



**Australian Government**

# #PNGAusPartnership

## HIGHLANDS EARTHQUAKE FACT SHEET

AUSTRALIA IS SUPPORTING PAPUA NEW GUINEA IN ITS RESPONSE TO THE EARTHQUAKE IN HELA, SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS, WESTERN AND ENGA PROVINCES



The RAAF C-130 delivering supplies to the earthquake-affected Highlands

## HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

- The Australian Government has extended its sympathies to the people of Papua New Guinea, particularly in Hela, Southern Highlands, Western and Enga Provinces affected by the earthquake on Monday 26 February and ongoing aftershocks.
- On 1 March, PNG Prime Minister O'Neill announced a State of Emergency in Hela, Southern Highlands, Western and Enga Provinces, and made available 450 million Kina (approximately AUD 180 million) for disaster relief, service restoration and the rebuilding of infrastructure.
- At the request of the Papua New Guinean Government, Australia is playing a leading role in the international relief effort. The Australian High Commission is leading the coordination of Australia's response efforts.
- Australia's total humanitarian commitment to PNG's earthquake response is up to \$5 million.
- Australia will provide up to:
  - \$3 million to support the recovery effort, including livelihoods, shelter, water and sanitation
  - a team of Australian doctors and other medical staff to provide support to specialists in the affected region and assist with coordination of the medical response
  - \$1 million to support vulnerable women and children in the earthquake-affected areas, in partnership with UN Women, the UN Population Fund and UNICEF



- \$400,000-worth of electrical transformers to re-establish reliable power supplies in Hela and Southern Highlands Provinces, which will benefit businesses, health clinics, schools and family homes, and restore power to some 3500 PNG Power customers
- \$200,000 worth of humanitarian supplies, including tarpaulins, water containers, blankets, tents and bed mats.
- The Australian Defence Force launched *Operation PNG Assist 2018* to support the relief operation
  - an Australian Defence Force C-130J has made over 30 flights into affected areas, transporting much-needed supplies from the Governments of Australia and Papua New Guinea, a range of NGOs, UN agencies and private businesses
  - since **10 March**, three **Australian CH47F Chinook helicopters and additional ADF personnel** have completed over 55 flying hours, delivering supplies, including food, water and medical kits, to distribution points in the Southern Highlands Province (including Walagu, Mendi, Nipa, Kagua and Ialaibu) and in the neighbouring Western Province (Dodomona village)
  - Australian Defence Force members, as part of the Australia-Papua New Guinea Defence Cooperation Program, provided direct support to the Papua New Guinea Defence Force in its operations to distribute PNG Government medical supplies and equipment to hospitals and health facilities in the Hela and Southern Highlands provinces.
  - the Australian Defence Force conducted an early damage assessment of the Highlands Highway, which was passed to PNG authorities and is informing relief efforts, including immediate road clearing work.
- Australia has supported the Department of Works to assess damage to roads, including some initial assessments by a team of engineers along the Highlands Highway from Mt Hagen to Mendi. Reports from this assessment are feeding into broader efforts from the Department of Works to assess damage and repair requirements following the earthquake
  - a number of major roads have now been cleared, which will help with further distribution of supplies, resumption of economic activities in affected communities, and will allow people to start returning home.
- Australia is working closely with the Government of PNG and other humanitarian partners to coordinate relief efforts
  - The ADF have deployed 110 personnel, and provided support from three posted personnel in PNG
  - around 40 Australian High Commission staff have supported relief efforts by supporting coordination, logistics and distribution
  - two Australian-funded logistics specialists have deployed to assist with the distribution of relief supplies
  - three humanitarian specialists have been deployed to work with the Australian Defence Force, PNG Defence Force and humanitarian partners to ensure supplies reach vulnerable communities
  - an Australian-funded specialist working with the PNG National Disaster Centre is assisting with information management and coordination
  - Geoscience Australia is providing advice on the scientific basis for the earthquake and seismic activity in the region.
- The Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) has additional information including a list of [accredited non-government organisations](#) and detailed information about public donations.

