



Australian High Commission
Solomon Islands

MEDIA RELEASE

LOCAL HEARING-IMPAIRED WORKER LEADS FIRST CLASS INFRASTRUCTURE

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Local worker Patrick Sali is championing the contributions that people with disabilities can make on first class infrastructure in Solomon Islands.

Leading a team of 15 plasterers at the Australian-supported Naha Birthing and Urban Health Centre, Patrick, who has a speech and hearing impairment, plays a key role in delivering high-quality finishing.

Patrick communicates with his workmates using sign language, which has never hindered teamwork or productivity. His workmates say they've gained valuable new skills from working alongside him and appreciate his professionalism and strong work ethics as a highly skilled and conscientious plasterer.

Australian High Commissioner Jeff Roach praised Patrick and his team, noting that inclusion creates opportunities and benefits all Solomon Islanders.

“Patrick’s leadership demonstrates how inclusive construction sites like Naha Birthing and Urban Health Centre enables anyone with first class skills to contribute to a portfolio of critical infrastructure being delivered around the country,” Mr Roach said.

“Australia is really proud of our record of championing the rights and skills of people with disabilities, whether it’s a wheelchair accessible infrastructure, construction skills training for people with disabilities, or advocating for the employment of people with disabilities on Australian-supported infrastructure.”

Patrick said working in a supportive and collaborative team environment had enabled him to lead with confidence and to share his skills with others.

“I am proud to be part of this project and to show that with the right support, everyone can deliver quality work in construction of this scale,” Patrick said.

Last year, Patrick was delighted to meet a group of hearing-impaired students from San Isidro who were receiving construction skills training supported by Australia. During the visit, he demonstrated practical hand rendering techniques with them.

Patrick impressed on the students that there is a real future for young people with disabilities and opportunities for them to use their skills in Solomon Islands' infrastructure sector.

The Naha Birthing and Urban Health Centre is scheduled to open in stages from mid-year. The centre comprises two purpose-year. The new facility comprises two purpose facilities, designed to expand access to essential health services in Honiara.

The Urban Health Centre will open first, offering outpatient care, dental and general clinical services, a Community Pharmacy, pathology and medical imaging.

The Birthing Centre will follow, providing five modern birthing suites and 17 inpatient beds, and will operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to support safe deliveries and improved maternal health outcomes.

PHOTOS:



Photo 1 - Patrick Sali (Left) uses sign language to communicate with his team while completing plasterwork at the Naha Birthing and Urban Health Centre.



Photo 2 - Patrick demonstrates hand-rendering techniques to students with disabilities during a site visit at the Naha Birthing and Urban Health Centre last year.



Photo 3 - Designed with inclusion in mind, the Naha Birthing and Urban Health Centre will be opening in stages mid-year, providing accessible health services for women, families and the community.