



## JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

**The Hon Peter Garrett MP**  
Minister for the Environment, Heritage  
& the Arts

**The Hon Bob McMullan MP**  
Parliamentary Secretary for  
International Development Assistance

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19 November 2008

### **KOKODA BENEFITS START TO FLOW**

The Australian Minister for Environment, Heritage and the Arts, Peter Garrett, and Parliamentary Secretary for International Development Assistance, Bob McMullan, said today that the opening of a refurbished health facility on the Kokoda Track was an exciting step in the Kokoda Development Program's efforts to improve the livelihoods of communities living along the Track.

The health centre at Efogi – about halfway along the track – was today jointly opened by the Prime Minister's Special Envoy, Sandy Hollway, and Papua New Guinea Deputy Secretary, Policy from Department of Environment and Conservation, Gunther Joku.

Minister Garrett said that despite being at an early stage, the Kokoda Development Program is a key element of the historic Joint Understanding between Australia and the Government of PNG.

The AusAID-administered program aims to significantly improve basic services for communities living along the Kokoda Track corridor.

"Through this special partnership between our two countries we are working together to both protect a place of special significance to Australia and to improve the lives of local people who live along the Kokoda Track corridor," Mr Garrett said.

"The Joint Understanding and its activities are focused on the fundamentals: investing in people, in their health and education and ensuring that the Kokoda Track and its globally significant values are sustainably managed."

Mr McMullan said that in addition to refurbishing the health centre, another vital element was providing health training for all communities along the track.

"Not only is Efogi better resourced from a health perspective but they have effectively become a training hub for health workers up and down the Track," Mr McMullan said.

"The Kokoda Development Program takes a holistic view of community needs bringing health, education, water and sanitation, and transport together and also engages people within local villages to play a key role in the decision making and delivery of each element."

The program follows a comprehensive needs analysis undertaken collaboratively by AusAID and the Government of PNG.

"As with other aspects of Australia's development program in PNG, we will continue to work in close partnership with the Government of PNG to engage with local people to ensure we understand what works best and how it should be implemented," Mr McMullan said.

Efogi is about half way along the Track and has an operating air strip, and will therefore play a major role in the roll-out of the program to other villages throughout 2009.

“As the Kokoda Development Program matures, more villages will benefit not only from facilities and equipment but from training opportunities for volunteer health workers and to improve the skills of school teachers in the Track communities,” Mr McMullan said.

The Kokoda Development Program will improve access to basic services for people living along the Kokoda Track corridor, including through;

### **Water & Sanitation**

- Water tanks and toilets will be in place in villages along the Track
- Kokoda Vocational School staff and AusAID community development workers will undertake toilet installation training so that local people have the skills to make their own toilets

### **Health**

- Infrastructure improvements to one Health Care centre and five village health posts
- Procurement of drugs and basic clinical equipment
- Training for more than 50 Village Health Volunteers

### **Education**

- Rehabilitation of school buildings and provision of additional staff housing
- Training for Teachers
- Provision of curriculum materials

### **Communications**

- Procurement and installation of new high frequency radios for needy villages
- Maintenance of existing HF radios will take place when new HF radios are installed

### **Transport**

- Support for restoration of regular air transport services

*Australia has committed \$14.9 million (managed by Department Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts) to assist the PNG Government in its efforts to improve the livelihoods of local communities along the Track and to establish effective management arrangements so that the Track is protected and delivers increasing benefits to local people. Those funds will also be used to assist the PNG Government to conduct a feasibility study into a possible World Heritage nomination.*

*AusAID is administering \$1.67 million of the above funding through the Kokoda Development Program. The PNG Government has also recommended that \$35 million from an AusAID performance grant be used to rebuild bridges along the road from Kokoda to Oro Bay destroyed in last year's floods.*

*Additionally, the Department of Veterans' Affairs will administer \$1 million of funding to develop educational materials to increase awareness of the special importance of the Track.*