



GAWAD KALINGA
AUSTRALIA

-MEDIA RELEASE-

GAWAD KALINGA WELCOMES AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT FUNDING

The Australian Government has provided a \$1 million grant to assist Gawad Kalinga (GK) in the Philippines to provide shelter and livelihood support to those affected by super Typhoon Yolanda.

GK Executive Director Luis Oquinena today said that the funding will be directed to the construction of 250 houses in Palo, Leyte and also help several hundred fisherfolk in that area.

“Thousands of families have been left without shelter but thanks to the generosity of the Australian people and the Australian Government, GK will provide safe shelter for 250 families.

“The houses will be single-storey, row houses with a total floor area of 25sqm and will be built outside of the government-mandated restricted area from the coastline.

“And the house will feature the trademark GK rainbow colours.” Mr Oquinena said.

As well as the construction of the 250 homes, GK will also provide 150 fishing boats (bancas).

“According to preliminary assessments by the Philippines’ Department of Agriculture, small-scale fishers were the worst affected when the typhoon tore through the *Visayas*.” *he said*.

“Providing fishing boats will have a very positive impact on the livelihoods of hundreds of families.

“We look forward to inviting Foreign Affairs Minister, Julie Bishop to visit the village once it is completed. I am sure all Australians will be very pleased and impressed with their investment in Palo.” *he said*.

GKA Chair, Andrew Chalk also welcomed the Australian Government's decision to partner with GK.

“Since its establishment in 2003, GK has been at the front-line of disaster relief and rebuilding efforts.

“Their world-renowned humanitarian work has now been recognised by the Australian Government.

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“The Australian Government partnership with GK will also give the Australian branch a huge boost to continue and expand our work and activities.” Mr Chalk said.

GKA will meet in Melbourne in early March to develop a strategy to enhance the funding provided by the Australian Government.

“There is so much more to do in and around Palo. The farming community has especially been greatly impacted upon.

“GKA plan to raise further funds and encourage Australians to travel to the Philippines to volunteer at the GK village in Palo.

“We will send our first volunteers in April and May as part of the annual Bayani Challenge which this year is expected to draw over 1,000,000 volunteers to support projects in over 12 provinces”. Mr Chalk said.

GK in Australia plans to raise money to target the following projects:-

- Bayan-anihan program (to help affected farmers whose crops were destroyed).
 - Rebuild the local school (cost \$40,000).
 - Community centre.
 - Assist families with packages that will cover health insurance, education support, values formation and skills training (\$150 per family). This will be a recurring program for the next three years and GKA plans to target 250 families.
- Water System, for the community (currently they are served only by wells).

Ends.....February 2014

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