



FROM THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S DESK

ROD HILTON

Solomon Islands - Australia Partnership

Solomon Islands and Australia: Building up Makira Ulawa and Guadalcanal Provinces



The Australia, Solomon Islands and New Zealand Government partnered to refurbish the Turarana Community High School dormitory and ablution block. This work cost \$2.4million and helped for 138 female students.



Australian High Commissioner His Excellency Rod Hilton opening the new water source facility in Mwanihuki, Central Makira Constituency, funded through the Solomon Islands – Australia Community Partnerships grants

This week I want to share the work of the Solomon Islands - Australia Partnership in Makira Ulawa Province and Guadalcanal Province. This is because these beautiful provinces are celebrating this Second Appointed Days, and both are enjoying the benefits of the patnasip wea iumi garem tugeda.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Australia has committed SBD325 million to the Tina River Hydropower Development Project; Solomon Islands' first major renewable energy project. This funding includes the transmission line from the Tina River hydropower facility, and construction will start soon.

Australia has also given SBD1.225 million for a solar-hybrid system at the Good Samaritan Hospital in Tetere, which will benefit over 43,000 people by reducing reliance on diesel power generation and supporting delivery of critical health services.



The Australian Defence Force delivered electoral materials in partnership with the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission to Kirakira, Makira-Ulawa Province on 3 April 2024.

PACIFIC AUSTRALIA LABOUR MOBILITY SCHEME

So far, 973 people from Guadalcanal and 199 people from Makira Ulawa provinces have participated in the PALM scheme with over 400 people, combined of the two provinces, ready for their chance to go work in Australia. The PALM scheme helps Solomon Islanders to earn money and support their families and communities,

as well as develop their skills which they will be able to use when they return back to Solomon Islands.

TOURISM

Through Australia's Strongim Bisnis program, we have partnered with local tourism operators like Parangiju Mountain Lodge, B-17 Dive and Beach Bungalows and Amazing Grace Boutique Cocoa Farm and Tours to improve their accommodation facilities, provide training and help them develop tours. The goal is for them to be more attractive and accessible for international and local tourists who can then see first-hand the natural beauty of Solomon Islands.

HEALTH SECTOR

Australia has been supporting Solomon Islands to improve health services across the country for over 20 years. This has improved health infrastructure and delivered essential services.

Australia is building a new birthing and urban health centre in East Honiara. This will take pressure off the National Referral Hospital. And this month, dentists from Australia joined the Guadalcanal Province dental team to provide dental examinations for 500 students across 5 schools.

Australia has also provided direct grants for health service delivery in Makira since 2018. Australia is funding the second Mass Drug Administration for scabies in Makira Ulawa and funded the Measles and Rubella 'Big Catch Up' vaccination campaign in 2023.

EDUCATION

Australia has provided SBD11 million since 2019 to improve access and provide quality education for all provinces in the Solomon Islands children over the past 10 years. This includes Teacher Professional Development, developing and printing of school curriculum/textbooks, and building and refurbishment of school infrastructures. This includes partnering with the Solomon Islands and New Zealand Governments to refurbish the Turarana Community High School dormitory and ablution block. The work cost SBD2.4million and improved the education experience of 138 female students.

We have provided SBD20million for Makira Ulawa Province schools since 2019, including, most recently, a Computer Lab and Home Economics classroom at Pirupiru Community High School in Ulawa valued at SBD1.3million.



Mrs Linda Rongonao, Assistant Program Manager for Solomon Islands – Australia Community Partnerships grants; Mr Karlson Kaekesa, Project Coordinator; Mr Kelvin Sese, Technical Officer; His Excellency Rod Hilton, High Commissioner of Australia inspecting three 10,000 litre tanks funded by Australia for Bubumala village in Northwest Guadalcanal.

GENDER EQUALITY

Australia has provided over SBD206 million towards gender equality

across Solomon Islands since 2012. Our support is delivered in partnership with the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, Seif Ples, Family Support Centre, Christian Care Centre, and the Women's Rights Action Movement. Our projects include economic empowerment and leadership development for women, our Markets for Change program, the SAFENET referral system, and advocacy on Temporary Special Measures in communities.

SOLOMON ISLANDS – AUSTRALIA COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Clean drinking water is a priority right across Solomon Islands. In 2023 I visited Mwanihuki village in Central Makira Constituency with former Premier Julian Maka'a, where an Australia-funded water source is now providing clean drinking water to around 350 people across the community.

In July 2024 I visited Bubumala Village in Northwest Guadalcanal with Honourable Francis Sade to formally open the new water source facility, funded by Australia through the Solomon Islands – Australia Community Partnerships grants. Using an existing borehole near the village, the Bubumala community installed a solar powered water pump to pump water to three 10,000L water tanks. The water is now dispersed from these tanks to 13 standpipes across the community – meaning easy access to clean water for everyone in the village! I loved seeing the impact Australia's support has had on this community in Guadalcanal.

HAPPY SECOND APPOINTED DAY

I'd like to wish iufala evriwan blo Guadalcanal Province (1 August) and Makira Ulawa Province (3 August): Happy Second Appointed Day!

Lukim iu neks taem!