



Kokoda Track Authority

A Special Purpose Authority of the Kokoda and Koiari Local Level Governments

KTA Quarterly Newsletter Jan-Feb-Mar 2014 Issue 1

Numbers on the Track for 2014

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Change
JAN	15	4	10	0	11	11
FEB	4	4	10	6	1	-5
MAR	40	16	22	9	30	21
APR	350	608	576	523	433	-90
MAY	204	196	168	218		
JUN	215	221	217	324		
JUL	662	671	770	819		
AUG	450	356	532	329		
SEP	509	354	631	413		
OCT	310	339	480	451		
NOV	103	128	176	123		
DEC	9	17	5	31		
Total	2,871	2,914	3,597	3,246	475	

Welcome all to the 2014 Trekking Season

Greetings Tour Operators, stakeholders and friends.

Welcome to the first KTA's quarterly newsletter for 2014.

On behalf of the KTA staff, I thank you for joining us once again on the Kokoda Track.

We hope to maintain our relationship and communicate better with you and the local communities along the track as we all share the same views and value towards the Kokoda Track. Let us continue to cooperate and manage the track with Trust, Respect and Pride.



We wish you all a successful year.

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CEO



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So whats new here at KTA?

Communications:

The KTA newsletter will now be produced quarterly and all Tour Operators and stakeholders are welcome to share your stories and news. Tour operators and trekkers are encourage to provide us with feedbacks of their experience on the Track. Do take time out to visit KTAs website and check if all your contact details are correct or if there is need for change. Do not hesitate to contact the KTA Communications Officer.

Operations & Safety:

KTA has undertaken an internal organisational restructure where there are two operations and safety managers. Michael O’Kave is the Operations and Safety Manager for the Southern side, starting from Owers Cnr to Mt Bellamy. Rapsey Vagi is the Operations and Safety

Manager for the Northern side, starting from Kokoda to Templeton 1.

Livelihood:

There has been a lot of improvement in the livelihood section. Read more about his activities in the Project Update section of this newsletter.

Permits & Licensing:

It is important that all Tour Operators need to pay trek permit before trekking. The original permit needs to be presented at the commencement of the track. Rangers will check permits at the various locations. KTA discourages photocopied or scanned trek permits. We encourage all operators to comply with compliance procedures.

Tour Operator Corner: Kokoda Ultimate Tours



The group arrives at arch way at Kokoda Station.



TWO BROTHERS, A SON AND A NEPHEW have just successfully completed crossing the Kokoda Trail from Kokoda to Ower’s Corner. The youngest in the group was 11 years old. At the end of each day along the village, he still had the energy to play with the children.



Happy 12th birthday to Isaac, who blitzed the Kokoda Trail as an 11 year old. He is seen here checking out one of the Japanese foxholes near loribaiwa Ridge



Kokoda Ultimate Tour guide with the Australian trekker Tim Bryson taking a break after a hard and long day walk from Alola village to Templeton’s crossing campsite.



All tour operators are welcome to submit your stories, pictures, profile or have your say here.

Knowing Your Rangers

KTA Rangers operate 96km distance across the Kokoda Track on the Owen Stanley Range.

There are six Rangers patrolling across the massive rigorous mountain terrains. This requires physical and mental strength to be able to encounter tasks each day.

The Rangers are local men from the communities and this gives Kokoda Track Authority much needed support to be able to perform their task within the local communities.

1. **Ryan Aaron** – Owers Corner
2. **Elizah Peter** – Manari
3. **Landy Noel** – Efogi
4. **Donald Siga** – Naduri
5. **Ivan Nitua** – Isurava
6. **Scott Gadova** – Kokoda Station

From Owers Corner to Naduri, the Rangers are stationed at the southern end of the track whilst from Isurava to Kokoda Station the Rangers are stationed at the northern end of the track.

The Rangers facilitate important link between the Authority and its stakeholders on the ground level implementing compliance procedures and meeting the obligations of the Authority.

Ranger Training

Six Rangers have undergone one week intensive training program in February and are now back on track. The new skills acquired from the training will enhance the performance of the Rangers to be competitive in their work and to support their activities along the track. Program planning was the highlight of the training emphasized on employers on strategic partners to achieve KTA vision.

Introducing the face of Kokoda Track Authority on the Track



From Left: Chris Halstead(Contractor), Ranger Landy Noel, Ranger Elijah Peter, Ranger Ivan Nitua, Ranger Donald Siga & Ranger Scotty Gadova.

The Bridge- Indigenous Engineering

Fourteen local skilled laborers have been engaged to construct Iora Bridge. The construction of the bridge requires immense time and support and has been completed as per schedule. The skills acquired by Alola and Isurava were from Papuan Waria of Morobe province. KTA would like to replicate the cane bridge building skills along the track in future.

The Tracks Upgrade

The major works on track conservation program have been completed. The track conservation works from Mt. Bellamy to Owers

Corner covered 60% of the work which involve log removal, benching, drainage and bridge construction. The 40% of the work commenced from Templeton Crossing to Kokoda Station.

Track Compliance & Safety

The both ends of the Kokoda Station and Owers Corner are significant entry and exit point.

The Rangers are now implementing compliance system on all tour operators which is an important aspect of regulating the industry. The emphasizes on track permits, registered tour operators, pack weights and appropriate safety communication tools are some of the key areas Rangers will be checking against.

The Tour Operators that constantly fail to comply will have their license terminated.

Trekking Season 2014 has begun

Kokoda Track Authority officially opened the 2014 trekking season by hosting the two start of trekking season tour operators' forum in Port Moresby and Brisbane earlier this year.

The Port Moresby tour operator's forum went well with a turn up of fifty (50) plus participants.

They spoke vocally on issues affecting their operations and raised important questions about capacity building and ways to improve their skills and knowledge to run businesses. The forum paved way for tour operators to exchange views and ideas to improve their business.

The Brisbane tour operator's forum was a successful two day event. The first day of the forum addressed specific needs of the tour operators.

The agenda discussed basically surrounds the way forward to improve and regulate trekking industry.

The second day was the actual forum, the discussions were on how to conserve the military heritage

and track experience; however, during both forums more emphasis was given on the upcoming Kokoda ANZAC Period 2015 Centenary of ANZAC.

A concerned tour operator raised the issue of overcrowding at some locations on ANZAC day and that KTA needs to assist in some way to ensure that overcrowding is avoided or controlled so everyone is satisfied and happy.



From left is the KTAs Operations Manager South Side Rapsey Vagi, from centre is KI Senior Advisor Bill Farmer & on the right is Jim Drapes from Back Track Adventure.

A SONS TRIBUTE TO HIS HEROIC FATHER ON ANZAC DAY

It is not every day you get to meet someone who is part of a very important global historical event such as the World War 2. I have had the privilege to meet this soft spoken and lovely old man.

His name is Aoba Batia, the last surviving son of Late Batia Lega Oagi. His late father was a carrier for the allied forces during

WWII. He was just a little boy then when he witnessed the war, he recalled his mother taking him and his other siblings and went into hiding while his father and other man stayed back. He is now 70 years old and always pay his respect to his father for his bravery and that of all the other soldiers who fought during the war.



PROJECT UPDATES- Livelihoods

Pilot Drying Room Project

Drying Room pilot project is now been completed, with the drier being installed and ready for testing.

It was constructed by a local carpenter with three other local men from Efogi village.

Drier is identified as a need, as a lot of trekkers have difficulty drying wet clothes and items over smoky fire. It becomes an extra load to porters and even trekkers themselves when carrying wet items with them along the track. The project is hoped to be successful to improve trekking experience.

If the Drier project is successful then we all have one less problem to worry about.

It has been decided by KTA that if the pilot project turns out successful then the drying room will be operated by the Efogi Primary school.

Funds generated from the project will help the school to acquire basic necessities for students.

The students will be engaged in operating the Drier and may become part of their regular work schedule.

Testing of the drier will be done by the Livelihoods officer upon his next visit to Efogi.

It will be exciting to know the outcome.



KTA chairman Mr Ruben Maleva (centre rear), Deputy Chairman and landowner rep Mr Robert Batia (second from left) inspecting the construction during their 2013 KTA Management Trek.



Men at work



Construction supervisor Barnabas Omi (second from left), with three other local men who put together the construction works and installation of the drier (in the background).



Installed heater ready for testing. Top ceiling to be covered.

Toilet Upgrades For Kokoda Track Guesthouses

The Kokoda Track Authority's Guesthouse Certification Program has made improvement on conditions of most guesthouse toilets along the Track. The Program is designed to improve guesthouse facilities of which the Toilet Upgrades project is part of.

Forty-seven (47%) guesthouses have received toilet seats with bases based on recommendations from two guesthouse audits so far.

Most guesthouse toilets on the track do not have proper toilet facilities. Materials used for toilets are from local wood and bamboo which often are in need of constant repair. Toilet seats and bases from local wood do not often provide a good platform for trekker toilets. Therefore is the need for properly manufactured toilet seats and bases, thus the need for the Guesthouse Certification Program.

Twenty-five (25) toilet seats and bases have been delivered to the northern end of the track in 2013, and the other twenty-two (22) to the southern end of the track in March 2014.

Guesthouses who have received toilet seats and bases have installed them ready for use in this trekking season. Guesthouses who have the KTA supplied toilets seats and bases now have proper and more comfortable toilet platforms for the trekkers.

About half of the guesthouses along the Kokoda Track have received toilet seats and bases from the Toilet Upgrades Program under the Kokoda Track Authority's Guesthouse Certification Program.

The toilets will be installed by local guesthouse operators for trekkers.

Other guesthouses who have not received toilets will be issued toilet seats and bases once they have met most or all certification requirements.

Trekkers will now be having proper toilets to use on the Kokoda Track.



Delivery of toilet seats and bases plus fittings at Efogi village

Awareness On Guesthouse Accreditation Scheme

The Papua New Guinea Tourism Promotion Authority (TPA) and the Kokoda Track Authority have completed an awareness on the Accommodation Accreditation Scheme to fourteen (14) Kokoda Track Guesthouse Operators at Efogi recently.

The awareness was facilitated by Heni John who is the Product Development officer for PNGTPA.

KTA livelihoods officer Hollen Mado assisted by elaborating on presentation and facilitated participant's feedback session.

The purpose of the awareness was to inform all Track Guesthouse Operators of the TPA's Accommodation Accreditation program in the country and how it can improve their businesses.

TPA is working on a possible separate category for the Kokoda Track accommodation accreditation plan for accommodations from their five different accommodation categories. KTA will be working closely with them to develop this categories in their program.

A good number of track accommodation operators who attended the awareness were from:

- *Manari*
- *Efogi*
- *Launumu*
- *Kagi*
- *Naduri*

Collective feedback from guesthouse operators was impressive as most understood the concept and accepted the plan to operate under the TPA-KTA Accommodation Program.

The following points were highlighted and discussed.

Accommodation Accreditation Scheme

- What it is?
- Why it is important?
- How can it improve our business?
- Issue of pamphlets on Accommodation Accreditation Scheme

Some important comments made by the guesthouse operators were:

- The challenge to maintain traditional guesthouse outlook while maintaining a semi-permanent structure
- Frequent repair of buildings against ever declining supply of natural building materials
- Interpreter to escort European auditor because most people did not understand comments made by the former auditor

- They need sustainable timber milling activity to acquire good timber for guesthouses and building infrastructure in the long run .

Constant repair becomes a problem as natural resources become scarce. A concern raised in the recent meeting with the guesthouse operators

The TPA Accommodation Accreditation Scheme generally was accepted by the Kokoda Track guesthouse operators as a good support program for them apart from KTA's Guesthouse Certification program. The TPA will develop a separate accommodation category for the Kokoda Track trekker accommodation facilities as part of their existing program.

The KTA Guesthouse Certification Program will hopefully see a good number of the trekker accommodation facilities along the track be certified after a follow-up walk in April 2014.



Product Development officer for PNGTPA-Heni John talking to the Kokoda Track Guesthouse Operators at Efogi about the TPA's Accommodation Accreditation program in the country and how they will benefit from it.



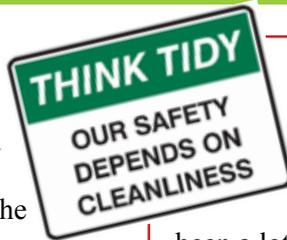
The picture of this house shows traditional building materials decaying

NOTICE BOARD

MEDIVAC POINTS

All Tour Operators are informed of the approved locations for Medevac on the track and should make an attempt to familiarise themselves with the locations.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Kokoda Airstrip | 15. Efogi Airstrip |
| 2. Kovelov Village | 16. Brigade Hill Ridge |
| 3. Deniki Lookout | 17. Envilogo Village |
| 4. Isurava Battlefield | 18. Manari Airstrip |
| 5. Alola Community Helipad | 19. Agulogo Campsite |
| 6. Eora Creek Campsite
_ War Grave | 20. Naoro 1 Ridge |
| 7. Abuari Elementary School Ground | 21. Ofi Creek Camp Site |
| 8. Templeton's Crossing 1 Campsite | 22. Ioribaiwa Ridge |
| 9. 1900 Campsite | 23. Ioribaiwa Village |
| 10. Myola Grassland Campsite | 24. Ua Ule Creek Camp Site |
| 11. Naduri Airstrip A | 25. Goodwater Camp Site |
| 12. Kavovo Primary School | 26. Goldie River Camp Site |
| 13. Kagi Airstrip | 27. Owers' Corner Ranger Station W |
| 14. Launumu Village | |



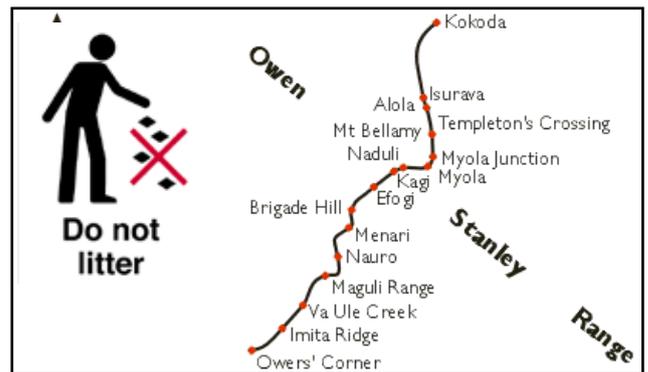
LITTERING WARNING

This is a notice to all Tour Operators, it has come to KTA's attention that lately there has been a lot of littering along the track.

Tour Operators are advised to ensure porters and guides dispose off rubbish properly in the villages or carried off the track.

KTA will not hesitate to penalise those who fail to comply.

Thank you
From the Management



KOKODA TRACK ADVERTISEMENT

The KTA will be rolling out the below developed advertisement in the local papers in PNG and within the Australian market soon to support the marketing drive of all the Tour Operators. The advertisement will be published quarterly in a year.



'Managing the Track with Trust, Respect and Pride'

COME DO THE KOKODA TRACK

For trekking details please contact our Licensed Tour Operators as listed on our website www.kokodatrackauthority.org
P: (+675) 323 6165 F: (+675) 323 6020 E: info@kokodatrackauthority.org





The Kokoda Track Authority (KTA) is a Papua New Guinea Special Purpose Authority, commissioned to promote and manage the Kokoda Track for tourists trekkers, while improving the way of life for communities living along the track, through funding and development programmes.

* If you have stories about the Kokoda Track that you would like to share with us, please send them to the Communications Officer communications@kokodatrackauthority.org or contact KTA office and ask to speak with Althea Masi.