



SOCIETY OF PRESENTATION SISTERS

Society of Australian Congregations of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (PBVM)



THE TRIALS AND PERILS OF GETTING AROUND PAPUA NEW GUINEA

PNG Fact Sheet No. 2

TRAVELLING AROUND PNG

Transport throughout PNG is a major concern due to isolation from major centres, lack of infrastructure, poor road conditions and safety issues. A four wheel drive truck is the only possible mode of transport in difficult terrain. The truck is serviced in Wewak which is a five hour drive from Aitape.

Fuel and maintenance of the truck is an ongoing cost draining the limited resources of the Sisters. But the truck enables the Sisters to link communities, assist the local people, support ministries, attend meetings, access flights in Wewak for Madang / Port Moresby.



The Perils of Travel in PNG - a personal account from Sr. Margaret Mary Crouch

“Nothing less than a helicopter, Army Duck or jeep, would help alleviate the pain of transport in regional Papua New Guinea! Since we didn’t have any such mode of transport available to us, like others in the locality, we had to rely on the truck or occasionally a boat when on the coast.”

Sr Margaret Mary, who has now returned to Australia after living with the Presentation Sisters in Papua New Guinea for many years, has spoken of the difficulties of transportation in the region.

“There is no air link between Wewak and Aitape so most people travel by road. On this route there are at least twenty six rivers to cross. Some of these rivers do not have bridges and those that do have a bridge are often unreliable after heavy flooding.



When I say we ‘travel by road’ the term ‘road’ is used loosely! If the truck slides into a deep rut the tactics of getting it free are simple. All passengers alight and shovels and ropes are handed out. Some assist by digging around the wheels whilst the remaining passengers pull from the front or push from the rear. This operation can take hours; only the driver is spared a mud bath!

Bridges in Papua New Guinea are an interesting phenomenon. Some shake in their foundations, others have all the sleepers removed for firewood in the villages, others don’t meet in the middle but the most common bridge just has the iron tracks and NOTHING else.

“Can you imagine a truck carrying a drum of diesel, timber, food and many passengers trying to wield that amount of cargo and at the same keeping on the iron tracks?”

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One false move and all land in the river. No wonder some passengers feign sleep when things become too hairy!



Rivers are often in flood. It is not advisable to cross when this is the situation. So we wait and wait and

watch the passing parade of floating large trees, peoples' humble abodes and dead animals including many snakes. Usually people bring food with them and watch with us until day break...on the first day and sometimes the second day. At the end of a trip the truck is ready for a big overhaul. This often costs thousands of Kina.

Sr. Margaret Mary Crouch has been helping communities in PNG for over 25 years.

Can you Help?

"A truck is a lifeline for the Sisters"

- Sr Margaret Mary

Can you help support the running costs of a truck or one of the community programs?

If so, please contact the Society Office on 02-97395600 or email society@pbvm.org.au for further information & bank transfer details or send a cheque, payable to Presentation Sisters PNG, to: Society of Presentation Sisters, Nagle Services, Suite 4F, 9-13 Redmyre Road, Strathfield, NSW 2135

Please Note: Donations are not tax deductible.

WHY IS IT NECESSARY FOR THE SISTERS TO TRAVEL AROUND?

Ongoing Formation / Spirituality:

The ongoing education of the Sisters is important as they are instrumental in contributing to the development of the local region and in turn the country.



Community Health Work

is provided by trained Sisters who not only work in the clinic in Ningil but travel to the surrounding 20-30 villages. They run schools for hygiene and nutrition and village programmes e.g. cooking with local produce, village sanitary practices like building bush toilets in the villages.

Teaching: Teacher training is held in Wewak and four Presentation Sisters teach in village schools alongside other National teachers in Ningil, Arop, Yimut and Aitape.

These schools are isolated and poorly resourced and cater for children from outlying villages.



Pastoral Ministry: The Sisters in this Ministry are involved in catechesis and run programmes to inform and support the women and youth of the villages. These programmes keep the women informed of their rights and teach elementary basic skills in sewing and literacy to those who have been unable to attend school.

FIND OUT MORE

We have two more factsheets: **Ministries of the Presentation Sisters in PNG & The Story of the Presentation Sisters in PNG.**

