, and restore power to some 3500 PNG Power customers.
  - \$300,000-worth of humanitarian supplies, including tarpaulins, water containers, blankets, tents and bed mats.
- The Australian Defence Force launched *Operation PNG Assist 2018*, one of the largest humanitarian air operations in the ADF’s history
  - an Australian Defence Force C-130J made over 40 flights into affected areas, transporting much-needed supplies from the Governments of Australia and Papua New Guinea, a range of NGOs, UN agencies and private businesses
  - between 10-18 March, three Australian CH47F Chinook helicopters and additional ADF personnel completed over 55 flying hours, delivering supplies, including food, water and medical kits, to distribution points in the Southern Highlands Province (including Walagu, Mendi, Nipa, Kagua and Ialibu) and in the neighbouring Western Province (Dodomona).
  - Australian Defence Force members, as part of the Australia-Papua New Guinea Defence Cooperation Program, provided direct support to the Papua New Guinea Defence Force in its operations to distribute PNG Government medical supplies and equipment to hospitals and health facilities in the Hela and Southern Highlands provinces.
  - the Australian Defence Force conducted an early damage assessment of the Highlands Highway, which was passed to PNG authorities and is informing relief efforts, including immediate road clearing work.
- Australia has supported the Department of Works to assess damage to roads, including some initial assessments by a team of engineers along the Highlands Highway from Mt Hagen to Mendi. Reports from this assessment are feeding into broader efforts from the Department of Works to assess damage and repair requirements following the earthquake



- a number of major roads have now been cleared, which will help with further distribution of supplies, resumption of economic activities in affected communities, and will allow people to start returning home.
- Australia has also worked with the Department of Works to undertake an assessment of damage to key social infrastructure in the earthquake affected zone, including schools and medical facilities.
- Australia is working closely with the Government of PNG and other humanitarian partners to coordinate relief efforts
  - The ADF deployed 110 personnel, and provided support from three posted personnel in PNG
  - around 40 Australian High Commission staff supported relief efforts through coordination, logistics and distribution assistance
  - two Australian-funded logisticians were deployed to assist with the distribution of relief supplies
  - three Canberra surge staff were deployed to work with the Australian Defence Force, PNG Defence Force and other partners to ensure supplies reached vulnerable communities
  - four RedR humanitarian specialists have been deployed to work in key UN agencies to help manage and coordinate relief assistance, including WFP, UN Women, UNOCHA and IOM.
  - an Australian-funded UNDP coordinator working with the PNG National Disaster Centre and the UN Resident Representative's Office is assisting with information management
  - Geoscience Australia has provided advice on the scientific basis for the earthquake and seismic activity in the region.

