

+ Buk bilong Pikinini – Press release

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Buk bilong Pikinini will open its 16th library on the 19th of June 2014 on Manus Island.

Buk bilong Pikinini (BbP) will open its first library on Manus Island on the 19th of June. The library is located in Lorengau at the Manus University Centre and is sponsored by the Bank of South Pacific, Australian Aid and long-term BbP donors. The land has been donated by the Manus Island District Administration through their Education Division.

The library has been greatly anticipated by the surrounding communities, who are looking forward to benefitting from this valuable community service. Manus Island has traditionally been a place where education has been highly valued and most children have had the opportunity to go to school. However, in recent years literacy levels have been on the decline and access to high quality literacy materials has been very minimal. It is part of Buk bilong Pikinini's mission to put a strong focus on Early Childhood Learning as a key to literacy. Reaching children from an early age has a huge impact on development and subsequent academic performance as well as their opportunities in life.

Buk bilong Pikinini is greatly looking forward to serving the children from the Ward 5 community where the library is located. So far 30 young children have been enrolled to attend literacy, numeracy and awareness classes during school hours and to enjoy the more than 3000 books available on the shelves. School children will be able to come and enjoy the library and borrow books.

Robin Fleming – Group CEO of BSP said: "BSP remains committed in our support of the outstanding work that Buk Bilong Pikinini does and we are proud that our sponsorship can help to establish pathways to education and literacy for children, our future leaders of Papua New Guinea."

"This Lorengau library opening will be officially our 3rd from a commitment of 7 however we hope to have another 2 underway at Gerehu and Gordons constructed and launched also in 2014."

Anne-Sophie Hermann – Founder of Buk bilong Pikinini said: “Buk bilong Pikinini is grateful to the Bank of South Pacific, the Manus Island District Administration and all our donors for the opportunity to establish a library in this remote yet beautiful part of the world. We are looking forward to be able to assist more regions of Papua New Guinea with high quality literacy materials and valuable learning programs to ensure that vulnerable children can become literate and have the same opportunities as everyone else.”

Beverlynn Wangillen, Regional libraries Manager said: “The opening of another BbP library is another giant leap that this organization is taking to help reduce rates of illiteracy in PNG. We would like to say a big thank you to BSP and our long-term donors for giving us the opportunity to establish this library and the District Administration for the provision of land for us to operate on. Working in partnership is the way forward for development”.

Luke Ebbs – Buk bilong Pikinini – Executive Officer said: ““My friends on Manus Island have provided me with a unique insight into the many development challenges Manus Province faces and the huge impact the people of Manus have had in the good governance and development of Papua New Guinea. It gives me great personal and professional satisfaction to see this library opened with the support of BSP and the Manus Professionals for Community Development. The people of Manus are deserving of a children’s library and I am confident they will make the most of this wonderful opportunity.”

James Hall – Minister Counsellor (Development Cooperation) – Australian High Commission said: “Australia has a strong commitment to improving access to a quality education for the girls and boys of Manus, including by building 20 primary school infrastructure kits in remote locations in the province. We are proud to support this expansion of BbP libraries into Manus which will give more children the ability to learn, participate in education and teach themselves through reading.”

Manus Professionals for Community Development Inc (MP4CD), a team of young professionals through their Donate –A- Book Project is satisfied that they are able to contribute back to their home province by way of supporting Buk bilong Pikinini, Bank South Pacific and Manus Provincial Administration.

Dorcas Sevua, MP4CD’s team Leader of the project said: “It is real hard work especially when it is voluntary work. It meant personal sacrifices, fundraisings, a lot of discussions but at the end of the day it was worth it. We have given back to our community, a library for young kids. BukBilong Pikinini is ensuring there are resources such as books for young children to assist their learning. A library for this age groups is a need for the community. A house of knowledge is what the young children need access to, it is a place where learning is fun and where parents can come and participate in their children’s learning.”

Buk bilong Pikinini aims to foster a love of reading and learning, raise children’s aspirations and increase literacy rates in Papua New Guinea.

Buk bilong Pikinini was started in 2007 to give vulnerable children access to books. There are now 16 libraries across PNG, all operating an Early Literacy program using trained Head Librarians and Assistant Librarians.

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