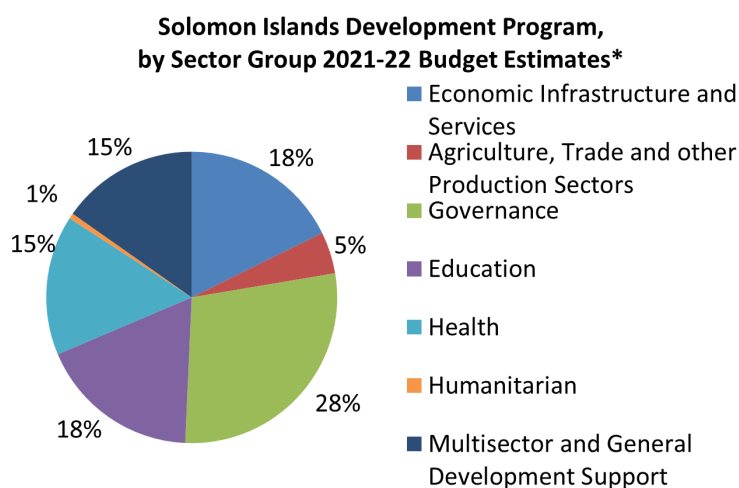


2021-22 SOLOMON ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT

The COVID-19 Development Response Plan for Solomon Islands has been extended through 2022-23. In 2022-23, the Solomon Islands program will have a stronger focus on delivering routine health activities and promoting economic recovery in support of the Solomon Islands' *National Development Strategy* (2016-2035) and 2022 budget objectives 'to live with COVID-19' and 'accelerate economic growth'.

Program Budget	2021-22 Budget Estimate \$m*
Bilateral	103.1
Regional	26.4
Global	8.3
Other Govt. Departments	18.6
Total ODA	156.4



*Actual expenditure is expected to be available in early 2023. Due to rounding, totals may not match the sum of components.

Our development program to the Solomon Islands contributes towards achieving the following Sustainable Development Goals:



The 2021-22 Solomon Islands Development Program Progress Report summarises the progress with implementation of the Australia – Solomon Islands COVID-19 Development Response Plan and highlights program results.

CONTEXT

Australia and Solomon Islands are strong development, economic, and security partners. Our partnership is aligned with Solomon Islands' *National Development Strategy* (2016-2035). As Solomon Islands' largest bilateral donor, we pivoted to respond to the **dual impacts of COVID-19 and the November 2021 civil unrest in Honiara**. Solomon Islands' COVID-19 State of Public Emergency was in place from March 2020 to 27 May 2022, with borders closed until July 2022.

Solomon Islands' first COVID-19 outbreak occurred in January 2022. After an initial surge, 34.8 per cent of the over 12-year-old population was fully vaccinated by 30 June 2022 (World Health Organisation). Solomon Islands reported 21,420 COVID-19 cases (21,440 cases in total since 2020) and 193 COVID-19 related deaths as of 30 June 2022 (likely underreported). COVID-19 impacted the delivery of other health services. The Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) reported **deteriorating health indicators**, including an increase in maternal and infant deaths, increased prevalence in malaria and tuberculosis, a fall in the number of children immunised against measles and the re-emergence of whooping cough. Solomon Islands is also highly vulnerable to disasters and climate change and is ranked **fifth in the world on the 2020 World Risk Index for hazards and vulnerability**.

In 2021-22, the **economy contracted by four per cent**, with gross government debt as a percentage of GDP increasing to 22.5 per cent (IMF) and the volume of exports decreasing by three per cent year on year. The cost of living increased, incomes decreased, education was interrupted with schools closed from January to June 2022 and reported rates of violence against women increased. International and domestic border closures were a barrier to development assistance and Solomon Islands Government (SIG) service delivery. In this challenging context, most Australian investments made satisfactory progress, with only one investment not fully meeting expected outcomes.



AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Health Security


As Solomon Islands' largest bilateral health partner, Australia's preparation, scale-up and redirection of health programming was instrumental in supporting SIG to prepare for and manage the first outbreak of COVID-19 in January 2022. Australia provided **three new biomolecular laboratories to improve diagnostics**, completed stakeholder consultation and a design for the National Referral Hospital's (NRH) acute care ward and **delivered four new isolation wards**. Our partnerships with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) supported MHMS and improved testing capability through procurement of three PCR machines and 40,400 cartridges. Australia provided **essential equipment and supplies including two new morgues, a new incinerator, and a cold room**. We undertook critical repairs to hospital back-up generators and delivered 112,000 Rapid Antigen Tests, 526,657 units of personal protective equipment and 300 oxygen concentrators. Australia supplied essential medicines and hospital supplies in response to three urgent requests from MHMS and the NRH, allowing the latter to continue critical care for patients.

Australia delivered on our commitment to support Solomon Islands and other Pacific Island countries achieve **comprehensive vaccine coverage through our regional Vaccine Access and Health Security Initiative (VAHSI)**. By 30 June 2022, Australia had provided 360,800 AstraZeneca (AZ) doses manufactured by CSL (347,800 doses provided in 2021-22) along with associated vaccine consumables. An additional 257,400 Pfizer doses were delivered through Australia's regional procurement agreement with UNICEF. Australia's response to the COVID-19 outbreak featured a range of complementary activities, including **rapid deployment of an experienced Australian Medical Assistance Team (AUSMAT)** in February 2022. AUSMAT conducted rapid COVID-19 response assessments at the NRH and four provincial hospitals, giving clinical training and executive advice. **This resulted in significantly improved capability in the Solomon Islands health system to manage severe COVID-19 cases, saving many lives**. Australia's Centre for Health Security deployed technical advisors into MHMS to assist with epidemiology and surveillance, laboratory diagnosis, infection, prevention and control, and immunisation planning and rollout.

The suspension of domestic sea and air transport due to the COVID-19 State of Public Emergency disrupted essential supply chains. Solomon Islands requested Australian assistance to respond during the first weeks of the outbreak. Australia ran a large-scale logistics operation over seven days in mid-February 2022. Two Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) planes conducted 24 flights across the country to distribute 55 tonnes of medical equipment and 39 tonnes of essential food supplies. Australia worked with the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock to deliver urgent food to communities locked down in greater Honiara, delivering 32,031 bags of rice and 403,200 cans of tuna. Australia also provided \$1 million to Solomon Airlines and hired Silent World ships to deliver medical supplies and food to locations RAAF could not access. **Australia funded Solomon Water to deliver 65.88km of new water pipelines to 2,570 households in Honiara to improve water and sanitation** and committed a further \$1 million for health infrastructure upgrades.

Stability

Australia's investments in justice, governance, education, gender and policing contributed to safer communities and increased the reach of SIG services. **Our justice program funded the Magistrates Court to undertake a court circuit in Malaita, including to the Malaita Outer Islands for the first time in three years**. We supported the Chief Magistrate to lead a three-week pilot community outreach program in Western Province. Funding to the UN Development Programme's (UNDP) Access to Justice Program delivered 243 awareness sessions across Solomon Islands, including support for paralegals and Community Legal Advocates, benefiting 10,996 people (5,650 women). Australia's long-term contribution to electoral strengthening through UNDP and community organisations **promoted and strengthened women's political participation and led to an increased number of women contesting national and provincial elections**. In this period Solomon Islands elected its first female provincial Premier (in Isabel Province).



Solomon Islands' COVID-19 outbreaks and civil unrest interrupted access to education, critical upgrades to education systems and educational outcomes. In this challenging context, **Australia provided \$4 million for primary school operating grants to prevent fee increases and early school closures due to COVID-19.** The Education Sector Support Program (ESSP) funded by Australia, New Zealand and Solomon Islands, supported the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development's COVID-19 Response Plan and Learning Continuity Action Plan. In early 2022, Australia funded the distribution of 841 boxes of printed remote learning materials across five provinces. **ESSP provided funding and technical support to school infrastructure, teacher professional development, curriculum development, legislative reform** and development of the National Education Action Plan 2022-2026. ESSP also provided grants to **strengthen early childhood education and improve outcomes for disadvantaged children.** Following extensive damage to Honiara High School, caused by the November 2021 civil unrest, Australia and New Zealand funded urgent repairs enabling the school to reopen and 800 students to return to study.

The RSIPF and AFP Policing Partnerships Program (RAPPP) supported Solomon Islands' policing priorities by conducting **training in public order management, investigations, frontline policing, forensics and leadership.** RAPPP also refurbished Naha, Aola and Avu Avu Police Stations and Tetere Barracks in Guadalcanal Province.

Australia's Solomon Islands Gender Equality Plan 2020-22 helped the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs implement the national SAFENET referral network, ensuring service providers worked together to address gender-based violence. Our **funding for the Seif Ples crisis and referral service in Honiara provided accommodation for 755 clients,** medical assistance to 253 clients, and assistance to 71 cases of sexual assault. Seif Ples' toll-free hotline attended to 7,955 calls from clients seeking support. We funded **UN Women and the International Women's Development Agency to improve services and establish the Family Support Centre's first provincial branch in Gizo, Western Province** and funded Oxfam and World Vision's country wide community level violence prevention programs.

Economic recovery

Australia supported Solomon Islands to respond to the dual impacts of COVID-19 and the November 2021 civil unrest in Honiara and encourage longer term economic recovery. In 2021, Australia provided \$40 million in budget support to SIG. This budget support represented 7.39 per cent of total domestic revenue. Budget support provided critical assistance for SIG service delivery, including in education, health and infrastructure. Specific budget support was provided to allow SIG time to develop a strategic fiscal plan, mitigating the need to seek unsustainable loans and enabling prioritisation of critical services expenditure as a result of COVID-19 and civil unrest.

Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) Scheme participation increased in 2021-22, with 3,694 Solomon Islanders working in Australia on 30 June 2022 (2,457 deployed in 2021-22). The Central Bank of Solomon Islands reported a **68 per cent increase in remittances in 2021 to \$38.3 million,** attributed to PALM workers. Australia's \$11.7 million contribution to the World Bank's Community Access and Urban Services Enhancement Project (CAUSE) supported **jobs for vulnerable people in Malaita, Western and Guadalcanal provinces.** Strongim Bisnis' partnership with the Solomon Islands Women in Business Association provided **business development services training to 61 women entrepreneurs.**

Through the Australian and New Zealand funded Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural (PHAMA) Plus Program we helped **smallholder farmers to increase exports by sharing freight and logistics costs through a digital platform.** This enabled over 50 farmer groups to contribute beans to the first consignment of cocoa exported to the United Kingdom.

Australia's \$250 million (2019-2030) Solomon Islands Infrastructure Program (SIIP) commenced a series of new markets across the country, upgrades to Western Provinces' Seghe and Choiseul's Taro airfields (co-funded with New Zealand), designs for Western Province's Noro Port redevelopment, and a water supply and sanitation feasibility study for Malaita's Bina Harbour tuna processing plant. Construction commenced on the access road for the Tina River Hydropower Project and environmental and social management plans are nearly finalised. Our funding for UN Women's Markets for Change delivered **women's safety infrastructure upgrades to Malaita's Auki market and Honiara Central market and established the predominantly women-led Munda Market Vendors Association in Western Province.**

ANNEX 1: PROGRESS AGAINST COVID-19 DEVELOPMENT RESPONSE PLAN RESULTS INDICATORS

Health Security

Key Results Indicators	Progress/Result
Decrease in vector borne disease incidence	Preliminary data indicates an 8 per cent increase in malaria in 2021 as MHMS resources were diverted to COVID-19. Our budget support to MHMS in 2021-22 contributed to malaria and dengue vector surveillance and monitoring in four provinces and procurement of training equipment. We also funded a Malaria Public Health Officer in WHO's country office.
Increase in rate of supervised deliveries	Budget support to MHMS contributed to 90.2 per cent of women having supervised deliveries (retaining and building on 90.1 per cent in 2020).
Number of children immunised with Australian support	Data not available for this reporting period. We supported MHMS with an embedded epidemiologist from the National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance to support data collection and reporting.
Budget execution rate for Ministry of Health and Medical Services over 75 per cent	In 2021, the execution rate for Australian budget support funds was 70 per cent and 48 per cent for all donor funds (down from 61 per cent in 2020). Our flexibility to reallocate program funds maintained expenditure. The MHMS recurrent budget execution rate was 92 per cent, excluding donor partner funds.
Number of people trained in field epidemiology, surveillance and infection prevention and control	Supported seven students to complete their Field Epidemiology Training Program and selected nine candidates (one from each province) for the next program (commencing 2022-23). Budget support to MHMS in 2021 enabled national and provincial training and workshops to strengthen surveillance systems.
Adequate laboratory capacity to test for COVID-19	Procured three provincial prefabricated biomolecular labs, three PCR machines and 112,000 rapid antigen tests in 2021-22. Continued refurbishment of the national biomolecular laboratory and supported UNICEF to procure 190,154 diagnostic items in 2021-22. MHMS budget support in 2021 supported COVID-19 testing, through equipment procurement, training, and transport of specimens to Australia.
Stock availability in national medical store and in primary health care facilities	Delivered 605,200 COVID-19 vaccine doses and supported delivery of 310,070 doses through our COVAX contribution. Delivered over 55 tonnes of medical supplies, a forklift and a truck for improved warehouse management and distribution. Defence supported inventory management. Budget support in 2021 contributed to improved customs processing, mSupply annual licence and upgrades.
Increase in number of people who have access to improved water and sanitation	Supported the Rural Water, Sanitation and Hygiene program to improve access to water and sanitation, with the Standard Operating Procedure endorsed and phase two of the National Sustainable Sanitation Plan launched in three provinces. Supported Solomon Water to deliver 2,570 household water connections in 13 different settlements in Honiara.
Number of people assisted with family planning	Supported Solomon Islands Planned Parenthood Association's COVID-19 emergency response, reaching 24,272 beneficiaries with sexual and reproductive health and COVID-19 prevention messages. Budget support to MHMS represented 5,904.21 couple-years of protection (CYP) in 2021 and supported contraceptive use training of trainers

	and strengthening youth-friendly health services. CYP is a measure that estimates the protection from pregnancy over a one-year period, based on the volume of all contraception provided.
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Stability

Key Results Indicators	Progress/Result
Net enrolment primary school rate is over 88 per cent	Due to COVID-19 outbreaks and civil unrest interruptions to education systems, data not yet available for this reporting period. Our education program continues to support primary school enrolment.
Number of schools with improved water and sanitation facilities	Six schools have improved WASH facilities, including completion of four WASH projects and construction of one ablutions block for girls.
At least 70 per cent of Year 4 students achieve the expected level for literacy and numeracy in the SISTA assessment	Due to COVID-19 outbreaks and civil unrest interruptions to education systems, the Solomon Islands has not conducted the SISTA assessment since 2019. In 2019 it was reported 69.2 per cent of Year 4 students achieved the expected levels for literacy and 69 per cent for numeracy.
Number of women and girls survivors of violence receiving services such as counselling	5,620 women and girls survivors of violence accessed accommodation, medical services, information and counselling in 2021. This decrease from 6,809 in 2020 reflects improved accuracy of reporting mechanisms, which removed duplicate counting records and general enquiries. Referrals increased by 93 per cent within the SAFENET referral pathway system, from 1,023 in 2020 to 1,975 in 2021.
Number of domestic violence counsellors trained	Training of three domestic violence counsellors for the Family Support Centre (FSC). COVID-19 stalled establishment of the Domestic Violence Counselling Register (DVCR) and counsellor recruitment. FSC will play an active role in governance of the DVCR subcommittee and brings growing technical and operational expertise to support the ministry to administer the DVCR.
Capacity to undertake regular border surveillance activities	Supported the National Disaster Management Office to establish a multi-agency COVID-19 On-Site-Operations Coordination Centre to strengthen sector coordination and integrate surveillance, community outreach and preparedness along the western border with PNG.
Professional development and training for teachers, and preparedness for continued education during a COVID-19 environment ¹	Supported 547 unqualified teachers to undertake qualification training. Provided technical and financial support to MEHRD's COVID-19 Response and Learning Continuity Plans, including online, radio, and print remote learning. Distributed 841 boxes of print materials to provinces. Provided \$4 million to ease COVID-related budgetary pressures on schools and prevent closures.
Numbers of households linked to markets, including digital linkages	Supported 765 households to connect with markets to source products and services as inputs in their economic activities, or to sell their products and services. This includes micro and small enterprises, which are typically family-run businesses.

¹ This indicator was added in 2020-21.

Economic Recovery

Key Results Indicators	Progress/Result
Coral Sea Cable uptake (measured in billions of bits per second- Gbps)	The Coral Sea Cable has led to an increase in wholesale internet supply from 1.4 to 6.03 Gbps between 2018 and 2021 (a more than four-fold increase) ² .
Australian budget support as a percentage of total domestic revenue in response to COVID-19 ³	Australian budget support represented 7.39 per cent of total domestic revenue.
Increased infrastructure investment to improve access to services and contribute to inclusive economic growth	Under the Solomon Islands Infrastructure Program, Australia spent \$13 million on economic infrastructure in 2021-22. This includes a \$10 million contribution to upgrades at Seghe and Taro provincial airfields.
Number of female entrepreneurs provided with financial/business development services	Supported 197 women entrepreneurs with financial and business development services.
Number of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) teachers adopting improved teaching practices	55 trainers (23 women) undertook International Skills Training (IST) and 24 (5 women) completed the IST Advanced training. 29 trainers (6 women) attended Certificate IV Leadership and Management training.
Number of TVET students (women/men) reached with improved teaching practices	403 students (90 women) enrolled in five National Skills Packages in 2021.
Number of returned labour mobility and seasonal workers reporting increased capacity to earn an income (employment, entrepreneurial)	3,694 Solomon Islanders were working in Australia under the Pacific Labour Mobility (PALM) Scheme on 30 June 2022, of whom 2,457 workers were deployed in 2021. With over 70 per cent participating in the longer-term scheme we anticipate a lag in availability of data until the 2023-24 financial year.

² The 2020-21 Solomon Islands Development Program Progress Report contained an error, where the PNG Coral Sea Cable uptake indicator was used instead of the Solomon Islands one.

³ This indicator was amended in 2020-21.

ANNEX 2: INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Investment Details	Year	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Gender Equality
Addressing Gender Equality in Solomon Islands Investment duration: 2012-23; Budget: \$35.2m	2022	4	4	4
	2021	4	3	4
Health Sector Support Program – Phase 3 Investment duration: 2016-24; Budget: \$126.6m	2022	4	3	4
	2021	5	5	5
Education Sector Support Program Investment duration: 2018-23; Budget: \$45.2m	2022	3	3	3
	2021	4	4	4
Solomon Islands Governance Program Investment duration: 2017-22; Budget: \$67.9m	2022	4	4	3
	2021	4	4	4
Solomon Islands Justice Program Investment duration: 2017-22; Budget: \$37.2m	2022	4	4	4
	2021	4	4	4
Solomon Islands Infrastructure Program Investment duration: 2019-2030; Budget: \$252.0m	2022	5	4	4
	2021	n/a	n/a	n/a
Strongim Bisnis Investment duration: 2020-23; Budget: \$18.0m	2022	5	5	5
	2021	4	4	5
Australia's Solomon Islands Resource Facility Investment duration: 2020-25; Budget: \$14.0m	2022	4	4	4
	2021	n/a	n/a	n/a

FINAL INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Investment Details	Year	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Gender Equality
Solomon Islands Democratic Governance Phase 2 Investment duration: 2017-21; Budget: \$14.6m	2022 FIMR	4	3	4
	2021 IMR	5	5	4

Definitions of rating scale:

Satisfactory (4, 5 and 6)

6 = Very good; satisfies criteria in all areas.

5 = Good; satisfies criteria in almost all areas.

4 = Adequate; on balance, satisfies criteria; does not fail in any major area.

Less than satisfactory (1, 2 and 3)

3 = Less than adequate; on balance does not satisfy criteria and/or fails in at least one major area.

2 = Poor; does not satisfy criteria in major areas.

1 = Very poor; does not satisfy criteria in many major area.