

ADDRESS BY
HIS EXCELLENCY MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL JEFFERY AC CVO MC
GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA
ON THE OCCASION OF
OPEN THE REFURBISHED HOLOLA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTRE
PORT MORESBY, PAPUA NEW GUINEA
4 AUGUST 2008

It is a great pleasure to open these refurbished facilities on behalf of the people of Papua New Guinea and Australia.

I first lived in this country over forty years ago, and it has been wonderful to see the great deal of progress has been made in that time.

Importantly, the people of Papua New Guinea have not lost their deep and divine sense of traditional culture as this progress has occurred.

The Hohola Youth Development Centre is an excellent example in educating young people for the modern world, but doing it in such a way as to take due cognisance of cultural traditions and values.

The Centre has allowed many young people to have access to academic and vocational training they would otherwise not have received.

I am impressed that some of the renovations have also been undertaken by the students here. There is a great satisfaction in actually using something you have made or worked on personally; you tend to take a greater pride in it and look after it better. It also shows both the high quality of the training and the work undertaken here.

And I am pleased that young girls are able to enter traditionally male-dominated trades through this Centre.

The provision of more than K 3,500,000 from the Australian Government demonstrates our high regard for the activities of the Centre and the importance of its mission in educating and training young Papua New Guineans on their proud and diverse history and culture.

It's very exciting to know that this funding is supporting an expansion of the student intake, an additional year of training along with short courses for members of the local community.

The new classrooms and other facilities look first class and will clearly be very useful in improving the education and practical skills of every student.

This is one of 39 projects funded through the Australia PNG Incentive Fund at a cost of more than 250 million kina in total.

The Australian Government established the Fund in 2000 to reward public and private organisations who could support PNG's development in ways that offered best value for money including an assurance that the funds were being used as intended.

Projects so far have included the construction of essential infrastructure such as schools, hospitals and marketplaces.

It's important to note that the groups supported under this Fund are considered 'organisations of excellence'.

In order to obtain the funding, strict criteria have to be met to demonstrate high standards of performance in key service delivery to their communities.

Thus to have received an Incentive Fund grant is a badge of honour for any organisation in PNG.

So well done to you all.

It's just one example of Australia's consistent efforts over many years to work cooperatively with your country to achieve sustained economic growth and alleviate poverty.

Australia's total aid budget to the support of Papua New Guinea is over 900 million kina this financial year.

It encompasses comprehensive support and assistance across such areas as institution building, infrastructure, education and health support, HIV/AIDS prevention, law & justice, and rural development.

It is an expression of our strong bilateral relationship and the spirit of cooperation and goodwill we extend to the people of PNG with whom we are inextricably linked by geography and history.

Ladies and gentlemen

I am particularly pleased to be launching this refurbished Centre today because of the great investment being made in the future of the young people who attend here.

The more we can do to educate young people to prepare them well for adult life and future employment, the stronger and more prosperous Papua New Guinea will be.

I congratulate the De La Salle Brothers on the tremendous work you do here on behalf of the students as teachers, mentors and administrators.

And I wish all the students well in the knowledge that these improved facilities will give you skills that will last a lifetime and improved opportunities for employment.

It is now my great pleasure to officially open the refurbished Holola Youth Centre.

Thank you.