

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**29 August 2017**

### **Sea Swift helps out in PNG humanitarian effort**

Northern Australia shipping company Sea Swift has teamed up with local organisation RRRC Connect to help donate 52 Rescue Swags to help a poverty-stricken region in Papua New Guinea (PNG).

RRRC Connect, the philanthropic arm of the FNQ-based Reef and Rainforest Research Centre, approached Sea Swift to see if the marine transport provider could help get the Rescue Swags to mothers in need in PNG's Treaty Villages.

The Rescue Swag is an award-winning multi-purpose life-saving device, containing comprehensive first aid items and transforms into a sling, splint, and immobilisation unit.

RRRC Connect manages an aid development program in the Treaty Villages, which are located less than five kilometres from the northernmost islands of the Torres Strait.

The Rescue Swags will be provided to RRRC-trained rangers in the Treaty Villages to assist their communities.

RRRC Connect Lead Coordinator Yolonde Entsch said five women die every day in childbirth in PNG, and these Rescue Swags would provide a clean birthing environment for mums and bubs experiencing a difficult birth.

"Women in the Treaty Villages on PNG's borderlands with Australia have to grapple with unhygienic and difficult conditions when giving birth," Yolonde said.

"These women have no choice but to use old razor blades or slivers of bamboo to cut umbilical cords.

"The Rescue Swags can be used by trained rangers to provide a safer situation to expectant mothers and the wider Treaty Village communities.

"They come with an umbilical clamp and stainless steel scissors for cutting the cord, as well as standard first aid inclusions, with the swag itself also able to be used as a birthing mat.

"It is easy to use and female rangers in villages will be available 24/7 to assist women in labour.

"I can't thank Sea Swift enough for their incredible support in making this all happen, and their kind donation which will help save the lives of mothers and babies.

"Without Sea Swift's generosity it wouldn't be happening, and on behalf of all the people who this will help, we are so grateful.

“The people we want to get these Rescue Swags to already know the container is on its way and are really excited.

“It will help build resilience in these borderlands between Australia and PNG.”

Sea Swift Chief Operating Officer Lino Bruno said the company was delighted to help a worthy cause as part of its community program.

“We operate across the Torres Strait and are aware of the difficulties faced by residents in the Western Province region of PNG,” Mr Bruno said.

“Yolonde spoke to us about RRRC Connect’s efforts to save lives, and we were keen to help out by providing a container and shipping free of charge.

“The loaded container will leave Cairns on 14 September and arrive on Saibai Island the following week.

“Yolonde and the team at RRRC Connect should be praised for their superb efforts in helping those in need.”

**Ends**

**MEDIA ALERT**

**DATE:** Tuesday 29 August

**TIME:** 11.30am

**PLACE:** Wharf 5, Wharf Street, Cairns

**SPOKESPEOPLE:** Aaron Herewini (Cairns Depot Manager, Sea Swift), Yolonde Entsch (RRR Connect), Tracey Beikoff (Founder, Rescue Swag).

**NOTE:** *Please wear steel cap or fully enclosed shoes. Vision will also be available of the Rescue Swags, and the vessel which will transport the container from Cairns to Saibai Island (in the Torres Strait – just across the PNG border).*

**MEDIA CONTACTS**

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