

# Japan-funded projects deliver real benefits to Malaita communities

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THE Japanese Embassy in Solomon Islands early this week organised a media tour to five Japanese government-funded project sites in Malaita Province.

The tour, held from February 18th to 20th, was led by Ambassador H.E Keiichi Higuchi and officials from the Japanese Embassy office based in Honiara.

It aimed to provide the media with a better understanding of Japan's development cooperation and ongoing support to the people of Solomon Islands and Malaita province.

The five project sites visited were the Kilu'ufi Hospital Improvement Project, Auki Market and Auki Wharf, the Solomon Islands Interlocking Block Pavement (SIIBP) Project at Auki Community High School, the Falake Forestry Project, and a Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) programme at Auki Primary School.

Japan is a long-time development partner of Solomon Islands and has funded numerous projects across the country, including in Malaita Province.

This is the first time a media tour of Japanese Government-funded projects has been held in the

province.

The media team comprised Mary Manelegua of the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC), Emma Komasi of Martin Tavuli News, Roderick Desuri of Islands Sun Newspaper, and Solomon Lofana of the Solomon Star.

In 2023, the Government of Japan provided SBD120 million under Japan's Grant Aid programme through JICA for the Kilu'ufi Hospital Improvement Project.

In March 2010, Japan also donated SBD50 million under its Grant Aid programme for the construction of the Auki Market and Jetty, facilities that are now widely used and benefiting the people of Malaita and other parts of Solomon Islands.

The Japanese Government further funded a pilot Solomon Islands Interlocking Block Pavement (SIIBP) project.

In Malaita Province, a 33.5-metre road using interlocking block pavement was constructed at the Auki Community High School drive-in area.

Japan also supported the Falake Forest Resource Management Project, which has been described as a success, with communities continuing to benefit from its outcomes.



Members of the mainstream media, together with the team from the Japanese Embassy, pose for a group photo after a site visit to the new Kilu'ufi Hospital improvement project.

Islands Sun reporter Roderick Desuri described the tour as a valuable opportunity to visit Japanese-funded project sites in Malaita Province.

He said the tour allowed him to learn more about both completed and ongoing Japanese-supported projects in the province.

Mr Desuri added that it was a great opportunity to interview key stakeholders, including hospital officials involved in the new Kilu'ufi Hospital Improvement Project, the Malaita Provincial Premier, school leaders, and community representatives.

"It was a great opportunity

for me to take time out to visit some of the Japanese-funded projects in Malaita Province," he said.

Mr Desuri thanked the Japanese Embassy for providing the opportunity for the media to visit some of its funded projects in the province.