



SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY JOHN MA'O KALI, CMG, OBE
HIGH COMMISSIONER OF PAPUA NEW GUINEA TO AUSTRALIA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE HANDOVER CEREMONY OF THE NEW
SECOND GIFTED GUARDIAN CLASS PATROL BOAT

'NUSHIP ROCHUS LOKINAP'

BY AUSTRALIA TO PAPUA NEW GUINEA

PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA ON TUESDAY, 30 MARCH 2021

- Senator the Hon Zed Seselja, Minister for International Development and the Pacific;
- AIR Commodore Fiona Dowse, Senior ADF Representative WA,
- Mr Ben Wardle, General Manager of Austal,
- CAPT Gary Lawton, CO HMAS Stirling,
- Sarah Hooper Director DFAT WA State Office,
- Commander Tobias Reid, US Coast Guard Attache' to Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea,
- Commanding Officer and Crew of **'NUSHIP ROCHUS LOKINAP'**
- Distinguish guests, ladies and gentlemen.
- Can I also acknowledge our PNG nationals working, studying and residing here and contributing to the economic development of this beautiful State, Western Australia.

- Daba Namona iboumuai, Monin Tru olgeta and Good morning to you all. His Excellency, Mr John Kali, PNG High Commissioner to Australia

has sent his sincere apologise for not able to attend this important ceremony due to his recent official engagement in Brisbane. Based on recent reported cases of covid19 in Brisbane and to comply with WA Covid19 protocols, he was unable to travel to Perth, WA.

- Therefore, High Commissioner Kali has asked me to officiate and deliver his speech on behalf of the government and people of Papua New Guinea.
- I am honoured to be here to attend the Handover Ceremony of the new second gifted Guardian Class Patrol Boat '**NUSHIP ROCHUS LOKINAP**' by Australia to Papua New Guinea.
- Thank you for the warm welcome, Mr Mathew Mcguire, elder and custodian of the land we meet, Captain Gary Lawton, CO HMAS Stirling, and Minister Seselja for the excellent hospitality accorded to us and the Australian Defence Organisation for making it possible for our attendance at the ceremony.
- Please allow me to register my Government's most heartfelt gratitude to the Government and the people of Australia for joining us in our time of grief for the passing of our late Father of our Nation, Grand Chief Sir Michael Thomas Somare; AND
- Thank you for the many condolence messages, and in particular Prime Minister Scott Morrison's personal visit to our Sydney Consulate General's office, where I welcomed him when he came to sign the condolence book; AND
- More significantly your Federal Parliaments House of Representatives Motions of condolence from the various leaders from both sides of the House; AND
- The flying of the Australian Flag at half-mast; AND
- The attendance of Minister Seselja, Your Chief of Defence, General Angus Campbell, Secretary for Defence, Mr Greg Moriarty, Director of

The Office of Pacific, former Australian High Commissioners to PNG and other close Australian friends at the Memorial Services held in Canberra, Brisbane, Sydney, and Cairns in honour of the late Grand Chief.

- These gestures have been very well received and registered by the Government, the family of the Grand Chief but more importantly the people of the many tribes of PNG.
- Mi pela galasim gut na bai mipela bekim naispela pasin yupela wokim (We have observed your gestures and we'll repay in kind).
- I also take this opportunity to register my Government's sincere appreciation for your Governments willing and continuous support to PNG during these difficult times in PNG with respect to the COVID spike there.
- Can I also register our Governments sadness for the suffering that has been endured by families in the South East Coast of Australia during the heavy rains and flooding over the past few weeks. Our thoughts and prayers are with them as they recover.
- On behalf of the government and people of Papua New Guinea in particular, the PNG Defence Organization, I wish to sincerely thank the government and people of Australia for gifting us the ship. We are very grateful for your generosity and continued support under the Defence Cooperation Program (DCP).
- In August last year, our Prime Ministers signed off on a long term **Comprehensive Strategic and Economic Partnership** (CSEP) to elevate our bilateral relations to greater heights across key Pillars; Strong democracies for a stable future; Close friends, enduring ties; Economic Partnership for Prosperity; Strategic cooperation for security and stability; Social and Human Development; and Near Neighbours and Global Partners.

- During the virtual signing ceremony, I overheard our two Prime Ministers appealing to our respective heads of the relevant State institutions to make these agreements work.
- I am pleased to say that this is working well for the PNG – Australia Defence relationship. It is the most enduring security partnership, founded on shared geography, historical links and cultural ties and values with a strong history of military cooperation, recognising that regional peace and security is enhanced by the interoperability of our defence forces.
- We are pleased to participate in the Pacific Maritime Security Program (PMSP) to enhance regional stability and security which delivered our first Guardian Class Patrol Boat, **HMPNGS TED DIRO** in 2018, and the second, '**NUSHIP ROCHUS LOKINAP**' to be handed over to us today with a third and fourth one to follow later this year and in 2022 respectively.
- The PMSP with its region-wide aerial surveillance capability, enhanced regional coordination, sustainable capacity development support and the in country maritime adviser arrangements are supporting and benefiting PNG and other small Pacific Island states who have limited capacity and resources.
- The gifting of these powerful boats signifies the beginnings of a more strategic 30-year voyage in our pacific maritime security cooperation...bringing to an end our 30-year Pacific Patrol Boat Program.
- I am truly thankful that our crew members for '**NUSHIP ROCHUS LOKINAP**' have been training in Australia over the past two months to prepare for the new vessel. I am confident the crew are now skilled and competent to effectively, efficiently and **ethically** operate the ship for the good of our peoples.

- The Boats are larger and better equipped with modern technology and other enhancements to support region-wide integrated aerial surveillance to support surface patrols, and other enhancements to promote a more cooperative and coordinated approach in combatting maritime threats including transnational crime, human trafficking and illegal fishing as well as provide support to other government agencies in delivering essential services.
- I am pleased to note that the boats will be capable of undertaking long range maritime patrols for extended periods with **mixed crews in support of our gender equity and social inclusion policies.**
- These ships are an integral part of the “Ships of Excellence Program” aimed at achieving defence outputs and capability development under the CDF’s ‘Three-Year Plan’ 2021 – 2023 which are aligned to our Force 2030 and our Government’s strategic plans which have been captured very well under the newly executed long term CSEP. Which includes the Redevelopment of Lombrum Naval Base in Manus Province to accommodate the new Guardian Class Patrol Boats.
- These are off course aimed at elevating our enduring partnership to a new level, seeking to further enhance interoperability between our defence forces, and to deepen our maritime security cooperation, including through increased Royal Australian Navy ship visits over time.
- The new second Guardian Class Patrol Boat, **‘NUSHIP ROCHUS LOKINAP’** commissioning ceremony will be advised once the arrangements are finalised. I hope that some members of the Senior Leadership Group from Defence will be invited to attend the ceremony, subject to the COVID19 travel restrictions both here and in PNG.
- This is a historical and proud moment for the PNGDF. As the PNG Government’s official representative in Australia, I thank the Australian Government, Defence Force and the Department of Defence for funding the building of the ship through the Defence Cooperation Program, AUSTAL for delivering the ship on time and budget, including

those companies and individuals who contributed towards the delivery of the ship. We commend you all for a job well done.

- To the government and people of the Commonwealth of Australia, thank you for gifting the new Guardian Class Patrol Boat, '**NUSHIP ROCHUS LOKINAP**' to the government and people of Papua New Guinea. The gifting of the ship demonstrates our long, deep and enduring relationship between our countries especially, through people to people and institutional links.
- It gives me profound privilege and honour, on behalf of the government and people of Papua New Guinea, to now officially accept and receive the new second Guardian Class Patrol Boat, '**NUSHIP ROCHUS LOKINAP**' from the government and people of the Commonwealth of Australia.
- Tanikiu bada herea iboumuai, Tenkyu tru olgeta. (Thank you all)