



Media Release

The Hon Alan Griffin MP
Minister for Veterans' Affairs

VA052

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GRANT TO HONOUR AUSTRALIAN SERVICE ON THE KOKODA TRACK

One month before Papua New Guinea's annual Remembrance Day, the Minister for Veterans' Affairs, Alan Griffin, today announced a \$12,000 grant to upgrade and refurbish the southern gateway to the Kokoda Track and two memorials honouring Australian service.

"This funding will help restore and repaint the Memorial Archway, a nearby 25-Pounder gun at Owers' Corner and the 39th Infantry Battalion Memorial," Mr Griffin said.

"Thousands of trekkers retrace the steps of Australian soldiers each year; passing through the archway as they begin their journey on the Kokoda Track.

"The 39th Battalion was the first Australian battalion to face the Japanese on the Track, and the memorial at McDonald's corner honours their service.

"The fighting on the Kokoda Track was among the toughest experienced by Australian troops during the Second World War.

"Australian casualties were high with more than 600 killed and more than 1000 wounded during the Kokoda Track campaign."

Mr Griffin said the funding was made available to the Kokoda Memorial Foundation for the restoration projects through the Overseas Privately-Constructed Memorials Restoration Program administered by the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

"The program recognises the contribution communities and organisations around the world make to honouring Australia's wartime heritage and provides funding to help organisations such as the Kokoda Memorial Foundation restore and preserve unofficial memorials overseas," Mr Griffin said.

"Through this program, we can work with community organisations and individuals to help ensure the legacy of those who served our nation is remembered for generations to come."

For more information about the Overseas Privately-Constructed Memorials Restoration Program and how to apply visit www.dva.gov.au/oawg/grants/index.htm or contact DVA on 133 254. Overseas callers please contact +61 02 6289 6184.

The first engagement on the Kokoda Track between the Australian Military Forces (39th Battalion and the Papuan Infantry Battalions) and the Japanese is remembered each year on Papua New Guinea's Remembrance Day, 23 July.

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Editors' note: Historical images of Owers' Corner are available from the Australian War Memorial's Media Centre www.awm.gov.au/media/.

The VVCS – Veterans and Veterans Families Counselling Service can be contacted 24 hours a day, seven days a week on **1800 011 046**. To receive the Minister's media releases automatically by **email** subscribe at minister.dva.gov.au/subscribe.htm

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