

THE TERRITORY OF PAPUA AND NEW GUINEA

PUBLICATION BY AUTHORITY OF
THE MINISTER FOR TERRITORIES
AUGUST, 1909





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The Territory of Papua and New Guinea — one of the territories administered by Australia — embraces the eastern half of the main island of New Guinea (the western half is Dutch New Guinea) with the hundreds of adjacent islands and the arc of islands extending from Manus to Bougainville in the north of the Solomons. The Australian possession of Papua is made up of the southern part of the eastern half of the mainland, the Torresian and D'Entrecasteaux Islands, and the Louisiade Archipelago; the Trust Territory of New Guinea embraces the northern part of the eastern half of the mainland, the adjacent islands, the islands of the Bismarck Archipelago, and Bougainville. The Territory's total area of 183,540 square miles is populated by about 1½ million native people.

It is a land of colour and contrast. Precipitous peaks tower from the ranges in the Territory. The highest is Mt. Wilhelm (15,000 feet). Its striking contrast are vast areas of savannah, mainly around the Sepik River in New Guinea and the Fly River in Papua.

The native people range from near-naked primitives in areas just coming under Australian influence to people, mainly in the coastal areas, who have been in touch with Europeans for many years. Some of these have become teachers, medical assistants, mission workers, skilled tradesmen, clerks and plantation owners. They look forward to higher standards of living and education for their children.

Australia has accepted the responsibility of guiding and assisting the native people of the Territory towards a way of life and economic, social and political standards that will enable them to take their proper place in the modern world. This task, a long and difficult one, takes Australian trained officers into some of the most remote and lonely parts of the Territory; teachers, medical workers, agriculturalists and instructors throughout the Territory are working for the advancement of the native people and the development of the Territory's resources.

Australians may well be proud of the achievements in the Territory of Papua and New Guinea, particularly when the devastation of the last war is remembered. Practically all civilian buildings and installations were destroyed, and European plantations and native villages and gardens were laid waste. Since the war about £300 million has been spent on the advancement of the native people and developing the Territory's resources.

HISTORY

In 1884, after the Dutch had claimed the western portion of the main island, Great Britain proclaimed a protectorate over the "southern shores and adjacent country" of the remainder, including the nearby island groups. Almost immediately afterwards Germany asserted the remaining northern portion. Boundaries were settled in 1885. Papua (or British New Guinea as it was then known) was annexed as a Crown Colony in 1888; in 1906 it was transferred to Australia. In the years following, Papua was brought to a world position as a model of enlightened colonial administration. The outbreak of war in 1942 brought about the suspension of civil administration.



Germany occupied her portion of the island (German New Guinea), developing copra plantations and trade, until a few weeks after the outbreak of the 1914-1918 war, when Australian troops landed and took over. From 1921 until the Japanese invasion in 1942, it was administered by the Australian Government under a mandate from the League of Nations.

During the war years the Australian New Guinea Administration Unit (ANGAU) maintained many forms of civil administration. When the Japanese surrendered in 1945, the restoration of civil administration in both Territories began.

On 13th December, 1946, a United Nations Trusteeship Agreement made New Guinea a Trust Territory with Australia the Administering Authority. Later, the Papua and New Guinea Act provided for the linking of the Trust Territory of New Guinea and the Australian possession of Papua in an administrative union. This act is administered by the Minister for Territories, who is assisted by the Department of Territories in Canberra.

Within the Territory the Administrator is the head of the Administration and representative of the Government; law-making powers are delegated to a Legislative Council.

Australia subsidises the Territory's budget to allow public works, health, education, agriculture and general development programmes to be carried out. In the 1958-59 Budget, Australia's grant was £12 million, subsidising a Territory revenue of about £4 million.

THE LAND AND ITS PEOPLE

The massive cordillera of the Territory is part of one of the great mountain systems of the world. Because of the rugged country and high rainfall, the mainland has a complex drainage pattern. Territorial rivers pour from the ranges. In some cases they eventually become broad and navigable rivers; in others they disappear in vast swamp areas. There are productive plateaus and, in places, fertile coastal plains.



The climate of the Territory is generally hot and humid. In the highland valleys, however, the days are warm and sunny and the nights cool.

Rugged mountains, thick tropical vegetation, the rivers and the swamps have hindered intercourse between the groups of native people in the past and are formidable barriers to transport and communication now. Although roads have been developed in some areas in recent years and quite considerable road networks have radiated from the main centres on the coast and in the highlands, air transport has been, and still is, vital to the development of the Territory. Whole towns and industries have been built and are being maintained by air freighters.

The main towns are Port Moresby, with a population of about 4,200 Europeans and 12,000 natives; Rabaul, in New Britain, with 1,800 Europeans, 1,700 Asians and people of mixed race, and about 21,000 natives in the surrounding sub-district; Lae, 1,500 Europeans and about 500 Asians and mixed-race people; Beloko, the timber milling and gold centre, with 900 Europeans; and Madang with about 850 Europeans and about 300 Asians and people of mixed race.

The native people of Papua and New Guinea although broadly Melanesian in type, vary greatly. They range through many types from the slender, small-boned people of Papua with their light-brown skin and finely-chiselled features, to the stocky-built black-skinned Bakas of Bougainville.

Before the coming of Europeans, these people were fragmented into relatively small groups, speaking some 500 different tongues. They were, in addition, isolated by geographic features. Many groups engaged in intensive food; they lived in fear of their more powerful neighbours and were plagued by disease, superstition and sorcery. Most of the natives were subsistence agriculturalists, cutting and burning clearings to grow their main staples such as taro, sweet potatoes, yams and bananas. The swamp dwellers lived mainly on sago obtained from sago palms. The native people of the Territory used only primitive stone and wood implements.

Although a few people in pockets of the Highlands still live much as their forefathers did, others are advancing rapidly, particularly on the coast where contact with Europeans has been longest. The coastal people are now adopting many aspects of the Europeans' manner of living whilst continuing many of their traditional forms.

As the standards of education and achievement of the native people rise, increased opportunities are opened up to them, so that they can assist in the advancement of their people and the development of the Territory's resources. The Public Service of Papua and New Guinea is open to the native people. At present more than 200 are members of the Auxiliary Division, a training division which prepares officers for positions of greater complexity and responsibility.

Politically, the native people are advancing in various ways. An important aspect has been the formation of Native Local Government Councils. These, operating with funds they themselves raise, supplement the civic services provided by the Administration. They construct schools, medical aid posts, roads, and so on, and promote economic development. There are three native members of the Legislative Council. Every session, native observers attend the Council, to learn parliamentary procedure. Some natives have gone overseas to participate in conferences of the South Pacific Commission and organizations such as the Queensland Co-operative movement.

Economically, the native people are advancing through the development of their own cash crops and the assistance of co-operatives. They are already major producers of copra, cocoa, coffee and peanuts; they can look forward to increasing income from such ventures as the cocoa projects in the Tolai area of New Britain and the Kokoda area of Papua. Co-operatives and Rural Progress Societies market most of the cash crops and also operate their own retail stores. There are nearly 250 native co-operatives in the Territory, with a total turnover of almost £1 million a year.

PRODUCE AND INDUSTRIES

The Territory of Papua and New Guinea is a major producer of copra. Timber and rubber are becoming increasingly important and, as crops come into bearing, cocoa and coffee will assume major importance in the Territory's economy.

The value of exports from the Territory in 1957-58 were:

	£		£
Copra and coconut products ..	6,100,000	Coffee	225,000
Timber, including plywood	1,250,000	Marine shell (trochan, etc.)	111,000
Rubber	1,100,000	Peanuts	104,000
Gold	850,000	Passionfruit juice ..	72,500
Cocoa	820,000	Crocodile skins ..	70,000
		Other produce	70,000

At present, the copra, timber, cocoa, and coffee industries are developing vigorously. Native farmers are making an increasingly important contribution to agricultural crops and, as copra, cocoa and coffee plantations come into bearing, their share of exports will increase.

The timber industry is based mainly on the Bulolo Valley where one of the most modern plywood factories in the world is drawing on extensive pine stands in the area. Cutting is restricted and areas are replanted to ensure a steady supply of timber permanently.

Rubber produced in Papua does not meet Australia's needs. The expanding coffee and cocoa industries are expected shortly to meet Australia's requirements and leave a surplus for world markets.

The future of mineral production is uncertain. Gold production is declining, but a vigorous search for other minerals and for ore in continuing. The 1954 oil strike at Puni, in Papua, revived interest in the Territory's possibilities.

THE WORK OF THE ADMINISTRATION

The social, economic and political advancement of the people of Papua and New Guinea is a task which will need Australian help for many years. The Territory's Administration offer a range of positions, in almost every field of endeavour, in what are aptly described as "Careers with a Challenge". In the professions, a number of cadetships are offered to take prospective officers through University and after training officers work as members of the Papua and New Guinea Public Service with liberal salaries and enjoying similar rights to members of the Commonwealth and State Public Services.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Detailed information about the Territory and careers there can be obtained from:

The Secretary, Department of Territories, Canberra.

The Public Relations Officer, Department of the Administrator, Port Moresby.

The Public Service Commissioner, Port Moresby.

The Department of Agriculture, Stock and Fisheries, Port Moresby.

PORT MORESBY



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