



PRIME MINISTER

Message from Australia's Prime Minister

On behalf of all Australians, I join all Papua New Guineans in celebrating the 50th anniversary of your independence – a truly momentous day for a proud nation.

Fifty years ago, black, red and gold flags rose over Port Moresby's Independence Hill for the first time, as the songs of 800 languages rang out among the kundu drums and garamuts.

Your new flag took the place of the Australian flag. As your first Governor General Sir John Guise made clear at the time, our flag was lowered, not torn down – in a sign of the shared history and deep friendship that bind us.

Australia will always be proud of the role we played in the events that led to 16 September, 1975. As my predecessor, Gough Whitlam, wrote:

“If history were to obliterate the whole of my public career, save my contribution to the independence of a democratic PNG, I should rest content.”

But we also know your independence was not Australia's gift to give, it was Papua New Guinea's right to realise. It was your dream and you worked together to make it real.

As the late Grand Chief Sir Michael Somare said, independence was the achievement of a young nation “[taking] possession of the prize which marks our people's determination and hard work.”

Today, we see a nation that continues to be defined by these qualities, and confidently forged a path for itself. As partners, we work together to fulfil Papua New Guinea's aspirations for a stronger and more prosperous future. As mates, we will always be there for each other when times are tough.

Papua New Guinea and Australia's ties are unique and they have become more and more interlinked over the past half century. Our cooperation across infrastructure, development, defence and security is some of the closest between any nations, and is supported by strong economic and cultural connections.

We also share a desire to foster mutually beneficial inclusive economic growth, build critical infrastructure, and boost trade and investment between our nations. In both our nations, monuments honour the service and sacrifice our people have made together in the cause of peace and we continue to work together – as free and proud democracies – to promote a safe, stable and prosperous region.

As my friend Prime Minister Marape likes to say, Australia and Papua New Guinea are joined at the hip. I have no doubt the close bonds we share – as friends, neighbours and strategic partners – will hold us both in good stead in the years and decades ahead.

Happy Golden Jubilee, Papua New Guinea! Australia looks forward to walking with you side by side, step by step – as a partner and equal – for another 50 years, and beyond.

Yumi stap wantaim.

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP
Prime Minister of Australia
16 September 2025

