



## AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION HONIARA

**MEDIA RELEASE**

**3 July 2020**

### **Australia's Direct Aid Program delivers eleven water tanks in Bellona**

Congratulations to the communities of Sa'aiho Ward 10 in Bellona for successfully completing their water tank project. The Australian Government is pleased to have funded the project, led by Hilda and Fred Tango, which delivered eleven water tanks for the communities through our Direct Aid Program.

Australia's High Commissioner to Solomon Islands Dr Lachlan Strahan handed over the water tanks on 1 July during a wonderful cultural celebration at Ba'aki in Bellona.

The communities of Sa'aiho thanked the Australian Government for funding the water tanks, which will provide access to safe and clean water for drinking, cooking, washing and watering vegetable gardens.

Elisa Soaika, a community representative of Sa'aiho Ward 10, expressed her gratitude for Australia's support during the handover ceremony.

"Huai aue, which means thank you so much in Bellonese language, for responding to our need by providing the water tanks. At least our children can wash their hands before eating and after visiting the toilet, at least our children can have a decent bath before going to bed, at least our children can quench their thirst and our women and girls can practice good hygiene. At least in the light of the current threat of COVID-19 pandemic that is sweeping the globe, we have access to clean water."

Dr Strahan thanked the people of Sa'aiho for their warm and friendly welcome, proudly demonstrating their Bellonese culture. He congratulated the local communities for successfully completing the water tank project, which will improve health standards.

"Access to clean water is vital, both at this time as we face the threat of COVID-19, but also to address water-borne diseases."

"The Australian Government is proud to be working with the people of Bellona to ensure that local communities are not forced to rely on unsafe brackish water from wells. We look forward to this project providing a lasting benefit into the future."

"Traditionally the task of fetching water has fallen disproportionately on women and girls. The tanks will therefore play their part in empowering local women and girls, allowing them to rightly spend more time at work and at school."

The Direct Aid Program is a small grants fund managed by the Australian High Commission in Solomon Islands, which supports community-led projects and seeks to improve living standards.

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 Project Coordinator Fred Tango cut the ribbon to handover the water tank project with MC Pastor Samuel.





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**Caption:** Bellonese warriors perform a traditional dance at the handover ceremony.



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**Caption:** Alma, a Bellonese dancer, during the handover ceremony.





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**Caption:** Australian High Commission staff, Christina Nonga and Laura Wilson, inspect one of the water tanks.

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