



# AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION

## HONIARA

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**6 February 2020**

### **Australia funds water tanks for Sipozae Island community in Choiseul**

The Australian Government has funded seven 3000 litre water tanks for the Sipozae community in Choiseul province through its Direct Aid Program.

High Commissioner Dr Lachlan Strahan and Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare officially handed over the water tanks on 3 February during a lively and colourful celebration at Sipozae Island in Choiseul. Proud Sipozae Islanders thanked the Australian Government for providing the water tanks as this will end the need for long walks to fetch water, and will also improve health standards in the community.

Dr Strahan congratulated the people of Sipozae Island for their cooperation in successfully completing this project.

“The Australian Government is so proud to fund this water tank project and we look forward to this project lasting for the benefit of future generations,” he said.

Dr Strahan was also able to visit the impressive Sipozae Early Childhood Development Centre, which was completed with the help of participants living in Choiseul under Australia’s New Colombo Plan.

Natasha Valaka, daughter of Chief Valaka of Sipozae, spoke on behalf of the community to express gratitude for the assistance from the Australian Government.

“The community often experiences long periods of little to no rainfall several times year-round. During these periods, water shortages become a key issue for the community. People have to travel to the mainland to fetch water for their household, making it difficult especially for women who needs water for most of their household activities. Fortunately, thanks to the Australian Government, through the Direct Aid Program (DAP), our community has received water tanks that will benefit us. We now have enough water tanks that can cater for the whole community to have access to clean and safe water,” she said.

For more information on Australia’s Direct Aid Program (DAP) please contact the DAP Officer by email: [dap.honiara@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dap.honiara@dfat.gov.au) or by phone on 21561.



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**Caption:** Australian High Commissioner Dr Lachlan Strahan, and Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare, cutting the ribbon during the official hand over of the water tank project.





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**Caption:** Australian High Commissioner Dr Lachlan Strahan delivering his speech during the handover ceremony at Supizae Early Childhood Development Centre.



**Caption:** Australian High Commissioner Dr Lachlan Strahan and Prime Minister Sogavare with some officials travelling back to Taro after the handover ceremony.

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