Australian High Commission
Solomon Islands

MEDIA RELEASE

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCE MEMBERS ARRIVE FOR FIRST EXERCISE COASTWATCHERS OF 2026

11 MARCH 2026

Twenty-two Australian Defence Force (ADF) members have arrived in Solomon Islands to begin the first activities for Exercise Coastwatchers in 2026.

Exercise Coastwatchers is the premier exercise between the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) and the ADF to build sovereign policing capacity. It is developed jointly between the RSIPF and the ADF, responding directly to the needs of the Solomon Islands Government and RSIPF.

The activities include ADF training teams working with RSIPF to boost its capability and capacity. Training will occur across multiple areas of the RSIPF and covers six core skillsets.

The Advanced Small Boats course will include boat maintenance and advanced navigation with deployments to several provinces.

Building on the donation of drones to the National Disaster Management Organisation by Australia's Deputy Prime Minister in February, RSIPF will receive training on the same high-spec Parrot Drones to support border security, natural disaster response and government operations.

This will include training for drone use at the Western Border Outpost in Shortland Islands Province when it opens later this year.

Advanced medical training will equip RSIPF members to provide vital first aid when required.

Border surveillance training will look at the planning and execution police operations across the Solomon Islands maritime borders to support national security.

Vehicle maintenance and logistic courses will help improve productivity, extend vehicle lifespan and strengthen warehousing skills.

Australia's Defence Advisor to the Solomon Islands, Captain Emma Griffiths said Exercise Coastwatchers was a highlight each year.

"This exercise is at the heart of the relationship between the ADF and the Solomon Islands. It brings participants together to strengthen their skills. The Exercise focuses on skills requested by the Solomon Islands Government and the RSIPF and remains a true partnership planned and run together."

"I know the ADF members who participate in Exercise Coastwatchers leave having learnt just as much as their RSIPF counterparts. Participants not only learn essential skills but also deepen their understanding of each other's cultures and operating environments."

Exercise Coastwatchers runs from 6 March to 1 April.

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PHOTOS & CAPTIONS

Photo 1: RSIPF and ADF Defence Cooperation Program members standing Shoulder-To-Shoulder, preparing for Exercise Coastwatchers.