



**Australian High Commissioner**

**Vanuatu**

**Handover of Tiroas Barracks redevelopment**  
**Speech delivered by Australian High Commissioner to Vanuatu, HE Ms**  
**Heidi Bootle**  
**Tiroas Barracks, Santo**  
**Monday 4 March 2024**

- Gud moning long yumi everiwan. Hemi gud tumas blong stap wetem yufala long Tiroas Barracks.
- Mi wantem tekem opotuniti ia blong aknolejmen ol Chiefs mo ol traditional owna long present mo future blong ples we yumi mit long hem today.
- Mi wantem aknolejem tu:
  - Honourable Prime Minister Charlot Salwai Tabimasmass, Honourable Deputy Prime Minister Matai Seremaiah, Honourable Minister blong Internal Affairs Johnny Rasu Joanapo, Minister blong lands Rick Temako Mahe, mo tu ol First Political Advisors
  - Ol Daarekta Jenerols mo ol offisols akros long Vanuatu Gavman
  - Komisena blong Polis, Commander blong mobile Force mo Chairman blong Police Commission
  - Acting SG blong SANMA Province mo Lord Mayor blong Luganville
- The Royal Australian Air Force flight this morning was a fitting way for today to start.
  - ADF members oli wok kolosap wetem VPF mo Fisheries blong achievem ol priorities blong yumi long side blong wan Blue Pacific.



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- In the case of the aircraft we travelled on today to monitor the vast Pacific Ocean for illegal, unregulated, and unreported fishing which we know is both economically and environmentally destructive, and the perpetrators are from outside of our region.

- Beh i no hemia nomo. Purpose blong today hemi blong handem over ol brand-new facilities long Tiroas Barracks.
- Construction blong ol facility ia hemi wan longfala road weh i been start long February 2022, long peak blong COVID-19 pandemic - taem weh ol international borders oli close.
- Beh hemia i no stopem tufala Governments blong yumi. We committed to delivering this project despite these challenges,
  - and I attribute this success to the strength of our Vanuatu-Australia partnership.
- The facilities include the armoury and magazine behind me as well as a medical centre
  - These are essential capabilities for the VMF here in Santo.
- And they have been designed from the ground-up to withstand natural disasters.
- The project has also injected tens of millions of vatu into Santo's economy
  - through engaging local businesses to deliver works



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- As well as employing and up-skilling workers on site.
- Me glad tumas long success we yumi achievim wetem Vanuatu Police Force through long partnership blong yumi.
  - Today's handover follows the laying of the foundation stone for the Central Police Station in January,
  - And in just a few short months the massive Cook Barracks project in Port Vila will be completed.
  - This will be followed by other milestone later this year, including,
    - Delivery of a landing craft, which will provide a significant disaster response capability,
    - The return of RVS *Takuare* to Vanuatu before next cyclone season we hope.
    - Commissioning of the Vanuatu Government National Emergency Radio Network.
  - Everi delivery ia oli folem ol priority requests blong VPF, olsem ol niufala mobility asset, ol camouflage uniform wetem ol impoten security equipment.
  - Hemi no finis lo plesia nomo. Today, yumi luk ol officers blong yumi oli stap wok tugeta planteh.



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- Whether that be for Forum Fisheries Agency Operations, disaster relief, training, or joint exercises.
- Partnership blong yumi, hemi mekem yumi saveh lukaotem gud yumi, long ol taem blong need.
- When Tropical Cyclone Lola struck in October last year as a Category 5 cyclone, an estimated 110,000 people were affected with 59,000 people requiring immediate assistance.
  - Australia hemi ready blong respond mo hemi givhan feswan blong supportem Government blong Vanuatu through long wan RAAF aerial surveillance flight, blong mekem wan initial damage assessment long Penama mo Malampa province.
  - At that time, Australia announced a package to support the Government of Vanuatu's response.
    - Package ia hemi sapotem delivery blong 30 tons blong ol essential humanitarian supplies
    - it funded non-government organisations under the Australian Humanitarian Partnership to deliver additional essential, targeted, and effective humanitarian assistance to impacted communities.



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- Australia hemi supportem deployment blong ol emergency medical teams wetem ol VPF officers, mo ol wok blong clearem ol road mo ol repair.
- **Today I am announcing a new VUV312 million (AUD4million) package of additional support for Tropical Cyclone Lola recovery to supplement our earlier larger package**
  - Ol funds ia bambae sapotem school fee relief blong mekem sure se ol pikinini oli saveh continue blong school long ol challenging times;
  - they will target skills development to ensure communities are employed in recovery efforts and will support the productive sector
  - mo bae targetem infrastructure repairs long ol school mo ol health facilities, mo repairem ol road weh Tropical Cyclone Lola hemi damagem long Pentecost.
- Australia recognises the urgency of the climate crisis and the threat it poses to livelihoods, security and wellbeing.
- That's why, Australia was proud to support Vanuatu's leadership in this space by co-sponsoring the ICJ advisory opinion on climate change.
- We are taking strong action to decarbonise our economy and we are working with countries to scale up global action.
- Tugeta yumi stanap. Tankyu tumas.