



NRHC AND RRRC PARTNERSHIP What happens there, matters here

National Rural Health Conference (NRHC) delegates will help the [Reef & Rainforest Research Centre](http://www.rrrc.org.au) (RRRC) support local PNG women by donating a very basic necessity that we all take for granted: SOAP!

The soap will be distributed by the Treaty Villages' Community Rangers, and the women will participate in hygiene sessions, as the use of soap will be a new concept to most. Delivery of the soap to pregnant women and those with babies will be the first priority, followed by women with older children.

The soap will make a significant difference to the lives of women, children and babies in the Treaty Village region. The Treaty Village Area on the south coast of Papua New Guinea, less than four kilometres from the northernmost islands of the Torres Strait, represents the borderlands between PNG and Australia. This region, despite being right next door to a developed country, suffers from severe poverty and disease.

Adults and children are dying from preventable and treatable diseases.

One in 13 children die before the age of 5.

Many of these deaths are preventable through simple hygiene practices.

In 2016 the RRRC shipped five containers of linen to the South Fly District for use by women in the Treaty Villages. The women were ecstatic and are already putting the material to use as bandages, to carry babies and supplies, to shelter the elderly from the sun, birthing mats, even as school uniforms.

Since 2014, the RRRC has been sharing knowledge, skills and training to empower people and improve lives on the PNG-Australian borderlands. RRRC focus is long-term, sustainable improvements in water security, sanitation, food security, disaster management, health and wellbeing.

Through training local people in the uniquely Australian Community Ranger program we are building resilience and a platform for service delivery – 52 Community Rangers graduated in 2015 and another 52 Papuans will be trained in 2017.

Delegates are encouraged to bring some soap to Cairns and drop it off at the RRRC Table in the Convention Centre foyer.

For more information about the Reef and Rainforest Research Centre visit www.rrrc.org.au

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