

Opening of New Operating Theatre and Patient Ward – ANGAU Hospital

4 November 2016

Acknowledgements

- Secretary Pascoe Kase, Secretary National Department of Health
- Secretary Hakua Harry, Secretary Department of National Planning and Monitoring
- Ms Sheila Pati, A/g Provincial Administrator, Morobe Province (and ANGAU Board Member)
- Ms Sarah Todd, Deputy Chair of the ANGAU Hospital Board
- Dr Chris Kenyhercz, CEO of ANGAU Hospital
- ANGAU Board Members
- Other special guests

Good morning.

It is a great pleasure to be here again at ANGAU Hospital.

Australia and Papua New Guinea are bound by history and geography. We have a strong enduring relationship and ANGAU is a longstanding demonstration of that relationship.

Australia's support to the redevelopment of ANGAU is undertaken in partnership with the government of PNG.

Partnerships are about shared opportunities, and shared challenges. We see this early work as part of the building blocks of not only the hospital redevelopment but also the changing partnership between our two great countries.

With that in mind I am pleased to be officially opening this new operating theatre and 20-bed ward. This is an investment of over 4 million kina by the Australian Government that will increase the capacity of ANGAU Hospital to treat patients.

It forms part of the first phase of support of the Australian Government's commitment of 207 million Australian dollars for the redevelopment of ANGAU Hospital.

The first phase of Australian works at ANGAU has been focused on rehabilitating surgical facilities while improving the quality and amount of inpatient accommodation.

The new operating theatre being opened today is fully equipped, and includes a patient recovery area, patient and staff ablution facilities, a nurse's station, and sterilisation rooms.

The ward is fully fitted out with patient beds, bedside tables, visitor chairs, patient toilet and shower facilities as well as amenities for staff.

Both new buildings are fully air conditioned, have energy efficient lighting, are fire protected and are connected to ANGAU Hospital's centralised medical gas system.

In addition to the new operating theatre and patient ward, Australian support is contributing to the upgrade of the Gware wing, procurement of over 2 million kina worth of medical equipment and supplies, substantial ground and electrical repairs, a new dental clinic, as well as a new academic building at the Lae School of Nursing, which will be completed at the end of this year.

Australia's health support to Morobe Province is strong. We, of course, have a long history with ANGAU Hospital, one that dates back to the Second World War. It started life as a small military base hospital and today, ANGAU is the second largest hospital in PNG. It treats not only Lae city but a catchment of about 1.8 million people in the Momase Region.

This redevelopment will improve access to crucial tertiary health services to PNG's second largest city and fastest growing region, as well as help attract specialist staff to the hospital. Most importantly, by improving the functionality and lifespan of this important facility, we will be improving the quality and safety of patient care.

Australia is committed to not only supporting the redevelopment of ANGAU Hospital, but to supporting PNG to strengthen the broader health system for the people of PNG.

In Morobe province, Australia is providing assistance to upgrade key district health facilities in Morobe province and strengthen referral pathways. Up to five health facilities will be provided with support that ranges from the upgrade of medical equipment to refurbishment works. We expect that these facilities will reduce the burden on ANGAU Hospital while major construction is taking place.

The Australian Government is also providing technical assistance to the Morobe Division of Health to strengthen the management and delivery of health services in Morobe. Assisting the Government of PNG to improve access to, and quality of, health services is a priority of the PNG-Australia Aid Partnership Arrangement. We remain a long term partner to Papua New Guinea in the health sector.

Going ahead, you will continue to see the redevelopment take shape. As I am sure you all know, Australia recently tendered for a consultant to oversee the major redevelopment works here at ANGAU. The tender process for this is currently being finalised. A second tender, for a construction company to implement the major works will be released to the market before the end of this year. I am pleased to confirm that this will facilitate the major works component of the redevelopment commencing, as planned, in 2017.

I look forward to touring these new facilities and hope to return soon to see and hear how the new facilities are being used to improve patient care.

I look forward to continuing to work in partnership with the PNG Government to redevelop ANGAU hospital.

Thank you.