



MercyWorks

SISTERS OF MERCY
IN AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

1 April 2021

Prime Minister Scott Morrison - scott.morrisonmp@aph.gov.au

L3, 6 Victoria Rd
Parramatta NSW 2150 Australia
IN THE LAND OF THE DARUG PEOPLE

Telephone: +61 (0) 2 9564 1911

Fax: +61 (0) 2 9550 9683

Postal Po Box 2023

North Parramatta NSW 1750

Email: mercyworks@mercyworks.org.au

Website: www.mercyworks.org.au

ABN: 37 147 042 466

Re: Concern for the people of Papua New Guinea with growing COVID crisis

Dear Mr Morrison

I am writing to you as the Executive Director of **Mercy Works Ltd**, which is the community development and relief arm of the Sisters of Mercy in Australia and Papua New Guinea. We work with vulnerable communities in Australia, Papua New Guinea and Timor Leste.

Mercy Works Ltd is a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID). Mercy Works have PNG national staff in our offices in Kiunga, Wewak, Goroka, Mt Hagen and with new work beginning in the Province of Simbu. Therefore, we are most concerned for the health and wellbeing of all our staff and the local people of PNG.

Today I attended an update meeting with other Members of ACFID on the growing COVID-19 health crisis in Papua New Guinea. I also attended an interview with the Lowy Institute and Jelta Wong, the Minister for Health in PNG. **We are told that 1 million infections are predicted in the next few weeks, with community transmission of COVID-19 across almost every province in Papua New Guinea.**

We, therefore, urge our Australian government to be generous in responding to this complex and growing crisis on the doorstep of our nearest neighbour Papua New Guinea by –

- immediately allocating 8,480 vaccines for frontline health workers and to increase to this to 20,000 to help increase PNG's capacity to rollout the vaccines at a provincial level, and
- immediately allocating one million of its domestically produced vaccines to PNG now, along with accompanying technical assistance and support to the PNG Government and communities to address vaccine hesitancy and distribution.

We support Marc Purcell, the Chief Executive of the Australian Council for International Development in his statement today to the Media - *"The risks of the virus mutating further as it takes hold across the PNG population is very real. If new variants emerge, they threaten to undermine the Australian vaccines program. It's in our national interest, as well as the right humanitarian thing to do to prioritise Australian vaccines to assisting PNG."*

Mercy Works Ltd remains deeply committed to working alongside the people of Papua New Guinea into the future. I look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience in response to our growing alarm and anxiety about this health crisis for our nearest neighbour the people of Papua New Guinea.

Yours sincerely

(Sr) Sally Bradley RSM
Executive Director – Mercy Works Ltd.



Cc: Marise Payne (Minister for Foreign Affairs), Greg Hunt (Minister for Health) and Zed Seselja. (Minister for International Development and the Pacific)