



# Kokoda Initiative



Australian Government



**THE KOKODA INITIATIVE IS A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENTS SINCE 2008**



**MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT**  
**HON JOHN PUNDARI MP**

Every year we commemorate ANZAC day and we are reminded of the stories of friendship, struggle, and the courage to overcome overwhelming odds to succeed.

The Kokoda Initiative program symbolises this friendship for development. We are proud to continue working in this unique region with our people, preserving the magnificent environment and maintaining our richly historic Kokoda Track.

As the lead PNG government agency for the Kokoda Initiative, we work closely with all sectors of government, communities, NGOs and the private sector. We have made tremendous progress in health and education, environment research, business and tourism. We are seeing changes in the lives of the communities that we work with.

ANZAC Day is not only about honouring our past; it is also about celebrating our hope for the future. It shows us how we can work together, suffer together and ultimately celebrate our achievements together.



**AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER**  
**HE MS DEBORAH STOKES**

The KI reflects the strong commitment of the Governments of PNG and Australia to improving the quality of life of communities along the track, to protecting the environment and cultural values, and to keeping the track safe and well-managed.

These communities sit on the doorstep of one of the most important regions in Papua New Guinea – the Owen Stanley Ranges - which is home to thousands of unique plants and animals. It is also home to the Brown River catchment, which is a potential source of clean water and energy for Port Moresby. And the Kokoda Track is where significant battles were fought by Australia and Papua New Guinea during World War II, to stop the Japanese from advancing to take Port Moresby. It is a place where a lasting bond of friendship between Australia and Papua New Guinea was formed.

The Australian Government is proud to have partnered with the PNG Government and communities. Together we have improved access to education, especially for girls, provided lifesaving medical treatment along the Track, and built clean and safe water and sanitation facilities in the region.

## OUR STORY OF THE WAR STORI BILONG MIPELA

*“The war on the track lasted for three years....when I was a young man at the age of 14... All these stories are not forgotten, they are all fresh in my mind.” Hawala Laula, Kagi village, Central Province.*

Story telling is a unique and important part of Papua New Guinea culture. Stories from World War II are still being shared through the generations and the information has been recorded in a remarkable project led by the PNG-Australian Government Kokoda Initiative.

In 2014, more than 70 Papua New Guineans were interviewed by historians, retelling their own experiences during the war or that of their ancestors. For the first time, the oral history project has helped to record these experiences and events.

The stories tell of the recruitment of local men and boys as carriers, soldiers and in other roles, and about the military campaign:

*“...on top of the Uberi mountain we carriers have built a tree house where we pulled a Bren gun up to the top of the tree... we set the Bren gun pointing towards the Japanese soldiers” (Claude Gegera Peututu, Deboin Village, Northern Province).*

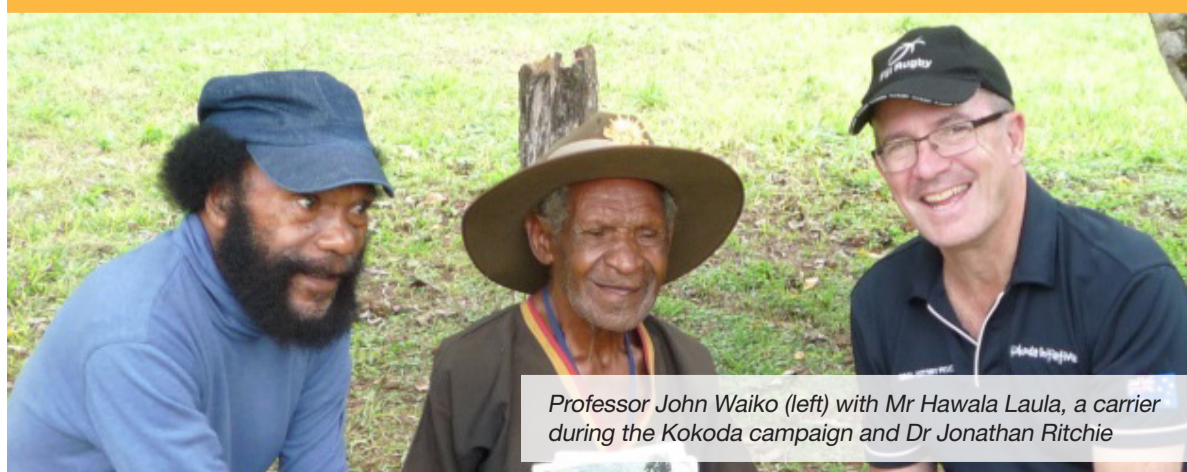
These stories recall life during the war and the impact of men and women’s lives that came from the Allied forces and their camps:

*“My mother... was recruited and taken to No. 3 camp where she did laundry with other girls.” Lomas Tonu Ani, Hanua village, Northern Province*

*“We were very frightened about where to go and hide. Our fathers started moving us to the caves and they started building shelters for us.” Vavaga Marina, Kagi village, Central Province*

The project was undertaken by historian Dr Jonathan Ritchie, Alfred Deakin Research Institute in Australia, working alongside Papua New Guinean historian, Professor John Waiko and a team of talented and enthusiastic Papua New Guineans.

The interviews will be used during an exhibition at the PNG National Museum and Art Gallery for the 75th anniversary of the outbreak of the war in the Pacific. The National Museum and Art gallery will be displaying a short film about the oral histories and taking the war stories back to the communities for display.



Professor John Waiko (left) with Mr Hawala Laula, a carrier during the Kokoda campaign and Dr Jonathan Ritchie





School teacher Warren Alfred cutting timber for the new classroom at Vesulogo

## BLACKBOARD TO BUILDER NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN SOGERI

Last year, school teacher Warren Alfred was busy building a classroom for his students – trading teaching for timber, as part of a Kokoda Initiative project funded by the Australian Government.

The completed elementary double classroom at Vesulogo in Sogeri includes water taps, water tanks and toilet facilities in a new and fresh school environment. The whole community supported the building of an elementary double classroom with the local women providing food and cleaning the site, and men mixing gravel to help the builders. Providing safe and clean toilets for girls has also been a priority as research suggests this contributes to increasing girls' attendance at school.

The partnerships across communities, local-level government and provinces were the key success of the project. The Koairi Local-Level Government provided a significant contribution towards the construction of the schools at Vesulogo and Depo, and fitting the classrooms with chairs and desks.

*Wok bung bilong komyuniti, LLG, provinsel gavman, gavman bilong Australia na PNG na Kokoda Initiative Projekt I wokim pinis tupela dabol klasrum bilong ol elementari sumatin long Vesulogo na Depo. Dispela ol klasrum ikam wantaim ol tenk bilong wara, ol tep, toilet na sia na desk bilong ol pikinini long usim. Wanpela bikpela tingting bilong Kokoda Initiative Projekt em bilong halivim na luksave long ol pikinini meri na putim mani long helt na edukasen weil ken halivim ol long bihain taim.*

## IMPROVING TREKKER ACCOMMODATION ON KOKODA TRACK



There are up to 5,000 trekkers from around the world who visit PNG to experience the beautiful yet rugged terrain of the Kokoda Track each year. Along the way, they sleep at haus wins (traditional thatched roof huts), grassy campsites and locally built guest houses. The standard of this accommodation will be improving as part of a new initiative by the PNG Tourism Promotion Authority supported by the Kokoda Initiative.

A new category – 'trekker accommodation' – will be piloted on the Kokoda Track which is planned in time for the start of the 2016 trekking season. The main requirements will include basic standards for accommodation, toilets, washing facilities and porters facilities, with recommendations based on the number of trekkers visiting each site.

The PNG Tourism Accommodation Accreditation Scheme for commercial accommodation was officially launched in 2013. The objectives of the scheme are to encourage and recognise higher standards of facilities and services within the hospitality industry through a process of accreditation. The Tourism Promotion Authority will work with communities to provide training for people to be involved in the scheme.

## KEY FACTS



More than **60** children at Vesulogo and **36** children at Depo will have better access to education as a result of new double elementary classrooms



Student to teacher **ratios** will improve at Kavovo and Efogi Primary schools following completion of staff houses in **April 2015**



Better quality literacy education for Central Province students following the training to enhance the skills of **77** teachers



# 'MAKING IT HAPPEN' THROUGH COMMUNITY MENTORS

Benson Gadova is a Community Based Mentor for his village in Kovel, just a couple of hours trek from the start of the Kokoda Track.

Last year Benson, along with 21 other motivated champions in the region were trained as mentors to support local community projects. The mentoring program is part of the Kokoda Initiative activities delivered by the Kokoda Track Authority and focuses on small business opportunities. Mentors help train local community members who then become small business leaders in their community. Mentors like Ben, provide much needed information on skills such as book keeping and income management.

Benson believes the knowledge and skills he has been sharing has sparked momentum for these small businesses to 'make it happen'. "The most important thing to me as a Community Based Mentor in my local village is seeing people improve their small businesses like trade stores and selling vegetables," he said.

Female mentors Lisa Vavave and Janet Elodo enjoy the direct engagement with communities to see real impacts. Lisa's vision for her community is for them to be involved in activities that have the potential to really improve their livelihoods. Janet described the importance of her role, "Being a community mentor gives me that special feeling of responsibility to my people. I feel my work is so important because I have joined efforts with the KTA," Janet said.

Local communities along the Kokoda Track can now look amongst their own people for inspiration, to start or improve projects, to 'make it happen'.

*21-pela man meri bilong Kokoda Rijen i kisim pinis wanpela treinin long kamap olsem ol tisa o ol man meri I go pas long givim skul na halivim igo long ol narapela pipol na tu sapatim ol koyuniti lo kammapim liklik ol bisnis projekt.*

*Dispela ol man meri halivim long treinin ol pipol long komuniti long kamap bisnis man meri na tu halivim ol long raitim bisnis plen bilong liklik treid stoa na ges haus.*

*Kokoda Track Authority ibin karim aut dispela treinin.*



Women from the Vesulogo community using the new water taps at the elementary school

## LIFE-SAVING TREATMENT ON KOKODA TRACK

Under the Kokoda Initiative, the Australian Government is funding a training program to support patients living with HIV in the Kokoda Track region.

For the first time, seven health workers from all catchments in the region have received this training in March 2015 and are now certified to prescribe Anti-Retroviral Tablet (ART) to treat HIV positive patients and support them with counselling. This means that these patients will no longer need to make the difficult and expensive journey to the Popondetta or Sogeri clinic to receive daily treatment.

Florence Tumber, the Health Officer at Kokoda Hospital said this training meant that, "most patients will have a chance to increase their life expectancy because we will be right there in their villages supporting them."

The Kokoda Initiative-funded health patrols are also increasing HIV/AIDS awareness and encouraging communities to receive HIV testing.

*Gavman bilong Australia na Papua Niugini i wok bung wantaim long fandim wanpela Anti-Retroviral Tablet (ART) treinin igo long 7-pela komuniti helt wokman/meri bilong Kokoda Rijen. Dispela treinin we Kokoda Initiative Projekt ikarim aut ilukim dispela 7-pela wokman/meri ikisim setifiket long testim ol man/meri long sik HIV, givim kaunselin na tritmen igo long ol.*



Florence Tumber is the Health Officer at Kokoda Hospital

## IN 2014 THE KOKODA INITIATIVE SUPPORTED MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH PATROLS IN KOKODA, SOGERI AND MT KOAIRI WHICH RESULTED IN:

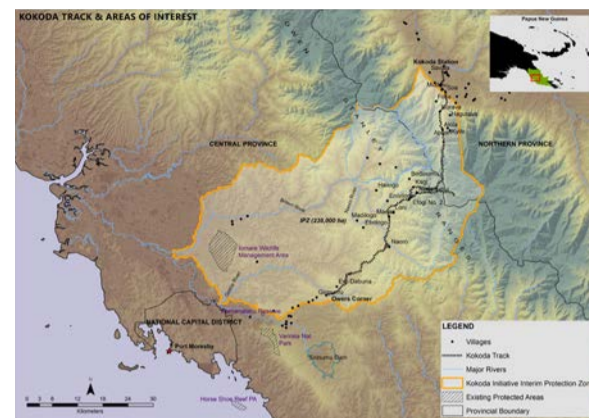
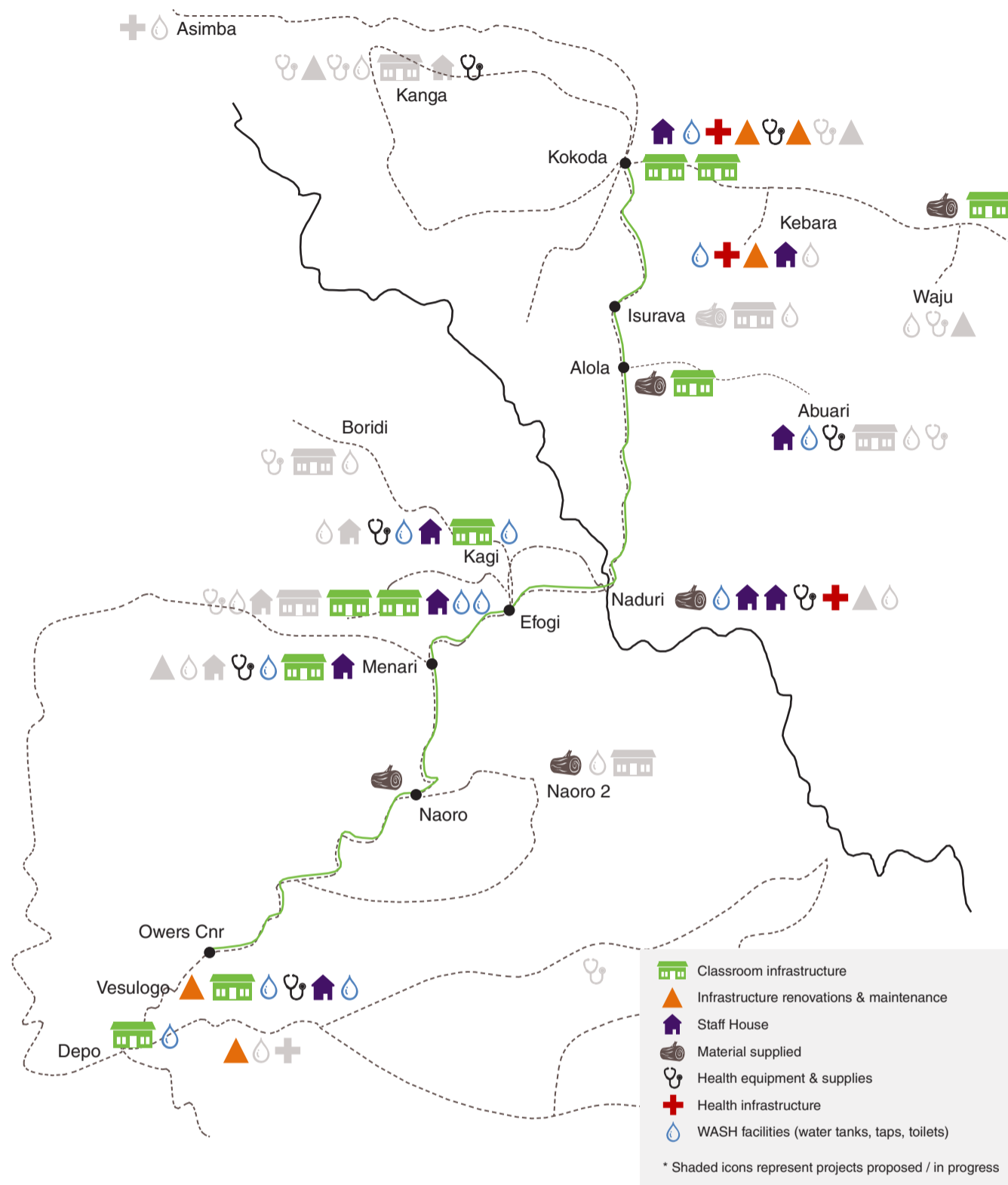
- > 710 children under the age of 5 years immunised
- > Tetanus immunisations for 40 pregnant and 139 child-bearing age women
- > Out patient services for 982 patients with various illnesses



# DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

This map represents the Kokoda Initiative's support to health, education and water sanitation projects in the region.

As at April 2015



## KEY FACTS



**63** Village Health Volunteers working in **91** villages in **3** catchments



**2** solar vaccine fridges at Naduri and Kebara



**22** water tanks installed



## WHAT WE SEEK TO ACHIEVE

The Kokoda Initiative is a partnership between Australia and Papua New Guinea to protect the Kokoda Track, Brown River Catchment and Owen Stanley Ranges while improving the lives of the people living along the Track. It represents the shared vision of both countries to promote the economic and social development of Kokoda communities while also protecting the important heritage values and history of the Track and its surrounding region.

The Initiative supports activities that deliver basic services to the Track communities and enhances community development and livelihoods. It also seeks to maintain and improve the Kokoda Track, honour its wartime significance, and regulate the trekking industry, promote tourism, and protect the natural and cultural resources and heritage values of the area. Cooperation and partnerships are important to the success of the Initiative. The Kokoda Initiative includes various people working together with the key partners, including;

- Conservation and Environment Protection Authority
- Kokoda Track Authority
- Tourism Promotion Authority
- National Museum and Art Gallery
- Oro and Central Provincial Governments
- Local Level Governments
- Australian High Commission
- Australian Department of the Environment
- Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Kokoda Initiative Development Program (managed by Coffey)

**For further information contact:**  
[kokodainitiative@dec.gov.pg](mailto:kokodainitiative@dec.gov.pg) or  
[kokodainitiative@environment.gov.au](mailto:kokodainitiative@environment.gov.au)