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GILBERT HELPS GROW GRASSROOTS RUGBY ACROSS THE PACIFIC

Gilbert Rugby has helped over 20,000 Pacific Island girls and boys get healthy and have fun playing Rugby in 2013, with the provision of hundreds of balls.

The sponsorship has seen hundreds of Gilbert Rugby balls distributed to schools and for use at community Rugby festivals in Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Solomon Islands as part of the AusAID-funded *Pacific in Union* program.

The *Pacific in Union* program is managed by Australian Rugby Union (ARU) in partnership with the International Rugby Board, Australian Sports Commission and Pacific Island National Unions. As part of the Pacific Sports Partnerships program, one of AusAID's development-through-sport initiatives, it aims to use sport as a vehicle for promoting social development and participation across Pacific Island communities.

Jon Clarke, Gilbert Rugby Brand Manager, is pleased with the outcomes.

"The joint initiative between the ARU and Gilbert Rugby to support the *Pacific in Union* sport-for-development project is an extremely worthwhile one and it is very satisfying to know that we are helping grow Rugby at the grassroots level across the Pacific."

The *Pacific in Union* program includes teacher professional development, Rugby-themed classroom resources, field lesson plans, Rugby equipment for schools, Rugby coaching sessions, festivals of modified Rugby games, and ongoing competitions between schools and villages.

Warren Robilliard, *Pacific in Union* Manager at the ARU, knows how integral the Gilbert Rugby balls have been in staging successful Rugby festivals in the participating countries.

"When each country received their size three, four and five Gilbert Rugby balls with *Pacific in Union* logos embossed on them earlier this year, there were big smiles all round because of the impact they knew the balls would make in growing participation."

Mr Robilliard said, "On behalf of the *Pacific in Union* program we would like to officially thank Gilbert Rugby for their generous offer of helping develop Rugby at the grassroots in the Pacific."



ENDS

Jocelyn Elliott | Pacific in Union Coordinator | Australian Rugby Union Ltd
Jocelyn.Elliott@rugby.com.au | **M** +61 405 121 240 | **W** www.rugby.com.au/News/PacificinUnion.aspx

An initiative of the Australian Government, Australian Rugby Union and International Rugby Board

