



Australian High Commissioner
Vanuatu

Australia Day – Vanuatu Partnership Function
Speech delivered by Australian High Commissioner to Vanuatu, H.E. Heidi Bootle
Residence of the Australian High Commissioner
14 March 2024

- Tangkyu tumas long yufala evriwan blong save joenem mifala tudei blong selebratem strong patnasip we Ostrelia i gat wetem Vanuatu.
- Koeyma eso and thank you, Hans, for acknowledging the land where we meet today and for your wonderful performance
 - mi tu, mi wantem tekem taem blong aknoledgem ol jifs mo tradisonal ona blong graon we yumi mit long hem tode.
- Ostrelia mo Vanuatu i serem semak solwora
 - yumi serem wan Blue Pasifik region, mo tu serem ol link bitwin ol pipol mo kalja insaed long Melanesia, olsem Hans i talem.
- When I reflect on 2023, the Melanesian Arts and Culture Festival stands out as a highlight:
 - not only for Vanuatu successfully hosting such a terrific event, in collaboration with the Melanesian Spearhead Group
 - but also for the Torres Strait Islanders who joined for the first time as well as Australian South Sea Islanders.
- While geography makes us neighbours, it is our shared culture and values that make Australia and Vanuatu good partners and friends.
- These values – equality of opportunity, strength of culture, democracy and a resilient, open economy – are what make us work so well together
 - and this evening I'd like to reflect on what we achieve together by working in strong partnership.



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- 2023 emi wan big yia, yumi gat fulap visit from Australia: Governor-General, Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Minister for International Development and Pacific mo fulap nara big woman mo big man
 - mo tu, yumi no foget se stamba blong Vanuatu-Ostrelia patnaship emi ol aksen.
- Mi luk long wok we Malvatumauri i lidim, wetem sapot blong Ostrelia tru long Vanuatu Skills Partnership, blong rebuildim Nakamal blong Ol Jif long Port Vila olsem wan gudfala eksampol
 - Vanuatu's chiefly system is unique and important, and Australia is pleased to not only partner in the rebuild and upskill youth from all six of Vanuatu's provinces in the process with qualifications in building and construction.
- Yumi bildimap ol skills blong yumi tru ol patnaship olsem
 - long saed blong skills i acknowledgem mo tu talem tangkyu tumas I go long tim blong Australia Pacific Training Coalition blong provadaem sevis long evening ya.
- Our partnership is not only about what we do and deliver together, but how we do it.
- Vanuatu faced three high impact cyclones in eight months: Judy, Kevin and Lola.
- Within hours of Tropical Cyclone Lola, Honourable Prime Minister Salwai joined us on a Royal Australian Air Force flight for an aerial damage assessment



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- it is through our strong partnership and resolve for swift action, that Australia can respond so rapidly to Vanuatu’s needs.
- And here I’d like to acknowledge especially our FRANZ patnasip, wetem Franis mo Niusilan, especially las yia blong respond long trifala saeklon ya
 - hemia i inkludum ol rispons aktiviti we Task Group blong Australian Defence Force mo HMAS Canberra i givim afta long Judy mo Kevin – wetem ol engineer mo equipment olsemol helicopter
 - mi tekem taem blong aknoledgem yufala evriwan tudei – weta yu pat blong Gavman, private sekta, civil society or pat blong wan kcommunity blong yu – blong gudfala faison blong rispons.
- Last week, I was on Santo, with the Honourable Prime Minister to handover the Tiroas Barracks redevelopment to the Vanuatu Police Force, with refurbished facilities designed and delivered through our partnership to boost VMF capability.
- While on Santo, Vanuatu and Australia announced a further partnership for response and early recovery from Tropical Cyclone Lola
 - the additional assistance will support Vanuatu’s most pressing roads and infrastructure, health, education, food security and telecommunications priorities.
- Mo tu yumi save gud se rispons emi no naff. Yumi mas tekem ol strong aksen long saed blong climate change blong protektem fiuja blong yumi



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- Ostrelia i luksave se climate change emi namba wan threat long ol livelihood, wellbeing mo sekuriti blong pipol blong Vanuatu, mo tu ol narafala Pasifik patna
 - climate action starts at home, where Australia is making big changes to decarbonise our economy and working with partners to scale up global action.
- Truaot long 2023, Vanuatu i lidim impoten wok blong campaign blong requestem wan advisory opinion blong climate change long Internasional Court blong Jastis
 - mifala i glad tumas blong joenem Vanuatu olsem wan co-sponsor long resolution ya long United Nations, wetem fulap narafala kaontri mo tu ol residen patna we oli stap long Vanuatu: Franis, Japan, Niusilan mo United Kingdom.
- I thank Vanuatu for supporting our bid to co-host COP31 in 2026, in partnership with the Pacific
 - if successful, this will be an opportunity to raise the profile of our region and the challenges we face.
- Ostrelia wetem Vanuatu i wok had blong mekem sua se climate change emi stap olsem focus blong ol patnaship aktiviti
 - long 2023, yumi openem wan niufala road long Sola – a strong, climate-resilient road that will last into the future with minimal maintenance and connect people to the airport, schools, hospital and Torba provincial headquarters
 - ol nasenol mo lokol Gavman patna, oli wok tugeta wetem ol lokol kontrakta oli finisim wok ya truaot long taem blong La Niña.



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- Today yumi selebratem MSG Day tu,
 - Australia highly values its deep and longstanding relationships and connections with Melanesia
 - this morning we were pleased to join the Prime Minister, MSG Director General and Lady Mary Lini to present the inaugural MSG Walter Lini Scholarships.
- This week the Prime Minister and I also announced two more road and infrastructure investments on Tanna
 - adding to the health centres, market houses, school buildings, courthouses and police posts Australia and Vanuatu have partnered to build to meet accessibility and disaster resilience standards.
- Our infrastructure partnership connects people to opportunities, and boosts service delivery
 - for example on Epi, the new police station and courthouse we opened last year has more than doubled the number of Vanuatu Police Force officers stationed there.
- Vanuatu and Australia have partnered in the policing and justice sectors for over two decades
 - we both value accountable, honourable and trusted police forces that keep our people and communities safe
 - as well as independent and transparent justice systems that uphold the rule of law, and I had the pleasure this week of giving an opening speech for the Judicial Officers Fraud & Corruption Workshop with the Honourable Chief Justice Lunabek.



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- In 2024, the Prime Minister and I laid the foundation stone for the new Central Police Station in Port Vila
 - which will serve as an important police operational base.
- Our security partnership is about working together on our shared priorities – including better equipping the Vanuatu Mobile Force and Police Maritime Wing to serve Vanuatu’s people and communities into the future
 - truaot mo afta long trifala saeklon long 2023, Vanuatu Police Force i stap usum Vanuatu Government National Emergency Radio Network blong ol emergency kommunikasen;
 - wan projek we VPF i stap patna wetem Australian Defence Force blong mekem.
- Long yia ya, yumi luk fowod long ol strong outcome we oli inkludum handover blong Cook Barracks, delivery long wan landing craft mo return blong RVS Takuare.
- Sekuriti emi business blong yumi evriwan, hemi too offer ol gudfala economic opportunity.
 - including through major infrastructure projects stimulating the local economy.
- The last few years have been challenging, with economic shocks of COVID- 19 and multiple cyclones.
- Patnasip blong yumi emi focus long economic rekoveri, mo yumi leftemap long wan nara level, we hemi inkludum wan niufala package blong budget sapot



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- hemia givhan long Gavman blong deliverim olsevis oli go long ol pipol
- mo tu, yumi wok tugeta insaed long kaontri mo long Pasifik region blong yumi blong mekem sua se Vanuatu i karem ol benefit blong PACER Plus
- in kava we are already up to 57,000 kilograms exported to Australia; yumi luk fowad blong lukim moa products blong Vanuatu blong save kasem ol niufala market.
- Another important development last year was Australia opening an Immigration office in Port Vila
 - these arrangements, and the work of our dedicated team, have substantially reduced processing times for Vanuatu travellers.
- Similarly, our Australian Border Force officers are working side-by-side with Vanuatu’s border and customs officers, building capacity, stronger connections and trust
 - Australia also partnered with Vanuatu as it reopened its international borders; including providing training and equipment for the Santo international terminal reopening in June 2023.
- I welcome Vanuatu’s participation in Australia’s Pacific Engagement Visa program, an initiative that will further deepen links between our nations, people and economies through a permanent residency pathway for Vanuatu citizens.
- As we look to the future, I am confident in our partnership and our ability to face the challenges that await us, together.
- There is much to look forward to



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- through our gender equality partnerships, more young women are connected to mentoring, employment and leadership opportunities; we had a wonderful International Women’s Day event here - thank you First Lady for joining us- where we called for more progress for women and girls.
- our labour mobility partnership shows how our economies, workforces and communities benefit from exchanges: last week we welcomed a further 50 ni-Vanuatu returned labour mobility workers on their journey to start their own businesses;
- in education, seeing more children enrolled in school and further improvements to literacy and numeracy in Vanuatu;
- and supporting the government’s decentralisation priorities through our health partnership, which is significantly enhancing health infrastructure across Vanuatu by supporting the hospitals masterplan and refurbishing or constructing 19 provincial facilities.
- Yumi gat fulap rison blong selebrate long evening ya – be tu, bae yumi gat fulap wok blong mekem tugeta
 - mifala i jusum date blong event ya from we emi klosap long namba 16 March; deit ya long 2007 we yumi bin openem current bilding blong Hae Komisen blong Ostrelia long Vanuatu.
- Patnasip blong yumi i stat long taem finis – bifo taem we Vanuatu i achievem independens, Ostrelia i openem wan consulate long Vanuatu long yia 1978 mo sapotem independens blong Vanuatu long United Nations mo ol Pacific Forums.



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- Ofis blong mifala i change bigwan kasem naoia.
- Our growing team reflects the depth of our partnership, and Australia's commitment to the people, communities and Government of Vanuatu.
- Emi wan hona blong sev long Vanuatu olsem Hae Komisena blong Ostrelia. Mi luk save fulap fren we oli stap wetem yumi tunaet.
- Long end long April, bae mi mas finisim term blong mi olsem Hae Komisena
 - wetem wan hart we i fullap long ol gudfala memories blong ol pipol, komuniti mo ol ples raon long Vanuatu mi stap announcem se bae mi stap finis mo go bak.
- I am strongly committed to Melanesia and building a strong future for the region
 - mi kam long Vanuatu olsem namba four posting blong mi long Melanesia – wetem one posting nomo we hemi outsaed long Melanesia, taem we mi go long Franis.
- I am confident in our shared future, and leave you in the capable hands of a dedicated team to deliver on our ambitious agenda
- Australia and Vanuatu will continue to deliver, aided by our strong focus on good governance, a transparent and accountable partnership and strong leadership that drives commitments to implementation.
 - it is a hallmark of our democracies that we hold ourselves, and our leaders, to a high standard.
- Bakagen mi wantem talem yufala evriwan wan big tangkyu tumas
 - plis enjoem naet blong yumi blong selebratem patnasip blong yumi.