



AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION HONIARA

MEDIA RELEASE

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Australia and Solomon Islands: Partners in crime-busting

Investigating crimes in the COVID era requires specialist skills and new procedures. That's why Australia is proud to fund and facilitate COVID-specific training for Forensic Officers from the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF).

The Solomon Islands Police Development Program (SIPDP) training course helped to develop skills and procedural knowledge Forensic Officers would require working on a crime scene in a potential COVID environment.

The training program was run by Crime Scene Investigator Sergeant Peter Webster from the Australian Federal Police (AFP). He has been an Advisor for almost four years with RAMSI and now SIPDP. Sergeant Webster has over 36 years policing experience and expertise in crime scene management and fingerprints.

Australian High Commissioner Dr Lachlan Strahan and SIPDP Commander Mark Ney visited the Forensics Officers who took part in the training course earlier this month.

"Cracking crimes requires good forensic work," said High Commissioner Strahan.

"It is vital that the RSIPF forensics team is ready and able to still do this important work in the event of a potential COVID-19 outbreak. Australia is pleased to be funding this particular course as well as broader forensics training for RSIPF officers.

"I was delighted to meet Inspector Laisalyn Mua and Constable Garnette Kwanairara who have attained undergraduate and master's degrees in forensics through Australian Government funded scholarships."

RSIPF Inspector Laisalyn Mua, the current Officer in Charge of Forensics, recently graduated from the University of Technology in Sydney. She has ten years of policing and eight years of forensic experience as a fingerprint technician, crime scene investigator and laboratory analyst.

RSIPF Crime Scene Investigator Detective Constable Garnette Kwanairara who joined the RSIPF in April 2015 has a Bachelor in Forensic Science/Forensic Chemistry from Griffith University in Queensland.

Four members of the forensics team have a Certificate IV in Crime Scene Investigation and two are accredited fingerprint experts.

Over the last three years, SIPDP has funded the forensic facility at Rove Police Headquarters, ensuring that it is well maintained and equipped. This facility has a



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forensic exhibit examination room and a fingerprint chemical development laboratory, all equipped to Australian standards.

“The development of the forensic capability within the Solomon Islands has been a long-term objective of RAMSI and now SIPDP,” said Commander Ney.

“The effort has paid off and now the RSIPF is seen as a leader of this capability within the Pacific.”

The RSIPF forensic team has also been able to establish a new Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) which is supported by the DFAT-funded Solomon Islands Justice Program.

Over 40,000 sets of criminal fingerprints have been downloaded onto the AFIS, allowing the RSIPF to identify fingerprints in 180 current or historical cases. The AFIS has improved the searching and efficiency of RSIPF Police Clearance applications that are required to obtain community work licenses, visa applications and national security checks.

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Media enquiries: AHC Media Unit, 21561 SIMediaUnit@dfat.gov.au



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Officer in Charge Forensic Inspector Laisalyn Mua, Australian High Commissioner Dr Lachlan Strahan and Detective Crime Scene Investigator Constable Garnette Kwanairara at the Rove Police Headquarters.



SIPDP Commander Mark New and High Commissioner Dr Lachlan Strahan with RSIPF Forensic Officers in training at Rove Police Headquarters



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