THE KOKODA TRACK WORLD HERITAGE AREA

ISSUES AND OPTIONS

Colin Filer
A POVERTY-ENVIRONMENT RELATIONSHIP

What has Australia done for Fuzzy Wuzzy in 65 years?

Rudd wants Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels to live in perpetual poverty
Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating was made an Orokaivan chief on Sunday during Anzac Day ceremonies in Kokoda. He was given a traditional Otohu pig tusk, a spear to fight with, a shield to protect himself and a stone club to use against enemies. This induction ceremony was done as a sign of peace and not for him to go out to war. As a chief of Orokaivans, he was asked to protect them.

Oro Premier Mr Benstead Atota urged for closer co-operation between PNG and Australia. Mr Keating described the ceremony in Kokoda as one of “celebrating freedom and friendship”. He said Kokoda was a place where the rock of foundation for Australia rested. “It’s really here that the soul of our relationship sits.”
1993: Bilateral memorandum of understanding
1994: Kokoda Trail Development Project launched
1995: Kokoda Memorial Hospital opened
2000: Oro Governor threatens Olympic torch relay
2002: First Kokoda Memorial AFL match
2003: Proclamation of Kokoda Track Authority (KTA)
2003: Establishment of Kokoda Track Foundation (KTF)
2006: Production of sustainable tourism plan
2006: Frontier Resources spruiks Kodu prospect
'AUSTRALIAN prime minister John Howard has supported moves to stop Frontier Resources from carrying out mining exploration along the Kokoda Track. This had attracted the ire of Mining Minister Sam Akoitai, who described Howard’s move as “overreacting to just exploration work” in the area.

“At this stage, there is exploration. If minerals are found along the Jojoda Trail (sic), that does not mean we’re going to dig them up. No way,” he said.

“We will make sure that we preserve the Kokoda Track.” Howard had sent a group of senior Australian officials to PNG last week to ask PNG to adopt measures to protect the Kokoda...’
'Frontier’s managing director Peter McNeil told AAP the prime minister’s call to stop mining going ahead was “quite frankly, appalling” and an attempt to deny the development rights of local landowners. 

Landowners saw the Kodu mineral deposit as their best chance of development for generations to come and said they got “diddly-squat” from tourism and trekking on the track, McNeil said.

“Eco-tourism on the Kokoda Track is rubbish in my opinion,” he said in reference to the wastes left by thousands of trekkers and porters each year.

“That’s a lot of excrement on the track and in the headwaters of their creeks, not properly contained.’
1972: Gazettal of ‘Kokoda Trail Reserve’

2003: Charlie Lynn proposes ‘National Memorial Park’

2004: RAPPAM report on ‘Kokoda Historic Track’

2006: WHA proposal prepared by WWF

2006: Central Province Draft Forest Plan

2007: Kokoda Track Unit established in Canberra
‘An expressway must be built to link Kokoda and Port Moresby if Australia wants to protect the Kokoda Track and its heritage, Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare has suggested.

The Prime Minister said this after returning from Bali that Australia had raised questions about the future of Kokoda Track and the mining activities in the area. Sir Michael said he suggested to the Australian government to build a road called the “Fuzzy Wuzzy” highway.

Sir Michael said he met new Australian prime minister Kevin Rudd in Bali and it was the first time he congratulated him in person. “I have deep ties with the Labor government going back to the days when I was a union leader before independence,” he said.
'A taskforce committee has been endorsed by the National Executive Council to look into, among other issues, Australia’s K42 million agenda to have the Kokoda Track on the World Heritage list.

Deputy Prime Minister Dr Puka Temu announced yesterday the NEC decision for the setting up of a national taskforce to develop a long-term strategy for the track and the Brown River catchment area — both of which are under the custody of Koiari landowners.

While the issue of whether the World War II track holds potential for carbon trading dealing will be looked into, Dr Temu also said the nation’s capital’s future power and water supply needs will be one of the taskforce’s top agenda items.'
‘KOKODA Track could be one of the areas for carbon trading pilot projects, Minister for Conservation and Environment Benny Allan said yesterday. He said the National Executive Council will set up the climate change office within his department to deal with all issues on carbon trading.

“Kokoda Track has plans for its conservation in the course of which the officers would take forest data to seek assistance from developing countries,” Mr Allan said. Under carbon trading, logging would be discouraged and developing countries would compensate for the loss in logging revenue.’
‘…. Now what the Rudd government and PNG Government should do through AusAid or any other financial assistance is to invest in assisting the Kokoda locals to conserve, protect and rehabilitate their forests for carbon offsets. Australia should buy the carbon credits and payments should be made directly into the accounts of the local people. Or else integrate tourism, carbon trade and mining developments in a more feasible, sustainable and environmentally friendly approach, to resolve the conflicts of interests. Australia, wake up from your slumber and remember the true “Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels”…..’

*Letter from John Laule, UPNG*
LOCAL TIMBER CONCESSIONS

Forest Concessions in the Owen Stanley Ranges

- Kokoda Trail (approx. location)
- Existing forestry concession
- Proposed forestry concession
- Provincial Boundaries
- Roads
- Towns

IOMA BLOCK 5
Forest Management Area
(227,330 ha)

Kokoda

VANAPA NORTH
Forest Management Area (79,535 ha)

EDEVU
Timber Permit
(26,819 ha)

VARAGADI
FMA (7,035 ha)

SOGERI/EFOGI
Proposed Forest Development
(201,853 ha)

PORT MORESBY

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 Kilometers
ECOSYSTEM SERVICES?

- Mining as a land use option
- Ecotourism or cultural tourism
- World heritage values
- Power and water supplies
- Logging and fuelwood harvesting
- Carbon sequestration measures
FLANNERY’S SCHEME

- 50 pilot villages offer 500,000 hectares online
- Google Earth and E-Bay form the marketplace
- NGO monitors outcomes and makes payments
- But PNG has no carbon accounting baseline
- And how will communities share benefits?
Will people who have nothing to do here... pay people who have nothing to do here?
‘MORE than 6000 Australian trekkers will descend on the Kokoda Track this year and inject about $A15 million (K40.5 million) into the Papua New Guinea economy.
But they will also leave behind 10 tonnes of human waste, which New South Wales state politician and Kokoda enthusiast Charlie Lynn warns will add to the World War II track’s degradation.
Describing the trekkers’ faeces as “carpet bombing”, the Australian said authorities urgently need to build environment-friendly toilets along the track.’
1. Sustainable development of Track communities
2. Preservation of Track’s historic values
3. Preservation of Moresby’s power and water supplies
4. Maximisation of potential forest carbon benefits
5. Recognition of World Heritage values
'Under the recent Joint Understanding agreement, the Australian Government will give $A14.9 million (K37.93 million) to PNG to fund a World Heritage feasibility study, and to assist communities along the Kokoda Track. Frontier Resources managing director Peter McNeil ... said the problems for other explorers in the World Heritage area of interest is yet to be addressed but the sovereign risk impact on PNG would be significant.

“A major question is, should PNG move forward utilising the country’s own resources and reap perhaps more than $US2.5 billion (K7.1 billion) in direct taxes and possible profit from the mine – assuming they are also 30% equity partners – or should they continue to accept Australian Government handouts for Australia’s pet projects and not attempt to foster a climate of self reliance?” he asked.'
‘The Australians came and we considered them part of our tribe. We didn’t say they were from another country, we said they are our brothers’