

## **AUSTRALIA'S SUPPORT TO PAPUA NEW GUINEA'S COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE**

Australia is working across the full Papua New Guinea – Australia partnership to provide support to the Papua New Guinea Government response to the COVID-19 crisis. We will reprioritise over PGK47 million from existing commitments to provide a wide-ranging package of support that builds on our current activities while providing direct assistance to PNG to prepare and respond to an outbreak.

We are supporting a comprehensive national response, not just in Port Moresby, but direct provincial assistance as well, including from our Consulate General and Australian Federal Police (AFP) and Australian Defence Force (ADF) representatives in Lae. Our initial assistance includes:

- supporting **PNG health institutions and systems as they prepare for and respond to the crisis**, by working with the PNG National Department of Health and partners, such as Provincial Health Authorities, UNICEF, the World Health Organization and NGOs. We are providing assistance that aims to implement the PNG Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan for Coronavirus, including providing over 42,000 pieces of protective equipment for health workers, over 20,000 testing kits and improving the ability of health facilities to respond and treat suspected cases and patients.
- **working alongside the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC) in their preparation and response to COVID-19 efforts**, including during the current lockdown period. The AFP PNG-Australia Policing Partnership (PNG-APP) currently has 28 Advisors based in PNG, our largest international policing deployment. These members are versatile and committed to working side by side with the RPNGC and the Government of PNG in support of the COVID-19 response. PNG-APP Advisors are embedded with RPNGC Commissioner Manning, supporting him as Controller for the State of Emergency; supporting PNG's COVID-19 Joint Task Force; assisting with RPNGC's COVID-19 budgetary planning; and supporting RPNGC's provincial response to COVID-19.
- **reinforcing communication and community awareness raising**, by empowering PNG's churches and others to support public information campaigns on avoiding infection, and helping to staff the PNG COVID-19 emergency call centre.
- **direct technical assistance and expert advice** to the PNG Government in planning and preparation, with advisers located in key Government departments and assisting the Government's Joint Task Force, as well as providing policy advice and support.
- **working with the PNG Defence Force (PNGDF) by re-prioritising and bringing forward programs within the Defence Cooperation Program (DCP)**. We are supporting the PNGDF with existing in-country personnel and resources. The DCP, our largest globally, is working with the PNGDF to provide technical advice, training and capacity building, refurbishment of a headquarters building at Murray Barracks, refurbishment of a PNGDF maritime landing craft to be better able to assist in a crisis response, and provision of aviation support to assist in the redeployment and resupply of PNGDF soldiers on operations.

Our support builds on the US\$300 million low interest budget support loan we provided to the PNG Government in 2019, which will help buffer the economy and the government against the economic impacts of COVID-19. We also have a significant development assistance program. While some of our work may be interrupted, we will continue to work across key sectors such as education, gender, infrastructure and law and justice.

