



# Australia and the Caribbean Partners in Development

It has been two years since Australia announced its commitment to stronger relations with the Caribbean region, including a portfolio of development assistance worth 60 million Australian dollars for the period 2010-2014. Australia's assistance focuses on areas where Australia has experience, expertise and credibility that match the needs of the Caribbean. It also complements the work of partner governments and other development actors.

So what is Australia's assistance doing in the Caribbean? Australia's development assistance portfolio focuses on three pillars: climate change and disaster risk reduction, economic resilience, and linkages between people and institutions. It emphasises partnerships with key regional institutions and the development of strong people-to-people linkages.



As we celebrate Australia Day 2012, it is our pleasure to renew our commitment to supporting the development of the Caribbean region based on the priorities identified by the people of the Caribbean. Our ties with the Caribbean transcend our rich sporting heritage and serve to strengthen our warm bilateral relations. As our partnership progresses it is our hope that our shared knowledge and experiences benefit not only the recipients directly, but that the underlying linkages established through our aid program also build enduring bridges between the people of the Caribbean and the Pacific.



**Philip Kentwell,**  
Australian High Commissioner



HE Philip Kentwell, Australian High Commissioner (left) and Hannah Bleby, First Secretary – Development, Australian Agency for International Development (right) with Australia Awards scholars from Jamaica.



CCCCC and SPREP representatives seal their partnership with a handshake



Salt water reverse osmosis system in Bequia



YUTE participant at work in Hope Gardens, Jamaica

## Australia in the Caribbean Making a difference

Australia has invested in projects that have already made a difference in the lives of the people of the Caribbean.

### Some highlights include:

Since 2010, Australia has granted 49 scholarships to eligible citizens from the region to pursue post-graduate studies in Australia. Their fields of study align with the Caribbean's priority development areas as well as Australia's areas of expertise and include environmental education; renewable energy; social development; geographic systems and land management; sports management; forensic science; international, customs and revenue relations and public administration.

Australia is committed to providing support to the international community in times of disaster. In 2010 Australia was among the first to respond to Haiti's earthquake of 12 January 2010 providing \$24 million, including \$10 million in emergency assistance to support relief efforts in the immediate aftermath and \$14 million to help address early recovery and reconstruction needs. Australia continues to tangibly demonstrate its support for the plight of Haiti through various funding initiatives, including reducing the spread of cholera, improving the quality and supply of water to affected communities,

facilitating international coordination on reconstruction, and providing support to Haiti's medical system as well as CARICOM's broader work in Haiti.

In May 2011, Australia sponsored the participation of a large Caribbean contingent to the Caribbean-Pacific Lessons Learned Conference on Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction in Samoa. This conference brought together policymakers and technical experts to share and synthesise lessons learned from climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction across the Pacific, the Caribbean and the Indian Ocean. The four-day conference culminated in the signing of a memorandum of understanding to enhance collaboration on environmental issues between the Pacific Regional Environmental Programme (SPREP) and the Caribbean Community Climate Change Center (CCCCC).

Australia has provided assistance through the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency for the rehabilitation of the Canaries Slow Sand Filter Structure and Grounds in St. Lucia following Hurricane Tomas in 2010. The installation of a 6" PVC Raw Water Transmission Line traversing the distance from the Water Intake to the Slow Sand Filter provides the 7,500 residents of the Canaries area with access to approximately 200,000 gallons of potable water per day.

Due to its size and geology, Bequia in St. Vincent and the Grenadines has no surface water and very limited ground water. Until very recently fresh water resource has been a major issue both for the local populace and tourism-related yachting industry in Bequia. Today, through support from Australia and other donors, the 4,874 residents of Bequia are benefitting from a salt water reverse osmosis (SWRO) system that utilizes renewable photo-voltaic energy to produce potable water that exceeds the previous standards, both in cost and quality. The system, established by the Caribbean Community Climate Change Center, is being powered by renewable energy and the excess power it produces is sold to the national utility, which will provide the resources to make the system sustainable in the long-term.

The Youth Upliftment through Employment (YUTE) program was designed and coordinated by the Private Sector Organisation of Jamaica to help disengaged youth of eight garrison communities in Kingston. Developed with funding from Australia and other donors, YUTE is a two-year pro-active program that zeroes in on some of the root causes of violence and unemployment among young people, improving their chances for employment through mentorship in trades and professions, as well as in personal life skills. YUTE differs from other youth programs in Jamaica in that it directly targets 2,200 unattached youth and is private-sector driven.