

# Gymnastics hits Papua New Guinea!

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By **Administrator** - 24 August 2016



Sport in Papua New Guinea is an important part of the national culture. Australian Rules Football is particularly popular and now Papua New Guineans have the opportunity to participate in gymnastics.

Oceania Development Manager Brooke Kneebush and Senior Manager Karen Norden recently visited Port Moresby to introduce gymnastics as part of the FIG funded Oceania Development Plan.

Gymnastics Australia were hosted by PNG Sports Foundation High Performance Unit whose staff undertook gymnastics coach training and assisted with introductory sessions including "Come & Try" Kindergym and Gymnastics for All, School Student Clinics and Teacher Education.

A very successful component of the development visit was the elite athlete cross training featuring flexibility, physical preparation and safe landings.

High Performance athletes from the sports of Karate, Triathlon, Netball, Weightlifting and Boxing took part and were surprisingly challenged by many of the activities.

There are plans to establish a Gymnastics Federation of PNG in the near future and for it to become a member of the Oceania Gymnastics Union, along with Australia, New Zealand and newcomers Cook Islands, Fiji, and American Samoa (development activities are also being conducted in Tonga). Each of these countries has their own unique culture and needs, therefore individual development plans have been prepared to suit. For example, with a population of more than 7 million people, Papua New Guinea nearly doubles that of New Zealand and Cook Islands' population of just 15,000 is not even 1% of PNG's.

Issues surrounding language, literacy and isolation are just some of the added challenges to development of gymnastics in Oceania, but a common theme throughout is the passionate people who value the benefits that this wonderful sport has to offer.

And after all, whether your hands are planted on the sand of a beach, the grass of a rugby oval or the sprung floor of an international standard gymnastics centre – a handstand is still a handstand!

## Comments

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