

CHAPTER 21

Review of the 2014 Kokoda Initiative Mid-Term Review of the 2nd Joint Understanding for Oxford Policy Management

Background

The 'Kokoda Initiative' was established by the Australian Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) to assist PNG to protect the environs of the Kokoda Trail by establishing a case for a World Heritage Listing for the Owen Stanley Ranges.

In retrospect it should have been designated the '*Owen Stanley Ranges Initiative*' to more accurately reflect its role.

The term 'Kokoda' is associated with our shared military heritage which is not a consideration for a World Heritage nomination.

The subsequent Master Plan developed by the 'Kokoda Initiative' did not include 'pilgrimage' as a pillar for consideration. As a result they failed to engage an accredited Military Heritage Architect to develop a Military Heritage Master Plan for the Kokoda Trail since it assumed control of the Kokoda trekking industry in 2009.

Kokoda Initiative officials have downplayed the fact that Australians are motivated to trek across the Trail because of its wartime significance. This is evident in the fact that they have engaged a wide range of consultants to examine social and environmental issues related to World Heritage but have ignored institutions such as the Australian War Memorial to develop a Military Heritage Master Plan for the Trail.

They have also elected to manage the Kokoda Trail as a Government environment resource rather than as a commercial tourism enterprise.

Consultants reports are inevitably couched in complex bureaucratic language which is not easily understood by those who are unfamiliar with it. An examination of the reports also reveals a great deal of obfuscation, ambiguity and repetition.

The only areas where their performance can be bench-marked are:

- Their million dollar 'Village Livelihoods Project' – conceived in Canberra without any local consultation which failed to generate any additional income for villages;
- their 'KTA Strategic Plan 2012-2015' – developed without any consultation with trek operators and which failed to achieve a single one of their 5 Key Strategies or 33 Objectives;
- and the 'Mid Term Review of the Kokoda Initiative' by Oxford Policy Management-Cardno in 2014.

In order to untangle the 'Kokoda initiative Mid Term Review' of 2014 by the Cardno review team it has been necessary to separate each statement and comment on it.

The latest review by Oxford Policy Management provides a timely opportunity to bench-mark the 2014 'Kokoda Initiative Second Joint Understanding, Mid-Term Review' against the reality of 2020.

The attached '*Kokoda Initiative Second Joint Understanding, Mid-term Review, Draft Report*' dated 30 June 2014 was distributed by the CEO of the Kokoda Track Authority (KTA), Mr James Enage to trek operators on 3 August 2015.

The Australian Government assumed control of the KTA in 2009. An Australian CEO was appointed on a salary of K360 000 per year plus generous tax concessions and allowance loadings – it was his first time in PNG and he did not walk across the trail until he was leaving two years later. During this time there was a 10-fold increase in staff, a multi-million-dollar budget and a conga-line of highly paid Australian social and environmental consultants.

Experienced trek operators who had worked to establish the industry together with traditional landowners along the trail were effectively sidelined - Kokoda has been effectively micro-managed from Canberra via the Australian High Commission ever since.

Despite the significant increase in management personnel and aid funding trekker numbers declined by 44% from 5621 to 3156 during the period 2009 – 2014.

There is little to show from the investment in Australian managers, consultants and NGOs during this period. There is no military heritage master plan. No database. No campsite booking system. No integrity in the trek operator licensing system. No safeguards for the welfare of PNG guides and carriers. No audit system for campsite owners. No village-based workshops. No community development plan. No village income generating initiatives in place. No effective landowner/community mediation programs in place, etc., etc.

A '*Kokoda Track Authority Strategic Plan 2012 – 2015*' was developed by Australian officials who had never trekked across the Trail. It is instructive that not one of the five strategies or 33 key performance objectives contained in the plan were achieved. It has since been quietly shelved and there is no known plan to replace it.

The Australian CEO departed towards the end of 2012 without leaving a single management protocol in place for his PNG successor. The management system he bequeathed to his PNG counterpart, Mr James Enage, was beyond dysfunctional and irrelevant to Kokoda tourism in its current format.

Since 2009 trek operators were often asked to provide feedback to desktop studies by various consultants who never issued draft papers for comment and their final reports were never publicly published.

The Mid-term Review was a good example. The report itself was difficult to untangle - it contains much obfuscation, ambiguity and repetition.

The authors claim to have used a '*consultative process*' but neglected to consult with the two most important stakeholders in Kokoda tourism i.e., the tour operators who generate the income and the people who own the land between Owers Corner and Kokoda!

The purpose of the Review was to '*assess the success of the Kokoda Initiative/Joint Understanding 2 to date from both the PNG and Governments' perspectives with sensitivity to the different cultural attitudes that define 'success'* – whatever that means.

The authors of the review worked in Port Moresby from 28 February to 7 March 2014 but did not visit the Kokoda Trail.

The Draft Review should therefore be regarded as a desktop study which has little relevance to the realities of Kokoda tourism.

The main body of the Review is difficult for people unfamiliar with the complexity of bureaucratic language to understand.

We have therefore limited our comments to the '*Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons Learned*' in the Review.

Conclusion

It is difficult to identify an area that has progressed since the mid-term review was completed in 2014.

Trekker numbers are 46 percent below what they were when the Australian Government assumed control of the Kokoda Trail in 2009; there are no plans to develop a Military Heritage Master Plan by an accredited heritage architect for the trail; there are no plans for routine environmental maintenance of the trail; there are no campsite development plans; no community development plans; and no management protocols in place.

Australian advisors, managers and consultants assigned to the Kokoda Initiative do not have any business skills, qualifications or experience and they have little understanding of the reality of pilgrimage tourism across the Trail.

As a result, the management, environment, and wartime heritage associated has been substantially degraded.

There is a need to acknowledge the following factors:

- The Kokoda Trail is PNGs most popular tourism destination and should be managed as a commercial tourism enterprise;
- the wartime significance of the trail is the primary reason Australians choose to trek across it;
- In Australia the responsible agency for commemoration is the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA); and
- In PNG the responsibly agency for tourism is the Tourism Promotion Authority (TPA).

Recommendations:

1. The current Kokoda Initiative be redesignated as the ‘Owen Stanley Ranges Environmental Initiative’ and be retained within the Conservation Environment Authority (CEPA);
2. Responsibility for pilgrimage tourism across the Kokoda Trail be transferred from the Department of Provincial and Local Level Government (DPLLGA) and CEPA to TPA;
3. Responsibility for commemoration across the Kokoda Trail be transferred from DFAT to the Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA).
4. A ‘Joint Agreement for Commemoration’ to support pilgrimage tourism be developed between Australia and PNG;
5. A Kokoda Project be established to:
 - a. develop a Military Heritage Master Plan for the Kokoda Trail;
 - b. develop a commercial management enterprise to manage Kokoda tourism;
 - c. Establish Incorporated Landowner Groups (ILGs) across the trail as shareholders in the management enterprise.

The Hon Charlie Lynn OAM OL
26 August 2023

1. ATTACHMENT 1: Comparison of outcomes from the Kokoda Initiative Mid Term Reviews for 2014 and 2020
2. ATTACHMENT 2: Response to the Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons Learned from the Kokoda Initiative Second Joint Understanding Mid Term Review 2014

CHAPTER 23 (DRAFT): Review of the Kokoda Initiative Mid-Term Review of the 2nd Joint Understanding for Oxford Policy Management

Comments on the conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned from the Kokoda Initiative Second Joint Understanding – Mid Term Review – Draft Report – 30 June

Goal 1: A safe and well managed track

‘The Track has remained open for all trekking seasons since the Initiative started. The KTA has processes to proactively assist in addressing likely constraints through routine maintenance programs, structured contacts with the communities, community contracts to maintain sections of the Track near each community and the ward development fund provides an annual allocation to all the wards along the Track.’

2014: Response:

The reason the trail has remained open is because of the relationships the income generators i.e. trek operators have established with local campsite owners and the economic benefits these have brought to local communities. Over the past three years 10 000 trekkers have crossed the Kokoda Trail – an average of 3 333 per year. These trekkers would each invest around K10 000 on airfares, accommodation, meals, clothing, camping gear and on-trail expenses in order to complete their trek. These amounts to a total spend of K33.5 million per year. The annual GST dividend between the Australian and PNG governments is therefore in the region of K3.3 million. The gross income for villagers (the on-trail spend) in 2015^[1] is estimated to be: K1.2 million in trek fees; K0.5 million in campsite fees; K3.5 million in wages for guides and personal carriers; K1.7 million in income for village fruit, vegetables, sing-sings, billum bags, carved trekking poles; 1 million in donated goods (boots, trekker clothing and gear based on an average of K300 per trekker).

2020 Update:

The KTA has not introduced any processes to allow for regular, structured contact with village communities and they have not introduced any plans for the regular environmental maintenance of the trail. We are not aware of what ‘Ward Development Funds’ have been allocated because the KTA has not published an audited financial report for the past 10 years – we therefore have no idea how trek fees are allocated but it is evident most of it now circulates in Port Moresby.

‘The Kokoda Initiative has funded enhancements made for safety of communities and trekkers along the Track including upgrading and maintaining airstrips along the track, particularly at Kokoda.’

‘The KTA office in Port Moresby provides a focal point for communities along the track and the radio network based there provides immediate contact for the Track communities. The office has a group of enthusiastic young staff that has benefited from the mentoring of the DoE business adviser. KTA has implemented livelihoods and trekking company liaison forums, however these forums challenge the capacity of the organisation.’

2014 Response:

The KTA office in Boroko was established in 2004 because it was a convenient and economical option at the time. Since then the PNG economy has improved significantly and the PNG trekking industry has consolidated. Office space in Port Moresby is now expensive and the area is heavily congested. It is not easy for villagers from as far away as the Mt Koiari area and Oro Province to access. It is time for the office to be relocated to 14-mile which would be more economical and easier to access. 14-mile has the potential to develop a Koiari Cultural Centre which would be

accessible to more than 3 000 trekkers per year plus the increasing number of Australian visitors to Port Moresby. KTA has never conducted a ‘livelihood and trekker company liaison forum’.

2020 Update:

During the 2019 trekking season not a single bridge along the trail could be classified as ‘safe’ – some sections of the trail remained dangerously unsafe.

The Kokoda Initiative has not initiated any action to identify the indigenous names of creeks and features along the trail or of the fauna.

Neither the Kokoda Initiative nor the KTA have introduced a single management protocol since 2014.

The management dysfunction caused the former Prime Minister, Peter O’Neill, to order a review into the organisation in 2017. The review was conducted by the Kokoda Initiative which is now in its third year without an outcome.

‘Funds raised through the trekking fees are paid to communities for routine maintenance along the Track, through village maintenance agreements. GoA funds maintenance of the road to Ower’s Corner to the benefit of local communities and trekkers, and also major conservation and maintenance works including bridge maintenance and repairing damage caused by landslips, etc. ‘

2014 Response:

The authors of the review are obviously unaware of the actual conditions along the trail.

There has been virtually no ‘routine maintenance’ along the trail for a number of years. The environmental degradation of the trail in the Nauro swamp area, Mt Bellamy and Templeton’s Crossing – Eora Creek is unacceptable.

2020 Update:

The lack of ‘bridge maintenance’ and ‘environmental repair’ indicates that few funds have been allocated for these tasks or they have been misappropriated.

‘There is some uncertainty on the level of enforcement of requirements for trek operators including public liability insurance coverage and all trekker registering and paying track fees.’

2014 Response:

There is no uncertainty at all. The managing authority has a duty of care to ensure all trek operators[i] they licence have adequate public liability insurance cover. This issue has been raised in many forums but has never been addressed. The management authority will eventually have to accept this reality.

2020 Update:

No action has been taken on this issue since 2014. The Kokoda Initiative has turned a ‘blind-eye’ to the fact that large numbers of Australian trekkers are unwittingly trekking with companies who have no public liability insurance policies.

‘The stakeholder workshops and trekking operator forums have provided opportunities for stakeholder contributions. There is good attendance at the trekking operator forums in PNG but interest in Australia could be improved through increased communication of progress in addressing recurrent operator concerns.’

2014 Response:

Trek operator forums are a bureaucratic construct in their current format. They are regarded as talkfests without outcomes.

The PNG forums may be well attended but they cannot possibly address the issues that are of concern to the guides, carriers and campsite owners because of their location and their format. The only way their concerns can be properly addressed is through workshops in their village environments.

2020 Update:

There has not been a single outcome from any forum conducted by the KTA.

They have refused to issue minutes of a forum held in Cairns in November 2017 which carried a unanimous motion to protect the welfare of PNG guides and carriers. This would have required trek operators to invest additional funds to ensure they were not overloaded, underpaid and poorly equipped.

The Kokoda Tour Operators Association – established to protect the interests of Australian trek operators ‘persuaded’ the PNG delegation not to table the motion.

Numerous requests for a copy of the minutes have been ignored.

The latest KTA Forum was held in Brisbane in November 2019 – four months on the minutes have still not been distributed.

The forums are a farce.

Goal 2: Enhanced quality of life for landowners and communities (along the Track)

‘The GoA funded KDP has provided materials for and assisted communities to construct village health centres and elementary schools along the Track. The KDP has been working on 19 school construction and/or rehabilitation activities with three reported as completed (Kokoda elementary school and primary school, and Kagi elementary school). The KTF assisted communities complete some of the infrastructure. The KDP provided some limited training to complement the infrastructure construction.’

2014 Response:

The provision of these facilities are welcome investments in village communities however the assessment of need, the provision of education/health supplies and strategies for ongoing maintenance are not known. The school at Kagi was built two years ago but still does not have any desks in either of the two classrooms.

2020 Update:

The construction of schools and health centres in PNG are a normal part of Australia’s aid program.

Nothing has been invested in meeting the needs of taxpayer-trekkers who pay a substantial fee to trek across it. Not a single dollar of their taxes or their trek fees have been invested in a single campsite along the trail. As of 2020 there is not a single campsite that meets the needs of trekkers and not a single toilet across the entire trail that meets the most basic of hygiene standards.

‘Training, mentoring activities have been provided for village health volunteers (VHV) and health workers who are also supported by regular patrols along the Track.’

2014 Response:

These are important initiatives.

2020 Update:

There is little evidence of improvement in the provision of health services along the trail.

Trek operators are not aware of any activities undertaken by ‘regular patrols’ because the KTA has not published a single newsletter since 2015.

‘The community based mentors (CBM) implemented through KTA under the Livelihoods project have started to support micro and small enterprises (MSE) in their communities particularly guesthouses for trekkers. KTA has managed a program of supporting guesthouse and camping ground owners improve their facilities and become accredited. This accreditation process will align with the national accreditation scheme managed by the Tourism Promotion Authority (TPA), another Kokoda Initiative partner. Income generation / nutrition improvement activities require ongoing technical support. ‘

2014 Response:

It is not known whether the Departments of Education, Health and Community Development were consulted in regard to assessing the health and education needs of these communities – or whether they were developed to meet the perceived needs of the Aid/NGOs

There is no evidence of any outcomes from the Livelihoods project.

The ‘capacity building’ programs and micro-business enterprises’ run by NGOs has not produced a single economic outcome for local villagers. It is not possible to even buy a cup of PNG brewed coffee along the entire Kokoda Trail. Not a single taro plant has popped out of the ground and not an additional kina has been earned as a result of this **project**. It is a demonstrable failure in its current format. The only improvements to campsites are those initiated and paid for by trek operators. The accreditation process is an academic exercise and destined for the same fate as the failed Village Livelihood project.

2020 Update:

There is no evidence of any outcomes from the Kokoda Initiative ‘Community Based Mentors’ program.

It is still not possible to buy a cup of PNG brewed coffee along the entire trail – trekkers now return with money they are unable to spend during their trek because there are no goods or services provided.

‘The DEC TEM Section working with the GEF project in DEC is developing the processes to ensure income streams (power and water production fees and trekking fees from the Track) from new developments in the Interim Protection Zone (IPZ) based around the Brown River catchment are directed fairly back to the customary land owners and communities in the area.’

2014 Response:

This is not relevant to the management of the Kokoda Trekking Industry.

2020 Update:

The construction of the Edevu Hydro Project on the Brown River by the Chinese Government has negated any initiatives planned for this area.

‘The Kokoda Initiative has not made significant progress in developing community capacity to identify, plan and implement development / income generation activities and manage the income streams. A systematic approach to community driven consultation / planning / implementation processes has not been introduced although models are available from other parts of PNG. Limited attention has been given to linking the Initiative activities to the GoPNG development planning processes, particularly at provincial level to ensure that operating and maintenance funds are able to support the infrastructure that has been constructed’.

2014 Response:

This is due to the fact that Australian government officials will simply not accept advice in regard to the need to conduct annual workshops in villages to determine, assess and review their needs.

2020 Update:

The Kokoda Initiative has continued to deny local villagers an effective voice in having their needs met through their failure to engage them in properly structured village-based workshops.

‘The Initiative design highlighted the need to include all stakeholders and levels in the approach to sustainable development. This has not been achieved. The high level coordination and planning activities have possibly been too intensive leading to some stakeholders experiencing meeting overload. The complex design of the Kokoda Initiative has made it difficult for some stakeholders, even those who have participated in the higher level meetings, to understand or appreciate the Kokoda Initiative concept and their agency’s role in the Initiative’.

2014 Response:

The most important stakeholders are the income generators for the industry i.e. trek operators have never been consulted as to what additional services their clients might be prepared to purchase during their trek.

These two groups are excluded from ‘higher level meetings’.

This Mid Term Review is a good example. It has not been distributed for comment. The CEO of the KTA circulated it more than 12 months after it was published because he has to bear the brunt of the criticism from trek operators and landowners. This was his way of advising both groups of what he has to tolerate.

Suggestions by trek operators in regard to sustainable development continue to be ignored with the result that villagers are missing out on tens of thousands of additional kina in income each year.

2020 Update:

It has still not been achieved!

‘Conversely, at the operational and community levels, there has been a lack of coordination and planning. Little attention has been given to engaging with relevant local or international non-government organisations (NGOs), including churches, with links to the Kokoda region. There are opportunities to access additional skills and resources from these NGOs which have strong links with Track communities’.

2014 Response:

This is true. There has been a long line of Australian consultants, bureaucrats and volunteers since the Australian government became involved in 2008.

Reports and outcomes are never distributed to trek operators for comment which creates a

climate of distrust.

The advice of pioneering trek operators, who were involved along the trail for more than a decade before the arrival of departmental bureaucrats from Australia, has been consistently ignored regarding the most effective way engaging with local village communities.

2020 Update:

There has been no coordination and planning in this area.

Not one of the 5 Key Strategies or 33 Objectives of the ‘KTA Strategic Plan 2012-2015’ was achieved. The plan has not been reviewed or updated – as of 2020 neither the KTA nor the Kokoda Initiative is working to a plan to meet the needs of trek operators, trekkers or local village communities.

An analysis on each of the 5 Key Strategies and 33 Objectives can be viewed [here](#).

‘The Kokoda Initiative does have not a comprehensive database of education and health infrastructure and supporting resources which would assist in planning and resourcing priority community issues. The KTF may have useful information to complement the KDP information’.

2014 Response:

This lack of such an essential management tool is simply inexcusable!

Trek operators are more likely than NGOs to have ‘*useful information*’ because they have close links with local communities and invest their own money in them.

NGO’s are only on the trail for short periods and invest other peoples’ money. They don’t have skin in the game. Trek operators could be engaged to provide, monitor and update community information as they have established relationships with landowners and are on the trail for most of the year.

2020 Update:

No action has been taken by the Kokoda Initiative or the KTA to develop a database – the most fundamental of all business success tools.

As a result they do not have a single contact detail of any one of the 50,000+ Australians who have trekked across the trail. They are therefore unable to conduct surveys or use the data to advise people of other adventure destinations in PNG.

They are also unable to seek philanthropic support for local village communities because of the lack of a database.

Goal 3: Wise use and conservation of the Interim Protection Zone

‘The DEC team is developing the building blocks needed for the integrated land use plan for the Interim Protection Zone. The spatial mapping of the area has been upgraded (to a 5 m x 5 m resolution), ground-truthed, including for assessment of primary or secondary forestry cover, and incorporated into DEC land management activities. This imagery from 2007 and 2010 has allowed assessment of land use changes but may now require updating. Staff from other sections in DEC have participated in the GIS training, building DEC capacity and providing back-up for the TEM specialist. A JICA forestry project is using the same imagery. Social mapping of the track area is progressing and a decision on whether to proceed with mapping for the whole track and an appropriate cost-effective methodology will be made by late 2014. The values mapping activity is

addressing biodiversity, cultural and archaeological aspects of the IPZ using both national and international experts to guide implementation. Current work is leading to further development of the National Biodiversity Information System (NBIS) to provide a framework for recording all known species in the IPZ by the end of 2015 and a project is underway to curate PNG species currently held in overseas collections. These are important aspects needed to prepare for a possible World Heritage nomination. The tools and processes being developed by the Kokoda Initiative in this area are being used by the GEF project which covers the whole of New Britain and a larger section of the Owen Stanley Ranges. The above activities are identifying the main natural and cultural values in the IPZ. New activities are starting to collect and document military heritage aspects of the Track. These will focus on heritage from the PNG side as well as the much better known Australian side. The first stage of the Oral History project managed by the NMAG should be finished by June 2014. Planning has started for an inventory of Australian military heritage along the Track’.

2014 Response:

This Goal is not relevant to the management of the Kokoda Trekking Industry.

2020 Update:

It remains irrelevant.

Goal 4: Building the national and international tourism potential of the Kokoda Track and OSR

‘The Initiative has supported the development of commemoration days for key participants in the military history of the Track (Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels Day, ANZAC Day, etc.). Promotion activities would be improved through the appointment of a KTA communications officer’.

2014 Response:

ANZAC Day has been successfully managed by the RSL for the past 73 years. The Kokoda Initiative is not involved.

A proposal for a Kokoda Day to be proclaimed was submitted to the PNG Government by a trek operator – it was not a ‘Kokoda initiative’. For reasons unknown it was changed to ‘Fuzzy-Wuzzy Angel Day’ by the National Executive Council. Such a term does not have any marketing resonance in Australia and nothing has happened since.

‘Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel Day’ therefore needs to be changed back to its original proposed name ‘Kokoda Day’.

2020 Update:

No action has been taken to change the name ‘Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel Day’ to ‘Kokoda Day’ despite numerous requests. As a result, the day does not feature as a marketing opportunity so nothing has happened since 2014.

‘The tourism marketing/promotion position in KTA (currently being recruited) is planned to take a more proactive role in promotion of the Track and to progress the proposed strategic tourism plan and associated marketing activities[1]. The major GoA grant recently made to TPA to undertake tourism training, and other activities relating to tourism resources along the Track should accelerate activities in this area’.

2014 Response:

The responsible body for the marketing and promotion of Kokoda treks is PNG Tourism. It is not the role of the management authority!

Trek operators also invest considerable resources in marketing their treks. There has been a steady decline in trekker numbers since the Australian Government assumed control of the management authority in 2009 despite a 10-fold increase in staff and an expenditure of \$40 million.

2020 Update:

Neither the KTA, the Kokoda Initiative nor the Tourism Promotion Authority has invested any efforts or funds into marketing the Kokoda Trail. This could be attributable to the fact that they have nobody qualified to do so and because they do not understand ‘poilgrimage’ or the needs of trekkers.

‘The Kokoda Initiative work being undertaken by DEC TEM is building the case for a World Heritage nomination for the IPZ / Track area. The military heritage aspects in a single area do not strengthen the nomination case but evidence is being developed of the cultural and natural significance of the area’.

2014 Response:

If military heritage is not a consideration for a World Heritage nomination it should be withdrawn from the orbit of the Australian Department of Environment and transferred to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

2020 Update:

According to an expert report the Kokoda Trail will not meet the requirements for a World Heritage Listing – the focus of the Kokoda Initiative should therefore now shift from ‘World Heritage’ to ‘Military Heritage’ to ‘pilgrimage tourism’.

Goal 5: Ensuring Kokoda Initiative activities are sustained into the future

‘Within a five year program working with new or under-resourced agencies, it is unrealistic to expect the activities to have become embedded in the PNG government processes and have access to ongoing GoPNG funding or be commercially sustainable’.

2014 Response:

The only effective means of sustaining the Kokoda Trekking Industry into the future is for the management authority to be run as a commercial enterprise and ensure there is a level playing field for all trek operators.

2020 Update:

No action has been taken since 2014 to establish an effective management structure to operate the Kokoda Trail as a tourism asset on a commercial basis for the economic benefit of landowner communities.

‘KTA is moving towards being financially viable for its core track regulation and management functions and a future focus should be to maximise the fees from trekkers that can be returned to the track communities or for track maintenance’.

2014 Response:

It is possible for the KTA to be financially viable provided it limits its responsibilities to commercial management functions.

A Community Development Levy and a Trail Maintenance Levy will provide for villagers,

protect the environment of the trail and provide additional employment for guides and carriers during the non-trekking season.

2020 Update:

Nobody knows if the KTA is financially viable or not because it has not published an audited financial report since the Australian Government assumed control of it in 2009.

The situation has deteriorated since 2014 as most of the money collected in trek fees now seems to circulate in Port Moresby.

In 2019 there is no record of funds being returned to ‘track communities or for track maintenance’. The KTA was also ‘influenced’ to donate K350,000 to an Australian NGO for payments unrelated to the Kokoda trekking industry.

‘It is disappointing to find that DEC, the main Kokoda Initiative partner, has been able to fill only half the staff positions in the TEM group for Initiative activities and has used the Initiative developed skills and knowledge for other priority work within DEC’.

2014 Response:

This is not relevant to the Kokoda Trekking Industry.

2020 Update:

It remains irrelevant.

‘Through the Initiative investments from GoA and GoPNG, good progress has been made in building the technical and operational capacity of the main counterpart agencies (DEC and KTA)’.

2014 Response:

This is an ill-informed deduction.

The KTA is beyond dysfunctional in its current format because the Australian Government management team did not develop a single management protocol for them to adopt during the period 2009 – 2013. The current KTA management system was set up to fail by the Australian CEO during his tenure.

2020 Update:

There is no evident of any progress made in this area. The Kokoda Initiative has not been able to assist the KTA in developing a database or a single management protocol for the Kokoda trekking industry. The management system deteriorated to such an extent that Prime Minister, Peter O’Neill called for a review of the KTA.

Unfortunately the task of conducting the review was awarded to the Kokoda Initiative who failed to examine all management options for the trail and recommended that the current status quo be continued.

The review is now in its third year without an outcome. This surely has to be some sort of record for an office with 6 staff!

Key MTR Questions

(a) Achievement of JU2 goals and objectives

‘As summarized in Section 2, the Initiative has made significant progress to the (ambitious/aspirational) high level goals set out in the JU2 agreement. There is high level commitment to the JU2 vision and the Kokoda Initiative has made good progress towards bringing together Papua New Guinea and Australian national interests, particular in the Kokoda Track area. With some changes to implementation as proposed below and with an increased focus on achieving agreed key outcomes, the Kokoda Initiative should contribute to significant improvements in community well-being and, protection and enhancement of the natural, cultural and military heritage environment in the IPZ’.

2014 Response:

This is a subjective statement which is not supported by the facts in regard to the Kokoda Trail.

The most effective means of improving community well-being long the trail is to have a well-regulated, commercial trekking industry and an independent PNG based philanthropic body.

The natural environment of the trail has deteriorated significantly under the watch of the Australian Government. Substantial erosion in the Mt Bellamy area, the Nauro swampland and Templeton’s – Eora Creek could have been prevented by cutting alternative tracks to allow vulnerable sections to regenerate.

Significant military heritage sites have been desecrated and are lost forever.

2020 Update:

There are no identifiable improvements in ‘community well-being and, protection and enhancement of the natural, cultural and military heritage environment in the IPZ’ along the trail apart from normal aid-projects in regard to the building of new schools and health centres.

In 2017 there was not a single delivery of medical or school supplies along the trail. Some sporadic deliveries were made since we reported the issue however there has been little improvement. Some of the facilities built are in excess to local requirements and were imposed without any consultation with local communities.

No action has been taken regarding the development of the economic potential of local communities through the provision of services to trekkers along the trail.

No action has been taken to enlist the support of trek operators who are on the trail continuously from April to November each year and who would be willing to assist with liaison with local schools and health centres and provide feedback on the condition of the trail.

(b) Alignment of Kokoda Initiative activities with JU2 goals and objectives

‘The Kokoda Initiative activities align quite well with the JU2 goals and objectives. The main challenge is in the degree of attention and resourcing provided to some areas. The main areas where this is weak is in the areas of managing the development opportunities and income streams, and in developing the alliances between the government, commercial and NGO stakeholders to provide consistent and cost-effective community development and infrastructure planning and implementation support to communities’.

2014 Response:

It is weak because there has been no consultation between trek operators to determine the services their clients would pay for.

NGO involvement should be minimised as they contribute to a hand-out mentality by providing goods and services without mutual obligation. They should be encouraged to relocate their endeavours to remote villages which do not have the benefit of a trekking industry to support them.

2020 Update:

It continues to be weak because there is still no consultation with trek operators in regard to the provision of services their clients would be willing to pay for.

NGOs continue to support aid-dependency along the trail.

(c) Enablers and constraints to Kokoda Initiative implementation and impact on achieving JU2 goals and objectives

Enablers:

- *High level commitment to the special relationship between PNG and Australia*
- *Resources from GoA and GoPNG*
- *Flexibility in delivery modes*
- *Interest from PNG and Australian stakeholders in the Kokoda Track area*
- *Capacity developed (formally and informally) in DEC and KTA, but there are opportunities for further capacity development.*
- *Access to specialist skills, knowledge and resources from both DoE and the KDP.*

2014 Response:

The Australian High Commission is responsible for maintaining and nurturing the special relationship between PNG and Australia while the Australian Government is responsible for the allocation of resources.

The two most important stakeholders in the Kokoda Trekking Industry are the income generators i.e. trek operators and local landowners.

There is no evidence of any measurable form of capacity building in local communities along the trail.

Specialist skills should be restricted to meet needs and demands as determined by the PNG Kokoda Initiative Ministerial Committee

2020 Update:

There is no evidence of any ‘capacity building’ outcomes anywhere along the trail since 2014.

Constraints:

‘A complex design incorporating aspirational high level goals which have not been linked back to achievable measurable outcomes for the five year program period’.

2014 Response:

A ‘Kokoda Track Authority Strategic Plan 2012 – 2015’ was developed by the Australian Department of Environment through their CEO in conjunction with officials from the Kokoda Development Program/Kokoda Initiative. Not one of the five strategies or any of the 33 key performance objectives contained in the plan has been achieved as of August 2015.

2020 Update:

The 'KTA Strategic Plan 2012-2015' was a complete fail – [the outcome of each of the 5 Key Strategies and 33 Objectives are listed on this link.](#)

'Lack of understanding of overall Kokoda Initiative program amongst some stakeholders'.

2014 Response:

This is due to the fact that Australian Government officials operate in a parallel universe to those trek operators who focus on the military historical aspects of the Kokoda campaign.

2020 Update:

The 'lack of understanding' has continued because the Kokoda Initiative does not engage with all trek operators or with local communities along the trail in a regular, structured way.

The Kokoda Initiative does not distribute any reports or newsletters associated with the trail to the income generators i.e. trek operators.

'Mixed feedback on the importance of the IPZ / Initiative activities in the future plans for CEPA (Clear support was given during the final MTR team meeting with senior DEC staff)'.

2014 Response:

Not relevant to the Kokoda trekking industry.

2020 Update:

Remains irrelevant to the Kokoda trekking industry.

'Organisational constraints in the implementing agencies which are outside the influence of the Initiative implementing group'.

2014 Response:

Not sure what this means.

2020 Update:

Still not sure what it means.

'Unfilled positions in the DEC TEM Branch placing a greater workload on the group leadership and core implementation team. Facilitation of the World Heritage nomination process is the responsibility of sections in DEC which may lack resources, capacity and commitment to support the nomination process'.

2014 Response:

Not relevant to the Kokoda Trekking Industry

2020 Update:

The construction of the Edevu Hydro Project on the Brown River and the expert report advising that the Kokoda Trail does not meet the requirements of a World Heritage classification makes this statement even more irrelevant than it was in 2014.

‘Limited in-country administration and organisational support for in-country coordination and planning activities’.

2014 Response:

The PNG Government has the ability to conduct its own planning activities.

2020 Update:

The Kokoda Initiative seems to have facilitated a number of consultants reports over the years since 2009. None seem to have addressed the failures of the management systems they put in place. This could be attributed to the fact that they do not understand the cultural or commercial requirements of a successful trekking industry.

‘Less than satisfactory coordination between Kokoda Initiative and KDP activities’.

2014 Response:

It is apparent that they are operating in a parallel universes.

The Kokoda Initiative is supposed to empower their PNG counterparts.

The KDP/KTF functions are operating as aid agencies which **disempowers** them through dependency.

2020 Update:

In 2014 the Kokoda Initiative was staffed by environment bureaucrats whilst the Kokoda Development Program was part of DFAT.

When the two organizations merged under DFAT the environment officials retained their positions and control of their aid-funded environment agenda.

‘Cross-cutting issues such as gender and M&E did not receive early attention during JU2. This delay has possibly reduced the impact on potential beneficiaries at community level and implementation efficiency’.

2014 Response:

Women have been involved in the Kokoda Trekking Industry for more than two decades.

Trek operators could be engaged to provide feedback in this regard but they are not engaged in a meaningful way.

2020 Update:

No action has been taken to empower women along the Kokoda Trail since 2009. They have never been taught how to meet the needs of trekkers through the provision of unique souvenirs or services such as local sing-sings, participation in official village welcomes or the sale of coffee and scones.

They are now mere spectators to a passing parade of trekkers.

‘Some budgeted GoPNG funds not flowing as planned’.

2014 Response:

Australian officials are hardly in a position to criticize the PNG Government in view of the fact that the PNG Kokoda Track Authority did not publish a single audited financial report during the period 2009 – 2012 while it was operated by Australian government officials.

2020 Update:

The KTA has still not published an audited financial statement since the review of 2014.

As a result there is high degree of mistrust as to where the funds have gone – what we do know is that most of it seems to circulate in Port Moresby.

‘Limited efforts have been made to access GoPNG budget resources (Public Investment Program (PIP) and DSIP) in the Track communities and related agencies which would increase the resources available to build and improve community and Track facilities and support services’.

2014 Response:

A properly managed Kokoda Trekking Industry would generate sufficient funds for community development across the Kokoda Trail.

2020 Update:

No action has been initiated to improve the management of the Kokoda trekking industry since 2014.

‘The (Kokoda Initiative and KDP) M&E systems have not yet provided substantial output and outcome information to support this review and the design of a possible further phase’.

2014 Response:

Trek operators could have fulfilled this role if they had been consulted.

2020 Update:

No action has been initiated to engage trek operators to fulfill this role since 2014.

‘Lack of clarity on the in-country working and reporting arrangements^[1] between the long term advisers (and short term technical specialists) in the PNG agencies. Many of the issues have been addressed informally but an agreed structure would improve clarity for the PNG agencies and their staff’.

2014 Response:

The collective input of long-term Australian advisers and short term technical specialists has led to the current dysfunction of the Kokoda Track Authority.

2020 Update:

No change to the 2104 response. There is virtually no engagement with ‘long term advisers and short term technical specialists’ or trek operators.

Governance structures for JU2

‘The Kokoda Initiative / JU2 design emphasised the need for effective coordination and planning at all levels of the Initiative. The Senior Advisor position has facilitated links between high level stakeholders. The Minister for Environment and Conservation has provided valuable leadership including formation of the Ministerial Committee to strengthen GoPNG engagement with the Initiative. Provincial governments are now taking up their mandated roles in the governance groups to strengthen the links to GoPNG budgeting, planning and implementation processes’.

2014 Response:

The establishment of the PNG Ministerial Committee consolidated control of the Kokoda

Trail within the Conservation Environment Protection Agency (CEPA) with the Department of Conservation and Environment.

This effectively sidelined the Minister for Tourism, Arts and Culture which meant the trail continued to be managed as an environmental asset rather than a tourism asset, No management protocols were introduced into the Kokoda Track Authority – and no developments were initiated to meet the needs of trekkers i.e. the paying customers or the campsite owners along the trail.

2020 Update:

The consolidation of authority within CEPA for PNGs most popular tourism destination was a mistake. The record now shows that neither the Senior Australian Advisor nor CEPA understand the business of tourism nor the values of pilgrimage.

‘The governance groups created have had varying levels of participation and success. The planned higher level taskforces in both countries have not functioned as planned. This may be partly due to the tasks, meeting scheduling, required time inputs and planned outcomes not being managed to suit the interests and time commitments of the intended participants. There is little evidence that this lack of engagement has been a major factor impacting on project progress and effectively but engagement from the new Ministerial Committee will be important in formulating and reaching agreement on the design for the Third Joint Understanding’.

2014 Response:

The reason Australian ‘higher level taskforces’ have not succeeded is because they have no idea of the reality of the Kokoda trekking industry. They operate in a parallel universe to trek operators who are income generators for the trekking industry. Too much time and effort is required for reporting to Canberra. The most effective way to overcome this limitation is for the PNG Government to reclaim ownership of the Kokoda trekking industry.

2020 Update:

Governance is one of the many failures on the Kokoda Initiative. A lack of accountability for failed projects and the lack of financial reports since 2009 should be the subject of a forensic audit. The Kokoda Initiative is currently an unaccountable law unto itself.

‘The PMC is functioning largely as planned as the working committee for the Initiative and would be strengthened by formal reporting processes back to the Initiative project director in Canberra’.

2014 Response:

Nobody seems to be aware of the workings of this committee.

2020 Update:

Trek operators are still unaware of the workings of this committee.

‘At local-level government and community level, the governance structures are much less developed with limited structured participation and support to the planning, coordination and implementation processes’.

2014 Response:

The lack of governance of the Australian management group during the period 2009 – 2012 should be examined before any criticism is made of PNG local-level government.

If the Australian management group had operated under Australian jurisdiction they would

have been subject to an official inquiry as a result of their secret dealings with rogue trek operators which provided them with a financial advantage.

2020 Update:

There is no evidence that local-level government officials along the trail have any understanding of the business of trekking or the values of pilgrimage tourism.

This is due to the fact that they have never received any training in these areas.

‘A disappointing weakness in the governance arrangements is the low level of participation of Australian trek operators in the consultative process through the trek operator forums. The lack of a single industry focal point to represent the views of all the trekking operators, particularly the Australian-based operators, in discussions with KTA, GoPNG and GoA, complicates the ability of these agencies to respond effectively to issues raised by these operators’.

2014 Response:

The primary reason for the lack of Australian participation is because agenda items submitted for discussion were ignored during the period 2009-2012. The forums themselves were irrelevant talkfests without outcomes. The lack of governance of the management authority during this period created a high level of distrust.

2020 Update:

The ‘low level of participation of trek operators’ in KTA Forums continues because they are a farce.

We are still waiting for the Minutes of a forum conducted in Cairns in 2017. We are still waiting for the Minutes of the latest forum conducted in Brisbane in November 2019.

Agenda items for forums are largely irrelevant to tourism in general and pilgrimage tourism in particular. Discussion papers are never distributed and Minutes – when they are published – are not an accurate reflection on the relevant discussions.

There has not been a single outcome from a forum conducted since 2009 despite some topics receiving unanimous support.

Longer term sustainability of changes facilitated through the Kokoda Initiative*‘The Kokoda Initiative is facilitating and funding an integrated package of interventions designed to address specific constraints and issues. The GoPNG is committed to strengthening management and community benefits from protected areas across the country such as the Kokoda Initiative supported IPZ activities. Including the KTA, the sustainability of the changes will depend on the level of, and how efficiently benefits from protected areas, including the Kokoda Track trekking operations, are returned to communities’.*

2014 Response:

The Kokoda Trail between Owers Corner and Kokoda should be separated from the wider environmental programs in the Owen Stanley Ranges – particularly in view of the fact that ‘military heritage is not a consideration for a World Heritage nomination’.

2020 Update:

The most effective form of ‘protected area management’ is to accept the fact that traditional owners have mastered this concept and have been practicing it for generations.

The solution for the environmental protection of the Kokoda Trail is simple – identify local landowner groups – seek the cooperation of trek operators – impose a ‘trail maintenance levy of K100 – and pay them to maintain the trail and keep it safe.

‘The capacity building elements of the Initiative activities are strengthening the ability of DEC and the KTA to implement their mandated functions. KTA is already close to financial viability to undertake its core mandated functions. As such, and provided that trekker fees and numbers are managed appropriately, and the organisation’s management and operational capacity continues to develop, KTA can fund a significant proportion of its core operations (through GoPNG PIP or GoA funding)’ [1].

2014 Response:

This has already been referred to and is largely a statement of the obvious.

The main impediment to the managing authority being financially viable is the Australian Department of Environment who have no understanding of the reality of conducting trek operations along the Kokoda Trail.

2020 Update:

The lack of governance and financial reporting by the KTA – which operates as a subsidiary of the Kokoda Initiative – should be the subject of an official inquiry.

‘The changes to DEC will prove more challenging as the GoPNG has indicated that it wants CEPA to become self-funding in a relatively short period. The Initiative activities are supporting development of skills, knowledge and processes that will contribute to increasing benefits from protected areas and ensuring they flow to the appropriate land owners and communities in these areas. The sustainability of CEPA will depend on an enabling environment for CEPA to undertake its mandated functions, developed with the assistance from the Initiative. In the short term, the challenge will be ensuring that CEPA has adequate funding and capable staff resourcing, supported by GoPNG funding as it makes the transition to being a self-funding organisation’.

2014 Response:

Self-evident waffle.

Findings and Conclusions *‘The Kokoda Initiative is regarded as an important element of the relationship between PNG and Australia. However, some high level stakeholders do not have a clear understanding of its functions and the relationship between the different activities’*

2014 Response:

‘Higher level stakeholders’ would have a better understanding of the Kokoda Trekking Industry if they engaged with trek operators, villagers, guides and carriers in their respective environments.

2020 Update:

The Kokoda Initiative *‘higher level stakeholders’* still do not have either a technical, cultural, or empathetic understanding of the Kokoda trekking industry.

‘The formation of the Kokoda Initiative Ministerial Committee, initiated by Minister Pundari, is an important step forward in highlighting this importance. The Ministerial Committee was formed in response to weaknesses in the functioning of the National Taskforce in providing high level monitoring and guidance’.

2014 Response:

The ‘Kokoda Initiative Ministerial Committee’ has failed to make any impact on the dysfunction of the management authority or the Kokoda trekking industry.

2020 Update:

The ‘Kokoda Initiative Ministerial Committee’ consolidated the ‘influence’ of the Strategic Management Advisor in the Kokoda Initiative who was assigned to the position in 2011.

Since then there has been no improvement in trekker numbers – the environment of the trail has been degraded due to the lack of a sustainable trail maintenance plan – there have been no structured village-based workshops to identify their local needs – there have been no ‘micro-finance’ initiatives introduced to assist local villagers to ‘value-add’ to the Kokoda trekking industry – there is no welfare protection for local guides and carriers – no attempt has been made to engage an accredited Military Heritage Architect to develop a Military Heritage Master Plan for the trail – there is not a single management protocol in place – no financial audits have been conducted and there is no campsite development plan to meet the needs of trekkers or to assist local landowners to generate additional income.

‘The design process took too long and the resulting design, based on the JU2 agreement, is complex’.

2014 Response:

Almost as complex as trying to decipher large sections of this report.

2020 Update:

The use of ‘complex’ bureaucratic language has continued and is evident in the [‘2019 Annual Review Report Papua New Guinea–Australia Governance Partnership’ which can be viewed on this link.](#)

It should be mandatory for government reports associated with our Pacific neighbours to be written in plain English.

‘The Initiative has made good progress in implementation of most planned activities but both sides have had lags in scheduled activities’.

2014 Response:

The Initiative has made good progress in implementation of most planned activities but both sides have had lags in scheduled activities.

2020 Update:

There are no longer an ‘lags in scheduled activities’ because there have not been any ‘scheduled activities’ in regard to the Kokoda trekking industry since 2014.

‘The Kokoda Track is a major draw card for most Australian tourists to PNG and provides some flow-on benefits to communities along the Track. These visits may not lead to significant flow-on benefits to other parts of the PNG tourism industry’.

2014 Response:

The Kokoda Trail is THE major tourist attraction in PNG. It provides more than ‘some’ flow on benefits to communities along the trail.

It is THE primary gateway for adventure tourism in PNG.

Over the past decade more than 40 000 Australians have trekked Kokoda – including some of the wealthiest and most influential people in the country.

There is no greater indictment on the failure of the Australian Government management system than the fact that they have not recorded a single contact detail of these trekkers because they have never established a database.

The potential for ‘significant flow-on benefits’ has been stymied by the ill-conceived Village Livelihoods Project and an emphasis of supporting NGOs rather than the income generators for the industry.

2020 Update:

Tourism is the World’s biggest business and the Kokoda Trail is PNGs most popular tourism asset. It should therefore be operated as a business enterprise on a commercial basis under policy developed by the Minister for Tourism, Arts and Culture.

Neither the Kokoda Initiative nor CEPA have demonstrated any understanding of the wartime tourism potential of the Kokoda Trail.

The solution is to separate the roles and responsibilities of tourism and environment through the rebadging of the ‘Kokoda Initiative’ as the ‘Owen Stanley Ranges Initiative’ under CEPA and ‘Kokoda Wartime Tourism Project’ under TPA.

‘The Kokoda Track is one of the shortest foot tracks across the Owen Stanley Ranges so is used by some low income travellers from other parts of PNG to travel to Port Moresby’

2014 Response:

An irrelevant statement of the obvious – it has been this way since the end of the War in the Pacific.

The description of subsistence villagers as ‘low income travellers’ is patronising. It is their country and most have no other choice but to carry heavy bilums and babies if they want to visit relatives, seek employment opportunities, or require medical treatment,

2020 Update:

Comments in the 2014 response remain relevant.

Department of Environment and Conservation

‘The new externally funded and run project through the Global Environment Fund, UNDP, working closely with DEC, is linking closely with the Kokoda Initiative activities and using them as the model for GEF implementation across New Britain and wider sections of the Owen Stanley Ranges’.

2014 Response:

New Britain has nothing to do with the Kokoda Trekking Industry.

‘The improved capacity of DEC TEM staff capacity is being used to deliver the GEF program and other activities within DEC. An ongoing challenge for DEC/CEPA and the Kokoda Initiative will be to retain these specialised skills within the Initiative activities’.

2014 Response:

This is not relevant to the Kokoda Trekking Industry.

‘The recent legislation to support formation of the CEPA will lead to a period of change as the current DEC resources are transferred to the new CEPA’.

2014 Response:

A self-evident statement.

‘DEC based activities have been constrained by:

The dis/relocation of the DEC office in 2013, in particular the impact on the computer network. Under resourcing of the DEC TEM Branch delivering the Kokoda Initiative (and other DEC) activities both in proposed PNG counterpart funding and in staffing resources’.

2014 Response:

Not sure of the relevance of this to the Kokoda trekking industry.

‘The Review team noted that DEC has another high level adviser^[1] to the Minister and DEC/CEPA’.

2014 Response:

Not sure of the significance of this finding.

Kokoda Track Authority

‘The KTA is fulfilling its mandate of keeping the Track open and managing funds collected from trekking operations for paying villages to undertake track maintenance and development payments to the communities along the track. The livelihood activities have been less successful’

2014 Response:

The KTA is currently dysfunctional as a management authority as a result of the failure of the Australian CEO to introduce a single management protocol during his tenure from 2009-2012.

The Livelihoods Project was a complete failure.

The project was conceived in Canberra without any consultation with the PNG Department of Community Development, the KTA, trek operators or local villagers. Not one vegetable has been produced or a single additional kina been produced as a result of the project.

The only beneficiaries are NGOs who participate in it and government officials who are paid to write ‘*monty python*’ reports about it.

2020 Update:

No action has been taken to rectify the dysfunction of the KTA which is now beyond dysfunctional and completely irrelevant to the efficient functioning of the Kokoda trekking industry.

‘The KTA has an enthusiastic group of young staff led by the CEO who is supported by the DoE business systems adviser. Formal staff and board capacity building activities have recently commenced[1], but structured further inputs are required’.

2014 Response:

According to informal feedback from KTA staff the Department of Environment business systems advisor spends most of his time compiling reports for Canberra. There is no evidence of any form of business system in place for the management of the Kokoda trekking industry.

2020 Update:

There is no evidence on outcomes from any Australian ‘business systems advisors’ assigned to the KTA over the years.

‘Recent increases in trekking company licence fees supplemented by trekkers’ fees provide a substantial level of income that can support the core KTA track regulatory and track management functions’.

2014 Response:

The impact of increases in license fees is minimal because of the lack of governance in the system – another failed legacy of the Australian CEO during the period 2009-2012. The current licensing system is dysfunctional.

2020 Update:

Trek fees do provide a ‘substantial level of income’ – but it seems to be for the benefit of KTA office staff and their ‘wan toks’ in Port Moresby.

There has been no investment in the most basic of benefits for their paying customers i.e. trekkers – this is evident in the fact that there is not a single toilet along the entire trail that would meet the most basic hygiene standard.

Nobody knows how the funds are spent because of the KTA has never produced a financial report.

‘The KTA is a special purpose authority (SPA) managing trekker fees for the benefit of communities along the Track and maintenance of the Track. A continued focus on improving the efficiencies of business systems and operations will maximise the funds that can be returned to communities along the Track’.

2014 Response:

One of the key objectives in the proposal for the establishment of a management authority for the Kokoda Trail was to establish ‘Kokoda’ as a model for a wartime tourism industry in PNG.

Another key objective was to ensure that villagers along the Kokoda Trail received shared benefits from the emerging Kokoda trekking industry.

The Kokoda Track (Special Purpose Authority) was proclaimed as a statutory government body of the Kokoda and Koiari Rural Local-level Governments June 2003. There are currently no business systems to improve as there are none in place for the management of the Kokoda trekking industry.

2020 Update:

There are no business systems in the KTA to ‘improve’ – and the amount of funds returned to communities along the trail has diminished to almost nothing since 2014.

‘KTA has had extensive long and short term technical assistance and unstructured capacity building inputs[1] which have assisted in development of the current staff resources and management systems. The challenge now is to transition the organisation to a financially viable business model using cost-effective capacity building and support resources that can provide mentoring and specialised technical inputs as required. This will require a narrower range of focused activities’.

2014 Response:

The purpose of the KTA is to manage the Kokoda trekking industry.

It is NOT a marketing organisation. It is NOT a training organisation. It is NOT a road construction organisation. It is NOT a sponsorship body. It is NOT a philanthropic body.

It is a commercial business!

2020 Update:

There has been absolutely no ‘*transition the organisation to a financially viable business model*’.

‘To support the organisation development activities, the Board will need to develop its capacity to guide and support senior management. This will require a process to develop the skills and understanding of governance and business management issues of board members’.

2014 Response:

Agree

‘KTA is the best known ‘face’ of the Kokoda Initiative and also has the closest interaction with the trekking companies regularly using the Track and the Track communities. It is sometimes wrongly linked with issues with other Kokoda Initiative activities’.

2014 Response:

The KTA does not have the trust of the local communities along the trail or of the legitimate trek operators because of the lack of governance and transparency.

2020 Update:

The KTA has absolutely no interaction with trekking companies (apart from the Australian Kokoda Tour Operators Association established to protect the interests of their members).

The Kokoda Tour Operators Association (KTOA) and KTA seem to appease each other – this is evident in the fact that the KTA was ‘persuaded’ not to table the unanimous resolution of PNG trek operators to put a stop to the exploitation of their guides and porters at the KTA Forum in Cairns in November 2017.

The KTA continues to refuse to release Minutes of the forum which would indicate that they betrayed the people they were established to protect in order to appease the KTOA. [More detail is available on this link.](#)

‘The planned trek information / booking website has not been developed but DEC resources have been committed for the work. Trekking operators and other stakeholders view this as a priority activity’.

2014 Response:

There is no excuse for the failure to develop such an important management tool. If DEC resources have been committed for the development of a website they are yet to consult with trek operators.

2020 Update:

Five years later it remains a ‘priority activity’ but no action has been taken to rectify it.

‘Some stakeholders interviewed expressed concern about the environmental impacts from the higher numbers of trekkers in the mid 2000s. The sustainable capacity of the Track for trekkers (and local non-trekkers) and opportunities to promote visits by more trekkers are important factors in the long term financial viability of the KTA’.

2014 Response:

The peak periods along the trail are the school holidays. After seven years in-country there is no system in place to manage trek itineraries and campsite bookings. If the trail does have a given capacity and government bodies are genuine in their desire for villagers to maximise benefits from the trekking industry then marketing programs should be pitched at the higher end of the market.

2020 Update:

Five years on and there is still no system that allows for campsites to be booked – and there is no trek itinerary management system in place. As a result nobody knows who is on the trail during the peak school holiday periods – nobody knows how many are in the trek groups, which direction they are trekking or where they intend to camp.

Local villagers have no idea who is arriving, how many, or when so they are unable to prepare to receptions or services for them to value-add to the experience.

‘The twice yearly trekking operator forums have been a valuable communication tool with the trekking industry, particularly in PNG. Improved communication of progress in addressing recurrent issues is needed’.

2014 Response:

If this was true they would be well attended. They aren’t because they are regarded as talkfests without outcomes.

The most effective means of communication is via a proper website and social media. Trek operator forums should be replaced by village-based workshops to engage with those involved in, and affected by, the Kokoda trekking industry i.e. guides and carriers from local villages, clan leaders, landowners, teachers and villagers.

2020 Update:

KTA Forums are a farce and should be discontinued. There has not been a single outcome from a forum. Any information the Kokoda Initiative or KTA wish to distribute can be provided via email and newsletters.

It is instructive that the KTA has not produced a single newsletter since 2014!

‘A published consolidated annual operational and financial report to the Kokoda Initiative partners and stakeholders such as the trek operators may address criticisms of KTA from stakeholders. As the KTA manages both trekker fees and public funds, public transparency on business activities and financial management is needed. An annual report is also required under the GoPNG Local Level Government Act’.

2014 Response:

Trek operators are the main contributors to the KTA via the trek fees they pay. They have never been issued with an Annual Report. The books were effectively closed by the Australian CEO in 2010. Trek operator statistics were kept in the secret file and no financial reports were disseminated. This has led to the high level of distrust that now exists between the KTA and trek operators.

2020 Update:

No financial reports have ever been published by the KTA since the Kokoda Initiative assumed control of the Kokoda Trail in 2009. This is in clear breach of the ‘GoPNG Local Level Government Act but nobody seems to care..

‘The KTA Livelihoods Project Scoping Study undertaken in late 2013 identified some areas where there were opportunities for improvement. Also the Economic Significance of Trekking on the Kokoda Track in 2012 made a start on quantifying the benefits of the trekking industry to communities along the Track, however, these studies do not provide a consolidated summary of the economic benefits of the trekking industry and an analysis of the distribution and quantum of benefits’.

2014 Response:

The KTA Livelihoods Project Scoping Study has never been released to trek operators.

The ‘Economic Significance of Trekking’ project was a desk-top study by yet another consultant. Information was gleaned from telephone conversations with selected trek operators.

The Australian Government has never commissioned the most important study that need to be undertaken.

Many millions of kina have flushed through village economies over the past decade yet there is nothing to show for it in local villages. A study therefore needs to be undertaken to follow the flow of money in their Wan-Tok system. How much goes to the church? How much goes to living expenses in Port Moresby or Popondetta? How much goes to education? Etc. It is not possible to assist in advising villagers of more effective saving/investment strategies until we know how they manage their money today.

2020 Update:

The ‘Village Livelihoods Project’ – conceived in Canberra without any consultation with trek operators was a complete failure.

No action has been taken since 2014 in order to seek to understand how the income received from the Kokoda trekking industry flows through village communities.

‘There is some uncertainty on the level of enforcement of requirements for trek operators including public liability insurance coverage and all trekkers registering and paying track fees. The coordination of trekker registration and monitoring process could be improved’.

2014 Response:

The management authority has a duty of care to ensure that every trek operator who applies for or holds a licence to operate on the Kokoda Trail has a current Public Liability Insurance Policy.

No ifs! No buts! No maybe’s!

2020 Update:

No action has been taken to address this important issue since 2014.

‘The status of the KTA as a special purpose authority under the Central and Oro provincial governments has not significantly limited the effectiveness of the organisation’.

2014 Response:

The KTA was initially allocated to the Minister for Local Government and Intergovernmental Relations because it was new Special Purpose Authority and there was no precedent for such a body.

The Kokoda Trail has since emerged as the most popular tourism destination for PNG. The management authority should therefore be elevated as a national body responsible to the Office of Arts, Culture and Tourism or as an independent business body under the auspices of the Independent Public Business Corporation as a model for the development of a wartime tourism industry.

2020 Update:

No action has been taken to discuss this issue or to transfer responsibility for PNGs most popular tourism destination from the Minister of Provincial and Local Level Government to the Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture where it reside.

Kokoda Development Project

‘The KDP has delivered required health and education infrastructure along the Track with some supporting capacity building which is appreciated by the communities and provincial and local level governments. Health activities had been given greater emphasis compared to school activities. Other possible KDP activities such as law and justice, and community development have not been implemented’.

2014 Response:

The KDP NEVER notified trek operators of any of their planned developments and has NEVER sought feedback on their effectiveness.

Trek operators are on the trail most of the year and would only be too willing to collate feedback from their local guides and carriers about the effectiveness of their programs.

2020 Update:

The KDP was amalgamated with the Kokoda Initiative in 2015 however there has been no improvement in the notification of their activities since 2014.

‘The KDP model for community driven construction of schools with materials provided by KDP has led to some schools not being built and several other communities, other NGOs including the KTF assisted the communities to complete the building’.

2014 Response:

Prior to the arrival of Government/NGO handouts local communities used to work together to build classrooms and teachers houses. When I asked one community why they had not finished one aid funded school at Kovovo they replied *‘Not our school – AusAID school’*. So they waited.

The aid funded KDP school at Kagi was completed two years ago and there are still no desks in the two classrooms. The KDP should liaise with trek operators who could provide feedback and assist in the continuous supply of school materials. Adventure Kokoda has a ‘Bring a Book’ program which has placed more than 5000 educational books in PNG schools. The company has never been contacted by the KDP.

2020 Update:

The village of Isurava was relocated to its current location after the war.

After the development of the Isurava Memorial in 2002 – approximately one hour’s walking time to the south of the village – many local villagers relocated to the new site.

The population of the village has been declining since 2002 and is currently estimated to be about 50.

Despite the declining population the Kokoda Initiative decided to build a modern elementary school in the village.

According to the villagers there were no workshops conducted with the remaining clans in the village to see if there was a need for a school.

It is normal practice in local villagers to build their own elementary schools, which are essentially village kindergartens, from ‘bush materials’ and provide their own teachers. The Government with Australian aid support would focus on the construction of primary schools which made sense.

The villagers at Isurava obviously agreed to an offer of a school as they would. Two modern classrooms were subsequently built with a capacity for up to 50 students and three new toilets.

After the school was built a delegation of 8 officials, led by Mark Nizette, was reported to have chartered a helicopter to fly in for the official opening. Such extravagant examples of PR overkill do not enhance our image in the eyes of local communities who cannot understand why we don’t provide a similar helicopter service to assist them in evacuating seriously ill or injured villagers.

Today the school has a total of 13 students aged 3 – 6 years. They have the best ratio of toilets per students across the entire Kokoda Trail with one modern toilet per 4 elementary school students.

This makes a mockery out of the supposed intent of the Kokoda Initiative in improving conditions along the Kokoda Trail where they are yet to provide a single hygienic toilet for the 50,000 Australian taxpayers who have paid to trek across the Kokoda Trail over the past decade – and who have paid \$5 million in trek fees.

An investigation should be initiated to ascertain what was the process for determining the need for the school and was a cost-benefit analysis conducted as part of the evaluation process for the school?

It should also seek to understand why two classrooms were built without enough students to occupy them – what was the cost of building the school – and what was the cost of the helicopter used for the official delegation to open the school?

‘Planning, management and coordination of the KDP activities has been less than satisfactory. After an initial needs analysis, the KDP has provided limited information on how infrastructure and support activities were planned. This has led to the other stakeholders responsible for equipping and staffing/operating the new facilities not being prepared to meet the required commitments or having to include them in other activities (eg. KTF). Management arrangements for KDP under the PLGP have been revised and are being monitored’.

2014 Response:

The KDP does not engage with the income generators – KDP officials have never been sighted along the Kokoda Trail.

‘An integrated database of education, health, other community facilities and trekking support resources along the Track to support planning of priorities and future activities by all government and NGO stakeholders is not in place (a KT Public Assets database). This would complement other possible databases of significant cultural and heritage items along the Track’.

2014 Response:

This is an inexcusable management failure.

2020 Update:

This was an inexcusable management failure in 2014 and it remains so in 2020.

Other Agencies (Tourist Promotion Authority, National Museum and Art Gallery

‘These agencies are undertaking agreed Kokoda Initiative activities. TPA is satisfied with its engagement and has commenced implementing agreed activities under a direct contract with the DoE. NMAG is chairing the advisory committee for the oral history project currently in progress. The proposed tourism/marketing position in KTA will strengthen these linkages’.

2014 Response:

The Oral History project is a good initiative – as is the research work being carried out on Paga Hill and Blamey’s Garden.

Marketing should be co-ordinated at the national level (PNG Tourism-Air Niugini) and not delegated to the organisation responsible for managing the Kokoda Trekking Industry.

2020 Update:

There has been no coordinated marketing plan developed in partnership with PNG Tourism or Air Niugini since 2014.

A marketing submission in response from a request from KTA after a forum in 2018 has been ignored. **The submission can be viewed on this link,**

Coordination and Management

‘The Kokoda Initiative design provides for structured coordination and planning processes at several levels, guided by the Senior Adviser. The MTR team was concerned to find some higher level officials who, despite participating in these higher level activities, still did not fully understand the Kokoda Initiative concept and implementation plans. This is largely an internal communications issue accentuated by the delayed recruitment of communications resources in DEC after the initial communication officer stepped down’.

2014 Response:

The current Senior Adviser for the Kokoda Initiative is the only Australian ever engaged who has an empathetic understanding of Melanesian Culture and the significance of our shared wartime history. This is due to the fact that he has lived in PNG for many years, is fluent in the local language, understands culture and has previously worked at the Australian War Memorial. He is the reason the whole edifice has not collapsed like a house of cards because he has earned the respect of his PNG counterparts and trek operators. He should be placed in charge of a combined KDP and Kokoda Initiative and be allocated the necessary resources to carry out his role.

2020 Update:

The 2014 response has proved to be inaccurate. The Australian Strategic Management Advisor has proved to be adept at local ‘politics’ but is considered to be duplicitous by some who have followed him over a longer term.

No details of his ‘strategic advice’ have ever been published.

The dysfunctional management of the Kokoda trekking industry; the desecration of significant military heritage sites along the trail; the degradation of the environment along the trail; the lack of a trail maintenance plan; the exploitation of local guides and carriers; the lack of any micro-finance initiatives for local village communities; the failure to conduct village workshops; and the failure to engage an accredited Military Heritage Architect to develop a Master Heritage Interpretation Plan for the trail have all occurred under his watch.

He has lost the trust of many of those who have dealt with him over the years.

‘The PNG National Taskforce did not operate effectively and has been upgraded to a more focused Ministerial Committee. In Australia, the proposed Taskforce has also had limited inputs’.

2014 Response:

The Australian Taskforce is a *mystery* body – it does not engage with trek operators or local villagers and there is no evidence of any activity or outcomes. It should be abolished.

2020 Update:

The ‘Australian Taskforce’ remains a mystery body.

‘The DoE Kokoda Initiative management and support team in Australia provide support to all the activity areas, apart from the KDP activities implemented through Australian Aid. The changes in

financial and reporting arrangements between DoE and AusAID / DFAT may have increased the workload on DoE resources. As noted above, the Australian Aid funded KDP management performance has been less than satisfactory’.

2014 Response:

The Australian Aid funded KDP management performance has not been ‘less than satisfactory’ – it has been a complete failure.

2020 Update:

No improvement has been identified since the KDP roles and responsibilities were transferred to the Kokoda Initiative in 2015.

‘Compared to other programs reviewed by MTR members, the Kokoda Initiative appears to have a high proportion of funds allocated to activity management. The MTR team accepts that the more complex Kokoda Initiative design and range of stakeholders and implementing agencies requires a greater level of coordination. However, options to decentralise administration and support functions and reduce the level of Australian-based coordination and management costs should be explored’.

2014 Response:

The functions of the Kokoda Initiative should be divided between the Kokoda Trail and the Brown River Catchment Area.

Management of the Kokoda Trail should focus on protecting the wartime heritage of the Kokoda campaign between Owers Corner and Kokoda.

The Brown River Catchment Area is an environmental management issue. Separation of the two components would reduce the complexity of the current organisation.

2020 Update:

The construction of the Edevu Hydro Project on the Brown River negates the need for any further involvement by the Kokoda Initiative in this area.

The management of the Kokoda Trail should be based on the tourism potential of the wartime heritage of the area with responsibility being transferred to the Minister for Tourism, Arts and Culture.

‘At field level in the Kokoda Initiative area, there is a lack of coordination between the three main implementing agencies and NGOs working in the area. The Kokoda Initiative field level activities do not have a structured and coordinated approach to interacting with village communities and their PNG-mandated governance structures as part of national bottom-up planning processes. This is leading to some duplication but, more importantly, has led to infrastructure activities not being finished and resourced to ensure they are fully utilised’.

2014 Response:

The continual refusal of the Australian Government to conduct village based workshops with facilitators fluent in Tok Pisin is the reason for the lack of a structured and co-ordinated approach. Australian Government officials have been advised of the need for these workshops since 2009 but have ignored all requests.

There is no evidence of a ‘bottom-up’ planning process.

2020 Update:

There has been no progress on this issue since 2014.

No village-based workshops have been conducted and there is still no evidence of a 'bottom-up' planning process. In fact since the failure of the 'KTA Strategic Plan 2012-2015 there is no evidence of any plan!

'There is little evidence of formal linkages / MOUs with implementing partners and participating communities to clarify expected partner initial and ongoing inputs and outcomes expected'.

2014 Response:

PNG is not a 'formal' society.

The most effective way of getting agreement is through the conduct of village workshops.

Australian Government officials have never conducted one of these and are therefore unaware of their effectiveness.

2020 Update:

There is no evidence of any advancement or improvement in this area since 2014.

'Opportunities to link with other GoPNG (PIP and DSIP funding) and NGO partners (such as KTF) have not been developed. The Initiative is largely using GoA development funds'.

2014 Response:

Network Kokoda PNG is a philanthropic entity currently providing fresh produce to 1200 boarding students at Sogeri and Iaowari High Schools through their agricultural learning projects. A local agricultural scientist has been employed as Field Manager.

Since then Network Kokoda has built an Agricultural Learning Centre at Sogeri with a classroom; market garden and freezer/cool-room facilities. The Field Manager has developed market gardens at six villages on the Sogeri Plateau and is now marketing their produce to City Pharmacy supermarkets and Boroko Foodworld.

Community Learning Centres have been built at Abuari and Kokoda.

Dame Carol Kidu is a Director of Network Kokoda PNG which models their programs on the policies she developed as the former Minister for Community Development. These initiatives have been achieved without any funding or assistance from the Australian Government however Network Kokoda is willing to work in partnership with any agency willing to provide support.

2020 Update:

The Kokoda Initiative has not acknowledged Network Kokoda since 2014.

'In summary, there may have been more coordination and planning activities than necessary at the higher levels of management contrasting to inadequate inputs to coordination and management at community and local government levels'.

2014 Response:

This is a statement of the obvious.

2020 Update:

There has been no change the *modus operandi* of the Kokoda Initiative in this regard since 2014.

Capacity Issues

‘At provincial and local government levels, funding (through PIP, DSIP and other sources) is available, but the administrations do not have the capacity (staff and/or skills) to undertake the consultation/planning and implementation/monitoring functions needed to design and manage community-level activities’,

2014 Response:

Network Kokoda PNG has the capacity to develop and manage community level activities through their utilisation of Adventure Kokoda trek leaders who are on the trail almost continuously between April and November each year.

Network Kododa has utilised the resources of the Koiari Local Level Government Association to hire plant to plough gardens on the Sogeri Plateau. They are in the process of developing an MOU with the President of the Association.

2020 Update:

There is no evidence of any improvement in this area.

‘The two long term advisers, supported by short term inputs from the Canberra-based support resources and technical specialists, are providing a range of services to both their agencies (DEC and KTA) and to the Kokoda Initiative in a range of roles. Part of their time is used for administrative and secretariat functions’.

2014 Response:

There is only one effective Australian adviser involved in the Kokoda Initiative – this is due to his experience, knowledge and empathy with his PNG counterparts.

2020 Update:

The 2014 response is retracted. The Kokoda Initiative ‘long-term’ advisers have not demonstrated any understanding of the reality of the Kokoda trekking industry; the business of tourism; or the significance of the wartime heritage of the Kokoda Trail.

Communications

‘There have been delays in establishing an integrated communication approach due to changes in communications staff and delays in recruiting their replacements. The formation of a communications sub-committee / group led by the DEC communications officer will strengthen this function’.

2014 Response:

This is an outcome of the failure of the Australian CEO to develop a proper website and social media program during his tenure from 2009-2012 – despite requests from trek operators.

The KTA has never produced an annual report and has not produced a newsletter or trek operator statistics (as agreed upon at a forum) for more than 12 months.

2020 Update:

No action has been taken on the 2014 response.

Gender

‘These issues are being addressed currently by the Gender consultant with her draft report delivered in late May 2014. Initial feedback from the consultant is that Gender issues have not been addressed in the Program to date and the targeting of program outcome and benefits, particularly in Track communities’.

2014 Response:

Women have been providing cooked food for PNG guides and carriers for the past 25 years. They quietly prepare and deliver hot food to them and are paid for it.

Women also set up fresh fruit stalls at various locations along the trail. Whatever food is left after trekker purchases is brought by the trek operator and provided to guides and carriers.

Women at the Community Learning Centre at Abuari have been provided with sewing machines, sewing tables and material to make ‘meri’ dresses to sell at the Kokoda markets.

Women along the trail are making bilums which are purchased by trekkers.

Women organise children’s sing-sing groups and receive payment for doing so.

Women participate in cultural dance groups and receive payment for doing so.

The ‘Gender consultant’ would have been advised of this participation if he/she had bothered to consult with trek operators as part of his/her consultancy. One would hope the ‘Gender consultant’ is a PNG citizen.

2020 Update:

No action has been taken to include women from villagers in sustainable income earning opportunities since 2014.

‘Studies that would inform the design of future livelihoods and income generating activities could include a more detailed assessment of the roles, needs and opportunities for women in Track communities and also assessment of the benefits and other effects of trekking generated income on the Track communities’.

2014 Response:

Trek operators are the most cost effective and relevant means of achieving feedback on programs initiated along the Kokoda Trail.

Unfortunately they have been ignored in this regard since the Australian Government assumed control of the Kokoda Trekking Industry.

2020 Update:

There has been no attempt to enlist the support of trek operators in regard to initiating, supporting or providing feedback that would assist in the economic development of women along the trail since 2014.

Monitoring and Evaluation

‘For both Kokoda Initiative and KDP, the M&E processes are weak and the proposed M&E plans for the overall Initiative may be too complex. As with Gender, M&E activities were not built into

the design and have not been mainstreamed in implementation. The complexity of the program design is reflected in the complexity of the Kokoda Initiative M&E plan. The program implementing agencies do not have the resources at present needed to implement the proposed M&E plan’.

2014 Response:

The failure of this process was predictable.

The most effective way of injecting a degree of reality into Canberra based initiatives such as the Village Livelihood Program is to link the salaries of those responsible to the success or failure of the program. If the academics/bureaucrats/consultants/NGOs had some skin in the game they would be more likely to interrogate ‘thought bubbles’ and would seek more dialogue with the key stakeholders of the Kokoda Trekking Industry.

2020 Update:

The 2014 response remains relevant.

Sustainability

‘The JU2 design has a specific goal relating to sustainability. Within the JU2 timeframe (5 years), putting in place and institutionalising processes and funding for necessary ongoing activities and organisations was unrealistic. As outlined in the above sections, Kokoda Initiative has worked through the responsible PNG government agencies with good success at national level and more limited success at provincial and community level’.

2014 Response:

This seems to indicate that higher level deliberations are considered to be successful but the implementation of the policy outcomes at the grassroots level are not.

2020 Update:

The definition of ‘good success’ should be expanded.

There is very little within the management of the Kokoda Trail that would meet this definition.

Recommendations for remainder of JU2

These recommendations are proposed to improve the cost-effectiveness and impact of the remaining two years of the JU2.

DEC/CEPA

‘Kokoda Initiative support the transition of DEC to the new CEPA. During the transition phase, there should be limited changes to the current level of engagement with Kokoda Initiative activities’.

2014 Response:

This is clearly a PNG Government initiative/responsibility.

‘The transition of DEC’s responsibilities to CEPA which is planned to be self-funding will be challenging and justifies ongoing support to the new agency in both institutional development and specialised technical areas such as funding sources (PES, biodiversity credits, etc.) for community and landowner payments’.

2014 Response:

A statement of the obvious.

‘The focus of the long term DEC adviser activities should be reassessed in relation to the need for ongoing high level technical environmental management skills or if the adviser profile should change to only mentoring the TEM team and providing high level strategic advice and support to the Minister and new CEPA executive’.

2014 Response:

‘Technical environmental management skills’ are not a requirement for providing advice on the Kokoda Trail or the Kokoda trekking industry,

A detailed technical knowledge of the military history of the Kokoda campaign and business qualifications/experience should be major factors in the recruitment of any ‘advisors’ associated with the Kokoda Trail.

2020 Update:

The 2014 response remains relevant.

‘As DEC transitions to the newly created CEPA, DEC / CEPA seek to make use of funds from the unused part of GoPNG funding committed at the start of JU2 for Initiative activities. (an estimated K6 million)’.

2014 Response:

The PNG Government will issue funds according to their own priorities. They should try and avoid the waste that has been apparent in Australian Government funding on the Kokoda Trekking Industry.

2020 Update:

There is no evidence of any funds being invested to meet the needs of trekkers or villagers and enhance the trekking experience.

Kokoda Track Authority

‘KTA should focus on its core business of regulating use of the Track and maximising the proportion of trekker fees used for basic track maintenance and contributions to communities along the Track’.

2014 Response:

The role of the KTA should be more specifically redefined thus:

‘To manage the Kokoda trekking industry on a commercial basis’.

2020 Update:

No action has been taken to redefine the role and responsibilities of the KTA which is now beyond dysfunctional and completely irrelevant to the Kokoda trekking industry.

‘KTA should concentrate on its core mandate as set out in Goal 1 of the JU2. This should be possible within the resources already in place. The implementation modality for KTA and work plans continue as described currently, except the KTA livelihoods activities which should be reassessed. DoE should only consider additional short term resourcing (to that scheduled in the work plans) when requested by the agencies (not advisers) or if there is an emergency’.

2014 Response:

'implementation modality' – WTF does this mean?

Goal 1 of the JU 2 needs to be rewritten. The KTA does not have the expertise or resources to manage philanthropic activities or the maintenance of roads and airstrips.

2020 Update:

No action has been taken in this regard since 2014.

'Uncommitted funds allocated to livelihoods activities could be directed into identified priority community activities such as completing the provision of solar lighting[1] for community assets such as the schools, health centres or other locations agreed by the communities. Or, subject to ensuring the ward development plans include the views all communities in the ward, disbursing these funds through the current ward development funds used to disburse trekker fees back to communities. Alternatively, or non-government organisation(s) (NGO) that are already implementing community development activities along the Track could be supported'.

2014 Response:

Uncommitted funds should be allocated to Network Kokoda to allow them to replicate their programs at Sogeri on the Kokoda plateau.

Network Kokoda PNG should be allocated responsibility for conducting village workshops because of the trust they have developed in local communities over the past 25 years.

2020 Update:

No action was taken to engage Network Kokoda in this regard.

'Completion and commissioning of the trekking reservation and management website should be a high priority. Successful implementation of this website would contribute to rebuilding the KTA relationship with the Australian based trekking companies. Guesthouse / camping ground bookings should be excluded'.

2014 Response:

The website should be designed to meet the needs of the management authority, licensed trek operators and local communities.

2020 Update:

No action has been taken to update the KTA website since 2014. It remains outdated, irrelevant and inaccurate.

'The tour operator forum approach and implementation should be reviewed and refreshed to make it more attractive for operators to participate. Part of this process should include ensuring that issues raised by and agreed to by operator participants are addressed and reported back to all operators. The operator forum is a venue for providing capacity building and business development support to emerging local trekking companies'.

2014 Response:

This will not work in its current format. If there is an issue to be addressed the managing authority should distribute a draft paper and call for submissions from trek operators.

Submissions should be circulated for comment before a final draft is produced.

Information on the Kokoda trekking industry can be distributed via the website, a blog, a newsletter, Facebook and other social media means. An annual PNG Adventure Conference convened by the Office of Arts, Culture and Tourism would be a more effective means of bringing stakeholders together. Such a conference could be held in different resort locations in PNG and feature a showcase of operators.

2020 Update:

No action has been initiated to improve the quality of information exchange between the Kokoda Initiative, KTA and trek operators. Forums have continued in their old form and can best be described as an irrelevant farce.

‘KTA should publish and circulate an annual report detailing key information on track operations and improvements, trekker numbers and, transparent and detailed financial reports’.

2014 Response:

‘Trek operators have been SCREAMING for this since 2009 – but have been consistently ignored by Australian Government officials. The KTA has never published a comprehensive annual report which is a major reason for the lack of trust that exists between trek operators and management’.

2020 Update:

No action has been taken to address this issue since 2014.

‘The draft KTA capacity building plan developed by the business systems adviser needs to reviewed and revised before implementation starts’.

2014 Response:

This has never been sighted – yet another reason for the lack of trust!

2020 Update:

The ‘draft KTA capacity building plan’ has never been distributed to trek operators.

‘KTA should develop and implement a process to develop the skills and understanding of governance and business management issues for board members’.

2014 Response:

This should have happened in 2009. Another of a litany of failures by the Australian management group.

2020 Update:

No action has been taken in this regard since 2014. The KTA continues to lack the business skills to operate an effective management organisation.

‘As part of preparing for a future activity, building on the Kokoda Initiative, a study(/s) be commissioned on the sustainable trekking load the Track and its communities can support and also the drivers of and future demand for Kokoda Track treks and other use by PNG communities. The study should have inputs from TPA on projected visits by trekkers to PNG and their interest in trekking the Kokoda Track’.

2014 Response:

This is a relatively simple task requiring campsite certification, itinerary management and a booking system. School holidays are peak periods. If the aim is to determine the capacity of the trail during these periods and maximise the return to local villagers then the marketing strategy should be pitched to the higher end of the market.

Consideration should be given to the introduction of peak season trek fees or the licensing of peak season trek operators.

2020 Update:

There is no evidence of any action taken in this regard since 2014.

‘These studies will facilitate assessment of the long term sustainability / financial viability of the KTA’.

2014 Response:

Increasing interest in our shared wartime history will ensure increasing numbers of Australian and PNG trekkers will want to trek Kokoda. The financial viability of the industry will be assured if the management authority is managed as a commercial enterprise.

2020 Update:

No action has been initiated in this regards since 2014.

‘If resources and funding are available, the 2012 study on the economic benefits of the trekking industry should be updated with a more comprehensive analysis of the flow and quantum of benefits (cash and kind) to the communities and, local and Australian based trekking companies’.

2014 Response:

The 2012 study was a desktop exercise and largely irrelevant.

Economic benefits include wages for guides and carriers, campsite fees, commercial activities along the trail, donations of clothing and equipment by trekkers to guides and carriers at the end of treks, philanthropic programs, donations of school and health supplies.

2020 Update:

No action has been taken in this regards since 2014.

‘The relationship between KTA and the trekking companies needs to be strengthened with greatly increased cooperation (and tolerance) – it will be a major challenge to achieve it but would be a very worthwhile use of GoA funds to achieve sustainability. This could be part of the tourism officer’s role but will require ongoing support from senior GoA and GoPNG officials’.

2014 Response:

The prime responsibility for the KTA is to ensure there is a level playing field for all trek operators. It should not be involved in an apartheid system which differentiates between Australian and PNG trek operators. It is not their role to pick winners and losers. Marketing, training, sponsorships and philanthropy should not be part of the management charter.

2020 Update:

The working relationship between the KTA and trek operators has deteriorated since 2014.

Community Engagement and Planning ‘Kokoda Initiative develop and implement a systematic and coordinated approach to community engagement that aligns with GoPNG processes and ensures women and disadvantaged groups are included in the planning and fund allocation processes. This approach will need support with skills and resources not available in Kokoda Initiative implementing agencies’.

2014 Response:

Women and ‘disadvantaged groups’ are already involved in the Kokoda trekking industry. Network Kokoda PNG is a major donor to the orphans in Efogi village.

Adventure Kokoda has employed guides and carriers with disabilities for many years.

2020 Update:

There is no evidence of any action taken in this regard since 2014.

‘Kokoda Initiative strengthen its relationships with and understanding of other civil society organisations or NGOs supporting and investing in Track communities’.

2014 response:

Network Kokoda PNG works in close consultation with the Koiari Local Level Government.

The Network is currently supplies fresh produce to 1200 boarding students; has built an Agricultural Learning Centre at Sogeri; a Community Learning Centre at Abuari; installed water systems into the Sogeri Health Centre and Bisiatabu Primary School; and has six villagers involved in agricultural production.

Thus far the Network has been ignored by the Australian Department of Environment and the KDP.

The Network is not a provider of handouts. All initiatives involve local partnerships based on mutual obligation. The most effective means of strengthening relationships with local communities is through the conduct of annual workshops and continual contact via trek leaders, guides and carriers.

2020 Update:

Network Kokoda has never been consulted or approached by the Kokoda Initiative.

‘DFAT (with DoE support) facilitates formation of a Kokoda Track development working group (KTDWG) comprising the provincial governments, representatives of the Ministerial Committee, KTA, the KDP (or its successor), relevant NGOs (KTF, etc.) and trekking companies. This aligns with a concept put forward at the recent Sogeri Ministerial meeting[1]. The newly established technical working group (TWG) of the KIMC may be able to fill this role with additional organisations co-opted as required’.

2014 Response:

The PNG Kokoda Initiative Ministerial Committee is the proper agency for this role.

Kokoda trek operators should be engaged to provide feedback to the management authority who would then report to the PNG Ministerial Committee.

2020 Update:

No action has been taken to develop a 'Kokoda Track development working group' since 2014.

'If the KTDWG is successfully formed, the working group could be tasked with assisting the provincial governments to coordinate (but possibly later in planning and supervising) resources into community infrastructure and livelihoods activities along the Track and down to the northern beaches, i.e. the provinces lead the community development / livelihoods activities'.

2014 Response:

The 'Kokoda Track Development Working Group' will most likely be yet another *talkfest* group.

The northern beaches are a separate issue and require a separate model based on the Kokoda management model after it has been revised.

2020 Update:

The 'Kokoda Track Development Working Group' was obviously not established.

If it was nobody knows anything about it.

'The proposed Kokoda Initiative M&E plans be reviewed by the PLGP M&E specialist to simplify and operationalize the Kokoda Initiative draft M&E plan'.

2014 Response:

A practical and realistic monitoring and evaluation program would involve trek operators providing feedback on programs and activities across the trail as they employ guides and carriers from local villagers who will gladly participate if required.

2020 Update:

It is not known if anything happened in this regard.

'The Australian Aid section of the Australian High Commission has indicated that M&E system design and implementation resources within the KDP/PLGP could be made available to assist in refining and implementing the simplified M&E activities across the Initiative. The KTA Livelihoods officer should be included in these activities'.

2014 Response:

The PNG Government should assume responsibility for the management of the Kokoda Trekking Industry and keep it simple.

The Australian Government should then be invited to provide funding for:

- preparation of a master interpretative plan for significant battlesites between Owers Corner and Kokoda and the progressive development of interpretative memorials;
- infrastructure that impacts on the safety of Australians trekking Kokoda i.e. the road from Sogeri to Owers Corner and airfields at Menari, Efogi, Kagi, Naduri, Lake Myola and Kokoda and a VHF radio communications system; and
- Funding a Kokoda Initiative Liaison Officer who is fluent in *Tok Pisin* and familiar with Melanesian Culture.

2020 Update:

No action has been taken in this regards since 2014.

‘Additional Kokoda Initiative resources will need to be added (M&E position to act as a focal point, data collection/collation resources) to support the Kokoda Initiative M&E processes after the initial proposed M&E support through the PLGP’.

2014 Response:

The PNG management authority should liaise with trek operators to provide feedback and recommendations on the physical condition of the trail, any issues concerning local communities and the condition of significant sites.

2020 Update:

No action has been taken in this regards since 2014.

Coordination and Planning ‘Kokoda Initiative start a process to improve coordination / linkages at provincial and local levels. The new KIMC TWG should be able to lead this function. This should also improve linkages to other GoPNG funding streams (such as PIP, DSIP, etc.)’.

2014 Response:

This could be facilitated by the Kokoda Initiative Ministerial Committee via quarterly meetings involving Provincial and Local Government representatives; the management authority and the philanthropic body.

2020 Update:

No known action has been taken in this regard since 2014.

‘The PMC processes be reviewed and a formal reporting process be adopted to ensure that priority agreed activities are documented with action plans and timeframes, and the DoE project director and senior PNG agency managers are aware of these agreed actions’.

2014 Response:

Not sure what relevance the PMC has to the Kokoda Trekking Industry.

‘Kokoda Initiative needs to rebuild and/or develop relationships with other NGO stakeholders contributing to development of communities along the Track. The Kokoda Development Program and Australian Aid need to do more with NGO’s, including Seventh Day Adventist Church (SDA), the Anglican Church, the KTF and Network Kokoda’.

2014 Response:

The management authorities need to re-establish trust with the most important contributors to community development along the Kokoda Trail i.e. trek operators who are the income generators for the industry. NGOs do not have any personal skin in the game and contribute largely to a hand-out mentality. They should be encouraged to direct their endeavours to remote villages off the trail who receive no benefits from the trekking industry.

2020 Update:

The level of trust between the Kokoda Initiative, KTA and trek operators is the lowest it has been since the Australian Government assumed control of the Kokoda Trail in 2009.

Lessons Learned

'The planning processes for a program to address high level government relationships and priorities require adequate time for the planning and consultation process to consider options and reach consensus. Preparatory activities for a new Joint Understanding should commence at least 18 months before the current JU2 is completed to support a smooth transition and to ensure that funding from both parties is available.'

2014 Response:

Any new Joint Understanding for the Kokoda Trail should be developed by the Kokoda Initiative Ministerial Committee on behalf of the PNG Government.

Trek operators, PNG based philanthropic bodies, landowners, clan leaders teachers and women from local villagers should be involved in the process of preparing the Joint Agreement to ensure it is truly 'joint'.

2020 Update:

The Joint Understandings developed since the first one was signed in 2008 are largely irrelevant to the Kokoda trekking industry.

The solution is to develop a specific Joint Understanding to commemorate our shared wartime heritage of the Pacific War in PNG.

'For multi-agency programs, the design should have 3-4 clear high level outcomes that can be quantified and measured, and be designed with individual components that are largely implemented by one agency.'

2014 Response:

The two essential high level outcomes are:

- . An efficient and effective management body for the Kokoda Trekking Industry; and
- . An independent PNG based philanthropic body to support community development across the Kokoda Trail

2020 Update:

No action has been taken to identify '3-4 clear high level outcomes that can be quantified and measured'. The reality is that no 'high level outcomes have been identified - or achieved!

'Planning and coordination issues at community and local government level are just as important as higher level coordination activities, and are more time-consuming and resource intensive but are an essential element of sustainability. Resources are needed to ensure these community-level planning issues include all community members.'

2014 Response:

An independent PNG based philanthropic body should be appointed to conduct annual workshops in Koiari and Orokaiva villages along the trail to determine village needs and initiate/support programs that emanate from these workshops.

2020 Update:

No outcomes are evident from any action that might have been taken to improve 'planning and coordination issues at community and local government level'.

The solution is to establish Incorporated Landowner Groups (ILGs) across the trail and give them ownership of a commercial management enterprise to manage the Kokoda trekking industry. This does not seem to have been considered.

‘The Kokoda Initiative can strengthen the coordination and impact of government and NGO funded activities along the Track through encouraging and supporting linkages to the government system and ensuring that service delivery actors on the Track implement activities to the relevant GoPNG standards (for example in education and health). This coordination will also reduce duplication of activities within the same target groups, and allow activities and resources to be spread more equitably amongst the Kokoda Track communities’.

2014 Response:

The two bodies required for the effective management of the Kokoda Trekking Industry are:

- An efficient and effective management body for the Kokoda Trekking Industry; and
- A PNG based independent philanthropic body to support community development across the Kokoda Trail.

PNG now has the expertise to effectively manage the Kokoda Trekking Industry.

2020 Update:

There is no evidence of any effective action being implemented in this area since 2014.

‘Cross cutting issues such as gender and M&E need to be highlighted and embedded in the agreed design and the planned activities. Early awareness raising and practical capacity building in these areas is needed to focus early attention on how inclusion of these activities will strengthen program implementation, outcomes and sustainability’.

2014 Response:

Women from villages across the trail have been fully involved in the trekking industry for the past decade.

A dedicated PNG based philanthropic body would ensure there is progressive improvement. Women’s workshops would be part of the annual village workshop agenda.

2020 Update:

There is no evidence of any effective action being implemented in regard to this issue.

‘The program design process needs to take account of the appropriate information requirements for an effective M&E system relevant to the reporting requirements of the partner governments to make the M&E activities relevant to the implementing agencies’.

2014 Response:

Obviously – whatever that means!

‘A multi-agency and sector program such as the Kokoda Initiative, providing capacity building and specialised technical support, requires high levels of administrative, management and technical support services. Based on the experience of other Australian Aid programs in PNG and the Review team’s experience of similar programs in other countries, a core support/secretariat group staffed by experienced national staff can provide cost-effective support to a core group of

implementation agencies and service the M&E, reporting and management requirements of the funding agencies’.

2014 Response:

A convoluted statement of the obvious.

2020 Update:

It is possible for the Kokoda trekking industry to be economically sustainable based on an average of 3300 trekkers over the past five years if it is reorganised as a commercial enterprise.

If it continues to be managed as a Government agency with the competing interventions of local, provincial and national government where bureaucratic outcomes are more important than the needs of paying customers and local landowners it will require ongoing government support.

‘For a future initiative similar to the Kokoda Initiative, this would provide resources for secretariat services to the coordination / planning groups and meetings used to support stakeholder inputs at each level and also provide a focal point for M&E activities. The independent support resources of a secretariat would facilitate transition of specialist full time advisers from full-time inputs in an agency to providing part-time mentoring and specialist technical support as required while supporting program activities in other agencies’.

2014 Response:

A rather convoluted statement that seems to support/consolidate Australian advisor/consultant jobs in PNG.

‘The secretariat would then source specialised high level technical and management support from Australia (and other locations) as required’.

2014 Response:

Australian *‘high level technical specialists’* should not be imposed on PNG.

2020 Update:

The Australian experiment regarding the management of the Kokoda trekking industry has comprehensively failed.

The only means of restoring confidence and re-establishing trust is to separate wartime heritage from World Heritage.

Responsibility for wartime heritage should be transferred to the Department of Veterans Affairs and responsibility for the Kokoda Trail should be transferred to TPA.

The current ‘Kokoda Initiative’ should be rebadged as the ‘Owen Stanley Ranges Initiative’ and remain with DFAT and CEPA,

The Kokoda trekking industry should be reorganised as a commercial enterprise and managed as a professional business with Incorporated Landowner Groups across the trail as shareholders.

RESPONSE TO THE CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE KOKODA INITIATIVE SECOND JOINT UNDERSTANDING – MID TERM REVIEW – DRAFT REPORT – 30 JUNE 2014

Conclusions, Recommendations and Lessons Learned	COMMENTS
<p>8.1 Overall Assessment Including Impact</p> <p>Goal 1: A safe and well managed track</p> <p>The Track has remained open for all trekking seasons since the Initiative started. The KTA has processes to proactively assist in addressing likely constraints through routine maintenance programs, structured contacts with the communities, community contracts to maintain sections of the Track near each community and the ward development fund provides an annual allocation to all the wards along the Track.</p>	<p>This is misleading. The KTA has no management protocols in place or any structured system for the engagement of village communities</p> <p>The reason the trail has remained open is because of the relationships the income generators i.e. trek operators have established with local campsite owners and the economic benefits these have brought to local communities.</p> <p>Over the past three years 10 000 trekkers have crossed the Kokoda Trail – an average of 3 333 per year. These trekkers would each invest around K10 000 on airfares, accommodation, meals, clothing, camping gear and on-trail expenses in order to complete their trek. These amounts to a total spend of K33.5 million per year. The annual GST dividend between the Australian and PNG governments is therefore in the region of K3.3 million.</p> <p>The gross income for villagers (the on-trail spend) in 2015¹ is estimated to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K1.2 million in trek fees; • K0.5 million in campsite fees; • K3.5 million in wages for guides and personal carriers; • K1.7 million in income for village fruit, vegetables, sing-sings, billum bags, carved trekking poles; • K1 million in donated goods (boots, trekker clothing and gear based on an average of K300 per trekker).
<p>The Kokoda Initiative has funded enhancements made for safety of</p>	<p>The Australian Government has a duty of care to ensure there is adequate</p>

<p>communities and trekkers along the Track including upgrading and maintaining airstrips along the track, particularly at Kokoda.</p>	<p>infrastructure in place to ensure the safety of Australian trekkers on such an iconic pilgrimage. This funding should be an integral part of the aid budget.</p>
<p>The KTA office in Port Moresby provides a focal point for communities along the track and the radio network based there provides immediate contact for the Track communities. The office has a group of enthusiastic young staff that has benefited from the mentoring of the DoE business adviser. KTA has implemented livelihoods and trekking company liaison forums, however these forums challenge the capacity of the organisation.</p>	<p>The KTA office in Boroko was established in 2004 because it was a convenient and economical option at the time. Since then the PNG economy has improved significantly and the PNG trekking industry has consolidated.</p> <p>Office space in Port Moresby is now expensive and the area is heavily congested. It is not easy for villagers from as far away as the Mt Koiari area and Oro Province to access.</p> <p>It is time for the office to be relocated to 14-mile which would be more economical and easier to access. 14-mile has the potential to develop a Koiari Cultural Centre which would be accessible to more than 3 000 trekkers per year plus the increasing number of Australian visitors to Port Moresby.</p> <p>KTA has never conducted a ‘livelihood and trekker company liaison forum’.</p>
<p>Funds raised through the trekking fees are paid to communities for routine maintenance along the Track, through village maintenance agreements. GoA funds maintenance of the road to Ower’s Corner to the benefit of local communities and trekkers, and also major conservation and maintenance works including bridge maintenance and repairing damage caused by landslips, etc.</p>	<p>The authors of the review are obviously unaware of the actual conditions along the trail.</p> <p>There has been virtually no ‘routine maintenance’ along the trail for a number of years.</p> <p>The environmental degradation of the trail in the Nauro swamp area, Mt Bellamy and Templeton’s Crossing – Eora Creek is unacceptable.</p>
<p>There is some uncertainty on the level of enforcement of requirements for trek operators including public liability insurance coverage and all trekker registering and paying track fees.</p>	<p>There is no uncertainty at all. The managing authority has a duty of care to ensure all trek operators¹ they licence have adequate public liability insurance cover. This issue has been raised in many forums but has never been addressed.</p> <p>The management authority will eventually have to accept this reality.</p>
<p>The stakeholder workshops and trekking operator forums have provided opportunities for stakeholder contributions. There is good attendance at the trekking operator forums in PNG but interest in Australia could be improved through increased communication of progress in addressing recurrent operator concerns.</p>	<p>Trek operator forums are a bureaucratic construct in their current format. They are regarded as talkfests without outcomes.</p> <p>The PNG forums may well be attended but they cannot possibly address the issues that are of concern to the guides, carriers and campsite owners because of their location and their format. The only way their concerns</p>

¹ In 1991 the combined annual income of all subsistence villages along the Kokoda Trail was estimated to be in the region of K30,000.

	can be properly addressed is through workshops in their village environments.
<p>Goal 2: Enhanced quality of life for landowners and communities (along the Track)</p> <p>The GoA funded KDP has provided materials for and assisted communities to construct village health centres and elementary schools along the Track. The KDP has been working on 19 school construction and/or rehabilitation activities with three reported as completed (Kokoda elementary school and primary school, and Kagi elementary school). The KTF assisted communities complete some of the infrastructure. The KDP provided some limited training to complement the infrastructure construction.</p>	<p>The provision of these facilities are welcome investments in village communities however the assessment of need, the provision of education/health supplies and strategies for ongoing maintenance are not known.</p> <p>The school at Kagi was built two years ago but still does not have any desks in either of the two classrooms.</p> <p>There was a huge waste of money associated with poor negotiation of the requirements for schools and medical centre at Naoro 1 & 2. The lavish medical centre is not staffed; school construction was commenced in both villages, despite both being very small, simply because there was argument between the two villages – now the partially built Naoro 1 school has been demolished by the villagers and most of the villages have moved out to POM following their successful bid for compensation following the closure of the Frontier Resources mine.</p>
<p>Training, mentoring activities have been provided for village health volunteers (VHV) and health workers who are also supported by regular patrols along the Track.</p>	<p>These are important initiatives.</p>
<p>The community based mentors (CBM) implemented through KTA under the Livelihoods project have started to support micro and small enterprises (MSE) in their communities particularly guesthouses for trekkers. KTA has managed a program of supporting guesthouse and camping ground owners improve their facilities and become accredited. This accreditation process will align with the national accreditation scheme managed by the Tourism Promotion Authority (TPA), another Kokoda Initiative partner. Income generation / nutrition improvement activities require ongoing technical support.</p>	<p>It is not known whether the Departments of Education, Health and Community Development were consulted in regard to assessing the health and education needs of these communities – or whether they were developed to meet the perceived needs of the Aid/NGOs</p> <p>There is no evidence of any outcomes from the Livelihoods project. The ‘capacity building’ programs and micro-business enterprises’ run by NGOs has not produced a single economic outcome for local villagers. It is not possible to even buy a cup of PNG brewed coffee along the entire Kokoda Trail. Not a single taro plant has popped out of the ground and not an additional kina has been earned as a result of this project. It is a demonstrable failure in its current format.</p> <p>There are only two villages along the entire Trail that provide food for sale</p>

	<p>on a regular basis and there is nowhere where it can be relied on to receive a sing-sing or cultural dance welcome.</p> <p>The only improvements to campsites are those initiated and paid for by trek operators. The accreditation process is an academic exercise and destined for the same fate as the failed Village Livelihood project. Isurava Memorial is a typical example – the landowner receives the same payment as other campsite owners despite the fact that washing facilities and a kitchen were only provided one year ago (after 12 years) and there is still no Haus Draï for trekkers or sufficient accommodation for carriers.</p>
<p>The DEC TEM Section working with the GEF project in DEC is developing the processes to ensure income streams (power and water production fees and trekking fees from the Track) from new developments in the Interim Protection Zone (IPZ) based around the Brown River catchment are directed fairly back to the customary land owners and communities in the area.</p>	<p>This is not relevant to the management of the Kokoda Trekking Industry.</p>
<p>The Kokoda Initiative has not made significant progress in developing community capacity to identify, plan and implement development / income generation activities and manage the income streams. A systematic approach to community driven consultation / planning / implementation processes has not been introduced although models are available from other parts of PNG. Limited attention has been given to linking the Initiative activities to the GoPNG development planning processes, particularly at provincial level to ensure that operating and maintenance funds are able to support the infrastructure that has been constructed.</p>	<p>This is due to the fact that Australian government officials will simply not accept advice in regard to the need to conduct annual workshops in villages to determine, assess and review their needs.</p>
<p>The Initiative design highlighted the need to include all stakeholders and levels in the approach to sustainable development. This has not been achieved. The high level coordination and planning activities have possibly been too intensive leading to some stakeholders experiencing meeting overload. The complex design of the Kokoda Initiative has made it difficult for some stakeholders, even those who have participated in the higher level meetings, to understand or appreciate the Kokoda Initiative concept and their agency's role in the Initiative.</p>	<p>The most important stakeholders are the income generators for the industry i.e. trek operators have never been consulted as to what additional services their clients might be prepared to purchase during their trek. These two groups are excluded from 'higher level meetings'. This Mid Term Review is a good example. It has not been distributed for comment. The CEO of the KTA circulated it more than 12 months after it was published because he has to bear the brunt of the criticism from trek operators and landowners. This was his way of advising both groups of what he has to tolerate.</p>

	<p>Suggestions by trek operators in regard to sustainable development continue to be ignored with the result that villagers are missing out on tens of thousands of additional kina in income each year.</p>
<p>Conversely, at the operational and community levels, there has been a lack of coordination and planning. Little attention has been given to engaging with relevant local or international non-government organisations (NGOs), including churches, with links to the Kokoda region. There are opportunities to access additional skills and resources from these NGOs which have strong links with Track communities.</p>	<p>This is true. There has been a long list of Australian consultants, bureaucrats and volunteers since the Australian government became involved in 2008. Reports and outcomes are never distributed to trek operators for comment which creates an impression of distrust. The advice of pioneering trek operators, who were involved along the trail for more than a decade before the arrival of departmental bureaucrats from Australia, has been consistently ignored in regard to the most effective way engaging with local village communities.</p>
<p>The Kokoda Initiative does have not a comprehensive database of education and health infrastructure and supporting resources which would assist in planning and resourcing priority community issues. The KTF may have useful information to complement the KDP information.</p>	<p>This lack of such an essential management tool is simply inexcusable. Trek operators are more likely than NGOs to have ‘useful information’ because they have close links with local communities and invest their own money in them. NGO’s are only on the trail for short periods and invest other peoples’ money. They don’t have skin in the game. Trek operators could be engaged to provide, monitor and update community information as they have established relationships with landowners and are on the trail for most of the year.</p>
<p>Goal 3: Wise use and conservation of the Interim Protection Zone The DEC team is developing the building blocks needed for the integrated land use plan for the Interim Protection Zone. The spatial mapping of the area has been upgraded (to a 5 m x 5 m resolution), ground-truthed, including for assessment of primary or secondary forestry cover, and incorporated into DEC land management activities. This imagery from 2007 and 2010 has allowed assessment of land use changes but may now require updating. Staff from other sections in DEC have participated in the GIS training, building DEC capacity and providing back-up for the TEM specialist. A JICA forestry project is using the same imagery. Social mapping of the track area is progressing and a decision on whether to proceed with mapping for the whole track and an appropriate cost-effective methodology will be made by</p>	<p>This Goal is not relevant to the management of the Kokoda Trekking Industry.</p>

<p>late 2014.</p> <p>The values mapping activity is addressing biodiversity, cultural and archaeological aspects of the IPZ using both national and international experts to guide implementation. Current work is leading to further development of the National Biodiversity Information System (NBIS) to provide a framework for recording all known species in the IPZ by the end of 2015 and a project is underway to curate PNG species currently held in overseas collections. These are important aspects needed to prepare for a possible World Heritage nomination.</p> <p>The tools and processes being developed by the Kokoda Initiative in this area are being used by the GEF project which covers the whole of New Britain and a larger section of the Owen Stanley Ranges.</p> <p>The above activities are identifying the main natural and cultural values in the IPZ. New activities are starting to collect and document military heritage aspects of the Track. These will focus on heritage from the PNG side as well as the much better known Australian side. The first stage of the Oral History project managed by the NMAG should be finished by June 2014. Planning has started for an inventory of Australian military heritage along the Track.</p>	
<p>Goal 4: Building the national and international tourism potential of the Kokoda Track and OSR</p> <p>The Initiative has supported the development of commemoration days for key participants in the military history of the Track (Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels Day, ANZAC Day, etc.). Promotion activities would be improved through the appointment of a KTA communications officer.</p>	<p>ANZAC Day has been successfully managed by the RSL for the past 73 years. The Kokoda Initiative is not involved.</p> <p>A proposal for a Kokoda Day to be proclaimed was submitted to the PNG Government by a trek operator – it was <u>not</u> a ‘Kokoda initiative’. For reasons unknown it was changed to ‘Fuzzy-Wuzzy Angel Day’ by the National Executive Committee. Such a term does not have any marketing resonance in Australia and nothing has happened since. ‘Fuzzy Wuzzy Angel Day’ needs to be changed back to its original proposed name ‘Kokoda Day’.</p>
<p>The tourism marketing/promotion position in KTA (currently being recruited) is planned to take a more proactive role in promotion of the Track and to progress the proposed strategic tourism plan and associated marketing</p>	<p>The responsible body for the marketing and promotion of Kokoda treks is PNG Tourism. It is not the role of the management authority. Trek operators also invest considerable resources in marketing their treks.</p>

<p>activities². The major GoA grant recently made to TPA to undertake tourism training, and other activities relating to tourism resources along the Track should accelerate activities in this area.</p>	<p>There has been a steady decline in trekker numbers since the Australian Government assumed control of the management authority in 2009 despite a 10-fold increase in staff and an expenditure of \$40 million.</p>
<p>The Kokoda Initiative work being undertaken by DEC TEM is building the case for a World Heritage nomination for the IPZ / Track area. The military heritage aspects in a single area do not strengthen the nomination case but evidence is being developed of the cultural and natural significance of the area.</p>	<p>If military heritage is not a consideration for a World Heritage nomination it should be withdrawn from the orbit of the Australian Department of Environment and transferred to the Department of Veterans Affairs.</p>
<p>Goal 5: Ensuring Kokoda Initiative activities are sustained into the future Within a five year program working with new or under-resourced agencies, it is unrealistic to expect the activities to have become embedded in the PNG government processes and have access to ongoing GoPNG funding or be commercially sustainable.</p>	<p>The only effective means of sustaining the Kokoda Trekking Industry into the future is for the management authority to be run as a commercial operation and ensure there is a level playing field for all trek operators. The Kokoda Trekking Industry is only one part of Kokoda Initiative activities. The reason that activities (trekking and other) have not been ‘embedded in PNG government processes’ is a complete failure by Australian Government officials to establish workable and relevant management processes and procedures for the implementation of these activities.</p>
<p>KTA is moving towards being financially viable for its core track regulation and management functions and a future focus should be to maximise the fees from trekkers that can be returned to the track communities or for track maintenance.</p>	<p>It is possible for the KTA to be financially viable provided it limits its responsibilities to commercial management functions. A Community Development Levy and a Trail Maintenance Levy will provide for villagers, protect the environment of the trail and provide additional employment for guides and carriers during the non-trekking season.</p>
<p>It is disappointing to find that DEC, the main Kokoda Initiative partner, has been able to fill only half the staff positions in the TEM group for Initiative activities and has used the Initiative developed skills and knowledge for other priority work within DEC.</p>	<p>This is not relevant to the Kokoda Trekking Industry.</p>

² The role may also include managing the KTA relationship with the PNG and Australian based trekking operators.

<p>Through the Initiative investments from GoA and GoPNG, good progress has been made in building the technical and operational capacity of the main counterpart agencies (DEC and KTA).</p>	<p>This in an ill-informed deduction. The KTA is beyond dysfunctional in its current format because the Australian Government management team did not develop a single management protocol for them to adopt during the period 2009 – 2013. The current KTA management system was set up to fail by the Australian CEO during his tenure.</p>
<p>8.2 Key MTR Questions</p> <p>(a) Achievement of JU2 goals and objectives As summarized in Section 2, the Initiative has made significant progress to the (ambitious/aspirational) high level goals set out in the JU2 agreement. There is high level commitment to the JU2 vision and the Kokoda Initiative has made good progress towards bringing together Papua New Guinea and Australian national interests, particular in the Kokoda Track area. With some changes to implementation as proposed below and with an increased focus on achieving agreed key outcomes, the Kokoda Initiative should contribute to significant improvements in community well-being and, protection and enhancement of the natural, cultural and military heritage environment in the IPZ.</p>	<p>This is a subjective statement which is not supported by the facts in regard to the Kokoda Trail. The most effective means of improving community well-being long the trail is to have a well-regulated, commercial trekking industry and an independent PNG based philanthropic body. The natural environment of the trail has deteriorated significantly under the watch of the Australian Government. Substantial erosion in the Mt Bellamy area, the Nauro swampland and Templeton’s – Eora Creek could have been prevented by cutting alternative tracks to allow vulnerable sections to regenerate. Significant military heritage sites have been desecrated and are lost forever.</p>
<p>(b) Alignment of Kokoda Initiative activities with JU2 goals and objectives</p> <p>The Kokoda Initiative activities align quite well with the JU2 goals and objectives. The main challenge is in the degree of attention and resourcing provided to some areas. The main areas where this is weak is in the areas of managing the development opportunities and income streams, and in developing the alliances between the government, commercial and NGO stakeholders to provide consistent and cost-effective community development and infrastructure planning and implementation support to communities.</p>	<p>It is weak because there has been no consultation between trek operators to determine the services their clients would pay for.</p> <p>NGO involvement should be minimised as they contribute to a hand-out mentality by providing goods and services without mutual obligation. They should be encouraged to relocate their endeavours to remote villages who do not have the benefit of a trekking industry to support them.</p>

<p>(c) Enablers and constraints to Kokoda Initiative implementation and impact on achieving JU2 goals and objectives</p> <p>Enablers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level commitment to the special relationship between PNG and Australia • Resources from GoA and GoPNG • Flexibility in delivery modes • Interest from PNG and Australian stakeholders in the Kokoda Track area • Capacity developed (formally and informally) in DEC and KTA, but there are opportunities for further capacity development. • Access to specialist skills, knowledge and resources from both DoE and the KDP. 	<p>The Australian High Commission is responsible for maintaining and nurturing the special relationship between PNG and Australia while the Australian Government is responsible for the allocation of resources.</p> <p>The two most important stakeholders in the Kokoda Trekking Industry are the income generators i.e. trek operators and local landowners.</p> <p>There is no evidence of any measurable form of capacity building in local communities along the trail.</p> <p>Specialist skills should be restricted to meet needs and demands as determined by the PNG Kokoda Initiative Ministerial Committee</p>
<p>Constraints:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A complex design incorporating aspirational high level goals which have not been linked back to achievable measurable outcomes for the five year program period. • Lack of understanding of overall Kokoda Initiative program amongst some stakeholders. • Mixed feedback on the importance of the IPZ / Initiative activities in the future plans for CEPA (Clear support was given during the final MTR team meeting with senior DEC staff). 	<p>A ‘Kokoda Track Authority Strategic Plan 2012 – 2015’ at was developed by the Australian Department of Environment through their CEO in conjunction with officials from the Kokoda Development Program/Kokoda Initiative. Not one of the five strategies or any of the 33 key performance objectives contained in the plan has been achieved as of August 2015.</p> <p>This is due to the fact that Australian Government officials operate in a parallel universe to those trek operators who focus on the military historical aspects of the Kokoda campaign.</p> <p>Not relevant to the Kokoda Trekking Industry.</p> <p>Not sure what this means.</p> <p>Not relevant to the Kokoda Trekking Industry</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational constraints in the implementing agencies which are outside the influence of the Initiative implementing group. • Unfilled positions in the DEC TEM Branch placing a greater workload on the group leadership and core implementation team. Facilitation of the World Heritage nomination process is the responsibility of sections in DEC which may lack resources, capacity and commitment to support the nomination process. • Limited in-country administration and organisational support for in-country coordination and planning activities. • Less than satisfactory coordination between Kokoda Initiative and KDP activities. • Cross-cutting issues such as gender and M&E did not receive early attention during JU2. This delay has possibly reduced the impact on potential beneficiaries at community level and implementation efficiency. • Some budgeted GoPNG funds not flowing as planned. • Limited efforts have been made to access GoPNG budget resources (Public Investment Program (PIP) and DSIP) in the Track communities and related agencies which would increase the 	<p>The PNG Government has the ability to conduct its own planning activities.</p> <p>It is apparent that they are operating in parallel universes. The Kokoda Initiative is seeking to empower PNG counterparts. The KDP/KTF functions as an aid agency which disempowers them through dependency.</p> <p>Women have been involved in the Kokoda Trekking Industry for more than two decades. Trek operators could be engaged to provide feedback in this regard but they are not engaged in a meaningful way.</p> <p>GoAUST funds have been mismanaged and wasted.</p> <p>A properly managed Kokoda Trekking Industry would generate sufficient funds for community development across the Kokoda Trail.</p> <p>Trek operators could have fulfilled this role if they had been consulted.</p> <p>The collective input of long-term Australian advisers and short term technical specialists has led to the current dysfunction of the Kokoda Track Authority.</p>
---	---

<p>resources available to build and improve community and Track facilities and support services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The (Kokoda Initiative and KDP) M&E systems have not yet provided substantial output and outcome information to support this review and the design of a possible further phase. • Lack of clarity on the in-country working and reporting arrangements³ between the long term advisers (and short term technical specialists) in the PNG agencies. Many of the issues have been addressed informally but an agreed structure would improve clarity for the PNG agencies and their staff. 	
<p>(d) Governance structures for JU2 The Kokoda Initiative / JU2 design emphasised the need for effective coordination and planning at all levels of the Initiative. The Senior Advisor position has facilitated links between high level stakeholders. The Minister for Environment and Conservation has provided valuable leadership including formation of the Ministerial Committee to strengthen GoPNG engagement with the Initiative. Provincial governments are now taking up their mandated roles in the governance groups to strengthen the links to GoPNG budgeting, planning and implementation processes.</p>	<p>The establishment of the PNG Ministerial Committee was initially considered to be a positive initiative however no management protocols have been introduced since its establishment; no campsites have been developed to meet the needs of trekkers; no sustainable economic initiatives have been introduced for village communities; and there is no welfare protection for PNG guides and carriers engaged in the industry.</p> <p>The Committee continues to operate in a parallel universe to the reality of the Kokoda trekking industry.</p>
<p>The governance groups created have had varying levels of participation and success. The planned higher level taskforces in both countries have not functioned as planned. This may be partly due to the tasks, meeting scheduling, required time inputs and planned outcomes not being managed to suit the interests and time commitments of the intended participants. There is little evidence that this lack of engagement has been a major factor impacting on project progress and effectively but engagement from the new Ministerial Committee will be important in formulating and reaching agreement on the</p>	<p>The reason Australian ‘higher level taskforces’ have not succeeded is because they have no idea of the reality of the Kokoda trekking industry. They operate in a parallel universe to trek operators who are income generators for the trekking industry.</p> <p>Too much time and effort is required for reporting to Canberra. The most effective way to overcome this limitation is for the PNG Government to reclaim ownership of the Kokoda trekking industry.</p>

³ The Review team has not seen an organisation chart or description showing the working and/or reporting relationship between the DEC and KTA advisers.

design for the Third Joint Understanding.	
The PMC is functioning largely as planned as the working committee for the Initiative and would be strengthened by formal reporting processes back to the Initiative project director in Canberra	Not aware of the workings of this committee.
At local-level government and community level, the governance structures are much less developed with limited structured participation and support to the planning, coordination and implementation processes.	The lack of governance of the Australian management group during the period 2009 – 2012 should be examined before any criticism is made of PNG local-level government. If the Australian management group had operated under Australian jurisdiction they would have been subject to an inquiry as a result of their secret financial dealings with rogue Australian trek operators which provide them with a financial advantage after they assumed control of the Kokoda Trail in 2009.
A disappointing weakness in the governance arrangements is the low level of participation of Australian trek operators in the consultative process through the trek operator forums. The lack of a single industry focal point to represent the views of all the trekking operators, particularly the Australian-based operators, in discussions with KTA, GoPNG and GoA, complicates the ability of these agencies to respond effectively to issues raised by these operators.	The primary reason for the lack of Australian participation is because agenda items submitted for discussion were ignored during the period 2009-2012. The forums themselves were irrelevant talkfests without outcomes. No minutes of proceedings at these forums have ever been produced or distributed and no outcomes have resulted. The lack of governance of the management authority during this period created a high level of distrust.
(e) Longer term sustainability of changes facilitated through the Kokoda Initiative The Kokoda Initiative is facilitating and funding an integrated package of interventions designed to address specific constraints and issues. The GoPNG is committed to strengthening management and community benefits from protected areas across the country such as the Kokoda Initiative supported IPZ activities. Including the KTA, the sustainability of the changes will depend on the level of, and how efficiently benefits from protected areas, including the Kokoda Track trekking operations, are returned to communities.	The Kokoda Trail between Owers Corner and Kokoda should be separated from the wider environmental programs in the Owen Stanley Ranges – particularly in view of the fact that ‘military heritage is not a consideration for a World Heritage nomination’.
The capacity building elements of the Initiative activities are strengthening	This has already been referred to and is largely a statement of the obvious.

<p>the ability of DEC and the KTA to implement their mandated functions. KTA is already close to financial viability to undertake its core mandated functions. As such, and provided that trekker fees and numbers are managed appropriately, and the organisation’s management and operational capacity continues to develop, KTA can fund a significant proportion of its core operations (through GoPNG PIP or GoA funding).⁴.</p>	<p>The main impediment to the managing authority being financially viable is the Australian Department of Environment who have no understanding of the reality of conducting trek operations along the Kokoda Trail. The ‘DoE progress report for July-December 2014’ referred to in Note 4 has never been distributed to trek operators for review/comment.</p>
<p>The changes to DEC will prove more challenging as the GoPNG has indicated that it wants CEPA to become self-funding in a relatively short period. The Initiative activities are supporting development of skills, knowledge and processes that will contribute to increasing benefits from protected areas and ensuring they flow to the appropriate land owners and communities in these areas. The sustainability of CEPA will depend on an enabling environment for CEPA to undertake its mandated functions, developed with the assistance from the Initiative. In the short term, the challenge will be ensuring that CEPA has adequate funding and capable staff resourcing, supported by GoPNG funding as it makes the transition to being a self-funding organisation.</p>	<p>Self-evident waffle.</p>
<p>8.3 Findings and Conclusions</p> <p>1. The Kokoda Initiative is regarded as an important element of the relationship between PNG and Australia. However, some high level stakeholders do not have a clear understanding of its functions and the relationship between the different activities.</p>	<p>‘Higher level stakeholders’ would have a better understanding of the Kokoda Trekking Industry if they engaged with trek operators, villagers, guides and carriers in their respective environments.</p>
<p>2. The formation of the Kokoda Initiative Ministerial Committee, initiated by Minister Pundari, is an important step forward in highlighting this importance. The Ministerial Committee was formed in response to weaknesses in the functioning of the National Taskforce in providing high level monitoring and guidance.</p>	<p>This is indeed a welcome initiative as this committee is much closer to the people they represent. The time is now right for full responsibility for the Kokoda Trekking Industry to be transferred to the PNG Government.</p>

⁴ The issue was raised in the DoE progress report for July-December 2014 to be addressed by the MTR.

3. The design process took too long and the resulting design, based on the JU2 agreement, is complex.	Almost as complex as trying to decipher large sections of this report.
4. The Initiative has made good progress in implementation of most planned activities but both sides have had lags in scheduled activities.	A vague assertion.
5. The Kokoda Track is a major draw card for most Australian tourists to PNG and provides some flow-on benefits to communities along the Track. These visits may not lead to significant flow-on benefits to other parts of the PNG tourism industry.	<p>The Kokoda Trail is <u>the</u> major tourist attraction in PNG. It provides more than ‘some’ flow on benefits to communities along the trail. It is the primary gateway for adventure tourism in PNG. Over the past decade more than 40 000 Australians have trekked Kokoda – including some of the wealthiest and most influential people in the country. There is no greater indictment on the failure of the Australian Government management system than the fact that they have not recorded a single contact detail of these trekkers because they have never established a database.</p> <p>The potential for ‘significant flow-on benefits’ has been stymied by the ill-conceived Village Livelihoods Project and an emphasis of supporting NGOs rather than the income generators for the industry.</p>
6. The Kokoda Track is one of the shortest foot tracks across the Owen Stanley Ranges so is used by some low income travellers from other parts of PNG to travel to Port Moresby.	<p>An irrelevant statement of the obvious – it has been this way since the end of the War in the Pacific.</p> <p>The description of subsistence villagers as ‘low income travellers’ is patronising. It is their country and most have no other choice but to carry heavy bilums and babies if they want to visit relatives, seek employment opportunities or require medical treatment,</p>
<p>Department of Environment and Conservation</p> <p>7. The new externally funded and run project through the Global Environment Fund, UNDP, working closely with DEC, is linking closely with the Kokoda Initiative activities and using them as the model for GEF implementation across New Britain and wider sections of the Owen Stanley Ranges.</p>	New Britain has nothing to do with the Kokoda Trekking Industry.
8. The improved capacity of DEC TEM staff capacity is being used to deliver the GEF program and other activities within DEC. An ongoing	This is not relevant to the Kokoda Trekking Industry.

<p>challenge for DEC/CEPA and the Kokoda Initiative will be to retain these specialised skills within the Initiative activities.</p>	
<p>9. The recent legislation to support formation of the CEPA will lead to a period of change as the current DEC resources are transferred to the new CEPA.</p>	<p>A self-evident statement.</p>
<p>10. DEC based activities have been constrained by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The dis/relocation of the DEC office in 2013, in particular the impact on the computer network. b. Under resourcing of the DEC TEM Branch delivering the Kokoda Initiative (and other DEC) activities both in proposed PNG counterpart funding and in staffing resources. 	<p>Not sure of the relevance of this to the Kokoda Trekking Industry.</p>
<p>11. The Review team noted that DEC has another high level adviser⁵ to the Minister and DEC/CEPA.</p>	<p>Not sure of the significance of this finding.</p>
<p>Kokoda Track Authority</p> <p>12. The KTA is fulfilling its mandate of keeping the Track open and managing funds collected from trekking operations for paying villages to undertake track maintenance and development payments to the communities along the track. The livelihood activities have been less successful.</p>	<p>The KTA is currently dysfunctional as a management authority as a result of the failure of the Australian CEO to introduce a single management protocol during his tenure from 2009-2012.</p> <p>The Livelihoods Project has been a complete failure. The project was conceived in Canberra without any consultation with the PNG Department of Community Development, the KTA, trek operators or local villagers. Not one vegetable has been produced or a single additional kina been produced as a result of the project. The only beneficiaries are NGOs who participate in it and government officials who are paid to write ‘monty python’ reports about it.</p>
<p>13. The KTA has an enthusiastic group of young staff led by the CEO who is supported by the DoE business systems adviser. Formal staff and</p>	<p>According to informal feedback from KTA staff the Department of Environment business systems advisor spends most of his time compiling reports for Canberra.</p>

⁵ This position had been funded by GoA but is now being funded through GoPNG/DEC resources.

<p>board capacity building activities have recently commenced⁶, but structured further inputs are required.</p>	<p>There is no evidence of any form of business system in place for the management of the Kokoda Trekking Industry.</p> <p>A campsite booking system is the most fundamental requirement of a management system yet after an investment of \$40 million of Australian aid money and a 10-fold increase in staff since the Australian Government assumed control of the industry in 2009 it is still not possible to book a campsite anywhere along the Kokoda Trail.</p> <p>‘Ranger training’ referred to in Note 6 is totally ineffective. The system was flawed from the start because of the Department of Environment’s application of political correctness in the recruitment process. An Australian applicant who has been trekking in PNG for more than 30 years; is fluent in Tok Pisin; is a highly qualified paramedic; and has the respect of all clan leaders across the trail was rejected because he was a white expat.</p> <p>If he had been selected all current trek rangers would have been aware of the role, would have documented SOPs to guide them and would all be qualified in advanced first aid.</p> <p>As a result the ranger system referred to is dysfunctional and rangers are now rarely sighted on the trail.</p>
<p>14. Recent increases in trekking company licence fees supplemented by trekkers’ fees provide a substantial level of income that can support the core KTA track regulatory and track management functions.</p>	<p>The impact of increases in license fees is minimal because of the lack of governance in the system – another failed legacy of the Australian CEO during the period 2009-2012. The current licensing system is dysfunctional.</p>

⁶ There has been formal training for rangers in 2014. In the early phase of the JU2 expatriate staff that were employed to manage the KTA provided mentoring and support for local staff. Some KTA staff have also attended conferences e.g. indigenous protected area conference, ecotourism conference. Operations staff and rangers have recently received training from experts in protected area management

<p>15. The KTA is a special purpose authority (SPA) managing trekker fees for the benefit of communities along the Track and maintenance of the Track. A continued focus on improving the efficiencies of business systems and operations will maximise the funds that can be returned to communities along the Track.</p>	<p>One of the key objectives in the proposal for the establishment of a management authority for the Kokoda Trail was to establish ‘Kokoda’ as a model for a wartime tourism industry in PNG.</p> <p>Another key objective was to ensure that villagers along the Kokoda Trail received shared benefits from the emerging Kokoda trekking industry.</p> <p>The Kokoda Track (Special Purpose Authority) was proclaimed as a statutory government body of the Kokoda and Koiari Rural Local-level Governments June 2003.</p> <p>There are currently no business systems to improve as there are none in place for the management of the Kokoda Trekking Industry.</p>
<p>16. KTA has had extensive long and short term technical assistance and unstructured capacity building inputs⁷ which have assisted in development of the current staff resources and management systems. The challenge now is to transition the organisation to a financially viable business model using cost-effective capacity building and support resources that can provide mentoring and specialised technical inputs as required. This will require a narrower range of focused activities.</p>	<p>The purpose of the KTA is to manage the Kokoda trekking industry.</p> <p>It is not a marketing organisation. It is not a training organisation. It is not road construction organisation. It is not a sponsorship body. It is not a philanthropic body.</p> <p>It is a commercial business.</p> <p>The ‘capacity building’ cliché should be dispensed with as the term is vague and immeasurable. ‘Management training would be a more appropriate and familiar term to use.</p>
<p>17. To support the organisation development activities, the Board will need to develop its capacity to guide and support senior management. This will require a process to develop the skills and understanding of governance and business management issues of board members.</p>	<p>Agree.</p>

⁷ The capacity building has not been structured and possibly relied on on-the-job training.

<p>18. KTA is the best known ‘face’ of the Kokoda Initiative and also has the closest interaction with the trekking companies regularly using the Track and the Track communities. It is sometimes wrongly linked with issues with other Kokoda Initiative activities.</p>	<p>The KTA does not have the trust of the local communities along the trail or of the legitimate trek operators because of the lack of governance and transparency.</p>
<p>19. The planned trek information / booking website has not been developed but DEC resources have been committed for the work. Trekking operators and other stakeholders view this as a priority activity.</p>	<p>There is no excuse for the failure to develop such an important management tool. If DEC resources have been committed for the development of a website they are yet to consult with trek operators.</p>
<p>20. Some stakeholders interviewed expressed concern about the environmental impacts from the higher numbers of trekkers in the mid 2000s. The sustainable capacity of the Track for trekkers (and local non-trekkers) and opportunities to promote visits by more trekkers are important factors in the long term financial viability of the KTA.</p>	<p>The peak periods along the trail are the school holidays. After seven years in-country there is no system in place to manage trek itineraries and campsite bookings. If the trail does have a given capacity and government bodies are genuine in their desire for villagers to maximise benefits from the trekking industry then marketing programs should be pitched at the higher end of the market.</p>
<p>21. The twice yearly trekking operator forums have been a valuable communication tool with the trekking industry, particularly in PNG. Improved communication of progress in addressing recurrent issues is needed.</p>	<p>If this was true they would be well attended. They aren’t because they are regarded as talkfests without outcomes. The most effective means of communication is via a proper website and social media.</p> <p>Trek Operator Forums should be replaced by village workshops to engage with those involved in and affected by the Kokoda Trekking Industry i.e. guides and carriers from local villages, clan leaders, landowners, teachers and villagers.</p> <p>If Trek Operator Forums are to be conducted they should address agenda items submitted by trek operators and have the recordings of proceedings distributed within seven days.</p>
<p>22. A published consolidated annual operational and financial report to the Kokoda Initiative partners and stakeholders such as the trek operators may address criticisms of KTA from stakeholders. As the KTA manages both trekker fees and public funds, public transparency on</p>	<p>Trek operators are the main contributors to the KTA via the trek fees they pay. They have never been issued with an Annual Report. The books were effectively closed by the Australian CEO in 2010. Trek operator statistics were kept in the secret file and no financial reports were disseminated.</p>

<p>business activities and financial management is needed. An annual report is also required under the GoPNG Local Level Government Act.</p>	<p>This has led to the high level of distrust that now exists between the KTA and trek operators.</p>
<p>23. The KTA Livelihoods Project Scoping Study undertaken in late 2013 identified some areas where there were opportunities for improvement. Also the Economic Significance of Trekking on the Kokoda Track in 2012 made a start on quantifying the benefits of the trekking industry to communities along the Track, however, these studies do not provide a consolidated summary of the economic benefits of the trekking industry and an analysis of the distribution and quantum of benefits.</p>	<p>The KTA Livelihoods Project Scoping Study has never been released to trek operators.</p> <p>The ‘Economic Significance of Trekking’ project was a desk-top study by yet another consultant. Information was gleaned from telephone conversations with selected trek operators.</p> <p>The Australian Government has never commissioned the most important study that need to be undertaken. Many millions of kina have flushed through village economies over the past decade yet there is nothing to show for it in local villages. A study therefore needs to be undertaken to follow the flow of money in their Wan-Tok system. How much goes to the church? How much goes to living expenses in Port Moresby or Popondetta? How much goes to education? Etc.</p> <p>It is not possible to assist in advising villagers of more effective saving/investment strategies until we know how they manage their money today.</p>
<p>24. There is some uncertainty on the level of enforcement of requirements for trek operators including public liability insurance coverage and all trekkers registering and paying track fees. The coordination of trekker registration and monitoring process could be improved.</p>	<p>The management authority has a duty of care to ensure that every trek operator who applies for or holds a licence to operate on the Kokoda Trail has a current Public Liability Insurance Policy. No ifs. No buts. The ‘ranger’ system, which is fundamental to the enforcement of KTA instructions, is now totally ineffective. There does not seem to be any documented responsibilities, processes or procedures for their role. Rangers are now rarely sighted along the trail.</p>
<p>25. The status of the KTA as a special purpose authority under the Central and Oro provincial governments has not significantly limited the effectiveness of the organisation.</p>	<p>The KTA was initially allocated to the Minister for Local Government and Intergovernmental Relations because it was new Special Purpose Authority and there was no precedent for such a body.</p> <p>The Kokoda Trail has since emerged as the most popular tourism</p>

	<p>destination for PNG. The management authority should therefore be elevated as a national body responsible to the Office of Arts, Culture and Tourism or as an independent business body under the auspices of the Independent Public Business Corporation as a model for the development of a wartime tourism industry.</p>
<p>Kokoda Development Project; 26. The KDP has delivered required health and education infrastructure along the Track with some supporting capacity building which is appreciated by the communities and provincial and local level governments. Health activities had been given greater emphasis compared to school activities. Other possible KDP activities such as law and justice, and community development have not been implemented.</p>	<p>The KDP has never notified trek operators of any of their planned developments and has never sought feedback on their effectiveness. Trek operators are on the trail most of the year and would only be too willing to collate feedback from their local guides and carriers about the effectiveness of their programs.</p>
<p>27. The KDP model for community driven construction of schools with materials provided by KDP has led to some schools not being built and several other communities, other NGOs including the KTF assisted the communities to complete the building.</p>	<p>Prior to the arrival of Government/NGO handouts local communities used to work together to build classrooms and teachers houses. When I asked one community why they had not finished one aid funded school at Kovovo they replied <i>‘Not our school – AusAID school.’</i> So they waited.</p> <p>The aid funded KDP school at Kagi was completed two years ago and there are still no desks in the two classrooms. The KDP should liaise with trek operators who could provide feedback and assist in the continuous supply of school materials.</p> <p>Adventure Kokoda has a ‘Bring a Book’ program which has placed more than 5 000 educational books in PNG schools. The company has never been contacted by the KDP.</p>
<p>28. Planning, management and coordination of the KDP activities has been less than satisfactory. After an initial needs analysis, the KDP has provided limited information on how infrastructure and support activities were planned. This has led to the other stakeholders responsible for equipping and staffing/operating the new facilities not</p>	<p>The KDP does not engage with the income generators - KDP officials have never been sighted along the Kokoda Trail.</p>

<p>being prepared to meet the required commitments or having to include them in other activities (eg. KTF). Management arrangements for KDP under the PLGP have been revised and are being monitored.</p>	
<p>29. An integrated database of education, health, other community facilities and trekking support resources along the Track to support planning of priorities and future activities by all government and NGO stakeholders is not in place (a KT Public Assets database). This would complement other possible databases of significant cultural and heritage items along the Track.</p>	<p>This is an inexcusable management failure.</p>
<p>Other Agencies (Tourist Promotion Authority, National Museum and Art Gallery) These agencies are undertaking agreed Kokoda Initiative activities. TPA is satisfied with its engagement and has commenced implementing agreed activities under a direct contract with the DoE. NMAG is chairing the advisory committee for the oral history project currently in progress. The proposed tourism/marketing position in KTA will strengthen these linkages.</p>	<p>The Oral History project is a great initiative. As is the research work being carried out on Paga Hill and Blamey's Garden.</p> <p>Marketing should be co-ordinated at the national level (PNG Tourism-Air Niugini) and not delegated to the organisation responsible for managing the Kokoda Trekking Industry.</p>
<p>Coordination and Management 30. The Kokoda Initiative design provides for structured coordination and planning processes at several levels, guided by the Senior Adviser. The MTR team was concerned to find some higher level officials who, despite participating in these higher level activities, still did not fully understand the Kokoda Initiative concept and implementation plans. This is largely an internal communications issue accentuated by the delayed recruitment of communications resources in DEC after the initial communication officer stepped down.</p>	<p>The current Senior Adviser for the Kokoda Initiative is the only Australian ever engaged who has an empathetic understanding of Melanesian Culture and the significance of our shared wartime history. This is due to the fact that he has lived in PNG for many years, is fluent in the local language, understands culture and has previously worked at the Australian War Memorial. He is the reason the whole edifice has not collapsed like a house of cards because he has earned the respect of his PNG counterparts and trek operators. He should be placed in charge of a combined KDP and Kokoda Initiative and be allocated the necessary resources to carry out his role.</p>

<p>31. The PNG National Taskforce did not operate effectively and has been upgraded to a more focused Ministerial Committee. In Australia, the proposed Taskforce has also had limited inputs.</p>	<p>The Australian Taskforce is ignorant of the reality of the Kokoda Trekking Industry and should be abolished.</p>
<p>32. The DoE Kokoda Initiative management and support team in Australia provide support to all the activity areas, apart from the KDP activities implemented through Australian Aid. The changes in financial and reporting arrangements between DoE and AusAID / DFAT may have increased the workload on DoE resources. As noted above, the Australian Aid funded KDP management performance has been less than satisfactory.</p>	<p>The Australian Aid funded KDP management performance has not been ‘less than satisfactory’ – it has been a total failure.</p>
<p>33. Compared to other programs reviewed by MTR members, the Kokoda Initiative appears to have a high proportion of funds allocated to activity management. The MTR team accepts that the more complex Kokoda Initiative design and range of stakeholders and implementing agencies requires a greater level of coordination. However, options to decentralise administration and support functions and reduce the level of Australian-based coordination and management costs should be explored.</p>	<p>The functions of the Kokoda Initiative should be divided between the Kokoda Trail and the Brown River Catchment Area. Management of the Kokoda Trail should focus on protecting the wartime heritage of the Kokoda campaign between Owers Corner and Kokoda. The Brown River Catchment Area is an environmental management issue. Separation of the two components would reduce the complexity of the current organisation.</p>
<p>34. At field level in the Kokoda Initiative area, there is a lack of coordination between the three main implementing agencies and NGOs working in the area. The Kokoda Initiative field level activities do not have a structured and coordinated approach to interacting with village communities and their PNG-mandated governance structures as part of national bottom-up planning processes. This is leading to some duplication but, more importantly, has led to infrastructure activities not being finished and resourced to ensure they are fully utilised.</p>	<p>The continual refusal of the Australian Government to conduct village based workshops with facilitators fluent in Tok Pisin is the reason for the lack of a structured and co-ordinated approach. Australian Government officials have been advised of the need for these workshops since 2009 but have ignored all requests. There is no evidence of a ‘bottom-up’ planning process.</p>
<p>35. There is little evidence of formal linkages / MOUs with implementing partners and participating communities to clarify expected partner initial and ongoing inputs and outcomes expected.</p>	<p>PNG is not a ‘formal’ society. The most effective way of getting agreement is through the conduct of village workshops. Australian Government officials have never conducted one of these and are therefore unaware of their effectiveness.</p>

<p>36. Opportunities to link with other GoPNG (PIP and DSIP funding) and NGO partners (such as KTF) have not been developed. The Initiative is largely using GoA development funds.</p>	<p>Network Kokoda PNG is a philanthropic entity currently providing fresh produce to 1200 boarding students at Sogeri and Iaowari High Schools through their agricultural learning projects. A local agricultural scientist has been employed as Field Manager.</p> <p>Since then Network Kokoda has built an Agricultural Learning Centre at Sogeri with a classroom; market garden and freezer/cool-room facilities. The Field Manager has developed market gardens at six villages on the Sogeri Plateau and is now marketing their produce to City Pharmacy supermarkets and Boroko Foodworld.</p> <p>Community Learning Centres have been built at Abuari and Kokoda. Dame Carol Kidu is a Director of Network Kokoda PNG which models their programs on the policies she developed as the former Minister for Community Development.</p> <p>These initiatives have been achieved without any funding or assistance from the Australian Government however Network Kokoda is willing to work in partnership with any agency willing to provide support.</p>
<p>37. In summary, there may have been more coordination and planning activities than necessary at the higher levels of management contrasting to inadequate inputs to coordination and management at community and local government levels.</p>	<p>This is a statement of the obvious.</p>
<p>Capacity Issues</p> <p>38. At provincial and local government levels, funding (through PIP, DSIP and other sources) is available, but the administrations do not have the capacity (staff and/or skills) to undertake the consultation/planning and implementation/monitoring functions needed to design and manage community-level activities.</p>	<p>Network Kokoda PNG has the capacity to develop and manage community level activities through their utilisation of Adventure Kokoda trek leaders who are on the trail almost continuously between April and November each year.</p> <p>Network Kododa has utilised the resources of the Koiari Local Level Government Association to hire plant to plough gardens on the Sogeri Plateau. They are in the process of developing an MOU with the President</p>

	of the Association.
39. The two long term advisers, supported by short term inputs from the Canberra-based support resources and technical specialists, are providing a range of services to both their agencies (DEC and KTA) and to the Kokoda Initiative in a range of roles. Part of their time is used for administrative and secretariat functions.	There is only one effective Australian adviser involved in the Kokoda Initiative – this is due to his experience, knowledge and empathy with his PNG counterparts.
Communications 40. There have been delays in establishing an integrated communication approach due to changes in communications staff and delays in recruiting their replacements. The formation of a communications sub-committee / group led by the DEC communications officer will strengthen this function.	This is an outcome of the failure of the Australian CEO to develop a proper website and social media program during his tenure from 2009-2012 – despite requests from trek operators. The KTA have never produced an annual report and have not produced a newsletter or trek operator statistics (as agreed upon at a forum) for more than 12 months.
Gender 41. These issues are being addressed currently by the Gender consultant with her draft report delivered in late May 2014. Initial feedback from the consultant is that Gender issues have not been addressed in the Program to date and the targeting of program outcome and benefits, particularly in Track communities.	<p>Women have been providing cooked food for PNG guides and carriers for the past 25 years. They quietly prepare and deliver hot food to them and are paid for it.</p> <p>Women also set up fresh fruit stalls at various locations along the trail. Whatever food is left after trekker purchases is brought by the trek operator and provided to guides and carriers.</p> <p>Women at the Community Learning Centre at Abuari have been provided with sewing machines, sewing tables and material to make ‘meri’ dresses to sell at the Kokoda markets.</p> <p>Women along the trail are making bilums which are purchased by trekkers. Women organise children’s sing-sing groups and receive payment for doing so.</p> <p>Women participate in cultural dance groups and receive payment for doing so</p>

	<p>The ‘Gender consultant’ would have been advised of this participation if he/she had bothered to consult with trek operators as part of his/her consultancy.</p> <p>One would assume the ‘Gender consultant’ is a PNG citizen.</p>
<p>Studies that would inform the design of future livelihoods and income generating activities could include a more detailed assessment of the roles, needs and opportunities for women in Track communities and also assessment of the benefits and other effects of trekking generated income on the Track communities.</p>	<p>Trek operators are the most cost effective and relevant means of achieving feedback on programs initiated along the Kokoda Trail. They have been ignored in this regard since the Australian Government assumed control of the Kokoda Trekking Industry.</p>
<p>Monitoring and Evaluation For both Kokoda Initiative and KDP, the M&E processes are weak and the proposed M&E plans for the overall Initiative may be too complex. As with Gender, M&E activities were not built into the design and have not been mainstreamed in implementation. The complexity of the program design is reflected in the complexity of the Kokoda Initiative M&E plan. The program implementing agencies do not have the resources at present needed to implement the proposed M&E plan.</p>	<p>The failure of this process was predictable. The most effective way of injecting a degree of reality into Canberra based initiatives such as the Village Livelihood Program is to link the salaries of those responsible to the success or failure of the program. If the academics/bureaucrats/consultants/NGOs had some skin in the game they would be more likely to interrogate ‘thought bubbles’ and would seek more dialogue with the key stakeholders of the Kokoda Trekking Industry.</p>
<p>Sustainability The JU2 design has a specific goal relating to sustainability. Within the JU2 timeframe (5 years), putting in place and institutionalising processes and funding for necessary ongoing activities and organisations was unrealistic. As outlined in the above sections, Kokoda Initiative has worked through the responsible PNG government agencies with good success at national level and more limited success at provincial and community level.</p>	<p>This seems to indicate that higher level deliberations are considered to be successful but the implementation of the policy outcomes at the grassroots level are not.</p>

<p>8.4 Recommendations for Remainder of JU2</p> <p>These recommendations are proposed to improve the cost-effectiveness and impact of the remaining two years of the JU2.</p> <p>DEC / CEPA</p> <p>Kokoda Initiative support the transition of DEC to the new CEPA. During the transition phase, there should be limited changes to the current level of engagement with Kokoda Initiative activities.</p>	<p>This is clearly a PNG Government initiative/responsibility.</p>
<p>1. The transition of DEC’s responsibilities to CEPA which is planned to be self-funding will be challenging and justifies ongoing support to the new agency in both institutional development and specialised technical areas such as funding sources (PES, biodiversity credits, etc.) for community and landowner payments.</p>	<p>A statement of the obvious.</p>
<p>2. The focus of the long term DEC adviser activities should be reassessed in relation to the need for ongoing high level technical environmental management skills or if the adviser profile should change to only mentoring the TEM team and providing high level strategic advice and support to the Minister and new CEPA executive.</p>	<p>It is essential for any Australian DEC advisor to be fluent in Tok Pisin and experienced in Melanesian culture.</p>
<p>3. As DEC transitions to the newly created CEPA, DEC / CEPA seek to make use of funds from the unused part of GoPNG funding committed at the start of JU2 for Initiative activities. (an estimated K6 million).</p>	<p>The PNG Government will issue funds according to their own priorities. They should try and avoid the waste that has been apparent in Australian Government funding on the Kokoda Trekking Industry.</p>
<p>Kokoda Track Authority</p> <p>4. KTA should focus on its core business of regulating use of the Track and maximising the proportion of trekker fees used for basic track maintenance and contributions to communities along the Track.</p>	<p>The role of the KTA should be more specifically redefined: ‘To manage the Kokoda trekking industry on a commercial basis’.</p>
<p>KTA should concentrate on its core mandate as set out in Goal 1 of the JU2. This should be possible within the resources already in place. The implementation modality for KTA and work plans continue as</p>	<p>Goal 1 of the JU 2 needs to be rewritten. The KTA does not have the expertise or resources to manage philanthropic activities or the maintenance of roads and airstrips.</p>

described currently, except the KTA livelihoods activities which should be reassessed. DoE should only consider additional short term resourcing (to that scheduled in the work plans) when requested by the agencies (not advisers) or if there is an emergency.	
The proposed appointment of a tourism promotion and marketing officer should be reassessed. If KTA adopts a narrow business focus on Track management, the proposed position is not appropriate.	Agree.
The current Livelihoods activities should be wound down while the proposal under Community Engagement below is developed and implemented.	Responsibility for Community Engagement and Development should be transferred to Network Kokoda PNG in view of the success of their community and agricultural development programs.
Uncommitted funds allocated to livelihoods activities could be directed into identified priority community activities such as completing the provision of solar lighting ⁸ for community assets such as the schools, health centres or other locations agreed by the communities. Or, subject to ensuring the ward development plans include the views all communities in the ward, disbursing these funds through the current ward development funds used to disburse trekker fees back to communities. Alternatively, or non-government organisation(s) (NGO) that are already implementing community development activities along the Track could be supported.	Uncommitted funds should be allocated to Network Kokoda to allow them to replicate their programs at Sogeri on the Kokoda plateau. Network Kokoda PNG should be allocated responsibility for conducting village workshops because of the trust they have developed in local communities over the past 25 years. After the KTA implemented their ‘solar light handout’ a couple of years ago every child in each village seemed to have one. Since then they have either been disposed of or have stopped working because they are rarely seen.
Completion and commissioning of the trekking reservation and management website should be a high priority. Successful implementation of this website would contribute to rebuilding the KTA relationship with the Australian based trekking companies. Guesthouse / camping ground bookings should be excluded.	The website should be designed to meet the needs of the management authority, licensed trek operators and local communities.
The tour operator forum approach and implementation should be reviewed and refreshed to make it more attractive for operators to participate. Part of this process should include ensuring that issues raised by and agreed to by operator participants are addressed and reported back to all operators. The operator forum is a venue for providing capacity building and business	This will not work in its current format. If there is an issue to be addressed the managing authority should distribute a draft paper and call for submissions from trek operators. Submissions should be circulated for comment before a final draft is produced. Information on the Kokoda trekking industry can be distributed via the

⁸ The KTF has funded an extensive program providing solar lighting for public facilities along the Track,

development support to emerging local trekking companies.	website, a blog, a newsletter, Facebook and other social media means. An annual PNG Adventure Conference convened by the Office of Arts, Culture and Tourism would be a more effective means of bringing stakeholders together. Such a conference could be held in different resort locations in PNG and feature a showcase of operators.
KTA should publish and circulate an annual report detailing key information on track operations and improvements, trekker numbers and, transparent and detailed financial reports.	Trek operators have been SCREAMING for this since 2009 – but have been consistently ignored by Australian Government officials. The KTA has never published a comprehensive annual report which is a major reason for the lack of trust that exists between trek operators and management.
The draft KTA capacity building plan developed by the business systems adviser needs to reviewed and revised before implementation starts.	This has never been sighted - yet another reason for the lack of trust.
KTA should develop and implement a process to develop the skills and understanding of governance and business management issues for board members.	This should have happened in 2009. Another of a litany of failures by the Australian management group.
As part of preparing for a future activity, building on the Kokoda Initiative, a study(/s) be commissioned on the sustainable trekking load the Track and its communities can support and also the drivers of and future demand for Kokoda Track treks and other use by PNG communities. The study should have inputs from TPA on projected visits by trekkers to PNG and their interest in trekking the Kokoda Track.	This is a relatively simple task requiring campsite certification, itinerary management and a booking system. School holidays are peak periods. If the aim is to determine the capacity of the trail during these periods and maximise the return to local villagers then the marketing strategy should be pitched to the higher end of the market. Consideration should be given to the introduction of peak season trek fees or the licensing of peak season trek operators.
These studies will facilitate assessment of the long term sustainability / financial viability of the KTA.	Increasing interest in our shared wartime history will ensure increasing numbers of Australian and PNG trekkers will want to trek Kokoda. The financial viability of the industry will be assured if the management authority is managed on a commercial basis.
If resources and funding are available, the 2012 study on the economic benefits of the trekking industry should be updated with a more comprehensive analysis of the flow and quantum of benefits (cash and kind)	The 2012 study was a desktop exercise and largely irrelevant. Economic benefits include wages for guides and carriers, campsite fees, commercial activities along the trail, donations of clothing and equipment

to the communities and, local and Australian based trekking companies.	by trekkers to guides and carriers at the end of treks, philanthropic programs, donations of school and health supplies.
The relationship between KTA and the trekking companies needs to be strengthened with greatly increased cooperation (and tolerance) – it will be a major challenge to achieve it but would be a very worthwhile use of GoA funds to achieve sustainability. This could be part of the tourism officer’s role but will require ongoing support from senior GoA and GoPNG officials.	The prime responsibility for the KTA is to ensure there is a level playing field for all trek operators. It should not be involved in an apartheid system which differentiates between Australian and PNG trek operators. It is not their role to pick winners and losers. Marketing, training, sponsorships and philanthropy should not be part of the management charter.
Community Engagement and Planning Kokoda Initiative develop and implement a systematic and coordinated approach to community engagement that aligns with GoPNG processes and ensures women and disadvantaged groups are included in the planning and fund allocation processes. This approach will need support with skills and resources not available in Kokoda Initiative implementing agencies.	Women and ‘disadvantaged groups’ are already involved in the Kokoda trekking industry. Network Kokoda PNG is a major donor to the orphans in Efogi village. Adventure Kokoda has employed guides and carriers with disabilities for many years.
Kokoda Initiative strengthen its relationships with and understanding of other civil society organisations or NGOs supporting and investing in Track communities.	Network Kokoda PNG works in close consultation with the Koiari Local Level Government. The Network is currently supplying fresh produce to 1200 boarding students; has built an Agricultural Learning Centre at Sogeri; a Community Learning Centre at Abuari; installed water systems into the Sogeri Health Centre and Bisiatabu Primary School; and has six villagers involved in agricultural production. Thus far the Network has been ignored by the Australian Department of Environment and the KDP. The Network is not a provider of handouts. All initiatives involve local partnerships based on mutual obligation. The most effective means of strengthening relationships with local communities is through the conduct of annual workshops and continual contact via trek leaders, guides and carriers.
DFAT (with DoE support) facilitates formation of a Kokoda Track development working group (KTDWG) comprising the provincial	The PNG Kokoda Initiative Ministerial Committee is the proper agency for this role.

<p>governments, representatives of the Ministerial Committee, KTA, the KDP (or its successor), relevant NGOs (KTF, etc.) and trekking companies. This aligns with a concept put forward at the recent Sogeri Ministerial meeting⁹. The newly established technical working group (TWG) of the KIMC may be able to fill this role with additional organisations co-opted as required.</p>	<p>Kokoda trek operators should be engaged to provide feedback to the management authority who would then report to the PNG Ministerial Committee.</p>
<p>If the KTDWG is successfully formed, the working group could be tasked with assisting the provincial governments to coordinate (but possibly later in planning and supervising) resources into community infrastructure and livelihoods activities along the Track and down to the northern beaches, ie. the provinces lead the community development / livelihoods activities.</p>	<p>The current Kokoda Initiative Management Advisor, Mr Mark Nizette, has excellent empathetic relationships with MPs, Provincial Governors, Local Government Presidents and trek operators. He is well respected by all parties and is particularly supportive of his PNG counterparts. The Kokoda Initiative Ministerial Committee is the most appropriate body to oversee the Kokoda Trekking Industry.</p> <p>The norther beaches are a separate issue and require a separate model based on the Kokoda management model after it has been revised.</p>
<p>The proposed Kokoda Initiative M&E plans be reviewed by the PLGP M&E specialist to simplify and operationalize the Kokoda Initiative draft M&E plan.</p>	<p>A practical and realistic monitoring and evaluation program would involve trek operators providing feedback on programs and activities across the trail as they employ guides and carriers from local villagers who will gladly participate if required.</p>
<p>The Australian Aid section of the Australian High Commission has indicated that M&E system design and implementation resources within the KDP/PLGP could be made available to assist in refining and implementing the simplified M&E activities across the Initiative. The KTA Livelihoods officer should be included in these activities.</p>	<p>The PNG Government should assume responsibility for the management of the Kokoda Trekking Industry and keep it simple. The Australian Government should then be invited to provide funding for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preparation of a master interpretative plan for significant battlesites between Owers Corner and Kokoda and the progressive development of interpretative memorials. • infrastructure that impacts on the safety of Australians trekking Kododa i.e. the road from Sogeri to Owers Corner and airfields at

⁹ The Senior Adviser has reported that 'The recent ministerial meeting at Sogeri agreed to set up a technical working group of PNG officials to identify PNG national and provincial priorities and liaise with Australian officials about where Australian development dollars for Kokoda should be spent'.

	<p>Menari, Efogi, Kagi, Naduri, Lake Myola and Kokoda and a VHF radio communications system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding a Kokoda Initiative Liaison Officer who is fluent in Tok Pisin and familiar with Melanesian Culture.
Additional Kokoda Initiative resources will need to be added (M&E position to act as a focal point, data collection/collation resources) to support the Kokoda Initiative M&E processes after the initial proposed M&E support through the PLGP.	The PNG management authority should liaise with trek operators to provide feedback and recommendations on the physical condition of the trail, any issues concerning local communities and the condition of significant sites.
<p>Coordination and Planning</p> <p>Kokoda Initiative start a process to improve coordination / linkages at provincial and local levels. The new KIMC TWG should be able to lead this function. This should also improve linkages to other GoPNG funding streams (such as PIP, DSIP, etc.).</p>	This could be facilitated by the Kokoda Initiative Ministerial Committee via quarterly meetings involving Provincial and Local Government representatives; the management authority and the philanthropic body.
The PMC processes be reviewed and a formal reporting process be adopted to ensure that priority agreed activities are documented with action plans and timeframes, and the DoE project director and senior PNG agency managers are aware of these agreed actions.	Not sure what relevance the PMC has to the Kokoda Trekking Industry.
Kokoda Initiative needs to rebuild and/or develop relationships with other NGO stakeholders contributing to development of communities along the Track. The Kokoda Development Program and Australian Aid need to do more with NGO's, including Seventh Day Adventist Church (SDA), the Anglican Church, the KTF and Network Kokoda.	The management authorities need to re-establish trust with the most important contributors to community development along the Kokoda Trail i.e. trek operators who are the income generators for the industry. NGOs do not have any personal skin in the game and contribute largely to a hand-out mentality. They should be encouraged to direct their endeavours to remote villages off the trail who receive no benefits from the trekking industry.
<p>Lessons Learned</p> <p>The planning processes for a program to address high level government relationships and priorities require adequate time for the planning and consultation process to consider options and reach consensus. Preparatory activities for a new Joint Understanding should commence at least 18 months</p>	Any new Joint Understanding for the Kokoda Trail should be developed by the Kokoda Initiative Ministerial Committee on behalf of the PNG Government.

<p>before the current JU2 is completed to support a smooth transition and to ensure that funding from both parties is available.</p>	<p>Trek operators, PNG based philanthropic bodies, landowners, clan leaders teachers and women from local villagers should be involved in the process of preparing the Joint Agreement to ensure it is truly ‘joint’.</p>
<p>For multi-agency programs, the design should have 3-4 clear high level outcomes that can be quantified and measured, and be designed with individual components that are largely implemented by one agency.</p>	<p>The two essential high level outcomes are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An efficient and effective management body for the Kokoda Trekking Industry; and • An independent PNG based philanthropic body to support community development across the Kokoda Trail
<p>Planning and coordination issues at community and local government level are just as important as higher level coordination activities, and are more time-consuming and resource intensive but are an essential element of sustainability. Resources are needed to ensure these community-level planning issues include all community members.</p>	<p>An independent PNG based philanthropic body should be appointed to conduct annual workshops in Koiari and Orokaiva villages along the trail to determine village needs and initiate/support programs that emanate from these workshops.</p>
<p>The Kokoda Initiative can strengthen the coordination and impact of government and NGO funded activities along the Track through encouraging and supporting linkages to the government system and ensuring that service delivery actors on the Track implement activities to the relevant GoPNG standards (for example in education and health). This coordination will also reduce duplication of activities within the same target groups, and allow activities and resources to be spread more equitably amongst the Kokoda Track communities.</p>	<p>The two bodies required for the effective management of the Kokoda Trekking Industry are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An efficient and effective management body for the Kokoda Trekking Industry; and • A PNG based independent philanthropic body to support community development across the Kokoda Trail <p>PNG now has the expertise to effectively manage the Kokoda Trekking Industry.</p>
<p>Cross cutting issues such as gender and M&E need to be highlighted and embedded in the agreed design and the planned activities. Early awareness raising and practical capacity building in these areas is needed to focus early attention on how inclusion of these activities will strengthen program implementation, outcomes and sustainability.</p>	<p>Women from villages across the trail have been fully involved in the trekking industry for the past decade. A dedicated PNG based philanthropic body would ensure there is progressive improvement. Women’s workshops would be part of the annual village workshop agenda.</p>

<p>The program design process needs to take account of the appropriate information requirements for an effective M&E system relevant to the reporting requirements of the partner governments to make the M&E activities relevant to the implementing agencies.</p>	<p>Obviously – whatever that means!</p>
<p>A multi-agency and sector program such as the Kokoda Initiative, providing capacity building and specialised technical support, requires high levels of administrative, management and technical support services. Based on the experience of other Australian Aid programs in PNG and the Review team’s experience of similar programs in other countries, a core support/secretariat group staffed by experienced national staff can provide cost-effective support to a core group of implementation agencies and service the M&E, reporting and management requirements of the funding agencies.</p>	<p>A convoluted statement of the obvious.</p>
<p>For a future initiative similar to the Kokoda Initiative, this would provide resources for secretariat services to the coordination / planning groups and meetings used to support stakeholder inputs at each level and also provide a focal point for M&E activities. The independent support resources of a secretariat would facilitate transition of specialist full time advisers from full-time inputs in an agency to providing part-time mentoring and specialist technical support as required while supporting program activities in other agencies.</p>	<p>A rather convoluted statement that seems to support/consolidate Australian advisor/consultant jobs in PNG.</p>
<p>The secretariat would then source specialised high level technical and management support from Australia (and other locations) as required.</p>	<p>Australian ‘high level technical specialists’ should not be imposed on PNG.</p>

ⁱ Approximately 80 trek operators have been licensed by the KTA. They fall into a number of categories – military historical specialists; eco and general trekking companies and hobby operators.