



Australian Government



Kokoda

The Kokoda Initiative

Caring for Kokoda – protecting the Track and improving the livelihoods of local communities

Recognising an important place

The Kokoda Track has historical significance for the people of Papua New Guinea and Australia. It is a powerful symbol of the goodwill and enduring relationship between the two countries. Thousands of trekkers experience the physically challenging 96-kilometre walk every year, making the iconic Kokoda Track PNG's most popular land-based tourism attraction and an important source of national and local income.

The Owen Stanley Ranges, through which the Kokoda Track passes, is rich in natural resources. It is also home to thousands of unique plants and animals, making this historic place one of the most biologically diverse and important areas in the Asia Pacific.

A complex challenge

As usage of the Track increases and environmental and development issues combine, the protection and management of the area presents a complex challenge, requiring careful management and cooperation at both the government and community level.

Working together for a better future

The Australian and PNG governments have signed a Joint Understanding to work together to protect the Kokoda Track and Owen Stanley Ranges and improve the lives of communities living along the Track corridor.

This work is delivered through the *Kokoda Initiative*.

Delivering the Kokoda Development Program

Part of the *Kokoda Initiative* includes the Kokoda Development Program (KDP), delivered by AusAID in consultation with the Government of PNG and local communities. The aim of the KDP is to improve the lives of the people living along the Track corridor through assisting with access to basic services such as water, sanitation, health, education and transport.

KDP achievements

The KDP has already refurbished the Efogi health centre; upgraded the health radio network; provided new curriculum materials in 22 schools; and flown teachers to remote villages for the new school year.

Over the next two years, the KDP will:

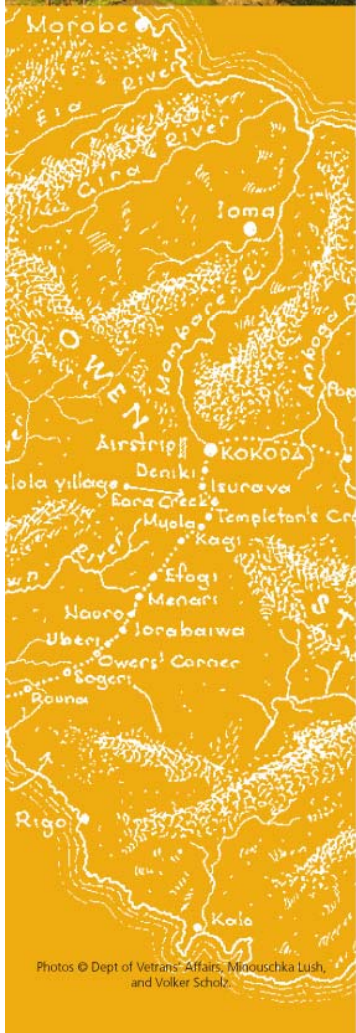
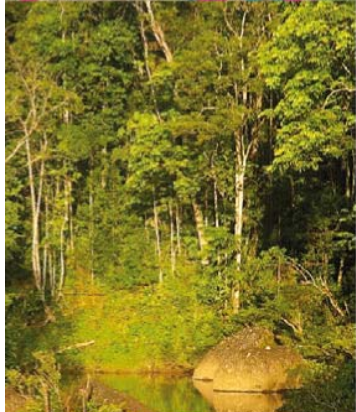
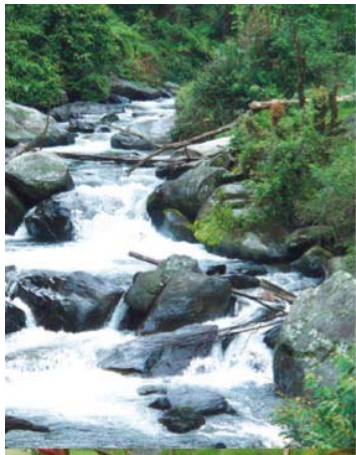
- Improve the water supply and toilets in health and education facilities along the Track, including training local people to install and maintain new toilets;
- Refurbish five village health posts and adequately stock health facilities;
- Train over 50 new Village Health Volunteers and upgrade all existing health workers' skills;
- Refurbish school buildings and provide additional staff housing; and
- Train additional teachers.

Caring for the Kokoda Track

Another element of the *Kokoda Initiative* is to assist with Track protection and management. The Kokoda Track Authority (KTA), reformed in 2008, has responsibility for management of the Track including administering trekking permits, coordinating activities on the Track, and distributing funds to communities. The aim of the Authority is to provide a sustainable future



Kokoda



for the Track, the trekking industry and local communities by preserving the Track's historic values, its natural environment and maintaining and improving its special qualities for trekkers.

The Authority is working with stakeholders to build Kokoda Track tourism into a world-class trekking experience and to ensure that community development and trekking industry-related activities are well coordinated.

KTA achievements and plans

Code of Conduct – the KTA Management Committee recently endorsed a Kokoda trekking industry Code of Conduct, to minimise adverse impacts and maximise benefits for local people. Plans are underway to address urgent infrastructure needs such as installing toilets and building emergency river crossings and to implement a five-year Track development and management plan.

Payments to communities – in mid 2009 the KTA, for the first time in the history of the Authority, distributed funding from trekking fees to Track communities. Communities will continue to receive funding every quarter through the Ward Development Committees established along the Kokoda Track.

Improving safety on the Track

The Australian and PNG governments have announced work to fast-track a range of safety projects along the Track. This includes funding for safety enhancements at airstrips, improvements to Track communications, repairs to bridges and maintenance work on the Owers Corner Road. The Australian and PNG governments have committed to work together to deliver further safety-related infrastructure in the future, which will benefit local communities and visitors.

Looking after water catchments

Rainfall on the Owen Stanley Ranges feeds into the Brown River, one of the main future water supply sources for Port Moresby's 255,000 residents. Improving sanitation along the Track and strengthening environmental control of the catchments will ensure this important water supply remains available into the future.

Maximising potential forest carbon benefits

The Owen Stanley Ranges and surrounding areas could possibly provide significant income for PNG with the introduction of a carbon trading system, under which the preservation of forests will earn carbon credits. Ensuring effective protection measures are in place to manage these forests is the first step towards unlocking new income opportunities.

Building international recognition for the Owen Stanley Ranges

The Owen Stanley Ranges and Kokoda Track is one of seven areas submitted by the Government of PNG for tentative World Heritage listing in 2006. This tentative listing is based on the outstanding biodiversity and cultural values of the area.

The Australian Government has been invited by the Government of PNG to provide technical assistance to support a feasibility study for a possible future World Heritage nomination of the Owen Stanley Ranges area.

Sharing knowledge and resources

The *Kokoda Initiative* partnership is ensuring the transfer of knowledge between PNG and Australian government agencies. Staff exchanges are currently underway in strategic management and capacity building in a range of areas such as Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping, catchment and protected area management and land use planning.

For more information

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