

## Time to End the Rorts for Kokoda Initiative-KTA Officials



The 2023 Kokoda Track Authority (KTA) Forum held over a two-day period in a 5-Star hotel on Brisbane's South Bank should bring the curtain down on what is probably the most incompetent Local Government Special Purpose Authority in Papua New Guinea.

It's only purpose now is to provide a scapegoat for equally incompetent Australian officials in the DFAT Kokoda Initiative to blame for their own failures regarding the management of the Kokoda Trail.

Their failures have been documented in the following links:

- [The Kokoda Trail: Chronology of Mismanagement: 2009-2019](#)
- [KTA Strategic Plan 2012-2015 – Fail!](#)

We learned long ago that KTA forums are a bureaucratic guise to create an impression of activity. The lack of a single outcome to improve the management of Kokoda tourism has exposed the fallacy of this annual charade.

The Brisbane forum which saw 10 officials fly from Port Moresby to brief 7 Kokoda tour operator representatives of Day 1, and just 5 on Day 2.

The following record of 'Issues raised and discussed' should be seen as a shallow excuse to justify an international trip to Brisbane.

The topics have been discussed ad nauseum at previous forums with no outcomes achieved – my topics on each item are self-explanatory.

**It would have been more economical and just as effective for them to conduct their forum by Zoom and do their Christmas shopping through Amazon!**

This should be seen a last hurrah for a dysfunctional organisation in an advanced state of decay – one that is well past its use-by date.

The Hon Charlie Lynn OAM OL  
Director  
Adventure Kokoda

## KTA International Tour Operator's Forum November 2023

### Issues Raised and Discussed

This list was derived from questions forwarded by KTOA and those raised during discussions at the Brisbane forum and the earlier local tour operators forum in Port Moresby. Issues that can be addressed within resources and with a bit more time are in **black**; issues that will take longer to be addressed and require additional resources are marked in **blue**.

| Issue   | Action Agreed  | Timeframe/Actions  |
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| <b>Rangers</b>  | <b>Action Agreed</b>   | <b>Timeframe/Actions</b>   |
| <i>Ranger visibility.</i><br>Tour operators would like the rangers to be more actively involved in compliance, and generally more engaged with the trekkers, perhaps in keeping them up to date with work on the track, local issues the trekkers may encounter etc.  | KTA will send out a note to tour operators on the roles and functions of the rangers, and what services they can expect of them. | January/ February 2024   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The ranger system is based on the Australian National Parks model and is unsuitable for Kokoda tourism.</b></li> <li>• <b>The system should operate under a qualified Chief Ranger experienced in, and familiar with, the Melanesian Way.</b></li> <li>• <b>The current arrangement with Qld National Parks should be respectfully wound-up.</b></li> </ul> |  |  |
| <i>Ranger names and locations.</i><br>Tour operators would like to know who and where the rangers are stationed.  | KTA will send out a note to tour operators on the structure of the ranger team, and where they are located.                      | <b>COMPLETED</b><br>7 <sup>th</sup> December 2023                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Of course they would! This would make it easier for unscrupulous tour operators to avoid-persuade-bribe them so they are not reported for overloading porters, not providing them with uniforms or sleeping gear, no not paying the correct fees at campsites.</b></li> </ul>   |  |  |
| <i>Ranger communication.</i><br>Communication with rangers in the field should be improved.   | Purchase hand-held radios for the rangers so that they can communicate more easily in the field.                                 | March/April 2024<br><b>UNDERWAY</b><br>Quotations have been requested. |
| <b>That should have occurred 10 years ago!</b>  |  |  |

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| <i>Female rangers.</i><br>Tour operators would like to see more female rangers on the Track.  | KTA will continue to encourage female applicants if and when new training is planned.   | <b>NOTED</b><br>Gender equity is a cornerstone of the next phase of ranger capacity development.                      |
| <b>Should have occurred years ago.</b>  |   |   |
| <b>Communication and Marketing</b>  | <b>Action Agreed</b>  | <b>Timeframe/Actions</b>  |
| <i>KTA website.</i><br>Needs to be repaired, updated and maintained.  | KTA will circulate a concept note to tour operators for comment and their suggestions on features and functionality.                    | January 2024  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The current website was obviously the result of a shonky deal between somebody in the KTA office and a company based in NZ which knew nothing about the business of Kokoda tourism.</b></li> <li>• <b>The issue has been raised ad-nauseum in the past and has been ignored.</b></li> <li>• <b>Proposals for the development of a professional website to meet the needs of Kokoda tourism have been submitted over the years – all have been ignored.</b></li> </ul> |   |   |
| Regular communication between KTA and the tour operators is important.  | The KTA Communications Officer will be recruited early 2024.  | February 2024   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Duh!</b></li> <li>• <b>If this is the case why did the KTA stop publishing monthly newsletters in 2014?</b></li> <li>• <b>Why haven't they published an Annual Report?</b></li> <li>• <b>Why haven't they ever published a financial report?</b></li> <li>• <b>Why don't they answer emails?</b></li> </ul>   |   |   |
| <i>KTA structure and funding.</i><br>Explanation of KTA funding and structure is requested.   | Explanatory note will be given at the 2024 tour operators forum, once funding and structure are clearer and discussed by the KTA Board. | March/April 2024<br><b>UNDERWAY.</b><br>A draft interim structure for 2024 has been prepared for Board consideration. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>FFS – Enough of the BS!</b></li> <li>• <b>If they were fair dinkum about this both the DFAT Kokoda Initiative and KTA would publish financial reports – but they never have, so we can only assume they have something to hide.</b></li> </ul>  |   |   |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have heard ‘rumours’ of millions of kina being allocated towards Kokoda tourism from the PNG Government for 20 years but there is no evidence of whether it was received or, if it was, what it was spent on.</li> <li>• And why did the KTA donate K350,000 to an Australian NGO in 2018 with no association with Kokoda tourism, instead of assisting campsite owners to develop their sites to meet their paying customers – and to build hygienic toilets?</li> </ul>   |  |   |
| <p><i>Minutes from May 2023 tour operators forum.</i><br/>Could the minutes of this meeting be circulated please?</p>   | <p>Minutes will be sent out.</p>   | <p>January 2024<br/><b>Communications officer will be tasked to collate the minutes.</b></p>                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are still waiting for the Minutes of the KTA Forum held in Cairns in 2017!</li> <li>• Adventure Kokoda invested K10,000 to attend this forum in good faith but our numerous requests for a copy of the Minutes have been ignored.</li> <li>• We believe the reason for this is due to failure of the KTA to table the motion carried unanimously at the PNG tour operators forum in Port Moresby the week before.</li> <li>• The motion called for a reduction in the maximum weight to be carried by porters to 18kg, which was the maximum allowed by army doctors during the Kokoda campaign.</li> <li>• This has been vigorously opposed by the Australian Kokoda Tour Operators Association (KTOA) who have fought to protect their business model which relies on exploiting their guides and porters.</li> <li>• The motion also called for minimum welfare provisions such as a daily rate of K70, a ‘Walk Home Allowance’ of K250, and the issue of full uniforms, sleeping bags and mats – these have also been successfully resisted by the KTOA.</li> </ul> |  |   |
| <p><i>Marketing levy (K50).</i><br/>The K50 marketing levy agreed to by the tour operators should be used for marketing as promised. What are the plans for 2024?</p>   | <p>KTA will write to TPA to agree on how the fees collected in 2023 can be used.</p> | <p>December 2023.<br/><b>UNDERWAY.</b><br/><b>KTA has written to TPA offering to make the marketing levy available.</b></p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The responsibility for marketing Kokoda tourism rests with the Tourism Promotion Authority however they have been sidelined by CEPA who do not have any expertise in this area – neither does the KTA.</li> <li>• A comprehensive Marketing Plan was submitted to the KTA based on our experience of marketing our own treks in Australia over the past 30 years.</li> </ul>   |  |   |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During this time we have featured on all major television networks, all major newspapers and radio stations, all national magazines, and social media – but this expertise was obviously not good enough for the KTA who ignored it – it can be accessed on this link: <a href="#">Marketing Kokoda – Wartime Tourism.</a></li> </ul>  |   |  |
| <i>KI Health and Education fact sheets.</i><br>Tour operators want to know more about other activities on the Track, especially the benefits being delivered to the communities, and other livelihood activities.   | Materials will be made available to the tour operators on a regular basis in 2024, and form part of the KTA communication strategy. | <b>Underway</b><br><b>The first set will be circulated in March 2024</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Spare us the BS!</b></li> <li><b>If the KTA was serious in facilitating philanthropic support they would work in partnership with National-Provincial Government to provide information on the number and location of village schools along with the number of teachers, students and their needs for educational supplies – same for health centres.</b></li> <li><b>This information, along with date on village populations, should be available on the KTA website along with advice on the best way for trekkers to contribute.</b></li> </ul>   |   |  |
| <i>Track feedback/surveys.</i><br>KTA would like to collect information from the tour operators that could be used to improve the experience.   | KTA will develop a feedback form for tour operators.  | March 2024, prior to the 2024 tour operator forum.                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>This is embarrassing – the collection of data is a key function of any management system.</b></li> <li><b>The KTA stopped publishing annual trekker statistics in 2014 despite requests for this essential information – one can only assume they are either too incompetent or too lazy!</b></li> <li><b>We have made numerous submission re this data – all have been ignored.</b></li> <li><b>We published this data with the information we were able to gather – it has been ignored, however it can be accessed on this link: <a href="#">Data Base Evaluation of the Kokoda Tourism Industry: 2003-2019</a></b></li> </ul> |   |  |
| <b>Business Development</b>   | <b>Action Agreed</b>  | <b>Timeframe/Actions</b>   |

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| <p><i>Capacity development.</i><br/>Local tour operators require training in a range of skills in order to develop and run a successful business.</p>   | <p>A capacity development plan will be discussed with TPA, and discussed at the 2024 local tour operators forum.</p>               | <p><b>UNDERWAY.</b><br/>The local tour operators association has already had some training from TPA and the program will progress in February/March 2024</p>                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The KTA has demonstrated it does not have any expertise in business management – or any employees with commercial business management qualifications or experience – this is reflected in the fact they do not have a single management system in place to manage PNGs most popular tourism destination – a major contributor to the fact that tourism numbers have fallen by 46% since the DFAT Kokoda Initiative-CEPA took control of the industry in 2009.</b></li> <li>• <b>Local tour operators who wish to develop their business skills should be directed to the appropriate training institution.</b></li> </ul>   |  |  |
| <p><i>Partnership arrangements.</i><br/>Local tour operators would like to develop stronger and more formal partnerships with Australian counterparts in order to grow the industry.</p>  | <p>For discussion between the local and the international tour operators at the 2024 tour operators forum.</p>                     | <p>March/April 2024</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>This cannot be resolved while the KTA continues to issue tour operator licences to Australian tour companies who do not comply with the IPA Act – continues to turn a blind eye to the current proliferation of illegal tour companies.</b></li> <li>• <b>One major Kokoda tour company has generated around K8 million in gross profit from his Kokoda tourism business over the past 18 years – but he has been able to avoid paying a single in taxation because of a lack of enforcement by the KTA-IPA-IRC.</b></li> <li>• <b>The solution is simple. Foreign tour companies should be required to either contract a PNG company to provide their personnel and logistics for each trek, or establish a legitimate PNG company to provide the necessary support. They should then be required to transfer least K5500 per trekker into the account of the personnel and logistic provider. Proof of transfer of funds should be attached to their application for trek permits.</b></li> </ul> |  |  |
| <p><i>Insurance.</i><br/>Local tour operators are finding it difficult to buy liability insurance for their clients and their staff.</p>  | <p>KTA will have discussions with PNG insurance companies and invite them to discuss options at the next tour operators forum.</p> | <p>March/April 2024<br/><b>UNDERWAY</b><br/>The KTA CEO has had discussions with a local insurance company and they have been invited to make a presentation at the 2024 tour operators forum.</p> |
| <p><b>If local PNG companies are established as legitimate companies they will be able to easily obtain Public Liability Insurance</b></p>  |  |  |

| <p><i>Porters and guides.</i><br/>The porters and guides are entitled to fair working conditions including coverage for injury while at work, and access to some financial security after they have finished working.</p>   | <p>A policy paper on porters and guides working conditions was circulated for comment at the May 2023 tour operators forum. This will be circulated again and finalised for KTA Board ratification.</p>     | <p>Policy re-circulated to tour operators in December 2023.<br/>Expected to be taken to the Board in February 2024.</p> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Easy fixed, as we have suggested for more than 10 years, introduce a K50 ‘Welfare Levy’ to be paid in addition to the K300 trek permit fee to provide for emergency evacuation by helicopter and emergency treatment at the Port Moresby International Hospital for guides and porter.</b></li> <li>• <b>This would require the KTA to have a registration system for guides and porters.</b></li> </ul>  |   |   |
| Track   | Action Agreed   | Timeframe/Actions   |
| <p><i>Maintenance priorities.</i><br/>Tour operators are asked to provide input on areas of the Track that require attention, including bridges and river crossings for the safety of the trekkers.</p>   | <p>KTA will incorporate into the feedback surveys mentioned above.</p>  | <p>March 2024, prior to the 2024 tour operator forum.</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>This is getting tedious – we have been advocating this for more than 20 years – in the 1990s we instituted a system which required our trek leaders to report to the KTA office and provide them with an update on the condition of the Trail and any other issues that came to their notice.</b></li> <li>• <b>After about 6-months they asked that we discontinue the requirement as there was no interest and no feedback from KTA management. We can provide records to support this initiative.</b></li> </ul> |   |   |
| <p><i>Rubbish.</i><br/>The issue of rubbish on the Track needs to be addressed as this detracts from the trekking and wilderness experience.</p>  | <p>KTA will develop <i>tok save</i> sheets out to communities. Rangers and tour operators to disseminate, discuss and reinforce.</p> <p>KTA will work with communities to agree regular litter patrols.</p> | <p>January/February 2024</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>This has been raised ad nauseum at previous KTA Forums but nothing has ever happened.</b></li> <li>• <b>It is a tour operator’s responsibility to burn, bash and carry out rubbish – Rangers should be engaged to inspect areas and report any tour companies who do not abide by this most basic requirement.</b></li> </ul>   |   |   |

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| <i>Track Helipads.</i><br>Helipad extraction points need to be identified and maintained for trekker safety.   | KTA will carry out a survey of potential sites and discussions with landowners.<br>Tour operators will discuss at the 2024 tour operator forum.<br>KTA will then ensure the helipads are cleared and maintained during the trekking season. | March/April 2024<br><b>UNDERWAY</b><br>A number of potential sites have been identified and mapped, and discussions with landowners will begin in 2024. For discussion at the tour operators forum in 2024. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>We identified all of the helipads across the Trail more than 10 years ago – once again there had been no interest from the KTA in this information.</b></li> <li>• <b>We have also identified the indigenous names of all features, pre-war mail stops, creeks and rivers across the Trail – however we have no trust in either the Kokoda Initiative or the KTA so we have retained it until responsibility for the Trail is transferred from CEPA to TPA.</b></li> </ul> |   |   |
| <b>Military Heritage</b>   | <b>Action Agreed</b>  | <b>Timeframe/Actions</b>  |
| <i>Access to the Kokoda Museum.</i><br>The museum at Kokoda should be accessible for trekkers prior to departure or after they have completed the trek.  | Tour operators will let KTA know, when purchasing trekking permits, if and when they wish to access the Kokoda Museum.<br>KTA will ensure the museum is accessible.   | Throughout 2024<br><br>Accessibility to the Kokoda museum <b>COMPLETED</b> . KTA Ranger at Kokoda has been assigned to manage the museum, and briefed on responsibilities.                                  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The KTA has not been able to resolve this issue for the past two decades and the Kokoda Initiative has failed to enhance the pilgrimage value of the Kokoda plateau.</b></li> </ul>  |   |   |
| <i>Access to Track museums.</i><br>The Efogi and Alola museums are often closed when the trekkers are coming through.  | NMAG will have discussions with the two museum curators and agree on more consistent access for trekkers.   | February 2024<br><b>ONGOING.</b><br>NMAG has discussed with Efogi Museum curator, and will contact Alola curator in February 2024 and continue to regularly reinforce messaging.                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>We have led numerous treks across the Trail since these two aid-funded ‘museums’ were o</b></li> <li>• <b>Museums across the Trail are the result of bureaucratic thought bubbles from inner-sanctum offices in Port Moresby.</b></li> </ul>   |   |   |



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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>No consultation was conducted with tour operators to see if they would meet the needs of their paying customers – and there was no cost-benefit analysis conducted.</b></li> <li>• <b>They are now reminiscent of aid-funded ‘white elephants – the buildings should be donated to the local community for their benefit.</b></li> </ul>  |   |  |
| <i>No Dig, No Touch.</i><br>Military heritage items are still being handled and trafficked by tourists and local people.  | NMAG will increase efforts to inform trekkers and local people on the museum’s policy. Rangers will form part of the strategy.  | January/February 2024  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>That is simply because there is no signage in place to remind trekkers not to touch grenades or mortars to souvenir items they may come across – and absolutely no monitoring system in place – or any form of reporting system for trek groups who might find items of ordnance or other souvenir items.</b></li> <li>• <b>But the main problem is a complete lack of interest by the KTA in the issue.</b></li> </ul>   |   |  |
| <b>Law and Order</b>  | <b>Action Agreed</b>  | <b>Timeframe/Actions</b>   |
| <i>Blockade reimbursement.</i><br>Blockade fees paid to the Kovelok blockade should be reimbursed to the tour operators.  | KTA will send out a letter to the tour operators asking them to forward evidence of payments so that they can be reimbursed.<br>CEO will seek endorsement from the KTA Board. | <b>UNDERWAY.</b><br><b>Letter to tour operators circulated December 2023.</b><br><b>To be taken to the Board (expected) February 2024.</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Kovelok issue first started in 1992 when the first blockade was established – and has continued on a regular basis ever since.</b></li> <li>• <b>Villagers are frustrated because they do not feel they are receiving their fair share of benefits from Kokoda tourism – and they are good cause for feeling this way because nobody in the Kokoda Initiative-CEPA-KTA alliance gives a stuff about them.</b></li> <li>• <b>The problem will continue until a system of village-based workshops is instituted to better understand village needs and then plan a support system to assist in meeting them – it’s not rocket-science.</b></li> <li>• <b>The system of flying in a group well-fed officials by helicopter to seek to pay them off hasn’t worked in the past – and it won’t work in the future.</b></li> </ul> |   |  |
| <i>Kovelok blockade.</i><br>What can the government do to clear the blockade and other blockades on the Track? What are the long-term solutions?  | Governor Juffa will speak to the leaders of the blockade and resolve the situation.   | January/February 2024  |

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The solution is to introduce a system of village-based workshops to better understand local needs and monitor progress of agreed initiatives.</li> <li>• The model established by the Kokoda Track Foundation, which has been ignored by DFAT Kokoda Initiative officials, should be studied and implemented- it can be viewed on this link: <a href="#">The Kokoda Track Foundation: 2003-2006.</a></li> </ul> |   |  |
| <p><i>Unlawful behaviour.</i><br/>What will the government do to resolve other instances e.g. demanding money for safe passage.</p>  | <p>KTA will increase awareness and information patrols by the police.</p> <p>Governor Juffa will implement a reserve police training and increase the police presence on the track.</p>   | <p>February/March 2024</p> <p>Throughout 2024.</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address it through village-based workshops – give the villagers a say and the problem will resolve itself.</li> </ul>   |   |  |
| <b>Campsites</b>   | <b>Action Agreed</b>  | <b>Timeframe/Actions</b>   |
| <p><i>Toilets.</i><br/>The standards of ablutions could be improved at the campsites.</p>  | <p>TPA is developing a program to improve the toilets at the campsites and will make that program known to tour operators.</p> <p>KTOA may also develop a toilet improvement program for communities. To be discussed at the tour operators forum.</p>              | <p>January/February 2024</p> <p><b>UNDERWAY.</b><br/>TPA is awaiting 2024 project funds to be allocated by Treasury, and are in discussions with Kokoda Initiative partners.</p> <p>March/April 2024</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This was first raised in 1996 – and raised again on an annual basis since then – and ignored by the DFAT Kokoda Initiative and KTA.</li> <li>• This amounts to an unforgivable abrogation of responsibility by distant, unaccountable, desk-bound, aid funded officials.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Kokoda: The Way Ahead</a> – first published in 2015 – and completely ignored!</li> </ul>                        |   |  |
| <p><i>Campground booking.</i><br/>Information on availability of accommodation is needed by the tour operators prior to departure so they can plan their itinerary.</p>  | <p>KTA will develop a platform for tour operators so they can be informed of prior bookings at each campsite. However, the onus rests with the tour operators to make their own arrangements with their service suppliers, KTA will not act as a booking agent.</p> | <p>March/April 2024</p> <p><b>NOTED.</b><br/>To be discussed at the next tour operators forum.</p>   |

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| <p><b>We have been seeking this information for 20-years – it has been the subject of numerous submissions and discussed ad nauseum at numerous KTA forums but our concerns have been ignored. We can only assume that management is either too inept or too lazy to do anything about it.</b></p>   |   |  |
| <p><i>Campsite guidance.</i><br/>Campsite owners need guidance on how best to site and set up their campsites for minimum environmental impact, and for maximum enjoyment for the trekkers.</p>  | <p>CEPA will work with TPA to conduct awareness on environmental damage in the region, and conduct land use mapping in each ward.</p>         | <p>Throughout 2024</p>   |
| <p><b>This has also been suggested and ignored for the past 20 years – it is clear the DFAT Kokoda Initiative and KTA operate in a parallel universe to the reality of Kokoda tourism.</b></p>   |   |  |
| <p><b>Other</b></p>  | <p><b>Action Agreed</b></p>   | <p><b>Timeframe/Actions</b></p>  |
| <p><i>Track communication.</i><br/>Tour operators have requested access to the VHF radio network through hand-held radios.</p>   | <p>KTA to seek quotations for hand-held VHF radios on behalf of the tour operators, and to grant permission for them to access channel 1.</p> | <p>December 2023.<br/><b>UNDERWAY.</b><br/>Supplier has been asked to provide quotations for tour operators.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tour operators should be required to provide their own satellite phones and VHF radios.</b></li> <li>• <b>KTA should ensure critical campsites at Imita Base, Va Ule Creek, Ioribaiwa village, Ofi Creek, Agulogo Creek, Bombers Campsite, 1900 Crossing, Templeton’s Crossing, Eora Creek and the Isurava Memorial are equipped with either a base station or mobile handsets for safety purposes.</b></li> </ul> |   |  |
| <p><i>Flight cancellations.</i><br/>Flight cancellations and the uncertainty of domestic travel are major inhibitors to growing the industry.</p>  | <p>TPA will continue to raise this issue with the PNG airlines.</p>   | <p>Throughout 2024</p>   |
| <p><b>If TPA were responsible for Kokoda tourism they would be across the issues which impact on the industry – the issue of charter and scheduled flights would be high on their agenda.</b></p>  |   |  |
| <p><i>Mining and land clearing.</i><br/>Small scale destructive land use is degrading the environment and negatively impacting the tourism industry.</p>   | <p>CEPA will continue to conduct awareness on environmental damage in the region, and conduct land use mapping in each ward.</p>              | <p>Throughout 2024</p>   |

- Since CEPA assumed control of the management of the Kokoda Trail via the Kokoda Initiative in 2009 the environment across the Trail has been degraded in many sections.
- The fact that many trekkers prefer to ‘go bush’ rather than use putrid toilets also has a negative environmental impact but this does not seem to concern them.
- The solution is simple – develop a ‘Trail Management Maintenance Plan’, introduce a K100 ‘Trail Maintenance Levy, and pay landowner communities to maintain the Trail and bridges in a safe condition.
- Also keep in mind that landowners are master of their environment who have been managing their land for centuries – they don’t need Qld Park Rangers or do-gooder eco-tour companies patronising them with advice.

*Compliance.*

Can an Australian trekking company who does not have a KTA licence, legally operate through a local company that does?

This will be clarified in writing once legal opinion is provided. Information will be circulated to tour operators prior to the next tour operators forum.

March/April 2024

- Australian tour companies can do what they like and easily avoid their employment and taxation responsibilities because the KTA is either too inept or too lazy to enforce their own laws and conditions – as is the IPA.
- This creates a climate which makes it virtually impossible to conduct business legally across the Kokoda Trail.