

## KOKODA CAMPAIGN

The Kokoda Campaign during the war was a watershed moment in the relations between PNG and Australia. Before the war, Papuans and New Guineans were working to their Australian colonial masters with a master-servant relationship. But the mateships and the camaraderie developed on the battlefield between the Papuans and New Guineans and the Australians led to a change in the attitudes of our colonial masters, both in Konedobu and Canberra. Post war development saw Papuans and New Guineans working side by side with Australians as equals, with many inter marriages taking place.

Kokoda is where our forebears fought bravely to give us the peace and harmony we enjoy today. While Papuans and New Guineans (as Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels) did not fully understand why they were at war, their efforts in supporting Australia to defend Australia's liberty helped plant the SEEDS of the birth of new sovereign nation – Papua New Guinea. As for Australians Kokoda is where the depth of the soul of the Australian nation was confirmed.

Our two Prime Ministers, Albanese and Marape, also reaffirmed this fighting spirit by traversed the treacherous Kokoda Track on ANZAC day this year, NOT only to remind us of the sacrifices our forebears made but also to strengthen the bonds between our two nations going forward.

These are important stories to be told and to be retold again and again so that the younger generation can come to appreciate the strength and resilience of our bilateral relations. And I know that in telling these stories it will renew the bonds of friendship between our two nations for generations to come.

I know that amongst us this evening are emerging leaders from PNG and Australia who I know will take this opportunity to establish lifelong relationships which will augur well for the future of PNG and Australia relationships in the long haul.

Deputy Prime Minister, from experience, having dedicated over forty years to public administration, I am aware that a large portion of the Australian aid program to PNG has supported governance capacity building programs in the PNG public sector since independence. As part of this program, and in collaboration with many elites from the PNG Government, the private sector the community and the Australian Public Services Commission, we jointly designed, developed and delivered the National Public Service Ethics and Values Based Executive Leadership and Management Capability Framework.

I want to encourage the public and private sectors, donors, churches. NGO's and all training and education providers to embrace the 6 values contained in the framework; HONESTY, INTEGRITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, RESPONSIBILITY WISDOM AND RESPECT and for these values to be an intrinsic part of your formal and informal learning programs.

Its almost a decade now since it was formulated so it may be a good time for a review to see whether parts of it are still relevant.