

KOKODA TRACK MEMORIAL WALKWAY  
ABN 43 081 954 592

ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024



The Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway is a registered charity under Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC).



Patron: His Excellency the Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Retd)  
Governor General of the Commonwealth of Australia

## Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway Annual Report 2023/2024

### Introduction

The Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway (KTMW) at Concord West, NSW serves as a poignant reminder of the bravery, sacrifice and enduring legacy of Australian soldiers who fought on the Kokoda Track during World War II. Our mission is to honour their memory, educate the public and foster a sense of appreciation and respect for our veterans and their families.

### Key Achievements

#### 1. Commemorative Services

- Three main services for ANZAC Day, Victory in Pacific and Kokoda Day were held with record attendances of over 350 participants for each event, including veterans, families, and local community members. Distinguished guests included government officials from State and Federal Parliaments and representatives from veteran organisations and the Diplomatic Corp. This year has also seen an increase in school students attending from across NSW. Keynote speakers were current serving members of the Army, Navy and Air Force.

#### 2. Educational Programs for Schools and Community

- **School Tours:** Over 50 school groups visited the Walkway, coming from as far as Port Macquarie, and were provided with guided tours by our dedicated band of volunteers. These tours emphasised the historical significance of the Kokoda Campaign and the values of courage, endurance, mateship, and sacrifice. Students were given the opportunity to have an immersive experience during their visit, using the virtual reality technology offered at the Ralph Honner Education Centre.
- **Tours for Community Groups:** These tours have proved to be popular with a wide range of community groups including walking groups, Rotary, RSL sub-branches, aged care facilities, sporting groups and Probus networks.
- **Friends of Kokoda 'Beyond the Battlefield' talks:** The talk series (held at the Ralph Honner Education Centre) has gained momentum, with five events held over this financial year. Feedback has been extremely positive on the speakers and the topics presented. We are grateful to the historians who have participated in the talks. Future promotions will focus on local community members and groups to increase attendance.



**Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway Ltd**  
A.B.N 43081 954 592

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[www.kokodawalkway.com.au](http://www.kokodawalkway.com.au)

- **Installation of QR Codes:** Providing greater access to information for visitors traversing the Walkway, QR codes have since been installed on each of the 22 information stations along the Walkway for greater depth of information, linking stations to our website - [www.kokodawalkway.com.au](http://www.kokodawalkway.com.au)

### 3. Volunteer Engagement

- Our volunteer base, comprising veterans and families of veterans, continues to grow. Regular training sessions ensure our volunteers are well-equipped to conduct guided tours and participate in commemorative services. An appreciation lunch was held in December to acknowledge their invaluable contributions.
- The Memorial was pleased to have staff from the Teachers Mutual Bank and Commonwealth Bank volunteer their services over this period to help create a new garden, and to clean a total of 500 plaques in the Memorial Rose Garden, respectively. Members from the nearby Rhodes Chinese Community assisted with planting over 3,000 poppies for Kokoda Day, creating a remarkable sight leading up to, and on, the day.

### 4. Site Improvements

- **Maintenance and Upgrades:** Several maintenance projects were completed during this period, including pathway repairs and landscaping enhancements. Structural fortification to the granite wall of the Memorial's Centrepiece was undertaken including the replacement of floor tiles and waterproofing membrane. The installation of a new pump has improved the flow of water to the Centrepiece via its reticulated system from creek bed and has resulted in the enhanced aesthetics of the area.
- **Accessibility:** The Memorial continues to ensure accessibility to its facilities for all visitors, ensuring that the Walkway is inclusive and welcoming to everyone. This includes a friendly wheelchair gradient along the Walkway and the availability of disabled toilets.

### 5. Community Engagement

- **Events and Partnerships**
  - The Memorial has continued to collaborate with local organisations and businesses to host community events, raising awareness and fostering a sense of community around the Walkway. The NSW Swifts netball team and the Sydney Thunder Cricket team visited the Memorial and met with our veterans to receive extra inspiration and to learn about leadership and resilience. Following the visit, we were pleased to have the full Swifts team attend our ANZAC Service in April of this year.
  - NSW Police Legacy conducted their visit to the Memorial once again to launch their annual Trek over the Owen Stanley ranges in PNG. The young trekkers had the opportunity to meet our veteran guides.
  - We were proud to be a leader in the field by conducting talks on the history of the Memorial and its significance in Mandarin to the growing number of non-English speaking residents in nearby Rhodes as a way of engaging our multicultural community, and to foster greater understanding. The talks will be repeated in the new fiscal year.

- **Communication**

- **Newsletters:** The Memorial continues to produce three newsletters annually to keep the community, stakeholders and our Friends of Kokoda informed of happenings at the Memorial. Newsletters are also available on our website.
- **Website:** Improvements have been gained through a refurbished website which now enables donations, e-commerce, and bookings of facilities to be made online resulting in greater efficiencies. The website is continually updated, and is a valuable tool providing details on upcoming events and is also an educational resource with numerous Kokoda-related articles, publications and links.

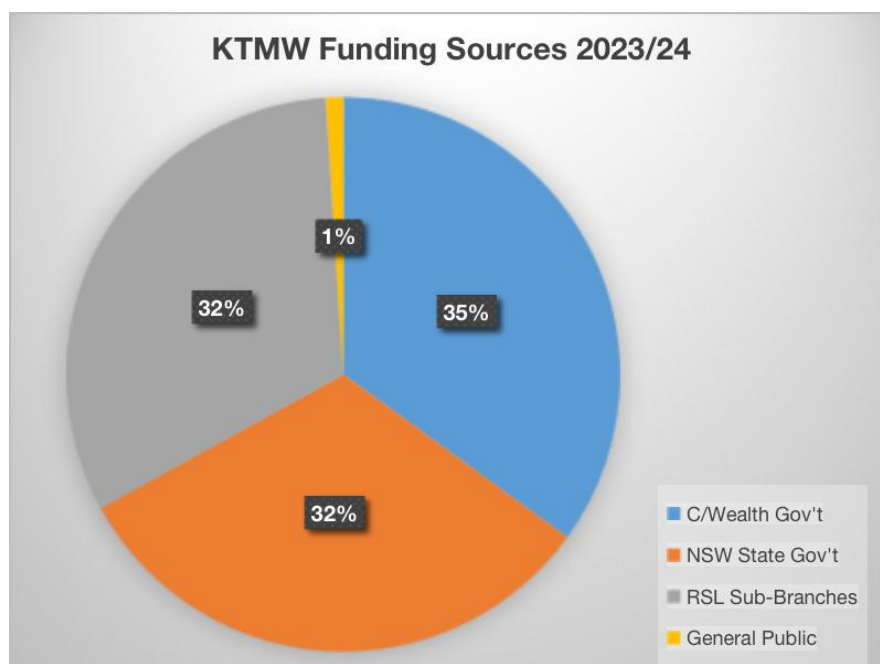
### **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**

This year the KTMW signed a MOU with the PNG Minister of Tourism. This MOU will facilitate the PNG Government funding a cultural dance group to attend Kokoda Day at the KTMW on 3 November each year.

### **Financial Overview**

Our longer-term financial position remains unpredictable due to government funding grants. This year we were thankful for generous support from our sponsors, the Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs, NSW Government, NSW RSL and sub-branches, and the community. Key financial highlights include:

- **Donations:** An increase in community donations and sponsorships have allowed KTMW to fund critical projects and initiatives.
- **Grants:** Successful grant applications provided additional resources for the schools' programs and site improvements.
- **Expenditure:** Funds were prudently managed, with expenditures focused on site maintenance, commemorations, operational costs, and volunteer support.



## Board of Directors

The Board of Directors met six times in 2023/2024 with an excellent attendance record by Directors.

### Current Board Members

- Jennifer Collins AM
  - Office(s) held: Director, appointed 10-08-2017; Chair December 2019.
  - Former Deputy Commissioner NSW/ACT Commonwealth Department of Veterans' Affairs.
- Alice Kang OAM
  - Offices (s) held: Director, appointed 12-03-1998; Honorary Secretary.
  - Representative as a founding member.
- Carole-Anne Priest
  - Office(s) held: Director, appointed 26-07-2002; Deputy Chair.
  - Pro Bono Lawyer.
- Ray James OAM
  - Office(s) held: Director, appointed 31-03-2020.
  - Immediate past NSW RSL State President, representative of veterans and families.
- Charlie Lynn OAM
  - Office(s) held: Director, appointed 31-07-2023.
  - Representative of veterans and families; advocate for PNG/Kokoda Track.
- Robert Ridge
  - Office(s) held: Director, appointed 13-12-2018.
  - President Five Dock RSL Sub-branch; representative of veterans and families.
- Mayor of City of Canada Bay Council - Cr Michael Megna
  - Office(s) held: Director.
- William Paterson
  - Office(s) held: Director, appointed 06-12-2004.
  - Representative of Concord Rotary.

There is currently one Board vacancy.

Other roles include:

- Pro Bono Accountant: Ken Wright - Enhance Accounting.
- Pro Bono Auditor: Robert Bill - PKF Accountants.

### Future Plans

Looking ahead, the KTMW aims to:

- **Expand our Schools Program:** Develop new partnerships to reach greater number of schools and community groups. This includes encouraging a greater number of RSL sub-branches to sponsor schools in their catchment area.
- **Enhance Visitor Experience:** Continue improving site facilities, accessibility, and historical information to ensure a memorable experience for all visitors.
- **Strengthen Volunteer Program:** Recruit and train more volunteers, recognising their vital role in our success.
- **Improve facilities:** Continue ongoing repairs and maintenance to all assets including setting a clear plan for capital improvements and enhancements.
- **Gain major sponsors:** Develop and execute a fundraising plan to assist with operational costs.



## **How to support the Walkway**

There are many ways for individuals, community/sporting clubs, corporate entities and others to support the Walkway - see [here](#) for further details.

Please call us on (02) 9166 0890 or email [admin@kokodawalkway.com.au](mailto:admin@kokodawalkway.com.au) if you would like to discuss your potential support for the Walkway.

## **Acknowledgements**

The KTMW Board extends heartfelt thanks to our volunteers, donors, sponsors, and the wider community who have supported the Memorial over this period. This unwavering support is the cornerstone of KTMW's success. Together, we will honour the past, educate the present and inspire the future.

## **Conclusion**

The Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway stands as a testament to the courage and sacrifice of Australian service personnel and their families. As we reflect on their achievements, we are inspired to continue our mission with dedication and passion.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Collins'.

Jennifer Collins AM  
Chair, Kokoda Track Memorial Walkway  
[www.kokodawalkway.com.au](http://www.kokodawalkway.com.au)

28 June 2024