

'End the Cycle' Exhibition
'End the Cycle of Poverty & Disability'
30 April 2014

Address by HE Ms Deborah Stokes
Australian High Commissioner

Australian High Commission
Port Moresby

I would like to welcome you to the 'End the Cycle' exhibition.

This event is an opportunity to raise awareness about the rights and also the capacities of persons with disabilities.

In all countries people with disabilities have lower rates of participation in the workforce, and less access to education and health services than people without disability. This is also the case in Papua New Guinea.

At the 2013 United Nations High Level Meeting on Disability and Development, Australia's Foreign Minister, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, affirmed Australia's

commitment to promote disability-inclusive development and to a 'leave no-one behind' policy.

On the most recent International Day for People with Disability (3 December 2013), Senator Mason announced the Government's intention to create a new strategy for disability-inclusive development from 2015, to build on the achievements of Australia's current strategy.

The Australian Government has made a strong commitment to end the cycle of poverty and disability in Papua New Guinea.

To support implementation of the United National Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, we have assisted the Department of Community Development and Religion to review the PNG National Disability Policy.

This review process has resulted in a new policy being developed, which is approaching finalisation.

Since July 2012, all new classrooms constructed by the Australian aid program around PNG have been equipped with ramps to enable access for children with disability.

Australia is supporting Callan Services in a one year, 1 million Kina partnership focused on its special education centres which support children with disabilities.

With Australia's support, the National Board for Disabled Persons and the National Orthotic and Prosthetic Services have provided 27,000 assistive devices since 24 May 2013 to enable over 20,000 people with disabilities full participation in community and economic in life.

Australia has disbursed 1 million Kina for community grants to disabled persons organisations and community based groups assisting disabled people.

These grants support income generation skills and activities to enable persons with disabilities to be self-sufficient in their communities.

And we are supporting people with disability, through organisations like the PNG Assembly for Disabled Persons and the National Disability Resource & Advocacy Centre. These organisations play an important advocacy role.

I acknowledge the contribution to these organisations by Ms Babao, Dame Carol, Ms Parkop, Ms Powaseu and many others in the room.

This afternoon's exhibition showcases photographs, written stories and short videos and provides a platform for people with disabilities to tell their own stories in their own words, to help others understand and work towards ending the cycle of poverty and disability.

Thank you again for accepting our invitation.

Please enjoy the exhibition.

I wish you well as we work together to address the cycle

of poverty and disability for persons with disabilities in PNG.