



KOKODA TRACK AUTHORITY

NEWS BULLETIN

Thursday 9 April 2020

A message from the Acting CEO.

Gud dei tru olgeta, welcome to the second issue of the KTA's weekly News Bulletin. I hope you and your families are keeping safe during this time.

In this issue, I wish to highlight some of the changes that KTA has undertaken as a direct result of the changing landscape caused by the Coronavirus globally and the restrictions imposed by the Government. I will also respond to some of the questions raised by Tour Operators.

News from the KTA.

COVID-19 State of Emergency

The Government of Papua New Guinea has lifted the 14 days shutdown period as part of the nationwide precautionary measures against the pandemic Coronavirus, ending on the 6th of April. The Government also extended the State of Emergency (SOE) for a further two months. This allowed for domestic flights to selected provincial airports and the movement of people between provinces to be closely monitored under strict control measures.

With the Prime Minister's announcement of a second positive Coronavirus case in the country, the affected Provincial Governments have decided to extend the shutdown period meaning there will be no movement of people in and out of the provinces and within the provinces.

Reprioritised activities

KTA has reprioritise its activities. This means some of our normal recurrent and annual activities have been put off indefinitely while selected minor activities brought forward.

Activities suspended for the year

- Trekking
- Tour Operator's Forum planned for May
- Village Leaders' Summit
- Partnership on Kokoda Water Security project
- Elections of Landowner Representatives to KTA Board

Current priorities

1. Improvement of the Track (planning is being assisted by QPWS rangers)
2. Strengthening of partnership with Stakeholders, and Provincial Governments on the implementation of new policy arrangement relating to revenue distribution
3. Audit of 2018 – 2019 Accounts
4. Improve the Administrative and Operational Management of KTA (assisted by QPWS rangers)
5. Owers' Corner Landowner Agreement
6. Efogi Land Survey for the new KTA Ranger station
7. Board Representative Election
8. Relocation of KTA Office
9. Refurbishment of the Kokoda Ranger station
10. Refurbishment of Owers Corner facilities

Questions raised by some tour operators.

The President of the KTOA has sent through a long list of issues seeking further information. I'll deal with these in future bulletins, but in the meantime I've answered three of the questions he has raised.

1. Have you already activated the online booking system for trek permits, starting dates and trek direction? The answer is No. KTA is still using the manual system but the matter is being considered as one of the priorities in improving in management.
2. What is the update on bridge/track maintenance? Phase one of track maintenance was completed. KTA will commence maintenance on selected areas as part of its priorities on track maintenance. In the previous newsletter I asked for your input on priority areas for attention. I have not yet received any feedback from the tour operators, but if you have any suggestions please send them to me as soon as possible.
3. What are KTA contingency plans if someone on the track gets Coronavirus? KTA is working with relevant Government agencies and NGOs operating in the two provinces to ensure precautionary measures are followed by the local communities on the track. The National Government through the Health Department are working closely with provinces to ensure contingency plans are in place to attend to possible suspected COVID-19 cases.

2020 First Quarter Achievements

- Partnership with Central Province and Department of Provincial and Local Government Affairs to complete the Koiari Local Level Government Assembly Chamber at 15mile.
- Partnership with Central Provincial Government assisted in transferring community school teachers from Port Moresby to Manari, Efogi, Boridi and Kagi where the community schools are located. This was a result of difficulties caused by late release of Government funds to Provincial Governments.
- Partnership with CEPA to carry out the first phase of track maintenance.
- Partnership with KTF to deliver much needed medical and food supplies to aid posts and Naduri Health Centre along the track including Kokoda and Buna Health Centres
- The successful heart-operation for 15-year old Freda from Kokoda who successfully went through a heart operation in Texas, USA. The humanitarian partnership was

coordinated by PIH with Network Kokoda, Sogeri Enterprise, KTF, Member for Sohe
Hon. Henri Amuli and KTA.

In Closing

I would like to thank all partner agencies that have assisted KTA in achieving some of its objectives in delivering services on the track in the last 17 months. I am grateful for your commitment in supporting the work of KTA. I would also like to specifically acknowledge the partner agencies that have partnered with KTA to achieve the major activities highlighted in this bulletin for the first quarter. Finally, but not the least, I would like to thank Kokoda Track Foundation for successfully coordinating the joint-humanitarian exercise to deliver essential medical and food supplies to health facilities along the track. I look forward to further strengthening these working relations in future years.

Em tasol na lukautim yu yet na femili bilong yu gut!



JULIUS WARGIRAI
Acting CEO - KTA