



# FROM THE HIGH COMMISSIONER'S DESK

ROD HILTON



## Solomon Islands - Australia Partnership for Health

### waka tugea fo impruvim helt sevesis an helt aotkams fo pipol lo Solomon Aelans



Minister for Health and Medical Services, the Hon Dr Paul Popora Bosawai MP and Australian High Commissioner His Excellency Rod Hilton at the opening of the new Biomedical Laboratory at Lata Hospital, Temotu.



Australia's Minister for International Development and the Pacific, the Hon Pat Conroy MP, Solomon Islands Health Minister, the Hon Dr Paul Popora Bosawai MP, Australian High Commissioner His Excellency, Rod Hilton and Ministry of Health and Medical Services Permanent Secretary, Mrs Pauline McNeil launching 'Partnerships for a Healthy Region' in Solomon Islands.

2024 has been a very busy year for Australia's health sector support to Solomon Islands! I'm so pleased to have joined the Minister for Health and Medical Services, the Hon Paul Popora Bosawai MP for several key events, including the commencement of construction at the Naha Birthing and Urban Health Centre, my first visit to Temotu Province to handover a new biomolecular laboratory, and the announcement of much needed lifesaving support at the National Referral Hospital.

The **Naha Birthing and Urban Health Centre** is a **SBD250 million** investment in the health of Solomon Islanders, funded by Australia in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, and implemented by the Solomon Islands Infrastructure Program with local subcontractors and workers.



Concrete slab and foundation works at the Naha Birthing and Urban Health Centre.

In May this year, Minister Bosawai and Australia's Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP stood side by side to witness the commencement of construction. This new urban health facility will provide high quality birthing and health care services for Naha and surrounding Honiara communities. It will also help reduce pressure on the National Referral Hospital for many primary health care issues and non-complicated births.

It's great to see construction works progressing well, with so many Solomon Islanders working on this project and fantastic engagement with the local community. We're working closely with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, Honiara City Council and National Referral Hospital to ensure the new facility will

be staffed, equipped and ready to commence full operations in early 2026.



Laboratory technician Terence Ngelea showing off the new laboratory to Temotu Premier Stanley Tehi, Health Minister, Hon Dr Paul Popora Bosawai MP, Permanent Secretary Mrs Pauline McNeil and High Commissioner Hilton.

My recent visit to Temotu Province meant I saw first-hand some of Australia's support, and I experience more of the incredible natural beauty and rich diversity of cultures across Solomon Islands.

With Health Minister Bosawai and Premier Stanley Tehahua, I was proud to handover an **international standard biomolecular laboratory**, providing vital health testing and pathology services to the people of Temotu. **Costing around SBD1.4m**, this laboratory, like those which have also been installed in Choiseul and Western Province, are strong enough to withstand powerful cyclones and earthquakes and are fitted with latest biomolecular testing equipment.

**We know that the ability to provide these critical tests in Lata and other remote areas saves lives.**

It also saves time and resources – improving the quality of diagnosis and treatment that can be provided locally.

Saving lives was also the theme of a visit to the National Referral Hospital in August, where I was pleased to **announce SBD9.1 million of Australian support towards procurement of critical medical**

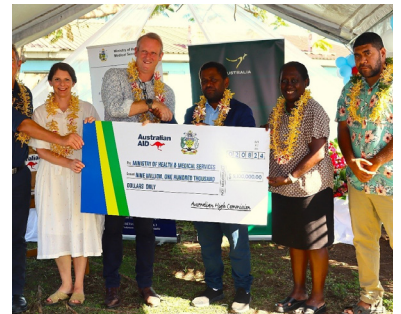
**supplies** in response to a request from Solomon Islands Government. I also handed over a three-tonne truck for Helena Goldie Hospital in Munda and a Landcruiser for the Mental Health team at the National Referral Hospital.

Australia's health partnership with Solomon Islands harnesses Australia's world-class health institutions, NGOs and clinical and technical experts. In September this year, Australia's Minister for International Development and the Pacific, the Hon Pat Conroy MP and I were honoured to join Minister Bosawai, Permanent Secretary Pauline McNeil and Ministry of Health and Medical Services staff to announce Australia is boosting its support for Solomon Islands' national health priorities through more than 20 innovative and transformational health partnerships.

Through the 'Partnerships for a Healthy Region' initiative, Australian organisations will work with the Ministry of Health and Medical Services, National Referral Hospital, civil society organisations and regional and multilateral partners to respond to key health priorities. This includes health worker skills, infectious disease response, and preventing non-communicable diseases. Areas of focus include medical supply chain management, training field epidemiologists to



Australian High Commission First Secretary Elise Newton with Lata Hospital Pharmacy staff and a delivery of essential medical supplies.



Australian High Commissioner, His Excellency Rod Hilton and Minister the Hon Dr Paul Popora Bosawai MP, MHMS Permanent Secretary McNeil and officials at the handover of funding for essential medicines.

identify and track disease outbreaks, tackling cervical cancer and rheumatic heart disease.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the critical role that all health workers and health officials in Solomon



Australia's Deputy Prime Minister, the Hon Richard Marles MP, Solomon Islands Minister for Health and Medical Services, the Hon Dr Paul Popora Bosawai MP, MHMS Permanent Secretary Mrs Pauline McNeil, Australian High Commissioner His Excellency Rod Hilton and partners celebrating the commencement of construction at the Naha Birthing and Urban Health Centre.

Islands are playing to improve health services and achieve a healthy future for all, in line with Solomon Islands' National Health Strategic Plan.

You are the champions on the front lines of investing in the people of Solomon Islands – it's greatest asset – and the future of this great country.

Australia is proud and privileged to partner with you in this great effort.

Lukim iu neks taem!