



## Report to the Pacific Islands Forum on RAMSI activities

2012

### TRANSITION

1. Throughout 2012, RAMSI worked closely with the Solomon Islands Government (SIG) to implement plans and activities for transition across the mission's civilian, military and policing components. Each of the components underwent considerable change and is on target for a successful transition in July 2013. RAMSI's focus will shift to a regional policing mission.
2. Reforms were achieved across the civilian development programs including the economic and public sector governance and law and justice programs. Mechanisms were put in place to ensure the future sustainability of these programs as they shift to bilateral and other donors post July.
3. Planning for the Combined Task Force (CTF) military withdrawal, which will occur from mid-2013, commenced in 2012. The Participating Police Force (PPF) continued to work in partnership with the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF), strengthening the RSIPF as an institution by delivering an extensive program of capacity building.
4. A proactive outreach program combined with continuous community engagement improved public awareness of RAMSI's transition. Two visible signs of the changing nature of the mission included the withdrawal of New Zealand's final military platoon in late 2012 and the drawdown of RAMSI police personnel from provincial posts in accordance with the joint PPF/RSIPF Transition Strategy.
5. Targeted messaging on transition in local media, public seminars and the RAMSI travelling exhibition highlighted the positive gains made from RAMSI and outlined the next steps forward.

### LAW, ORDER AND JUSTICE

#### *RAMSI Participating Police Force*

6. The Participating Police Force (PPF) continued to work closely with the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) to achieve outcomes under the joint Transition Strategy 2011-2013. In particular, the PPF focused on reducing its security footprint and on increasing the RSIPF's institutional and personnel capacity.



7. A key achievement for the program in 2012 was the drawdown of PPF's full-time presence in all but three provincial posts. Provincial Mentoring Programs and logistics support were put in place for the Provincial Police Commanders, which allowed the RSIPF to take the lead in policing and increase its involvement with communities.
8. The RSIPF's capability continued to grow. This enabled it to successfully make progress with: the arrest of high profile criminal Stanley Gitoa; management of civil unrest within Gizo in late 2012; and operations around major public events, such as the Festival of the Pacific Arts, Oceania Football Confederation Nations Cup and the Royal Visit by The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge. Well-planned RSIPF responses ensured major events were held without incident. RSIPF effectively dealt with high profile criminal activities. This forged a greater level of public confidence in the RSIPF and improved community relationships.
9. The review of the *Police Act 1972* was finalised in 2012, with the *Police Bill 2012* envisaged to be tabled in Parliament in early 2013. The new Act will provide a solid and sustainable foundation to support the RSIPF, strengthening their capacity to maintain law and order and to ensure community safety.
10. Train the trainer activities continued to build the capacity of local systems, giving the RSIPF the ability to independently take forward training introduced by the PPF. As a result of these courses, RSIPF trainers (supported by the PPF) have: trained 580 members in Operational Safety Training; trained 316 members in Public Order Management; and delivered three driver training courses. This has improved the RSIPF's capacity to respond to security incidents as set out in the Joint Transition Strategy 2011-2013.
11. The PPF has promoted gender equality within Solomon Islands and the RSIPF on a number of fronts. This included advocacy on issues such as influence on laws and policies, social mobilisation including community awareness, and behavioural change. Specific examples include:
  - review of family violence policy in line with the *Family Violence Act*;
  - the Family Violence and Community Policing units have undertaken a number of community awareness programs on relevant legislation and policies;
  - continued support to the Christian Care Centre (support centre for victims of crime);
  - inclusion of the RSIPF in the World Vision Channels of Hope Project which uses community and faith leaders to tackle some of the origins of beliefs surrounding domestic violence, and the status of women.
12. The RSIPF has one of the highest rates of female participation across SIG agencies with approximately 16 per cent of the RSIPF workforce. Women also occupy a number of senior positions, with the first female Assistant Commissioner recently promoted into the position.
13. PPF support to critical infrastructure such as housing has actively addressed sustainability issues, minimising travel time and transportation costs for the RSIPF



and allowing for a more flexible workforce. In 2012, the Police Accommodation Project completed the delivery of 74 houses under Phase 1 of the project, as well as commencing the construction of the final 60 houses to be delivered under Phase 2. This Phase, to be completed by April 2013, will complete the housing component of the project and will have delivered 134 new houses to the RSIPF.

14. In 2012, the PPF also refurbished four Provincial Police Stations and Posts (Lata, Kira Kira, Tingoa and Avu Avu) and constructed three new Provincial Police Headquarters at Buala, Gizo and Henderson; and commenced construction of a fourth at Taro. These facilities provide the infrastructure necessary for the RSIPF to perform its role independent of the PPF.
15. The PPF also commenced a staged and sustainable approach to reducing the RSIPF's reliance on PPF resourcing and logistical support. This will be achieved through continued support to RSIPF Finance, to ensure SIG is encouraged to increase its financial support to the RSIPF.
16. The joint PPF and RSIPF mobility project has seen the first use of shared deeds of funding. These have enabled the RSIPF to use SIG procurement and financial systems for the first time since the inception of RAMSI for the delivery of PPF projects and objectives. This has enabled the delivery of 25 vehicles and 10 short range maritime vessels, which will help the RSIPF deliver policing services more effectively across Solomon Islands.
17. The RSIPF IT Infrastructure project has provided a local area network capability for buildings at Rove, Central Station, the Professional Standards and Internal Investigation Department and Henderson Station to deliver a RSIPF networked IT environment. These locations will be interconnected via the SIG whole-of-government computer system.
18. The Communications Upgrade project has seen the installation of High Frequency data/voice networks to 16 provincial posts. This has given the RSIPF the first data transfer capability between Honiara and the provincial posts.

### ***Combined Task Force***

19. Throughout 2012, the Combined Task Force (CTF) continued to support RAMSI by providing on-call back up support to RAMSI PPF. Whilst not being required to deploy in support of any PPF operation which is an indication of an improved security environment, the CTF has maintained such capability as it transitioned to a lower public profile ahead of a planned withdrawal in the second half of 2013.
20. The final rotation of a New Zealand platoon took place in November 2012. The CTF will maintain its current numbers until 31 July 2013.

### ***RAMSI Law and Justice Program***

21. In 2012, the RAMSI Law and Justice Program continued with structural and operational reforms in preparation for transition. The program continued to target



activities to support effective justice and correctional services in Solomon Islands independent of RAMSI.

22. Discussions with SIG provided opportunities to confirm the most appropriate type of future support to the sector. These included high level “Dovetail Dialogues” and other consultations with Solomon Islands Ministers and officials. The program worked closely with SIG to ensure the smooth transfer of the future Solomon Islands Justice Program to the Solomon Islands-Australia Partnership for Development from July 2013.
23. With support of the program, in a landmark court case, in October 2012 the Solomon Islands High Court ruled that marital rape is no longer acceptable under Solomon Islands law. The case will have a significant and positive impact for Solomon Islands women.
24. In 2012, case disposals in the High Court decreased with 347 civil cases and 49 criminal cases. In part this likely reflected the fact that many matters were withdrawn or dismissed following a case review undertaken by the Registrar in 2011. However, inefficient listing practices and cases not being able to proceed at their set date also likely contributed to the drop in disposal rates.
25. The Magistrates Court had a challenging year. Issues included dissatisfaction with pay and conditions, difficulties in filling vacant Magistrate positions, and absenteeism of key staff. RAMSI’s Law and Justice program continued to work with SIG to resolve issues affecting the Magistracy.
26. 2012 saw the accountable cash grant working group – comprised of SIG and RAMSI Law and Justice program representatives – begin to demonstrate value. The group has helped improve collective understanding of the SIG’s financial and human resources systems. This in turn has enabled more effective use of donor funds to complement SIG funding. It further improved budgeting, reporting and cooperation between the Ministry of Justice, National Judiciary, Corrections and the Ministry of Finance and Treasury.
27. Work commenced on the development of family protection policy and the drafting of a Family Protection Bill. The Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs and the Ministry for Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs are jointly undertaking this project, supported by advisers.
28. The Family Protection Unit in the Public Solicitor’s Office, supported by RAMSI, opened in March 2012 to provide advice and support in family law, child custody and protection, and domestic violence matters. The Unit is also undertaking awareness-raising, policy development, advocacy and community legal education on issues of family protection.
29. Correctional Services Solomon Islands (CSSI) saw many achievements in 2012 including: a continuing reduction in technical advisers; the completion of an influential gender audit; improvements in compliance with legislation, policies, procedures and orders; and increased training opportunities. The average length on



remand has dropped from 8.2 to 7.2 months. The CSSI Women's Network is now functioning without direct adviser assistance.

30. Construction of a correctional centre in Gizo will be a focus for the program during 2013. The operating correctional centres in Auki, Rove and Tetere complied with international standards and the number of incidents remained consistent with previous years. However, the absconion of three prisoners from the Rove Correctional Centre resulted in a suspension of some rehabilitation programs, and inspections at Auki revealed some serious deficiencies in asset maintenance arrangements.
31. With support from RAMSI, CSSI has implemented programs for prisoners, with dedicated rehabilitation and behaviour change programs for perpetrators of violence. The program will continue to focus its support on succession planning, including through the provision of advisors to work with the Executive and the human resources teams.
32. Gender mainstreaming continues to be a focus for CSSI. Female officers now make up 16.4 per cent of all staff and female officers currently hold 7 per cent of management level positions and 14.6 per cent of leadership positions.
33. The program approached gender equality at a policy and program level. It supported policy advice and legal reforms, and women's participation in agencies such as CSSI. The program recruited an Elimination of Violence Against Women Policy Officer at the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs and also funded a Women's Law Manual. The manual will include discussions on legal rights of women in Solomon Islands, covering matters such as inheritance, separation, marriage, violence, sexual assault and child custody and maintenance. The manual will be distributed in 2013 to women's organisations, advocacy groups and welfare services and will also be available online.

## **ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE**

34. RAMSI's Economic Governance program continued to support the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MoFT) and other key agencies to deliver an extensive range of economic and fiscal policy reforms and improve financial management, budgetary and technical systems.
35. In 2012, as part of RAMSI's transition, the economic governance and machinery of government programs commenced design processes to transition key program elements into the Economic and Public Sector Governance Program (SIGOV). SIGOV will fall under the longer-term Solomon Islands-Australia Partnership for Development, which will further strengthen coordination, delivery and effectiveness across SIG central agencies.
36. With support of the program, macroeconomic indicators (economic growth and GDP per capita) and IMF forward estimates continued to improve in 2012. This pointed to the effectiveness of the program in stabilising the cash, budget and debt position in Solomon Islands.



37. The program continued to support policy engagement through the Core Economic Working Group, facilitating enhanced engagement between line agencies and the Ministry of Finance and Treasury, and improving implementation arrangements with other development partners.
38. Despite a weaker international economic environment resulting in softer commodity prices, SIG finances during 2012 were reasonably stable. Cash balance/buffer targets were just met by the end of the year. Real GDP growth in 2012 is estimated to be 5.75 per cent, moderating from an estimated 10.6 per cent growth in 2011.
39. Government debt decreased from SBD 1,190.8 million at end 2011 to an expected SBD 1,061.5 million at end 2012. Debt to GDP ratio fell from 19 per cent to 14 per cent over 2012 - well below the acceptable benchmark of 30 per cent.
40. Since the start of RAMSI, SIG public finances have improved substantially. This has been a result of almost a decade of fiscal discipline and control and no new borrowing. Domestic sourced revenue growth in 2012 was just under 13 per cent (preliminary actuals) compared with 2011. While total SIG revenue is continuing to grow, collections were well below the overly optimistic 2012 Budget forecasts and trending towards a more normalised growth rate following an exceptional period of growth.
41. With the public debt to GDP ratio expected to fall below 15 per cent of GDP at the end of 2012, a new Debt Management Strategy was put in place allowing for limited new borrowing for high quality infrastructure projects. The new Strategy and procedures were developed and endorsed by Cabinet and Honiara Club Members, paving the way for prudent new borrowing for high quality social and economic infrastructure investment and the first sovereign borrowing in over a decade. This represented a substantial achievement.
42. In 2012, under the Debt Management Strategy, a loan of USD10.5 million and grant of USD7.5 million from the Asian Development Bank was agreed for a new underwater fibre communication cable. This is expected to deliver high speed internet at affordable prices and significantly contribute to economic opportunities for Solomon Islanders. In early 2013, risks to the project, beyond SIG's control, were identified. This may result in some delays.
43. The year also saw significant advances in business regulatory reform, evidenced by an improvement of 7 places in World Bank 2012 *Doing Business Rankings*, and an improvement of 11 places in 2011.
44. In 2012, important legislative reforms on the exemptions process for tax and duties were achieved. Efforts continued to improve public financial management, debt reduction, and maintain financial stability. The program supported the review of the *Public Finance Act*. This new legislation will pave the way for clearer public financial management processes and reform. Changes to the *Central Bank of Solomon Islands Act*; the National Provident Fund legislation; and tax and duties exemption regulations were also supported through the program.



45. A new charter of accounts was introduced for the 2013 budget, and both the recurrent and development budgets were developed on the new budget system for the first time. While technical achievements, they are key steps in a long-term journey to improve budget-policy connection and improved budget control.
46. With assistance of the RAMSI-supported Economic Reform Unit, an agreement was reached between Solomon Islands Electricity Authority and the Solomon Islands Water Authority to settle the latter's outstanding electricity arrears.
47. The first ever Preferred Supplier Agreement was implemented for IT equipment. This has resulted in significant costs savings on IT equipment (around 30 per cent), and has also reduced opportunities for corruption as prices are pre-determined under the whole-of-government agreement.
48. In addition, there are other institutional level achievements which have strengthened the capacity of the Ministry of Finance and Treasury (MoFT). The program supported MoFT to fill 50 per cent of personnel vacancies and worked to embed the MoFT Executive more firmly in decision-making on the direction of the program.
49. There was a 78.6 per cent improvement in time to start a business between 2011 and 2012, from 42 days down to 9 days.
50. The program is also strengthening MoFT's capacity to engage in monitoring and evaluation using the Ministry's own systems. A monthly reporting and monitoring system against the Corporate Plan is now largely managed by Ministry staff requiring minimal direct input into the process by program advisers.
51. The program is working to embed MoFT management more firmly in the program's decision-making processes. In addition, the annual planning of program resources is starting to be undertaken in conjunction with MoFT planning cycles, with heads of divisions to be more involved in resource allocation decisions. The program is also increasingly using local systems. During 2012 approximately \$4.5 million was channelled through direct accountable cash grants to SIG, managed using MoFT systems.
52. The program supported gender quality in a range of ways in 2012. The State Owned Enterprise (SOE) reform program included explicit gender objectives, including encouraging women's representation on SOE boards. Partner organisations are supported to pursue specific initiatives to ensure women are able to support good governance of organisations. In addition, the National Financial Inclusion Taskforce continued to target the extension of financial services and financial literacy training to women in Solomon Islands. On a practical level, MoFT encouraged all selection panels to be gender balanced and advisers encouraged staff to attend workshops concerning gender equality.

## **MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT**

53. In 2012, the Machinery of Government program made incremental but important gains. It focused on supporting government administration that was strategic,



professional, transparent and accountable in the delivery of services and priority programs.

54. Improved program effectiveness was achieved largely due to the roll-out of the new Implementation Strategies developed in mid-late 2011 – as part of RAMSI’s transition process – for the Public Sector Improvement Program, Accountability Program, Electoral System Strengthening Program and Women in Government Program.
55. Under these strategies, RAMSI has continued to shift program emphasis from legislative and technical reform in individual agencies to broader SIG operational capacity, effectiveness and accountability. The program has also increasingly linked support to SIG’s own priorities and reform agenda. These efforts have enabled SIG institutions to better engage with their own longer-term governance challenges.
56. The Electoral System Strengthening Program worked with the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission on capacity building, election management and preparations for the 2013 voter registration exercise. With continued donor support, the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission is tracking well in their preparations for the 2014 national elections.
57. With support of the program, the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission has grown in strength, almost doubling its staff. Activities commenced for the Voter Registration Plan and Voter Registration Assessment Centres project in late 2012. Preparations are on track for voter registration in May/June 2013. The voter roll has not been updated since 2009 and a new roll will improve the integrity of national elections.
58. The program is repositioning its support by engaging in a multi-donor approach, led by the United Nations. Close coordination with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on electoral support occurred throughout the year, with plans to fund a UNDP-managed multilateral electoral support program in 2013.
59. Two successful by-elections were conducted in 2012 (North Malaita and East Are Are), with post-election feedback indicating a good standard of election management.
60. A major Ministry of Public Service restructure created new core service functions, redesigned roles/positions, and set new policies, systems and processes for administering new functions and roles. The transition of 84 officers into the new structure occurred from December 2012.
61. Greater clarity of functional relationships between the Public Service Commission and Ministry of Public Service has resulted in improved compliance and more effective human resources services support to the wider public service.





62. The 2011 Office of the Auditor General Annual Report and three ‘special’ Office of the Ombudsman reports in education and municipal service provider were tabled in Parliament in November 2012.
63. The Office of the Auditor General completed all statutory required audit reports, and strengthened its performance auditing. This has included undertaking particularly challenging performance audits, for example on constituency development funds and scholarships.
64. Throughout 2012 a high-level regional mentor supported the Public Service Commission Chairman to re-introduce performance agreements for Permanent Secretaries.
65. Contracting and performance management responsibilities shifted from the Office of the Prime Minister to the Public Service Commission. With all vacant positions to be advertised for open competition for the first time, this is an important step in removing potential political interference in public service recruitment processes.
66. A pilot ‘twinning’ initiative was successfully implemented with the Solomon Islands Ombudsman’s Office and the Australian Commonwealth Ombudsman leading to incremental but important improvements in case management processes.
67. The Institute of Public Administration and Management trained 1,374 SIG participants in 2012 (495, 36 per cent females), Honiara: 538 (317, 59 per cent females), Provinces: 836 (242, 29 per cent females).
68. The program continued to promote gender equality in 2012 with the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs establishing a new Policy Coordination Unit, to strengthen its still nascent policy role and focus. The ministry also conducted a gender awareness session for all SIG Ministries Human Resource Managers. All ministries developed a Gender Profile, providing baseline data for subsequent initiatives.

## **PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

69. The *RAMSI: A History in Pictures* photographic exhibition toured New Zealand in March 2012 and Australia in July 2012. The Australian launch was hosted at Parliament House by the Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs, the Hon Richard Marles and was attended by Solomon Islands Prime Minister, the Hon Gordon Darcy Lilo. The exhibition showcases the history, people and places that have shaped RAMSI over nearly a decade. It has now been seen by more than 25,000 people.
70. In November 2012, Solomon Islands Minister of Police, National Security and Correctional Services, the Hon Chris Laore, visited Guadalcanal Beach Resort (GBR) for a RAMSI Participating Police Force capability display. This coincided with the withdrawal of the final New Zealand Combined Task Force platoon. The visit was covered well by local and New Zealand media. Targeted messaging reassured



communities ahead of transition that the PPF would remain in Solomon Islands to continue strengthening the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force.

71. RAMSI Community outreach in 2012 focused on messaging explaining RAMSI's transition. Twenty-two outreach consultations were held with local communities in and around Honiara with one being held in the provinces. In addition, fifteen school forums were held with the senior classes of all secondary schools in Honiara.
72. Work commenced on a documentary and book to commemorate the ten year anniversary of RAMSI's partnership with Solomon Islands in July 2013. The documentary is aimed at young Solomon Islanders and will tell the story of the tensions and recovery following RAMSI's arrival. It will feature interviews with key players both past and present.
73. In 2012, RAMSI hosted an International Women's Day Breakfast for 250 local women from all walks of life. Each guest was gifted a copy of the RAMSI produced DVD *Mere Blo Iumi (Our Women)* featuring interviews with Solomon Islands women on matters of concern to women in the nation building process. The annual Special Coordinator's Award for Women was awarded to long standing champion of efficiency, transparency and accountability in the Public Service, Ms Ruth Liloqula.
74. Speeches have proven a useful vehicle to promote and build understanding of RAMSI's transition. In 2012, the Special Coordinator delivered three major speeches to key audiences:
  - *Eighth International Lessons Learned Conference*, Sydney. This conference also marked the last showing of the highly successful *RAMSI History in Pictures* exhibition
  - *Transition of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands* delivered to the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Program, at the Australian National University, Canberra
  - *RAMSI: The Next Four Years* at the 4<sup>th</sup> Australia-Solomon Islands Business Forum, Brisbane.
75. The Special Coordinator also delivered speeches marking the handing over of RAMSI funded and built provincial police headquarters to the RSIPF. These were delivered in Buala (August 2012), Gizo (November 2012), and Henderson (December 2012).
76. A number of radio promotions were implemented to support transition messaging. In August, RAMSI began a weekly talkback radio program, *Spotlight*, aimed at a younger demographic. It was designed to provide a medium for discussion of topical issues and current affairs by young Solomon Islanders. Topics included the court ruling banning marital rape, 'constituentisation' of Government spending and gun collection.
77. The long-running bi-weekly radio program Talking Truth continued with a focus on transition topics. These included several panel discussions comprised of senior SIG and RAMSI officials, and dealt with key aspects such as the planned military withdrawal and the SIG-RAMSI consultations on transition.



## OTHER COORDINATION

78. The RAMSI Triumvirate - comprised of the Special Coordinator, Nicholas Coppel, the SIG Permanent Secretary with responsibility for RAMSI, Jeffrey Kauha, and the Forum Representative for Solomon Islands, Sakiusa Rabuka – continued to meet approximately monthly during 2012 to discuss RAMSI’s transition, performance and engagement with SIG. The Triumvirate also met regularly with Solomon Islands Governor General, His Excellency Sir Frank Kabui GCMG CSI OBE.
79. Two high-level policy dialogue discussions between SIG Permanent Secretaries, Deputy Special Coordinator and RAMSI Principals took place in 2012. RAMSI continued to express its on-going willingness to continue policy dialogue in preparation for RAMSI’s transition. Throughout the year, the Special Coordinator met with Solomon Islands Prime Minister, the Honorable Gordon Darcy Lilo, ministers, and members of the opposition to discuss RAMSI’s transition.
80. High-level engagement with Pacific regional partners continued in 2012. Progress on RAMSI’s transition was discussed and endorsed at the Eighth Enhanced Consultative Mechanism Meeting and the Sixth Forum Ministerial Standing Committee on RAMSI which met in Honiara in May, and at the Forum Regional Security Committee Meeting held in Suva in June.
81. A number of senior ministers and officials visited the RAMSI headquarters in 2012, including:
- New Zealand’s Foreign Minister, the Hon Murray McCully, in January
  - Australia’s Governor-General, HE Ms Quentin Bryce AC CVO and the Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs and Foreign Affairs, the Hon Richard Marles, in April
  - Australia’s Defence Minister, the Hon Stephen Smith and Defence Secretary, Mr Duncan Lewis, in April
  - Australia’s Parliamentary Secretary for Pacific Island Affairs and Foreign Affairs, the Hon Richard Marles, in May and December
  - New Zealand’s Chief of Defence Force, Lieutenant General Rhys Jones, in June
  - Australia’s Acting Speaker of the House of Representatives, Ms Anna Burke MP and Mr David Elder, Deputy Clerk of the House of Representatives, in July
  - Australia’s Foreign Minister, Senator Bob Carr, in August
  - Australia’s Parliamentary Secretary for Defence, Senator David Feeney, in August
  - New Zealand’s Secretary of Defence, Mr John McKinnon, accompanied by Chief of Navy, Rear Admiral Tony Parr, in August
  - Australia’s Defence Force Chief of Joint Operations Command, LTGEN Ash Power, in September
  - United States of America’s Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Edgard Kagan, in August and November



- Solomon Islands Minister of Police, National Security and Correctional Services, the Hon Chris Laore, in November
- New Zealand's Defence Force Land Component Commander, Brigadier Mark Wheeler, in November
- Australia's Global Ambassador for Women and Girls, Ms Penny Williams, in December
- Papua New Guinea's Defence Force Chief of Logistics Colonel Carl Wrakonei, in December

