



Australian High Commission
Solomon Islands

MEDIA RELEASE
**AUSTRALIA SUPPORTS RED CROSS SCHOOL
UPGRADES FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

28 APRIL 2026

Australia is supporting urgent upgrades to the Red Cross Special Development Centre to provide safe and reliable access to water and sanitation facilities.

The Red Cross Special Development Centre is Solomon Islands' only school for children with special needs.

Delivered by local contractor Capitol Construction, the upgrades will restore reliable water supply to the centre, install accessible toilet facilities, and improve sanitation for teachers and over 100 students.

Established in 1977, the centre provides specialised education for children from across Solomon Islands with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities - many of whom would otherwise miss out on schooling.

Currently, toilets no longer work, and the only running water is from outdoor tanks.

Australian High Commissioner Jeff Roach said access to clean water and safe sanitation is fundamental to a healthy start in life.

"Every child deserves to learn in a safe, healthy and dignified environment," Mr Roach said.

"Australia is working closely with the Solomon Islands Government on these priorities. These upgrades are a direct response to advocacy from the Ministry of Infrastructure Development and concerns raised about the conditions facing students.

"We're pleased to be supporting a swift and locally-led response that will create local jobs and make a real difference every day for teachers and children," Mr Roach said.

Phase one of works will also include drainage improvements to ensure the school remains open during rainy days. Currently, flooding during heavy rain can close the school for cleanup.

Acting Principal, Mrs Manmino Sare, welcomed the improvements and the continued partnership support to support the health, learning and inclusion of one of Solomon Islands' most vulnerable groups of children.

“These upgrades will greatly improve daily life for our students, as well as our dedicated teachers,” Ms Sare said.

“We are excited about the positive impact this will have on our school community.”

This first phase of works is expected to be completed by end of May.

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PHOTOS:



Photo 1 - Acting Principal Mrs Manmino Sare and Capitol Construction's Project Manager Larry Dionie (centre), with officials from Australia's Solomon Islands Infrastructure Program.



Photo 2 – The poor state of water and sanitation facilities at the school was raised in media reporting last year.



Photo 3 – The Red Cross Special Development Centre is the only school in Solomon Islands providing specialised education and life skills training students with a range of disabilities.



Photo 4 – The Red Cross Special Development Centre was established in 1977 to provide education and life skills for students with disabilities.