

Member	Tim Bull	Electorate	Gippsland East
Period	01 July 2023 to 30 September 2023		

Regulation 6 - Expense allowance and electorate allowance	
Total amount paid to member for electorate allowance	\$13,549.34
Total amount paid to member for expense allowance	\$3,228.05

Regulation 7 - Motor vehicle allowance	
Total amount paid to member for motor vehicle allowance	\$0.00
Member did not receive the motor vehicle allowance in the previous quarter and member has elected to receive the motor vehicle allowance for this quarter	No

Regulation 9 - Parliamentary accommodation sitting allowance	
Total amount paid to member for parliamentary accommodation sitting allowance	\$7,139.44
Suburb in which the member's parliamentary accommodation is located	Fitzroy

Regulation 10 - Travel allowance claims					
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid	Town or city in which accommodation was located	Value of the accommodation
Total number of nights for travel allowance claims			0		
Total amount paid to member for travel allowance			\$0.00		

Regulation 11 - Commercial transport allowance claims					
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid	Mode of transport	Value of transport
Total number of nights for commercial transport allowance claims			0		
Total amount paid to member for commercial transport allowance			\$0.00		

Regulation 12 - International travel allowance claims			
Date from	Date until	Reason for travel	Total amount paid
27/06/2023	6/07/2023	Connecting flights from Melbourne to Brisbane for travel to Papua New Guinea to trek the Kokoda Trail in capacity as Shadow Minister for Veterans and in relation to the men who served from country Victoria, many from the Gippsland East electorate.	\$505.60
Total number of nights for international travel allowance claims			0
Total amount paid to member for international travel allowance			\$505.60
See attached travel report for further details			

Kokoda Trail report

June 27 - July 6, 2023

- Tim Bull MP

Member for Gippsland East

Kokoda Trail report

Between June 27 and July 6 (travel included) I trekked the Kokoda Trail. This was undertaken in both my capacity as Shadow Minister for Veterans and the increasing information that is coming out in relation to the men who served from country Victoria, many from my electorate of Gippsland East.

I also undertake this to assist in educating fellow MP's on the history of the Kokoda Trail to Victoria and hence was accompanied this year by the Honourable Peter Walsh MLA and Melina Bath MLC. This is lodged on their behalf as well.

In addition, I also ran scholarships to take nine students from my electorate, who then return as Kokoda Ambassadors for 12 months and speak at Remembrance and Anzac Day services, and at community groups and service clubs to "get the story out" that these men were our men from our towns.

I raise the approx. \$50,000 each year with the help of a small volunteer committee under the banner of the "Arthur Grassby Scholarship" – Arthur being a Kokoda veteran who lived in East Gippsland and passed away in 2022. The remainder of the trek is made up of local constituents who pay their own way.

I intend to continue my visits to the area in future years to have this story told and to monitor some concerning elements relating to the condition of the Kokoda Trail, which I will cover later in this report.

THE TREK

Without providing a day-to-day report, it is best the highlights are provided in a summary due to the fact some days consisted of a 4am rise and after dark conclusion and, in some cases, was spent between battle sites of significance.

Among the sites of significance visited were Jackson's Corner, Ower's Corner, Imita Ridge, Iorabaiwa Ridge, Brigade Hill, Efogi, Templeton's Crossing, Eora Creek, Isurava, Deniki and then Kokoda.

The vast majority of the aforementioned locations were significant battle sites, in particular Brigade Hill and Isurava where many Gippslanders made the ultimate sacrifice.

Because this trek has a strong Gippsland and East Gippsland focus, we visited the locations along the Trail where these local men lost their lives. For the few trekkers from other areas, we do this as well.

This cannot always be done with accuracy as it is only known of the area where some disappeared with "no known grave".

At these locations I provided a briefing of what we know about what happened to these men, sometimes this is very specific and on other occasions it is what we are best aware of through historical records.

Following the Trail, we then visit Bomana War Cemetery to visit the graves, meaning we visit the locations they died, and then the grave.

Each of the student scholarship winner visits the grave of a man from their area and makes a commitment to them in silence with hand on headstone of what they will do for them with the rest of their lives and simply to say "thank-you".



The Dawn Service at Isurava is a surreal Moment on the trek.

One of the highlights of the entire trek is the Dawn Service at Isurava, which in the breaking light looking over the memorial and fog filled gully backdrop is quite surreal.

This is the location where many lost their lives and Bruce Kingsbury won his Victoria Cross.

The stories from Brigade Hill, Templeton's Crossing and Eora Creek are also similarly hair raising, but of course such feelings are not confined to those locations.



Darren and Daniel Grassby, grandson and great grandson of veteran Arthur Grassby, in a foxhole on the Kokoka Plateau where Arthur was likely located at some stage.

Of significance is the Kokoda plateau in the middle of the village, where a 16yo Arthur Grassby (after whom our scholarship was named) was one of around 100 men facing a Japanese force of around 2,000.

This year we had the pleasure of having Arthur's grandson and great grandson on the trek and they visited the location where Arthur was stationed.

OTHER ELEMENTS

Apart from the extensive military significance, which is the reason for the trek and the scholarships, we are also able to expose trekkers to some of the most beautiful scenery in the world in the jungles of New Guinea and around 100 river and creek crossings.

The third element is we get to experience life in this country, with high unemployment and a poor health system.

However, one clear highlight is the visits to the villages along the Trail, to see the basic structure of village life, how these people are so happy with so little.



Scholarship winners getting to know some of the local children in Kovello Village

ISSUES

Some of the issues we encountered have resulted in Mr Walsh, Ms Bath and myself writing to the Federal Minister on our return. The matters raised included:

TREKKING FEES, BLOCKADE AND THE KTA

On reaching the village of Kovello, our group was met with a blockade, set up largely through frustration and anger with the Kokoda Track Authority (KTA).

The issue, as was relayed to us at the blockade, was that the KTA has collected around \$5 million in trek fees over the past decade, however nobody knows where the money has gone.

To pass the blockade, trekking companies were being forced to pay 1000 kina (approx \$400 AUD).

The fee system was originally set up to “ensure local villages across the trail received shared benefits” but this has not occurred. We are told the KTA has never published a financial report so the expenditure of funds cannot be tracked.

Those on the blockade believe most of the money, if not all, never gets past the bureaucracy in Port Moresby. Indeed, in addition to the lack of an annual report, the KTA website has been “under construction” for some time now, so there is little transparency.

While it technically is a PNG body, given the KTA receives financial support from the DFAT-Kokoda Initiative and has Australian Government bureaucrats holding positions within its staffing, we believe the concerns above need to be pursued and greater transparency is required.

We would support this occurring as a condition of the KTA receiving further Australian funds through the Kokoda Initiative.

A request for the production of an annual report containing a clear financial statement would go a long way to addressing these matters and reveal if the KTA trekking fees are supporting the original intention.

KOKODA INITIATIVE

The Australian Government provides funding for the Kokoda Initiative (KI) and among its objectives is to preserve the military history. As we see it, KI is not fulfilling this role.

Our trek included a number of Year 11 scholarship winners who were partaking to learn the history of the Trail and walk in the footsteps of men from their communities.

Just one example of many is Eora Creek battle site, which for many reasons is a significant location in Australia's military history.

At this location, there remains nothing to tell the story of what occurred. A small plaque in a paddock that simply marks the location of the wartime hospital station, but there is nothing to tell the remarkable story of what transpired there in 1942 at this location.

This is duplicated at other sites and indeed where there are some information plaques at certain locations, they fall well short of expectations.

We are advised there has been no upgrades to the military history storytelling since 1992, 30 years ago – yet it is listed as a key objective of KI. This needs to be addressed.

SAFETY AND LITTER

KI's website states that it *“works with partners like the Kokoda Track Authority (KTA) to enhance track safety for local communities and visitors”* and *“preserve the environment”*.

I first walked the Trail in 2015 and since then there has been significant degradation along the track and increased safety concerns.

One example is the Brown River. In 2015 a log bridge existed to allow the safe passage of trekkers across this fast flowing river.

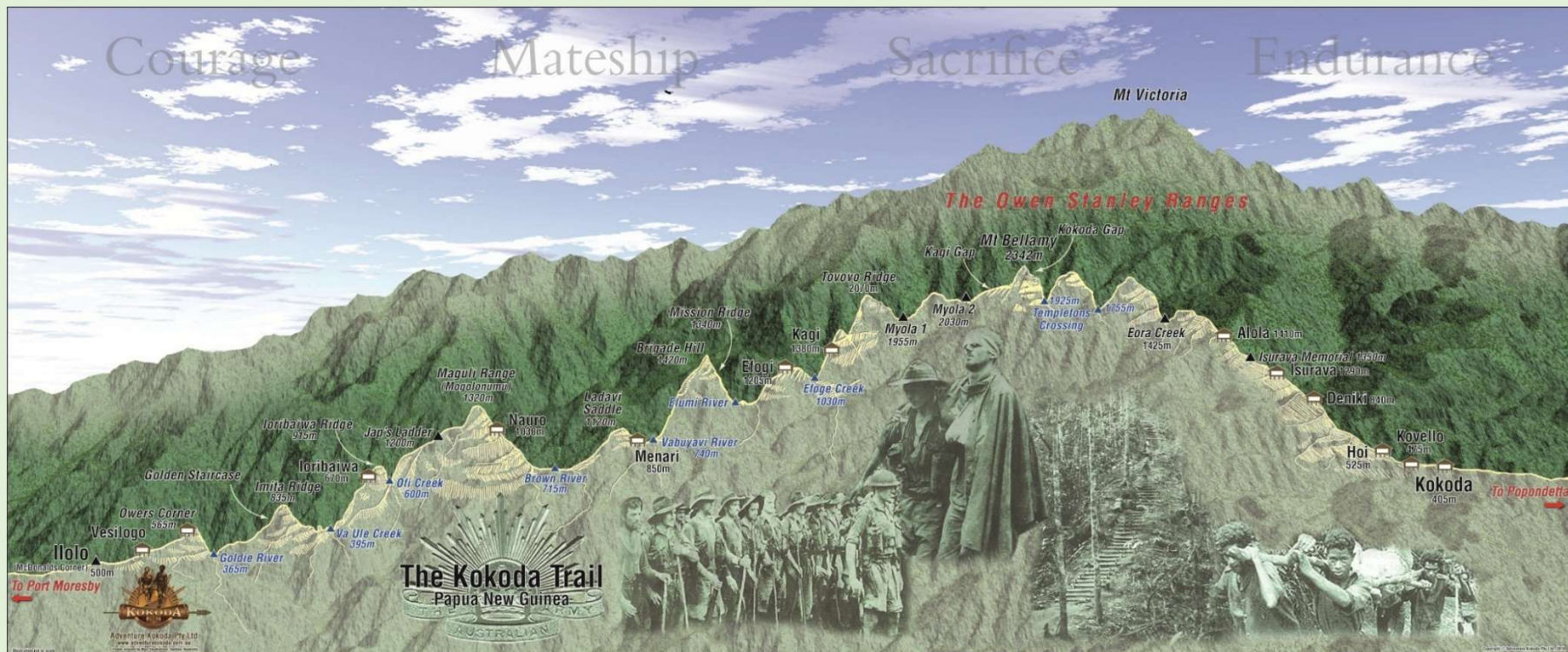
Today there is nothing, and trekkers are forced to wade through over waist deep fast flowing water and hope, if you lose your footing, you are grabbed by your porter. In several locations safety has gone backwards, not improved.

On “preserving the environment” there is significantly increased litter along the Trail. Regardless of whether this comes from trekkers, locals or both, it is surely a critical part of KI’s remit to address this. A great opportunity exists to have locals on a small retainer to keep their sections of the Trail clean, but it is not occurring.

SUMMARY OF ISSUES

There are many issues along the Trail that could be addressed to allow more Australian trekkers to better experience and enjoy this critical part of our military history while at the same time benefitting those villagers (and villages), the descendants of the Fuzzy Wuzzy Angels, who saved the lives of many Australians.

ADVENTURE KOKODA TREK ITINERARY



Owers Corner to Kokoda 27 Jun – 6 Jul 2023

- Total Distance: 124 kilometres
- Total Climb: 6658 metres
- Total Descent: 6683 metres

DATE	FROM-TO	NOTES
Day 1 Tuesday 27 June	Fly to Port Moresby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flight arrangements as advised • Arrive PNG: Met at airport by Adventure Kokoda staff • Check into The Sanctuary Hotel • Timings as advised by Trek Leader • Trek Briefing - Introductions • Dinner • Final Gear Checks
Day 2 Wednesday 28 June	To Owers Corner by bus Trek Owers Corner to Imita base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.30 AM: Reveille • 6.30 AM: Breakfast at hotel • 8.30 AM: Depart for Owers Corner • 9.30 AM: Arrive Owers Corner – meet guides and porters. Inspect 25-pound Artillery gun relocated to this site. They were used to fire over the Australian position at Imita Ridge onto the Japanese position at Ioribaiwa. Some were towed down to the Goldie River. Wartime briefing at Owers Corner • 11.00 AM: Depart Owers Corner – commence trek. Follow track down to the Goldie River and onto the abandoned village site of Uberi. • Trek to campsite at Imita base on Lubu Creek at 510m AMS.
Day 3 Thursday 29 June	Imita base to Ofi Creek via Imita Ridge and wartime Ioribaiwa village	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0700: Daily Trek Briefing • Follow wartime trek to the Golden Staircase - climb to Imita Ridge. Inspect weapon pits on the Brigade position amongst the sheer rock face of 'fortress Imita'. This was the ridgeline the Australians were ordered to defend at all costs and fight to the death if necessary. It was the final obstacle between the advancing Japanese and their objective at Port Moresby. Wartime briefing on Imita Ridge • Follow the track to Va Ule Creek then climb to the wartime village of Ioribaiwa via original track. This was the furthest point of the Japanese advance. • Descend to campsite at Ofi Creek – site of a successful Australian ambush during the withdrawal to Ioribaiwa Ridge.

<p>Day 4 Friday 30 June</p>	<p>Ofi Creek to Menari</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0700: Daily Trek Briefing • Grinding climb to the crest of the Maguli Range – known as Mogolonumu – numerous false ridges along the way – spectacular views. Engineers cut thousands of steps into this ridge in 1942 – hence it became known as ‘Engineers Ridge. • Inspect Japanese defensive position • Descend to Nauro village. • Trek through the Nauro swamp area, cross the Brown River to the base of the Ladavi Saddle. • Sharp climb to Menari Gap (Ladavi Saddle) - extensive views over Menari, the southern slopes of Brigade Hill and the valley beyond. • Descend to campsite at Menari Village – this is the site where Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Honner addressed his young bravehearts after the battle of Isurava – the parade was captured by wartime photographer, Damien Parer. Wartime briefing on significance of Menari
<p>Day 5 Saturday 1 July</p>	<p>Menari to Kagi via Brigade Hill and Efogi</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0700: Daily Trek Briefing • Trek via Menari airfield down through village gardens to Vabuyavi River – log crossing. • Climb up southern ridge to a track junction located at Tabunumu. • Grinding climb to the crest of the ridge to Brigade Hill – the site of the biggest battle of the Kokoda campaign (site was rediscovered by Charlie Lynn in 1992). Wartime briefing on Battle for Brigade Hill • Inspect the weapon pits in the area held by the 2/14th Battalion during the battle. • Trek around the crest of the hill to Mission Ridge. The Diggers of the 2/27th Battalion referred to this as ‘Butchers Ridge because of the carnage that occurred during the battle. • Views across to Launumu village where the Japanese assembled for their attack on 7 September 1942. • Follow wartime trek down to Efogi village, cross Efoge Creek then climb to Launumu village. Inspect the Japanese monument. • Trek to campsite at Kagi – the 144th Japanese Regiment assembled in this area in preparation for their attack against more than 1500 Australian defenders from the 21st Brigade.

<p>Day 6 Sunday 2 July</p>	<p>Kagi to Templeton's Crossing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0700: Daily Trek Briefing • Follow the original Kokoda Trail up to through the Kagi Gap and enter the moss forest area – this is nature's wonderland – birds of paradise, giant pandanus trees, numerous varieties of palm trees, fern colonies, fungi – it is difficult to imagine that this was the scene of such a desperate battle in 1942. • Trek down to the junction of Eora and Wase Creeks at the base of Myola Ridge at 1,940m AMSL – this is known as Crossing 1 and was the start of the Templeton's Crossing campaign. • Cross Eora Creek and climb to the Boili Mail Exchange Point at 2,005m AMSL (this is where mail carriers from Port Moresby and Popondetta used to exchange their mail bags). • Trek down to Templeton's Crossing campsite at 1,760m AMSL.
<p>Day 7 Monday 3 July</p>	<p>Templeton's Crossing to the Isurava Memorial via Alola village</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0700: Daily Trek Briefing • Trek to Eora Creek – the site of the abandoned village of Eora. This was the scene of utter chaos during the withdrawal. Wounded Diggers were forced to crawl up the track while their mates desperately tried to buy them time against the advancing Japanese. Those who couldn't were given morphine and a gun! • During the Australian advance a month later this was the final obstacle for the Australians to breach. Wartime briefing on the Battle for Eora Creek • Climb to Japanese position with dominating views over Eora Creek. Gain an appreciation of how difficult it would have been for the Australians to breach this obstacle. • Trek to Alola Village then onto the Isurava Memorial.
<p>Day 8 Tuesday 4 July</p>	<p>Isurava Memorial to Hoi via Deniki</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0500: Dawn Service at the Isurava Memorial – includes traditional songs by PNG guides and carriers • 0715: Wartime briefing on the Battle for Isurava and Daily Trek Briefing • Trek to Isurava Village via Etume and Ilole creeks and down the mountain through old garden areas that have been overgrown with choko vines. Take a break at the old village site of Deniki which was the scene of the first battle after the Japanese attacked Kokoda. Trek down to the campsite at Hoi Village via Deniki. • After the Australians were forced off the Kokoda plateau they made a brave stand at Deniki. From here they sent out patrols which recaptured Kokoda for a short time but were eventually forced to withdraw to Isurava after a brief but intense battle. Extensive

		<p>views down over the Yodda Valley from Deniki.</p> <p>Wartime briefing on the Battle for Deniki</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trek to campsite at Hoi village
<p>Day 9 Wednesday 5 July</p>	<p>Hoi to Kokoda</p> <p>Kokoda to Port Moresby via charter flight</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0615: Daily Trek Briefing • Trek to Kokoda • Wartime briefing on the two Battles for Kokoda • Inspect the monuments, memorials and small museum on the Kokoda plateau • Proceed to the airfield to meet the charter aircraft for our flight back over the track to Port Moresby • Charter flight from Kokoda to Port Moresby • Visit Bomana War Cemetery • Presentation Dinner The Sanctuary Hotel
<p>Day 10 Thursday 6 July</p>	<p>Port Moresby/ Arrangements as advised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checkout of The Sanctuary Hotel • Transport to Port Moresby Airport • Check-in at airport as per travel arrangements

