

# Oceania Weightlifting Federation

## Latest News

August 2009

### **It was simply sensational.**



The Oceania Weightlifting Institute accommodation at night



The Institute training halls

Well, it did happen. In New Caledonia, on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009, the new building specifically constructed to cater for the Oceania Weightlifting Institute program, as well as house the Oceania and Commonwealth headquarters, was officially opened by Monsieur Philippe Gomez, President of the New Caledonia Government, Monsieur Eric Gay Mayor of the City of Mont Dore and H.E. Marcus Stephen, President of the Republic of Nauru and President of the Oceania Weightlifting Federation.



(The cutting of the ribbon at the main entrance by Monsieur Pierre Frogier, Deputy of the Republic of France, Monsieur Phillip Gomez, President of New Caledonia Government, the Mr Ma Wenguang, IWF General Secretary, His Excellency Marcus Stephen, OWF President, Monsieur Ronal Frere OWF Vice President, and the Mayor of the City of Mont Dore Monsieur Eric Gay.)

The relocation of the Oceania Institute to New Caledonia originated in 2007, after a number of meetings between the New Caledonia Minister for Sport, Le Comité Territorial Olympique et Sportif (CTOS) Mr. Ronald Frere the President of New Caledonia Weightlifting, the NC 2011 Pacific Games Organizing Committee, and the OWF General Secretary, Paul Coffa, who created the Institute program back in 2002 in Sigatoka, Fiji. At the conclusion of these meetings, it was decided to relocate the Institute program and in February 2008, the Institute program commenced in New Caledonia. Temporary facilities were made available until the Institute building was completed.

It took almost 12 months to complete the new facility and on Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> August, it was officially opened. 250 guests attended, amongst them included Heads of State and Government Ministers of the different Pacific Island nations, local government officials including Monsieur Pierre Frogier, Deputy of the Republic of France and President of the South Province, Monsieur Maurice Ponga the former Minister for Sport of New Caledonia and now Member of the European Government, the current Minister for Sport for New Caledonia, the President and Board members of the Le Comité Territorial Olympique et Sportif (CTOS), the

President and Board members of the NC 2011 Pacific Games Organizing Committee, the Secretary General and the CEO of the Pacific Games Council plus many other distinguished guests.

The IWF weightlifting personalities who traveled to New Caledonia for this special occasion were Mr. Ma Wenguang the General Secretary of the IWF and President of the Weightlifting Association of the People's Republic of China, his personal secretary Ms. Wang Yan who was the Competition Manager for weightlifting at the Beijing Olympics. Mr. Sam Coffa, the Vice President of the IWF, Mr. Nicu Vlad also Vice President of the IWF, the President of the European Weightlifting Federation, Dr. Antonio Urso, many times world champion Mr. Blagoi Blagoev, Mr. Matthew Curtain, London 2012 Weightlifting Competition Manager, and Ms. Reiko Chinen from Japan representing the 2016 Tokyo Bid.



Two great friends, His Excellency Marcus Stephen with Sam Coffa.



The unveiling of the plaque.

Mr. Ma Wenguang, was extremely impressed and stated that the Institute is unique in its operation in the world of weightlifting, is a concept of great forward thinking, and is a model that other continents should try to emulate. In the same manner the European President, Dr. Antonio Urso, was equally impressed and he believes that a regional concept such as this will not only develop weightlifters in the region but also promote the sport of weightlifting in a professional manner.



The main training hall has 18 platforms.



The hall prepared for the Opening Ceremony.

The Institute facilities includes a main training hall with 18 platforms, a second training hall which includes 10 platforms plus general weight training equipment, changing facilities for men and women, weigh-in rooms, doping control room, offices, and reception area. The accommodation area includes twelve rooms with en-suite facilities catering for 24 athletes, a large dining room, television room, kitchen facilities, utilities room, meeting room and offices for the Oceania and Commonwealth headquarters.



Dr. Urso is talking to Mr Pierre Frogier, Deputy of the Republic of France and President of the South Province together with Reiko Chinen and Paul Coffa.

It is interesting that already quite a number of countries outside of the Oceania region have expressed interest in training at the Institute here in New Caledonia.

Finally what a great achievement and what a great day the opening ceremony was for Monsieur Ronald Frere, the President of New Caledonia Weightlifting, OWF Vice President and Executive Board Member of the IWF.

He was able to see this dream come true in New Caledonia within a short period of time. An institute building, which is unique in this part of the world, in fact unique at continental level for the sport of weightlifting. On behalf of the Oceania Weightlifting Federation and the Commonwealth Weightlifting Federation, we acknowledge Ronald's tremendous enthusiasm and contribution to the sport.

You are welcome to visit the IWF website on [www.iwf.net](http://www.iwf.net) It carries a very good story on the institute and many photos. Also it is interesting that the Institute Opening made the sports news of the Chinese Olympic Committee website on the following link [http://en.olympic.cn/news/sports\\_news/2009-08-05/1852840.html](http://en.olympic.cn/news/sports_news/2009-08-05/1852840.html)

Photos courtesy of Mrs Tulia Frere, Jamie Coffa, Dr Antonio Urso, Ms Reiko Chinen and Ms Wang Yan.

**Paul Coffa MBE,  
OWF General Secretary**





Many weightlifting personalities were amongst the guests. Here we have Matthew Curtain, Blagoi Blagoev and Reiko Chinen.



The IWF General Secretary and Paul Coffa enjoying the view of New Caledonia.



His Excellency, Marcus Stephen, makes a speech during the Opening Ceremony with Ronald Frere translating in French.



Monsieur Phillip Gomez, and Monsieur Eric Gay, hold their recognition awards.



Ronal Frere welcomes H.E. Marcus Stephen on his arrival to the Institute.



VIP guests waiting for the opening speech.



Dr. Antonio Urso, President of the EWF, presents a gift to the President of the New Caledonia Government, Monsieur Philippe Gomez.



EWF President, Dr. Antonio Urso with IWF Vice Presidents Nicu Vlad and Sam Coffa. Also sitting is Mrs. Cristina Vlad.





**The IWF General Secretary Mr. Ma Wenguang together with H.E. Marcus Stephen and the EWF President Dr. Antonio Urso visited the Territorial Olympic Committee of New Caledonia. The President of CTOS, Mr. Charles Cali standing next to Mr. Ma Wenguang presented some gifts. Also in the center is Madame Pascale Bastien-Thiry, the President of the 2011 Pacific Games Organizing Committee.**



**IWF General Secretary, Mr. Ma Wenguang presented a magnificent gift to Paul Coffa in recognition of his outstanding efforts in establishing the Oceania Weightlifting Institute. The gift had a significant message from Hu Jin Tao the President of the People's Republic of China which reads in English "CHEER YOU UP" It's a weightlifting barbell encased in a glass frame.**



**Paul Coffa receives the key to the Institute from the President of CTOS, Monsieur Charles Cali, with Monsieur Ronald Frere and Monsieur Jean-Marc Domergue, General Secretary CTOS looking on.**



**His Excellency, Marcus Stephen with Paul Coffa present an award of recognition from the OWF to Monsieur Pierre Frogier, Deputy of the Republic of France.**



**Dr. Urso, Mr. Sam Coffa, Mr. Ma Wenguang, Mr Matthew Curtain and Ms. Reiko Chinen enjoy New Caledonia sights.**



**A relaxing afternoon after the opening ceremony for the IWF members at Paul Coffa's residence in New Caledonia.**



**Ronald Frere, the perfect host entertains his guests.**



**Seafood was never missed during the many functions.**



**IWF members spending a relaxing day on one of the beautiful islands of New Caledonia.**