



## MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2020

### **Sogeri seamstresses unite to make face masks for regional communities**

In support of protective measures against the spread of COVID-19, a group of seamstresses in Sogeri, Central province have come together to produce face masks for communities in the Kokoda Track region.

The project, which commenced on 12 October, is supported by the No Roads Expeditions Foundation and the PNG-Australia Partnership through the Kokoda Initiative and will see the production and distribution of nearly 3,750 face masks.

The collaboration has also created a micro-industry for the five seamstresses at a time when employment opportunities have been limited by the pandemic.

"This project has helped me earn income to help my family," said Edna, one of the locals engaged by the project."

"I have three kids and it's difficult to provide school fees, lunch and bus fares daily with COVID-19 affecting schools and jobs."

"Whatever is earned will keep the family going until my husband is employed or the trekking season starts again."

The first week saw the group trained in contemporary techniques, pattern cutting and advanced sewing by expert seamstress Helen Kila, who has eleven years' experience in the industry and specialises in skirt and dress apparel.

The face masks pattern and guidelines comply with recommended World Health Organizations standards, ensuring the mask meets stringent quality assurance.

Karen, another member of the project, said "this project has given me an opportunity to put the skills that I learnt into practice."

"These masks will help people who cannot afford to buy themselves a face mask, especially those living in remote areas, to keep them safe from COVID-19."

By the end of the training the seamstresses had produced 248 face masks and are looking forward to employing their skills through the 12-week project and beyond.

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### **For Further Information Please Contact**

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### **About No Roads Expeditions Foundation**

The Mission of No Roads Expeditions Foundation is to work in a spirit of collaboration and undertake health, education and infrastructure projects in remote and rural areas, that improve the lives of disadvantaged people, by building community capacity.

The foundation's primary work has been to inject into remote areas of PNG, health and education professionals to support local health and education workers and, where appropriate, provide resources in a sustainable manner to ensure that we are building capacity and not replacing it.

We partner with local authorities, the Australian Government and other NGOs in an effort to collaborate and ensure the efficient and effective use of all resources.