



# FROM THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S DESK

ROD HILTON

Solomon Islands - Australia Partnership

## Celebrating Malaita's Second Appointed Day



Prime Minister Manele, Minister of Infrastructure Development Maelanga, and Premier Asilaua with Australian High Commissioner Hilton on the Malaita South Road.



The opening of the Ambu multipurpose hall

This week I want to share the work of the Solomon Islands-Australia Partnership in Malaita Province. Malaita celebrated its Second Appointed Day on 14 August and I was blessed to be able to travel there for the celebrations, to meet with national and provincial leaders, and to see the benefits of the patnasip wea iumi garem tugeda.

### INFRASTRUCTURE

This Wednesday, I joined the Minister for Infrastructure Development Hon Mannasseh Maelanga, Member for Aoke-Langalanga Hon Matthew Wale, Premier of Malaita Hon Elijah Asilaua, and community members from along Malaita's South Road at Ambu village to announce support for the longer-term climate resilient rehabilitation of the road from Auki to Bina.

Heading north of Auki, Australia is also excited to fund the construction of a new market in Malu'u. Construction is set to start in the coming months, and soon the people of Malu'u will have a new, safe and clean place to sell produce and earn income for their families.

Did you know Australia is a partner under the Community Access and Urban Services Enhancement (CAUSE) project? CAUSE has delivered great employment and infrastructure outcomes for Auki, including the Ambu multipurpose community hall - which I was honoured to officially hand over this week.

A new mobile telecommunication tower in the remote Ontong Java, delivered in partnership with Our Telekom, is now online and connecting the Islanders to friends and family across the country - have you noticed a difference in the quality of your calls to and from Malaita?

### TOURISM

On my visit to Malaita, I got to see firsthand the country's natural beauty and understand why it's attracting more local and international tourists. Last year Australians made-up 45 percent of all tourists to the Hapi Isles. I was thrilled to stay at BH Family Lodge and Apartments and sign new partnerships with BH, Taflabana Guesthouse and Haodaikiri Homestay.

Australia's support will help these operators refurbish accommodation and work with local tour guides to enhance the tourist experience. It's another example of how Australia is supporting Solomon Islands attract more visitors to all parts of the country and generate more local jobs.

### CLIMATE RESILIENCE

While in Malaita, I also joined with tribal leaders from East Kwaio to launch a new three-year program of support for the Baru Conservation Alliance, which will focus on building resilience to climate change to protect forests and preserve traditional knowledge.

### EDUCATION AND HEALTH

I was lucky enough to see firsthand the positive impact of Australia's support for the education sector in Malaita. We have provided SBD4.3 million to Malaita Province, alongside New Zealand, to build critical school infrastructure, support curriculum development, and training for 267 Malaitan teachers.

This includes the construction of new classrooms at Manawai Community High School and Hunanawa Primary

School, and we've also provided a vehicle to the Malaita Education Provider, to enable transport and support to schools.

In Malaita alone, Australia has provided SBD48 million in provincial health service grants since 2018. My health team is currently overseeing the second nation-wide Australian-funded mass drug administration for scabies, benefitting communities right across Malaita, just as we supported the Measles and Rubella Big CatchUp vaccination campaign ahead of the Pacific Games.



The new classrooms at Manawai Community High School funded by Australia

### PACIFIC AUSTRALIA LABOUR MOBILITY SCHEME

During my travels across this country, I have seen how the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme has transformed the lives of many people and communities. It has created jobs for over 7500 Solomon Islanders and contributed to the country's economic development through remittances.

I'm pleased to see that over 2700 people from Malaita have been mobilised to work in Australia so far, and over 1000 more are ready to be deployed. In Auki, I was delighted

to tok stori with Manasseh and John about their time in Australia and how they were using their new skills and the income they'd earned to support their families and communities.



Prime Minister Manele, Minister of Infrastructure Development Maelanga, and Premier Asilaua with Australian High Commissioner Hilton during signing of the Malaita South Road.

### JUSTICE AND SECURITY

Through our law and justice partnership, Australia has supported training for 21 Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) prosecutors in Malaita, as well as community consultation on important law reforms and equipment for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions in Auki. These initiatives are about making sure that all Solomon Islanders have access to justice.

Finally, I am proud of the work our Defence team has done on a new SBD1.5 million small boat facility in Auki for the RSIPF, delivered in February this year.

### HAPPY SECOND APPOINTED DAY

I'd like to wish iufala evriwan blo Malaita Province: Happy Second Appointed Day!

Lukim iu neks taem!