

Attachment B: Maternal and Reproductive Health in PNG

- Health is a priority area under the PNG-Australia Partnership for Development
 - in 2010-11, Australia will provide \$43 million for health in PNG
 - this is approximately 10 per cent of AusAID's total country program in PNG and is equivalent to about 20 per cent of PNG's 2010 National budget for health (Kina 571 million or \$224.1 million).
- Ultimately, responsibility for maternal health rests with the Government of PNG.
- Sasa Zibe, Minister for Health and HIV/AIDS, convened a Ministerial Taskforce in mid 2008 as a way of exploring the reasons for the deterioration in maternal health and establishing a way forward to protect the future health of PNG girls and women
 - subsequent to the release of the Task Force's report, PNG requested Australia's assistance to implement the recommendations. Australia funded a meeting of international and local experts (29 June - 2 July 2010) to support PNG to develop an emergency action plan
 - PNG Government's recent leadership in this area is promising and Australia will continue to support PNG's efforts and to build community awareness of the issue
 - AusAID agrees that working closely with provinces is vital to save women's lives. We are pleased that the National Department of Health intends to allow provinces to provide their own plans to address maternal health problems and intends to support the provinces financially to do so.
- Implementation of maternal and reproductive health activities continues to be hindered by a number of issues relating to:
 - low leadership capacity and commitment at provincial and facility level
 - poor infrastructure, lack of equipment, problems with drug distribution
 - insufficient trained staff and an ageing workforce.

Australian Assistance

- AusAID works with the Government of PNG and other donors to strengthen the overall health system
 - at the national level, strengthen functions that relate to service delivery such as drug supply and distribution and workforce planning

- at the sub-national level, strengthening on the ground service delivery including funding the operation of rural health facilities, integrated health patrols and district drug distribution, all of which are essential for women to enjoy safe pregnancy and childbirth
- our goal is to see better results on the ground i.e. more women actually accessing quality health services.
- To directly respond to the Taskforce report recommendations, Australia will work with the Government of PNG and other donors to:
 - establish five fully functional midwifery schools by February 2012 (currently only two of the four existing schools are functional);
 - expand community health worker training in maternity care;
 - increase and improve obstetrics and gynaecology services; and
 - investigate the use of outreach patrols in the provinces to increase maternal health service coverage.
- In 2009, AusAID supported maternal health related activities, which included:
 - sponsorship of 120 midwives and paediatric nurses through training programs;
 - funding four maternal and child health program officers to selected provinces (Bougainville, West New Britain, New Ireland and Manus and four technical staff within the PNG National Department of Health);
 - a long term adviser to the National Department of Health to oversee development and implementation of policies to improve maternal health;
 - funding for two maternal and child health workers and annual obstetric care training at Buka Hospital in Bougainville; and
 - funding outreach patrols including health workers focused on maternal and child health along the Kokoda Track, as well as renovating health centres, providing water supplies and upgrading systems.