

Water, sanitation and hygiene and sport in Papua New Guinea

Summary of findings of research for the PNG Sports Foundation



WaterAid staff member Lua Rikis collects data on the standard of WASH facilities at a PNG Games venue.



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Executive summary

In November 2017 WaterAid Papua New Guinea, with support from the Australian Government's Sports for Development Program, attended the PNG Games in Kimbe, West New Britain Province, to assess the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities provided at sports venues and speak to athletes, officials and spectators about their experiences with WASH and sport.

We found that inadequate access to WASH facilities at sports venues in Papua New Guinea (PNG) is likely undermining participation in, and viewership of, sports. Our assessment identified a range of issues concerning reliable and equitable access to WASH facilities, including: limited access to clean toilets; ongoing water shortages; limited availability of soap for handwashing; an absence of facilities for women and adolescent girls to manage menstruation; and lack of accessible facilities for use by people with disability.

The assessment further found a shared demand amongst athletes, officials and spectators for WASH facilities at PNG sports venues. This was strongly expressed by women and athletes with disabilities, who have specific needs that must be addressed to facilitate their participation in sport. Women reported that they may not participate in sport if they feel unsafe when going to the toilet, or if they believe that they will be unable to manage their personal hygiene when playing sport. Athletes and spectators with disabilities raised concerns regarding dignity and barriers to participation, calling for toilets and showers at venues designed to accommodate their needs.

A lack of adequate, accessible and inclusive WASH facilities at sporting venues is undermining both participation in, and attendance at, sporting events, denying people the health and social benefits of sport. Women and people with disabilities are particularly impacted. In order to remove these barriers, we recommend the PNG Sports Foundation develop a set of minimum standards, and accompanying guidance, to set WASH facility requirements for sporting venues.

Overview of the assessment

With approval from the Games' Host Organising Committee, WaterAid staff assessed the quality of WASH facilities at six PNG Game venuesⁱ, using a survey tool we developed using MWater (an open access digital monitoring platformⁱⁱ). Our assessment was supplemented by over 40 interviews with spectators, officials, cleaners and focus group discussions with athletes at five venues to gauge satisfaction with existing WASH facilities. We focused particularly on the views of women, and people with disabilities, as marginalised groups who stand to significantly benefit from increased sports participation.

Assessment findings

Perceived value of WASH facilities at sports venues

When asked about the WASH facilities required at sports venues, athletes, officials and spectators all reported wanting safe drinking water, clean toilets, handwashing stations and showers. Female athletes particularly emphasised the need for showers, and requested sanitary bins in female toilets to support disposal of menstrual products. The following justifications were given for these demands:

- **Improved health and performance:** Athletes expressed a desire to remain healthy during tournaments in order to optimise on-field performance. Access to toilets and handwashing facilities was recognised as a barrier against illness, with several people attributing teammates' bouts of diarrhoea during the Games to a lack of these facilities at venues.
- **Physical safety:** Female respondents noted access to toilets at venues as important for their physical safety, referring to the increased risk of assault posed to women when toileting in open spaces (e.g. in the bush). Women also reported they may not use toilets at sporting venues if these facilities are far from the field or if men are nearby, due to associated safety concerns. This need for sex-segregated toilets was also echoed by officials interviewed.
- **Comfort and convenience:** A third of people interviewed stated they would avoid watching live sports if there were no toilets at the venue. Athletes noted that venue toilets are important so they can remain close to the field to avoid missing the start of the game, or to call for a substitute player. This was a particular concern for female athletes, reporting that they would not play if they felt stressed about the lack of adequate facilities at a sports venue, particularly facilities to manage their menstrual hygiene.

Athletes use a tapstand at San Remo to cool down between matches.



Status of PNG Games' water, sanitation and handwashing facilities

Water

Five of the six venues visited had piped water onsite. Saraklok was the only venue that had no onsite water supply of any type. Even the venues with piped water supply experienced shortages of one to two days due to demand exceeding Water PNG's supply capacityⁱⁱⁱ.

At least one tap was accessible at the five venues with onsite water supply. San Remo provided several tapstands for use by spectators and athletes. Tap stands were observed being used both for hydration and to cool down. With no water for sale at most venues, teams were bringing their own drinking water supply onsite.

Sanitation

Five venues had permanent flush toilet facilities. Saraklok was again the exception, with no toilets onsite at the beginning of the tournament. However, basic pit latrines were erected at Saraklok three days after the Games commenced. All toilets were free to use, however the San Remo Fishing Club initially barred non-club members from using toilets inside the venue^{iv}. An overview of venue's toilets is presented below.



Athletes at the PNG Games

Table 1. Overview of toilets at PNG Games venues.

Venue	# of toilet blocks	# of toilet stalls	# of functional toilet stalls	Sex-segregated	Accessible for people with disabilities
San Remo	3	18	4	Yes ^v	Yes
Kimbe Rugby League Stadium	2	8	8	Yes	No
Soccer Academy	1	2	0	No	No
Kapore	1	6	4	Yes	No
San Remo Fishing Club	2	4	4	Yes	No
Saraklok	1	6	6	Yes	No

As seen in Table 1, only 59 percent of toilets were functional at time of survey. With flushing toilets dependent on a reliable supply of water, non-functionality was largely linked to aforementioned water shortages experienced during the Games.

In terms of user safety, all venues had sex-segregated toilets, bar the Soccer Academy. Sixty percent of toilet blocks across the venues had internal locks on all toilet stalls.

Regarding access for people with disabilities, only San Remo provided accessible toilets. Of the two toilet stalls, only one was functional at the time of the survey.

Only one-third of toilets blocks were assessed as clean. Several interviewees indicated they were avoiding using venue toilets due to poor cleanliness, reporting having openly defecated or leaving the venue early to avoid using the onsite toilets.

Hygiene

Five venues had handwashing basins within toilet blocks. Saraklok was again the sole venue without. While four venues had functioning handwashing basins, only Kapore provided soap.

Survey teams checked whether the female toilet stalls contained sanitary napkin disposal bins. No female toilet blocks had bins inside, while only two venues, San Remo and Soccer Academy, had a bin located close to toilet blocks.



Additional Observations

Matches were typically played in the day time, when temperatures were at their peak and humidity was high. Venues provided limited shade for both athletes and spectators. When shade was available it was usually prioritised for officials. Coupled with inadequate water supply at venues, this lack of shade poses significant health risks for athletes and spectators, including heat stroke and dehydration.

Conclusions and recommendations

From our assessment of WASH facilities at the PNG Games several clear shortcomings were common across venues. Water shortages resulted in people having to bring their own water onsite, the closure of flush toilets, and limited people's ability to maintain good hygiene practices. Limited access to toilets was reported as leading to open defecation, a practice which puts people's health, physical safety and dignity at risk. Widespread lack of soap at handwashing basins would have further increased health risks, indicated by athletes reporting cases of diarrhoea within their teams. This should be of particular concern given the potential for transmission of infectious diseases at large tournaments such as the PNG Games.

Diarrhoea can lead to dehydration, which combined with high ambient temperatures in PNG, increases heatstroke risk during sports tournaments. Combined with the aforementioned issues, the absence of shading at venues would have heightened this risk.

Looking specifically at women's experiences, several WASH-related factors may be undermining their participation in sport. While most venues had sex-segregated toilets, a lack of access to showers and sanitary bins, combined with concerns about entrances to male and female toilets being too close together, may result in women choosing not to play. As one female athlete explained, having access to toilets, handwashing basins and showers would "really boost women to take part".

People with disabilities were faced with largely inaccessible WASH facilities, with San Remo being the only venue with accessible facilities in place. While games for athletes with disabilities were hosted only at San Remo, people with disabilities would unlikely be able to use WASH facilities at any other venues, limiting their involvement in, and enjoyment of, the PNG Games.

As emphasised to us during interviews, athletes need to remain healthy and focused to perform, while spectators want comfort and convenience if they are to attend live sporting events. The above issues must be addressed if the number of people playing in and attending sporting events is to grow, and everyone is to feel included.

WaterAid recommends that the PNG Sports Foundation develop a set of minimum standards, and accompanying guidance, to clarify WASH facility requirements. Sporting venues would then have to meet these standards to be considered to host sporting events. Acknowledging the range of venues in which sport is played, from community sporting fields to stadiums designed to host international events, the PNG Sports Foundation should develop accompanying criteria which sets out the appropriate standards for different venue types.

Minimum standards will help ensure that basic facilities are in place to enable women and people with disabilities to participate in sport, ensure that athletes, spectators and officials are able to maintain their health and better enjoy the experience of attending and participating in sports events, and prevent disease outbreaks. As a starting point, basic standards covering provision of drinking water, toilets, handwashing stations, showers and shading are presented on the following page.

Suggested minimum standards of WASH facilities at sporting venues

Water

- Venues must supply an adequate quantity of water for the duration of the tournament, with guidance on the volume of water that will be needed on a daily basis, including for drinking, handwashing, flushing of latrines and use in showers.
- Venues provide an appropriate ratio of tap stands for the population accommodated at a sports venue, for drinking water use by athletes, spectators and officials. Guidance on the ratio of taps to users is needed to ensure that an adequate number of taps is provided. In rural areas without piped water supply or water storage onsite, drinking water needs could be supplemented by permitting vendors to sell coconuts and bottled water onsite.

Sanitation

- Venues must provide an appropriate ratio of toilet blocks for the population accommodated at a sports venue, for use by athletes, spectators and officials, placed close to sports fields and seating areas. Guidance on the ratio of toilet blocks to users is needed to ensure that an adequate number of toilets are provided.
- Toilets must be gender segregated. Entrances for men and women will ideally be placed on opposite sides of the toilet block.
- Each toilet stall must have an internal lock on its door to enhance user safety.
- Female toilets should have bins placed within the toilet block to support menstrual hygiene management.
- Venues must have a minimum of one accessible toilet for use by people with disabilities.

Hygiene

- Venues must provide an appropriate number of handwashing basins for the population accommodated at the sports venue. Handwashing basins should be located either within toilet blocks, or at the entrance of the toilet, to allow for handwashing after toilet use. In rural areas without piped water onsite, alternatives such as tippy taps can be used.
- Each handwashing facility must have soap for handwashing available at all times when venues are open.
- Sports administrators must budget for the employ of janitors and the provision of cleaning materials, and provide a routine for maintenance, to ensure that facilities remain clean and hygienic during match and tournament play.
- Venues should provide gender-segregated showers, ideally with individual stalls with internally-lockable doors. At least one male and one female shower stall should be designed to be accessible to people with disabilities.

Shading

- Shaded standing and seating areas should be provided at sports venues to reduce the risks of dehydration and heat stroke.

ⁱ Venues assessed were: San Remo; Kapore; San Remo Fishing Club; Saraklok; Soccer Academy; and Kimbe Rugby League Stadium.

ⁱⁱ MWater is an open access online monitoring tool for WaSH services, and its development has been supported by WaterAid. More information about MWater can be found at <https://www.mwater.co>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Water PNG is the national water utility servicing small towns and provincial capitals in Papua New Guinea.

^{iv} WaterAid convinced the San Remo Fishing Club to overturn this policy and have inside toilets designated for exclusive use by women and the outdoor toilets used exclusively by men (both club members and non-members) for Games' duration.

^v While San Remo's toilet blocks were sex-segregated, water shortages required women to share the men's toilets.



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