



Australian High Commission
Vanuatu

Friday 9 October 2020

JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

Australia works with Vanuatu to support policing services for Malampa

In the lead up to Malampa Day celebrations, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Vanuatu the Honourable Bob Loughman Weibur, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Internal Affairs the Honourable Alatoi Ishmael Kalsakau, Acting Police Commissioner Robson Iavro and Australia's High Commissioner to Vanuatu Her Excellency Sarah deZoeten opened the new Malampa Metemet Demat Police Headquarters in Lakatoro, Malekula on Friday 9 October.

The construction of the new police provincial headquarters was funded by the Government of Australia as part of its ongoing partnership with Vanuatu in justice and policing. The name of the new facility, the 'Metemet Demat Police Headquarters' is displayed at the front entrance. This name was given by the Malekula Council of Chiefs and means 'people who look after the peace'.

At the opening ceremony, Honourable Bob Loughman Weibur said "I would like to thank the Government of Australia to help implement the policy of the Vanuatu Police Force to extend its service delivery to the rural communities".

"Police is a friend and when you respect the police, then it will look carefully after the people's needs for peace and security."

The Vanuatu Police Force, in partnership with the Government of Australia through the Vanuatu Australia Policing and Justice Program, are working to implement the Government of Vanuatu's decentralisation policy by expanding professional policing services to rural communities. The establishment of the VPF's second largest police headquarters in Lakatoro will increase access to policing services and support law enforcement throughout Malampa Province.

"As the Acting Commissioner of Vanuatu Police Force I would sincerely like to thank the Government of Australia for the financial assistance towards the newly built premises and look forward for good continuous working collaboration with the Government of Australia to achieve even more in the future," said Acting Commissioner of Police, Robson Iavro.

The new station was completed in 15 months, through a challenging period which included Tropical Cyclone Harold and COVID-19. During the opening ceremony, the late Mr Simeon Aru and the team from Simeon Aru Construction were acknowledged for their dedication to



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the task. The building follows the Vanuatu National Building Code and national inclusive design standards and incorporates traditional carving features on the facade.

“I am pleased Australia is supporting Vanuatu to provide a safe and improved environment for the Vanuatu Police Force officers to deliver policing services to the people of Malampa Province,” said Australia’s High Commissioner to Vanuatu, Her Excellency Sarah deZoeten.

“I am also glad the construction has helped boost the local economy in this difficult time,” she added.

The first item to be hung inside the newly opened station was a framed pledge signed by members of the Malekula Council of Chiefs to stand against domestic violence. The Vanuatu Australia Policing and Justice Program has been working with the VPF and Ministry of Justice and Community Services in Malampa province to address violence towards women, children and vulnerable people.

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