



Working for a healthier PNG

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Australian Doctors International Inc. (ADI)

Submission to the Joint Standing Committee On Foreign Affairs,
Defence And Trade (JSCFADT) on the Inquiry into the Delivery and
Effectiveness of Australia's Aid to Papua New Guinea.

Australian Doctors International (ADI) is a non government, not-for-profit health development organisation with no religious or political affiliations, focused on health goals in PNG. It is a full member of ACFID and has base accreditation with DFAT. ADI currently has programs in Western Province (since 2001) and New Ireland (since 2011). Gulf Province. ADI has been invited by Provincial government and faith-based officials to extend its important health programs to other PNG provinces.

Papua New Guinea (PNG) is Australia's nearest neighbour and one that deserves Australia's support to improve its economic, social and development indices. PNG saved Australian lives during the Second World War when it was an Australian colony, but, post independence (1975), PNG has struggled to improve the health and welfare of its 7 million people.

Australian non-government organisations (NGOs) work alongside, equip and empower civil society movements and community based organisations who have significant on-the-ground expertise and experience and who prioritise working through local systems to achieve positive change for communities.

ADI's focus is on delivering and strengthening primary health services in rural and remote communities, reducing preventable disease through public health programs and increasing the capacity of the local health workers. ADI's signature project, integrated rural health patrols, involves volunteer doctors joining local ancillary health workers to travel by road, boat or on foot to remote health centres and aid posts. These are welcome visits for some of the remote and disadvantaged families in PNG.

ADI partners with the Provincial government in New Ireland and the Diocese of Daru-Kiunga in Western Province to improve the provision of health services to their communities. Recently, ADI has established fruitful partnerships with for-profit companies working in those provinces, namely Horizon Oil and Newcrest Mining and early indications are that these three-way arrangements are yielding sustainable benefits for the people of PNG.

Not all aid and development programs can be successfully transported from one country to another but aid and development organisations are learning organisations and constantly looking for ways to improve the services they provide. Considerations of accessibility, culture and safety must be addressed when agreeing on, in consultation with partners, the best way forward. Violence against women in PNG continues to be a serious threat to improvements in health and development and increased funding in law and justice is needed as well as "safe houses" for the victims.

Australian Doctors International supports the Australian Government's efforts to identify potential leaders among PNG nationals, especially women, and promotes local health workers to lead the integrated health patrols to all parts of New Ireland Province. ADI also relies heavily on local health professionals to contribute to the twice yearly in-service training programs for staff from all health centres.

In spite of its considerable economic success in the last decade, PNG has failed to meet any Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) with 40% of the population continuing to live in poverty. ADI would suggest that Australia's Aid Program in PNG align with the new priorities agreed in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) prioritising the health and education needs of those living in rural and remote PNG.

25th March 2015

Anne Lanham

ADI Board Secretary