



Australian High Commission Tarawa

Quarterly Newsletter

ISSUE : 03

DECEMBER 2010

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- **PM's Pacific Australia Award**
- **RAMSI**
- **More photos on page 5**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Parliamentary Secretary visit	1
Orthopaedic Team	2
KAP (AYAD)	2
RAMSI Photo Exhibition	2
Tarawa Climate Change Confer-	3
PM's Pacific Award	3
Social Club	4
Photos	5

PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY VISIT

The Australian Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs, the Hon Richard Marles MP visited Kiribati on 30 November 2010. Mr Marles was accompanied by senior advisers and officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and AusAID.



HE Brett Aldam meeting the Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs, the Hon Richard Marles MP on arrival in Tarawa

Mr Marles' visit reaffirmed the strength and vitality of relations between Australia and Kiribati. His visit included a courtesy call on His Excellency President Tong and meetings with Government Ministers and senior officials. At a State



Mr Marles and delegation call on H.E. President Anote Tong

House function hosted by His Excellency the President that evening, Mr Marles was delighted to be able to experience traditional Kiribati performances, meet Australians living and working in Kiribati and enjoy the country's unrivalled hospitality.

Earlier in the day, Mr Marles and

his team received a typically enthusiastic welcome from the students and staff at the Kiribati School and Centre for Children with Special Needs. Among the highlights was a rousing rendition of the Australian national anthem and a dance in traditional costume performed by the students for their Australian



Mr Marles giving his speech at the School

visitors. For their part, the Australian team looked absolutely resplendent in the golden-wattle inspired shirts presented to them by the school to mark the occasion.



Also included in Mr Marles program were visits to the Kiribati Institute of Technology and the Marine Training Centre, where he saw first-hand Australia's support for these key institutions and reaffirmed Australia's strong commitment to promoting education and work force development in partnership with Kiribati. During a tour of the Kiribati Patrol boat,



Mr Marles meeting the Principal of the KIT, Ms Tess Martin

RKS Teanoai, Mr Marles discussed bilateral defence cooperation and regional maritime surveillance issues with senior Kiribati Police Service and Australian Defence Force personnel.

As part of his visit, Mr Marles announced an additional \$50,000 in funding for the School and Centre for Children with Special Needs and another \$45,000 for a new Satellite Internet Centre to promote officer training at



Mr Marles viewing the MTC simulation room with Cpt. Boro

the Marine Training Centre. Mr Marles also foreshadowed significant further Australian assistance for the KIT and the Kiribati School of Nursing to ensure they take their place alongside other leading teaching and training institutions in the region.



Mr Marles on the Patrol Boat with Lt. Cdr Brough and Commanding Officer Taataa

AUSTRALIAN ORTHOPAEDIC TEAM ARRIVES



The Team (from left to right)— Ben, Rob, Cherrie, Boris and Dale

An Australian medical team specialising in orthopaedics arrived in Kiribati on 16 November to treat and operate on patients in need of orthopaedic care. The project was managed by the Royal Australasian Group of Surgeons with the support of the Australian Government through AusAID.

The orthopaedic team consisted of two orthopaedic surgeons, two nurses and an anaesthetist. It was not the team's first visit to the Pacific as they have been coming to

the region for over ten years. Nevertheless each visit brings with it its own unique challenges and rewards with this year proving to be no exception. Team leader, Dr Robert Genat, said the team had seen more than two hundred patients and performed 26 operations during a particularly hectic but rewarding two week visit.

Before returning to Australia on 30 November, the team said they felt their trip had been a success and that they

were pleased to be able to reach as many patients as they did during their time in Kiribati. The newest member of the team, Dr Boris Brankov said it was one of the best experiences he has had - describing Kiribati as a hidden paradise and its people as among the friendliest he had ever met.



Carlo Iacovino from KAP

KAP COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR (AYAD)

Mr Carlo Iacovino is an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development (AYAD) currently working in the role of Communications Coordinator for the Kiribati Adaptation Project (KAPII). Carlo has been in Kiribati for about 7 months as a volunteer. There are currently 5 Australian Youth Ambassadors working in Kiribati and 11 Australian volunteers.

Carlo holds a Bachelor degree in Media and a Masters degree in Science. Prior to working as an

AYAD, Carlo worked as an Education Officer and then CEO of the Clean Ocean Foundation in Victoria, Australia.

Among his many roles, Carlo has recently written a news story for the AYAD program about his work with the Tarawa Climate Change Conference. In it, he describes how living in Kiribati helps to foster a better understanding of the challenges faced by the country. Carlo enjoys his work with KAP, despite the long hours, and is

grateful that he has been made to feel such a part of the team. During those rare moments when he is not working, Carlo enjoys surfing and says that the Gilbert Islands have some great waves - contrary to the belief that 'there is no surf in Tarawa!' KAP, an initiative funded by AusAID, NZAID, the Global Environment Facility and the Government of Kiribati and aims to reduce Kiribati's vulnerability to climate change, climate variability, and sea level rise through adaptation. More information on KAP can be found at www.climate.gov.ki.

RAMSI PHOTO EXHIBITION

The High Commission was pleased to support the launch of the RAMSI photo exhibition (RAMSI: A history in pictures) on 16 November at Bairiki Square. The exhibition was officially opened by the Minister for the Line and Phoenix Islands, the Hon Tawita Temoku, the RAMSI Special Coordinator, Mr Graeme Wilson and the Pacific Islands Forum Representative to Solomon Islands, Mr Sakiusa Rabuka. Also present were Government Ministers, senior officials, the Acting Commissioner of Police and members of the Kiribati Police Service who have served in RAMSI.

The launch was only the second time the exhibition had been shown in the Pacific after it's unveiling at the Pacific Islands Forum meeting in Port Vila in August. It was timed to coincide with the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Biketawa Declaration by Forum leaders in Kiribati in 2000. RAMSI was established under the Biketawa Declaration which allows Forum countries to help a fellow member in a time of crisis.

In his remarks, the Special Coordinator thanked the Government of Kiribati and the Kiribati Police Service for their continuing sup-

port, saying that the country's police had represented Kiribati with distinction and had helped to improve the lives of Solomon Islanders.

Kiribati was a founding member of RAMSI in 2003 with the names of all those to have served in the mission read out at the launch. An impressive contingent then assembled in their RAMSI uniforms to mark the occasion.



RAMSI Special Coordination Mr Graeme Wilson



TARAWA CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE



The Tarawa Climate Change Conference in session

The High Commission was pleased to join the Australian delegation to the Tarawa Climate Change Conference held at Parliament House in Ambo on

the 10th of November 2010. The meeting brought together major developed and developing country economies and some of the most vulnerable small island states for intensive talks on the international climate change negotiations ahead of the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP16) in Cancun, Mexico.

The Conference culminated with the adoption of the Ambo Declaration by 12 countries; Australia, Brazil, China, Cuba, Fiji, Japan, Kiribati, Maldives, Marshall Islands, New Zealand, Solomon Islands and Tonga. The Declaration set the scene for Cancun by calling for urgent and concerted global action on

climate change and early access to adaptation funding for the most vulnerable states.



PRIME MINISTER'S PACIFIC AUSTRALIA AWARDS (PMPA)

The High Commission was delighted when Ms Marii Marae, a Kiribati student currently studying in Australia under the Australian Development Scholarship (ADS) program, was confirmed as one of the Pacific recipients of the Prime Minister's Pacific Australia (PMPA) Awards in 2010.

The PMPA Awards give postgraduate students studying under the Australian Development Scholarships (ADS) or Australian Leadership Award Scholarships (ALAS) programs the opportunity to build on their academic experience through a practical work placement in an Australian business organisation. PMPA awardees also participate in a

structured leadership development component, such as attending the prestigious Leadership Development Program or participating in the Pacific Leadership Program.

The program started in 2010 and will offer awards to eligible postgraduate ADS and ALAS scholars from the Pacific.

This year's recipients received their awards at a presentation dinner hosted by Australia's Minister for Tertiary Education, Senator the Hon Chris Evans, on 23 November 2010. The Australian Prime Minister, the Hon Julia Gillard, MP also attended the event and met the recipients.

Marii is currently studying towards a Masters in Environmental Law at the Australian National University where she is due to finish her studies at the end of this year.

Prior to taking up her scholarship offer in January 2009, Marii worked as an Environment Inspector with the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Agricultural Development.



Marii with Senator the Hon Chris Evans (left)



The Awards recipients from the Pacific



Marii meeting with the Australian Prime Minister

AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION SOCIAL CLUB EVENTS

2010 Melbourne Cup

The Social Club hosted the race that 'stops a nation' on Tuesday, 2 November. It was a great turn out with guests dressing up for the occasion to parade the best dressed fillies and stallions on the field. Especially eye-catching were the many hats that were on display - with the locally designed millinery a real feature. Adding to the drama of the race was a TV screen that went blank as the field approached the finishing post. Nevertheless, it all worked out in the end with the happy punters claiming their prizes after the replay. While not quite topping the 'other Cup' as the feature event of the day, the local Hermit Crab Cup also attracted a large and enthusiastic crowd who were not disappointed with a high quality race. Only one crab refused to budge but was cleared of anything untoward after a stewards' inquiry. The Social Club would like to thank the many willing 'punters' who were there on the day. As a charity event, all monies raised went into The Club's kitty to be donated to worthy causes in the Tarawa community.

Social Club Christmas Bar Night

The final Bar Night for the year, on Friday 3 December, was a bittersweet event. Not only did the night bring down the curtain on a very happy and successful 2010 for the Social Club, it also bid

saying farewell to the grand old man of the office, Duncan McCullough, who had come to the end of his three year posting with AusAID. Fancy dress and karaoke were the order of the day with a DVD of Duncan's life and times in Tarawa a special treat. There was nary a dry eye in the house during the screening of the DVD, although we're not sure whether that was from tears of sorrow or laughter. Perhaps it was a bit of both. In any event, Duncan recovered sufficiently from having his life flashed across the big screen to belt out a rendition of 'Locomotion' that set the night's karaoke competition alight. It was followed by some very creditable, and some not so creditable, performances of other karaoke favourites.

Duncan made his mark during his three years with AusAID and will be sadly missed in the High Commission and by his many friends in Tarawa. But we know Duncan will go on to achieve bigger and better things in Canberra and have seen in his replacement, Amie Milligan, someone who is prepared to plunge headlong into her life and work in Kiribati.

We would also like to say farewell to Deb Mercurio and Ray and Barb Kinsey as they

come to the end of their stay with us as Australian volunteers. We are very grateful for their contribution to the post community during their time in Tarawa and for the outstanding work they did at the Office of the Peoples' Lawyer and the Marine Training Centre respectively. Tia bo ao tekeraoi ami mwananga (cheers and good luck with your journey).

And a big lukim iu bihaen to Atenasi who will lusim Tarawa and kasem Solomons disfala week after a stint with us in the High Commission. Mifala hapi tumas fo mitim iu. Lu hemi barava gudfala.

Thank You From the Club's Executive

The Social Club (hereafter known as 'The Club') would like to thank all our esteemed patrons for their continued support during the year. We are sure everyone has enjoyed themselves and will do so next year. A very special thank you to all of our Committee Members for taking the time to volunteer their services during our bar nights and events. The Club will use the money raised this year to purchase equipment for the Mental Health Ward in Bikenibeu to the value of \$1000.00. The equipment will be delivered early in the New Year.

2010 has heralded a great return for The Club with the regular bar nights and special events – such as the Melbourne Cup and the Aussie Rules grand final(s) – well attended and a lot of fun. But we are not about to rest on our laurels and look forward to an even bigger and better 2011. In the meantime, we would like to wish everyone a very happy Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year. Tekeraoi ami Xmas ao te ririki ae boou.

Kam bati n rabwa.



Patrons of the 2010 Melbourne Cup



Duncan bids adieu (with the support of his former dog Jem)



Joanne says thanks and it's cheers to Duncan



Karaoke in full swing!



Australian High Commission Tarawa

P.O Box 77
Bairiki
Tarawa
Republic of Kiribati
Phone: 21184
Fax: 21904
Email: ahc.tarawa@dfat.gov.au

Please find below the link
for further information to
Mr Marles' visit to Tarawa
on the AusAID website:

[http://
www.youtube.com/
user/AusAIDvideo](http://www.youtube.com/user/AusAIDvideo)



MORE PHOTOS FROM MR MARLES' VISIT

At the School



At the MTC



At the KIT



On the Patrol Boat

