



Opening of new facilities at Kaugere Primary School

Speech delivered by: Kate Fuller, First Secretary Education

Good morning.

Thank you for your warm welcome and the opportunity to be here today on this important day.

Let me begin by saying it is a privilege to be here with the Honourable Minister Justin Tkatchenko for the opening of these new facilities at Kaugere Primary School.

I am sure the students and teachers at Kaugere also join with me and Minister Tkatchenko in welcoming the addition of these new classrooms, teachers' offices, store-rooms and toilet facilities.

I note, too, that this assistance from Australia is also supplemented by a range of hygiene and

health awareness activities provided through the WASH program.

Ladies and gentlemen, good health, good facilities and good infrastructure are important for producing good school outcomes.

I have no doubt that better facilities, such as new classrooms and new ablution blocks, encourage better school attendance.

And better school attendance is obviously good for students. It is also good for the broader community surrounding Kaugere Primary School.

After all, the children studying at Kaugere today are the community's leaders of tomorrow.

And if a community is to improve its economic and social well-being, it needs people with the right experience and the right education.

As we all know, a good education starts with young people learning the basics of reading, writing and mathematics at elementary and primary school.

And, ladies and gentlemen, the young people you see here today at Kaugere are the future of your community.

By encouraging them to get a better schooling, they will grow and develop into better and more productive members of your community in the future.

By productive community members of the future, I mean young people who have benefited from attending elementary, primary and secondary schools.

And, hopefully, even attending technical college or university.

If today's new classrooms and ablutions block can play a small part in encouraging Kaugere Primary School children to attend school and to go on and improve their education and find worthwhile jobs, it is good news for both students and their families.

It is good news for the local community.

And it is good news for Papua New Guinea.

I am confident the students of this school – especially the girls – will make full use of these new facilities to improve their education and contribute to their country's progress by achieving full and rewarding lives in the future.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have said that the children here today will contribute to your community in the future.

But in fact you, as a community, are already making a great contribution to the lives and well-being of the people in and around Kaugere.

The installation of the school's new infrastructure would never have happened without your support and close work with the teachers, staff, students and families involved with Kaugere Primary School.

And for that spirit of cooperation, I both congratulate you and thank you.

Through its partnership with the Government of Papua New Guinea, the people of Australia are committed to supporting local communities like Kaugere.

In particular, Australia is committed to supporting the education and welfare of girls and women.

A good schooling gives girls and young women the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary in later life to find good jobs, start businesses, and become leaders in government, industry and the community.

That is why Australia's aid program in PNG prioritizes gender equality and women's empowerment.

Australia recognises that one of the best ways to achieve stronger communities, societies and economies is to empower women and girls and people with disabilities through educational support.

Ladies and gentlemen, I began this speech by explaining why today is important.

Let me end by giving you one more reason why this is a significant day.

It's significant because it shows how closely the governments of Papua New Guinea and Australia are working together.

Australians understand the importance of education. They want their political leaders to work closely with Australia's important and nearby neighbours like Papua New Guinea.

Papua New Guineans understand the importance of education too.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the Honourable Mr Justin Tkatchenko and you, the local school and community, for inviting me to take part in opening these new facilities.

On behalf of the Australian people, I congratulate the teachers and staff, parents and children, school advisers and the broader community for showing the spirit of cooperation necessary to provide the school facilities your children deserve.

Thank you.

