



MEDIA RELEASE

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Australian unions and business working together to boost jobs in the Pacific

Australian trade unions and employer groups have worked together to deliver skills training programs and create new job opportunities for people in Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea.

ACTU President Ged Kearney said unemployment and underemployment, particularly among young people, is an entrenched problem in many Pacific island countries that leads to poverty, social unrest and disengagement with the community.

“The ACTU welcomed the opportunity to work with industry, employer organisations and our union counterparts to tackle this issue through the joint development of skills and training programs that will lead to fair and sustainable employment,” said Ms Kearney.

ACCI Director of Employment, Education and Training, Jenny Lambert said the ground breaking project saw industry, unions, government and community groups coming together for the first time to discuss practical strategies to drive productivity and employment growth.

“The innovative training programs in both PNG and Vanuatu will help young people make that first step into employment and help future leaders in industry progress down the path towards workplace leadership,” said Ms Lambert.

In Vanuatu, the project involved job readiness training for new entrants to the workforce, a pilot program to provide training for workplace mentors and trainers for existing hotel workers, and international workshops to improve social dialogue in the tourism sector and to link farmers with workers to create additional employment opportunities.

In Papua New Guinea, the project included pilot training sessions in stevedoring based on the Australian Training Framework (which the PNG Government has committed to register as standard and mandatory), a feasibility study and workshops for a national truck driving school and a truck driving standard that will now be developed.

The two year project was implemented by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and funded by the Australian Government through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) and the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU) delivered the project and today expressed appreciation for the support they received from the Department of Employment at a meeting with Employment Minister Eric Abetz.

ILO Director of the Office for Pacific Island Countries, David Lamotte, welcomed the joint efforts of Australian unions and employer groups.

“The Australian social partners worked closely with their counterparts in Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea to put in place initiatives to create frameworks for employment creation,” said Mr Lamotte.

ACTU Contact: Carla De Campo, 0410 579 575 or Kara Douglas, 0418 793 885

ACCI Contact: Margaret Creswell, 0439 429 259