



Australian High Commission
Vanuatu

Australian assistance to COVID-19

July 2020



A message from Australia's High Commissioner to Vanuatu Her Excellency Sarah deZoeten



I am pleased to share with you our COVID-19 newsletter. The global pandemic has had a profound impact on both our countries. Managing the social, economic and health impacts of COVID-19 is now the overriding challenge for both Vanuatu and Australia.

It's a challenging situation but I can assure you that we are here, as partners, to support efforts in Vanuatu. We have provided an additional package of over 1 billion vatu for Vanuatu's COVID-19 response, which includes funding for economic stimulus, health programs and quarantine costs. We are also adapting our existing development programs to help support Vanuatu's preparedness and response efforts.

This inaugural newsletter provides a snapshot of our assistance. We welcome you to keep up-to-date with news on the Australian High Commission Vanuatu Facebook page.

Since March 2020, Australia has:



Provided over 1 billion vatu in funding for Vanuatu's COVID-19 response



Delivered over 1,000 GeneXpert test cartridges, giving Vanuatu the ability to test for COVID-19 in-country



Provided other medical equipment and supplies, including personal protective equipment to protect frontline health workers



Funded technical and medical staff deployed in Vanuatu's medical facilities and the Ministry of Health



Provided support to the Government of Vanuatu to manage quarantine facilities



Supported Vanuatu's economic stimulus plan by providing funding towards Vanuatu's Employment Stabilisation Payment



Supported the home-schooling program including a regular national radio program for students



Supported Vanuatu's efforts to repatriate more than 100 ni-Vanuatu citizens from Australia



Found new jobs for over 1,500 seasonal workers



Health response

As part of its enduring partnership with the Vanuatu health sector, Australia is providing an additional 380 million vatu to support Vanuatu's health response to COVID-19. Recent activities include funding upgrades to essential health infrastructure, medical staff, national public health messaging on COVID-19, delivering in-country test cartridges, and helping fund quarantine costs in Vanuatu. Australia has supported Vanuatu's efforts for two repatriation flights of Vanuatu nationals and residents. The flights adhered to strict COVID-19 protocols and enabled over 100 ni-Vanuatu and other essential personnel to safely return to Vanuatu.

Economic response

Australia is supporting Vanuatu to respond to the economic impacts of COVID-19 through its work with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Management. Australia has provided 350 million vatu towards the Government of Vanuatu's Employment Stabilisation Payment (ESP) which is a key component of the stimulus package. ESP has helped employers impacted by COVID-19 to retain staff by paying up to the equivalent of a minimum monthly full-time wage per employee.



Education response

Australia has been working with the Ministry of Education and Training to provide home-schooling support to Vanuatu students whose schools were closed due to COVID-19 and Tropical Cyclone Harold. This includes guidance for teachers, curriculum materials and a national radio program. Australia is also helping design and deliver a 312 million vatu Vanuatu-wide school and community grants program to provide economic stimulus to communities across Vanuatu.

Policing and justice response

Australia is supporting Vanuatu's police and justice sectors to continue to deliver services despite the threat of COVID-19. Australia is supporting Vanuatu Police Force officers to help enforce State of Emergency protocols and to prevent and address crime.

Australia is continuing to assist the Vanuatu Women's Centre and its provincial counselling centres to provide legal assistance, counselling and support to women and children affected by violence.

