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## Media Release – Local Government drawn together by Kokoda – August, 2011

Eleven local government CEO's and Senior Managers will travel to Papua New Guinea on August 6, 2011 to test their physical and mental toughness by trekking the famous Kokoda Trail. 110km of treacherous terrain over the Owen Stanley Ranges in the footsteps of heroes will test the mettle of these professionals, and provide them with endless opportunities along the way.

Rather than simply trekking as many thousands of Australians do every year, these trekkers will add a little more to their experience. The organisers have been working with the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), the Port Moresby City Council, and the National Capital District Commission (NCDC) to value add to their trip. From a welcome by CLGF Project Officer Lulu Ted and an induction regarding the trail by Mr James Enage, Chief Executive Officer of the Kokoda Track Authority on their first night in Port Moresby, to meetings with Sohe District Administrator, Local Government President and Local Level Government (LLG) Manager of Kokoda Rural LLG at Kokoda, for the commencement of the trek. The trekkers will also meet with Councillors and Ward Development Committee representatives on four nights along the track at the villages of Aolo, Naduri, Efogi, and Naoro.

"These meetings will allow us to gauge the views on some of the priority needs of the communities and allow us to return to Australia with some understanding of the community needs and look at options to give something back to the Kokoda community" Scott Mason said.

As the trekkers finish the trek at Owen's Corner after nine arduous days of trekking, they will be welcomed by CLGF representatives and the Koiari Rural LLG President. They will also be privileged to be welcomed by a Koiari Traditional Group with a traditional welcome, and will also meet the local media team.

Once back in Port Moresby, a Civic Reception will be held for the trekkers with NCDC and CLGF representatives. For many of the trekkers, this will be the end of their adventure, but for five brave souls, the journey doesn't end there. Michelle McFadyen (CEO Longreach Regional Council), Scott Mason (CEO Diamantina Shire Council), Toni Averay (General Manager Development and Community Standards, Redland City Council), George Frangos (Executive Manager Area Services, Central Highlands Regional Council) and Alana Donovan (Project Officer, Diamantina Shire Council) will be staying on to conduct a project with the National Capital District Commission (Port Moresby Council). The NCDC employs over 1000 people and between 18 and 25 of their senior managers will take part in the three day program being conducted by the local government group.

Not wanting to reinvent the wheel, the local government group has teamed up with Townsville City Council who has an existing relationship with the NCDC which has been progressing since 2000. Townsville City Council and NCDC have proposed a project focusing on Communication, Meetings and Teamwork. The local government group has developed a series of workshops to be conducted with the NCDC Senior Management Team with a view to achieving an Action Plan toward the development of a Communication Plan.

"The great benefit of this project is that we are continuing to progress a project that has been going for 11 years and we know that when we leave, the project will continue through the existing relationship between Port Moresby and Townsville City Council" team member and CEO Diamantina Shire Council, Scott Mason said.

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Scott Mason

IN REPLY PLEASE QUOTE:

MM:BB:20110801

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“It will be a unique experience all round especially to respect what our diggers endured protecting Australia in 1942. We are really grateful for the help we have received from the Commonwealth Local Government Forum and other agencies to get this off the ground and create such a worthwhile project.” Mr Mason said.

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For more information:

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