



FROM THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S DESK

ROD HILTON

Solomon Islands - Australia Partnership

Australian High Commissioner Rod Hilton visits Temotu Province for the first time.



PS Pauline McNeil, Health Minister Dr Paul Popora Bosawai, Australian High Commissioner His Excellency Rod Hilton and Premier Stanley Tehiahua during the official handover of the Lata Biomedical Lab



Australian High Commissioner His Excellency Rod Hilton, Health Minister Dr Paul Popora Bosawai, Premier Stanley Tehiahua and PS Pauline McNeil inside the new Biomedical Laboratory

This week I had the pleasure of making my first visit to Temotu province. The diversity of peoples and cultures across Solomon Islands is one of its many strengths, and I am constantly reminded of it. And there is no substitute to seeing first-hand how the Solomon Islands – Australia Partnership is delivering for local communities.

During my visit, I met with Premier the Honourable Stanley Tehiahua. We talked about Temotu's proud cultural traditions, the priorities of his administration, and ideas to further support Temotu's economic development. I look forward to further discussions with the Premier, and all provinces of Solomon Islands, to deliver lasting improvements under the Solomon Islands – Australia Partnership.

Australia knows that supporting the people of Solomon Islands, and the people of Temotu, means lasting investments into people and infrastructure. That is why Australia has delivered over SBD21 million in education infrastructure, training and curriculum to Solomon Islands since 2020,

Access to healthcare is an enabler of economic growth, and Australia has invested over SBD12 million into Temotu's health services since 2018. During my visit, I was honoured to hand over the new Lata Hospital Biomolecular Laboratory with Minister for Health and Medical Services, Honorable Paul Popora Bosawai. The laboratory, one of

In October 2023 when Tropical Cyclone Lola struck Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Australia did its part to help the community recover and rebuild. We chartered the MV Ocean Joy and delivered urgently required humanitarian relief to impacted communities in Temotu. This operation demonstrated the value of working closely with the Temotu Provincial Government, the



Warrior welcome on arrival in Lata



Australian High Commissioner His Excellency Rod Hilton upon arrival at Lata, Temotu province, with medical supplies and text books

including SBD1.8 million to Temotu in the last year alone. Australia also built a new dormitory at Leusalemba Primary School, with a further three projects underway at Baenga Primary School, Safoa Community High School and Lata Training School.

three that Australia has built across Solomon Islands, has already provided on-site pathology results, helping doctors to make fast and accurate medical diagnoses to improve treatment and health outcomes.

I am also proud Australia has supported small-scale infrastructure projects across Temotu under Community Partnership Program grants, such as the installation of a community water tank at Malo and constructing a community hall at Yonema. The Australian Government will continue to invest in these projects that meet community needs.

Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) and the National Disaster Management Office.

I was pleased to visit the RSIPF Lata Police Station and the Provincial Disaster Management Office that are being refurbished as the first stage of works under the Eastern Border Outpost project. The Eastern Outpost project is being delivered under our Defence Cooperation program and upon completion, will see Temotu home to the first provincial warehouse for Humanitarian Aid Disaster Relief. The project will also locate Solomon Islands agencies in one place to enhance humanitarian response, border security and maritime surveillance.



Premier Stanley Tehiahua, Australian High Commissioner His Excellency Rod Hilton and PS Pauline McNeil

In these and other infrastructure projects across Temotu and Solomon Islands, Australia has ensured that we are using local businesses, creating local jobs and supporting local communities. I am proud that, across Solomon Islands, we have spent over SBD5 billion on high quality, disaster resilient, locally led infrastructure since 2019.

I am always looking for new ways to support Solomon Islanders deliver for their families. As Australia works to grow the local economy, I am also pleased that over 7,600 Solomon Islanders have participated in the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme (PALM) to date, including 253 from Temotu alone.

The skills gained from agriculture, meatworks and aged care industries have supported local industry, and remittances, amounting to SBD247 million in 2023 have been invested back into local communities across Solomon Islands.

Lukim iu neks taem!