



**Australian High Commission**

**Vanuatu**

Friday 25 January 2019

## **Media Release**

### **Australia's Chief of Defence Force makes first visit to Vanuatu**

General Angus Campbell AO DSC, Chief of the Australian Defence Force (CDF) has led a high-level delegation to Vanuatu including Commissioner Andrew Colvin APM OAM, Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and Commissioner Michael Outram APM, Commissioner of the Australian Border Force (ABF).

Vanuatu was the first country to be visited on the week-long tour of the Pacific. Its purpose was to reinforce the depth of Australia's commitment to Vanuatu following Prime Minister Morrison's historic visit to Port Vila last week. Following Vanuatu the delegation was visiting Tonga, Fiji and the Solomon Islands.

"This visit was timed to closely follow that of our Prime Minister to demonstrate that Australia truly is stepping up here in Vanuatu," said recently appointed Defence Advisor to Vanuatu, Commander Kylie Turnbull.

"The visit has deepened links with the Vanuatu Government and Vanuatu security forces. It has also enabled the delegation to see how Australian support across the whole of Vanuatu's security sector is aligned to and supporting the security needs of Vanuatu," Commander Turnbull said.

The packed program included meetings with Internal Affairs Minister, Andrew Napuat, Foreign Affairs Minister, Ralph Regenvanu, Acting Police Commissioner, Willie Ben, and the Vanuatu Police Force Executive. The delegation was also warmly welcomed to Cook Barracks, the Vanuatu Police Training College and RVS *Mala Base* where colourful receptions included quarter guards, personal tours and kastom ceremonies.

A highlight of the engagement at Cook Barracks was General Campbell's presentation of a Chief of Joint Operations Australia Commendation to VMF Force Sergeant Major, Warrant Officer Class One Joshua Bong Junior, for his outstanding reporting and exceptional assistance to the Australian Defence Force Operation RENDER SAFE Team who deployed at the request of the Vanuatu Government in December last year to dispose of unexploded WW2 ordnance discovered at Malapoa Estate.

Block laying, tree planting and ground breaking ceremonies with Commander VMF, Colonel Robson Iavro, also marked the commencement of a substantial package of Australian funded



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infrastructure works for the VMF, which will commence this week with the Cook Barracks perimeter fence.

During a tour of the Vanuatu Police Training College, a tree planting ceremony was conducted by AFP Commissioner Colvin to reflect the strong and enduring relationship between the Vanuatu Police Force and the Australian Federal Police, initially formed between 2006 and 2010 and continued since 2012 through the Vanuatu Australia Policing and Justice Program.

Commissioner Colvin also met the newly arrived AFP liaison officer, Sergeant Joanne Warden. The new position has been established following a request from the government of Vanuatu last year.

A visit to RVS Mala Base hosted by Commander Maritime Collin Kalwatman included a tour of the Surveillance Centre, where new contracted aerial surveillance provided under Australia's Pacific Maritime Security Program was already being employed by the Police Maritime Wing to support upcoming maritime surveillance patrols. A tour of the base and Pacific Class Patrol Boat RVS *Tukoro* was concluded with refreshments on the ship, where the delegation formally acknowledged the efforts of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and VPF in overcoming a number of significant challenges to achieve the scheduled maintenance docking of *Tukoro* in Fiji last November. These ongoing maintenance works will ensure *Tukoro* remains fully operational until delivery of the new Guardian Class Patrol Boat in mid-2021.

At a dinner reception hosted by Australian High Commissioner, HE Jenny Da Rin, General Campbell acknowledged the great work of the South Pacific World War Two Museum Project Team and presented Founding Chairman Bradley Wood and Project Manager Alma Wensi with an Australian Flag to fly at the Project Site in Luganville.

The visit to Vanuatu marks the first ever by a CDF and General Campbell reinforced that he would be back for further engagement and to personally check progress on the commitments agreed between the Prime Ministers of Australia and Vanuatu.

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