



Australian High Commission  
Vanuatu

## Media Release

### Vanuatu and Australia partnering for resilience, relief and recovery

**PORT VILA, EFATE:** The Vanuatu and Australian Governments have announced an additional package of support for response and early recovery from Tropical Cyclone (TC) Lola. Australia will provide a further A\$4 million (approximately VT 320 million) for Vanuatu’s most pressing roads and infrastructure, health, education, food security and telecommunications priorities.

“The additional support reflects the heightened partnership that Vanuatu has with Australia, building on the notion of family and looking out for each other in peace and crisis times,” said Prime Minister the Honourable Charlot Salwai Tabimasmās.

“The partnership between Australia and Vanuatu is robust, amicable and forging strong relationships into the future,” said Prime Minister Salwai.



*Prime Minister Salwai at the Handover of the Tiroas Barracks redevelopment in Santo, Vanuatu.*

On Santo for an event for Vanuatu and Australia’s security partnership to redevelop the Tiroas Barracks, Australian High Commissioner Her Excellency Heidi Bootle said Australia recognised communities in Vanuatu faced compounding impacts from the climate crisis and recent cyclones.

“Through this new package of support, Australia will partner with Vanuatu to rebuild classrooms, repair critical road infrastructure, support food security and restore health services and infrastructure for remote communities.

“How we work is as important as what we deliver. Australia’s investments in Vanuatu deliver disaster-resilient infrastructure, and our partnerships with provincial skills centres will ensure impacted communities are employed in recovery efforts,” said High Commissioner Bootle.



**Australian High Commission**  
**Vanuatu**



*ii High Commissioner Bootle at the Handover of the Tiroas Barracks Redevelopment on Santo.*

Strong partnerships build community resilience and reduce vulnerability to future natural disasters. When Category 5 TC Lola struck in October 2023, just 8 months after Tropical Cyclones Kevin and Judy, the Ambaebulu community found shelter from the destructive hurricane force winds for six hours in classrooms restored through the Vanuatu-Australia humanitarian partnership. Through the Ambae Recovery Program, Vanuatu and Australia partnered to rebuild these classrooms to the Ministry of Education and Training's Build-Back-Better design standards.

The close humanitarian partnership between Vanuatu and Australia enabled a swift response to support impacted communities as quickly as possible. Australia immediately responded to Vanuatu's request for international assistance by supporting an aerial damage assessment with a C-127J Spartan aircraft and, on 30 October, delivering over 30 tonnes of critical humanitarian supplies in coordination with the National Disaster Management Office.



*iii Swiftly after Tropical Cyclone Lola impacted Vanuatu, Vanuatu and Australia partnered to conduct an aerial damage assessment supported by a C-127J Spartan aircraft*



**Australian High Commission**  
**Vanuatu**

Vanuatu led a multisectoral response effort to support impacted communities, especially in Malampa and Penama provinces. Australia coordinated support through the National Disaster Management Office and with humanitarian partners, including France and New Zealand through the FRANZ agreement and international organisations and NGOs.

Australia and Vanuatu partnered to deploy three Sanma-based emergency medical teams and HELPR-1 to Pentecost and Maewo, where they provided critical medical assistance to people injured after TC Lola. HELPR-1 also supported Vanuatu's recovery effort by distributing relief supplies to affected communities, with Australian support.

The Vanuatu Police Force used all-terrain vehicles, an initiative of Australia and Vanuatu's policing partnership, to reach affected communities on Ambae and Malekula.

Organisations including CARE in Vanuatu, Save the Children, ActionAid and the Church Agencies Network (CANDO) received Australian Humanitarian Partnership support to provide seeds, seedlings, cuttings, and essential agricultural equipment to affected communities to support food security.

The TC Lola partnership builds on the A\$12.77 million (approximately VT 1 billion) Australia contributed to Vanuatu's response to Tropical Cyclones Kevin and Judy in 2023, including for school fee relief to support education without interruption for schoolchildren across Vanuatu.

Vanuatu and Australia are also partnering in ongoing recovery efforts from previous disasters. Australia has supported Vanuatu to rebuild classrooms at 34 schools with more to come. In the health sector, Vanuatu and Australia have rebuilt the Tasmalum and Kerepei Health Centres, the Ranmawat Dispensary and repaired the Northern Provincial Hospital. Restored water supply systems in Melsisi and Pentecost will soon bring clean, reliable drinking water to over 11,000 people.



*Constructing the water collection chamber at the Melsisi Water System in Pentecost.*



**Australian High Commission**  
**Vanuatu**



*Australia delivered over 30 tonnes of critical humanitarian supplies on a Royal Australia Air Force C-17.*

–END–

**Media Contact:**

Hilaire Bule  
Government Public Relations Officer

Ria Bhagat  
Second Secretary  
Australian High Commission  
Email: [ria.bhagat@dfat.gov.au](mailto:ria.bhagat@dfat.gov.au)  
Tel: 22777 (extension 107)  
Mob: 776 3763