



PRIME MINISTER

STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P J KEATING MP

SUPPORT FOR JOINT COMMEMORATION AT KOKODA

The Australian Government will contribute \$1.5 million to commemorate jointly with Papua New Guinea the sacrifices made by both countries on the Kokoda Track during World War Two.

I first discussed this proposal with the then Prime Minister, Rabbie Namaliu, when I made what was for me a very memorable visit to Kokoda in April, 1992.

When the Prime Minister, Paias Wingti, was in Australia recently I returned to the discussion, and we agreed our two governments would undertake construction of a number of facilities at Kokoda.

Details of the construction will be finalised with the Papua New Guinea Government soon, but Australia expects that they will include a new airport terminal at Kokoda, an expanded and renovated war museum, a hostel for people hiking along the Track and a new medical centre to serve the area.

Those who made the greatest of all sacrifices, in the name of their country and their people, have already made Kokoda sacred.

Australian servicemen, many still in their teens, came to Kokoda to save their country from a ruthless enemy. They won a famous victory, and we honour them for that. We also pay tribute to the unquestioning help, courage and selfless humanitarianism of the people of Papua New Guinea who supported them.

Together they suffered appalling hardship in a terrain totally inimical to their task. They suffered in battle. Many suffered long after. This and future generations must not forget them.

We hope that tomorrow, Anzac Day, we can begin to remember their sacrifice and the bonds between our two people in a substantial way.

I also thank Rotary Australia, which has agreed to undertake the construction and supervise the associated administration.

**CANBERRA
24 APRIL, 1994**