



KOKODA TRACK AUTHORITY

A Special Purposes Authority of the Kokoda and Koiari Local - level Governments

Newsletter Issue: No. 3 - July 2009

Numbers on the Track

June trekker numbers are well down on previous years and are continuing the trend for reduced numbers on the Track. Year to date is 22% down on last year and 12% down on 2007. July forward bookings are positive with 664 permits already sold as of 1st July.

Kokoda Track Permit Holder Monthly Trekking Statistics Since 2001

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	% change
January	0	0	4	7	6	2	4	11	0	
February	0	0	0	0	2	5	10	13	0	
March	0	0	11	13	33	56	57	123	122	-1%
April	0	0	152	79	286	723	909	1030	768	-34%
May	0	0	8	53	239	180	254	438	389	-13%
June	5	12	273	293	336	486	659	540	392	-27%
July	50	132	173	266	506	647	961	1368		
August	21	128	191	346	469	697	939	802		
September	0	16	127	273	353	629	734	765		
October	0	29	62	101	90	286	490	412		
November	0	22	73	95	53	28	79	83		
December	0	26	0	58	1	8	50	36		
Total Permits:	76	365	1,074	1,584	2,374	3,747	5,146	5,621	1,671	-22%

Permitted trekkers departing p/month.

Second Payment to Ward Development Committees (Tourism Services Funding)

The second round of K5,000 payments to Ward Development Committees (Tourism Services Payments) were distributed on the 1st July. This is the second of three payments scheduled to be made this calendar year.

At this stage there are six (6) of the fourteen (14) Ward Development Committees (WDC) functioning with bank accounts. It is expected that the other WDC will be operational by the end of July.

There is a very positive reaction when speaking with the communities in the Villages about these payments. The people have expressed real joy that money is reaching the village.

Radio Network

There has been an ongoing problem with the radio network along the Kokoda Track. It appears to be a combination of aging equipment, overuse of the repeater network and poor weather. The system relies on a single repeater that is recharged by a solar unit on the Mt. Fala tower. The increase in the number of radios and the associated increase in radio use are draining the batteries and only on days when sunlight reaches the summit of Mt Fala will the system function.

Steve Groves has provided invaluable assistance in providing advice and support to fix the problem. My thanks to Steve.

PO Box 545
Boroko NCD 1 11
Papua New Guinea
P: (+675) 323 6165
F: (+675) 323 6020
E: kokodatrackauthority@global.net.pg



The plan is for Steve to fly by helicopter to the summit of Mt. Fala and;

1. Fit a second repeater providing an “operational channel” for Tour Operator and KTA use
2. Fit two new solar panels and batteries for the new repeater
3. Fit new batteries and solar panels to increase existing repeater life.
4. Provide a general service to existing equipment

I will advise when the new “Operational Channel” is functioning. To access the new channel you will need to take your handheld to TEPNG at Cameron Rd. Waigani who will reprogram your radio to the new channel. I will negotiate a price for this.

The Operational Channel will be for the use of Tour Operators and the KTA only, leaving the current channel for village communication.

Track Analysis

The Track Analysis has begun with KTA delivering the project with assistance from Soc Kienzle. Requests for quotation were circulated to a range of suitable consultancies and none of the responses were considered suitable. KTA’s new Operations Manager, Volker Scholz, has undertaken similar exercises in Australia and has been nominated to undertake the task. Soc Kienzle has been engaged to lead the trek, provide on ground advice, provide historical and local knowledge, logistic and planning support, provide a tour operator’s perspective and provide translation services.

The on ground inspection was carried out from the 25th June – 5th July. The next stage is consultation with tour operators and relevant PNG Government Departments. The Track Analysis will be the guide to develop a five year works program for the Track.

Tour Operator Forums - (PNG Forum 20th July - Gateway Hotel)

A Tour Operator Forum was held in Brisbane in on the 12th June. This forum will be repeated in Port Moresby on Monday 20th July at the Gateway Hotel. RSVP to 3236165

The Brisbane forum was well attended with over twenty representatives from Tour Operators discussing a range of issues and seeking common views on the future. These views will be further discussed at the Port Moresby forum.

My thanks to Peter Vincent and the TPA for their generous support for the Forum.

Ministers Kokoda Walk

The PNG Minister for Tourism and Culture, Charles Abel, will lead a walk across the Kokoda Track 20th – 29th August with an invited group of other Ministers, MPs and Government officials to provide first hand experience to the key decision makers and to hear concerns from the local communities.

There is a sponsorship dinner to support the Minister’s Walk at the Crowne Plaza on the 23rd July, K5,000 p/table of ten. Any operator seeking tickets please contact the KTA office for further information.

Ausaid Subsidized Flights

Ausaid has announced the introduction of scheduled flights by Airlines PNG to Villages along the Track. Two flights will travel every Friday (19 seats) at the cost of K130 one way and can carry freight.

Schedule will be

08:00 Port Moresby - Manari – Efogi – Port Moresby

09:30 Port Moresby - Kagi – Milei – Port Moresby

Owers Corner Road.

The contractor has begun work on the repairs to the Owers Corner Rd and should be completed by mid July. The delay has been caused by the ongoing wet weather and initial reports are very positive about the improvement.

Yours.

Rod Hillman
Chief Executive

Email: rhillman@online.net.pg



Staff at KTA

New KTA Ranger Staff

KTA has engaged two new Rangers (Nuxie Mamo & Clement Simon) who will be based on the Track (one from Owers Corner and another at Efogi). These Rangers will be supported by the two Permit Checkers (Kaine and Landy) based, also, at Owers Corner and Efogi. There is still a vacant Senior Ranger position based at Kokoda.

These Rangers will patrol the Track and work with Tour Operators, Trekkers and Local Communities to provide support, communication and assistance. These Rangers will be clearly identifiable by wearing KTA uniforms and based from KTA Ranger Stations.

Wartime Track Condition Report

A contract has been let to Brad Manera to produce a “Wartime Condition Report” collating records, plans, photos and drawings of the condition of the Track in 1942. The report will be peer reviewed by the Australian War Memorial and will be used by the KTA to inform the Track Analysis and, subject to copyright issues with photos and other documents, the report will be available to tour operators and other stakeholders.