LOOKING BEYOND RAMSI

SOLOMON ISLANDERS’ PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR FUTURE

Proceedings of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
10th Anniversary Seminar
25 July 2013

Edited by Clive Moore

Honiara
Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands
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Contributors

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Nicholas Coppel, a senior career officer with Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), served as Special Coordinator to the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands from March 2011 until November 2013. He was previously Assistant Secretary, Pacific Regional and New Zealand Branch and Australia’s lead negotiator for the Pacific regional trade and economic integration agreement, known as PACER Plus.

Between 2006 and 2008 Mr Coppel was seconded to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet where he ran the branch responsible for the Pacific, Africa, Europe, the Middle East and the United Nations. Mr Coppel was Executive Director of DFAT’s Economic Analytical Unit from 2004 to 2006 where he led the research, writing and publication of books on economies and economic issues relevant to Australia’s trade and foreign policy interests. Publications included *Papua New Guinea: The Road Ahead* (2004) and *Solomon Islands: Rebuilding an Island Economy* (2004). Overseas, Mr Coppel has served as Deputy High Commissioner in Port Moresby and Deputy Head of Mission in Manila, with an earlier posting in Washington DC.

Mr Coppel holds a Bachelor of Economics from the Australian National University and a Master of Business Administration from London Business School.

Jude Solomon Devesi
Jude Solomon Devesi graduated with a Bachelor of Arts majoring in History/Politics and Economics in 2004 from the University of the South Pacific, and in 2005 received a Post-Graduate Diploma in Development Studies, also from USP. He is currently the Assistant Resident Representative (Programmes) for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Sub-Office in Solomon Islands. In his current role, he is responsible for managing and providing oversight to the UNDP Solomon Islands Programme, covering four main areas of
UNDP’s intervention in Solomon Islands, namely Democratic Governance, Poverty Reduction, Crisis Prevention and Recovery, and Environmental Sustainability. Before taking up this position, Mr Devesi was the Programme Analyst for the Governance Unit within UNDP, and was given responsibility for UNDP’s interventions in the area of democratic governance and human rights.

Prior to joining UNDP in 2009, Mr Devesi worked as a Committee and Research Officer of the National Parliament of Solomon Islands. He began his work with the National Parliament in February 2006 after he was recruited to the post of Induction and Training Coordinator and was responsible for the organization and delivery of induction programs for Members of the National Parliament. Mr Devesi is also currently serving as a board member of Transparency Solomon Islands (TSI) in the capacity of Vice-Chair. He was elected to the TSI board in 2012.

Sebastian Ilala
Sebastian Ilala currently works in his family company, Direct Management Limited, which is involved with the cocoa exporting trade to Asia. The business works closely with farmers in the provinces, with markets mainly coming from Guadalcanal, Makira, Western and Isabel Provinces. Previously he worked for the ANZ bank in Honiara, starting as a trainee manager, then was moved to project management, headed the Rural Banking Programme and finally became commercial manager. He attended King George VI Secondary School in Honiara and was a successful recipient of the Aoteroa Scholarship to complete year 13 in Hamilton, New Zealand at the Hamilton Boys High School before going on to his Bachelor of Management Studies majoring in Accounting and Finance at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand. Highly involved within the community, Mr Ilala is a past president of the Rotary Club of Honiara and a current member on the Board. He currently sits on the Solomon Airlines Limited Board and also on the Solomon Island Electricity Authority Board.

Genesis Eddie Kofana
Genesis Eddie Kofana currently works in the Office of Prime Minister and Cabinet, but was previously Director of the Land Research and Policy Unit in the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Survey. A journalist by trade, he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Southern Queensland in 1996, then took up postgraduate studies at the University of South Pacific in 2003, completing a Postgraduate Diploma in Development Studies in 2004, and a Master’s Program with the same university, focusing on land issues in Solomon Islands. As part of his thesis he worked with the Solomon Islands Institutional Land Administration Project (SIILAP) project doing pilot studies on recording at Auluta Basin, Malaita Province, working closely with the secretary of Tribal Land Unit.
Gordon Darcy Lilo
Hon. Gordon Darcy Lilo has represented the Gizo/Kolombangara electorate in Western Province in the National Parliament since 2001. He holds a Bachelor of Economics from the University of Papua New Guinea and a Postgraduate Diploma and Masters of Development Studies and Administration from the Australian National University. Before entering Parliament Mr Lilo was Under Secretary for Budget in the Ministry of Finance, Director of Energy in the Ministry for Mines, Deputy Head of the Policy Evaluation Unit in the Office of the Prime Minister, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Forestry, Environment and Conservation, and Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance. He has served as Minister for Planning (May to August 2006), Minister for Finance (September to November 2007), Minister for Justice and Legal Affairs (9 to 10 November 2007), Minister for Environment and Conservation (December 2007 to April 2010) and Minister for Finance and Treasury (August 2010 to November 2011). He was Leader of the Independent Group in Parliament 17 December 2001 to 4 April 2006 and was elected Prime Minister on 16 November 2011.

Clive Moore
Clive Moore, CSI, FAHA, is McCaughey Professor of Pacific and Australian History in the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics at The University of Queensland. His major publications have been on Australia’s Pacific Island immigrants, the Pacific labour reserve, Australian federation, masculinity and sexuality, New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands. Professor Moore is the author of Happy Isles in Crisis: The Historical Causes for a Failing State in Solomon Islands, 1998–2004 (2004) and editor of Tell It As It Is: Autobiography of Rt. Hon. Sir Peter Kenilorea, KBA, PC, Solomon Islands’ First Prime Minister (2008). Inaugural President of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Pacific Studies (2006–2010), in 2005 he received a Cross of Solomon Islands for his history work on Malaita Island. In 2011 he became a Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities.

Phillip Tagini,
Phillip Tagini, LLB, LLM (Investment Law), Diploma in Legal Practice (USP), PhD (Monash), was admitted to the Solomon Islands Bar Association and practiced in the Magistrate Court, High Court and Court of Appeals of the Solomon Islands. Dr Tagini worked as a general legal practitioner in Solomon Islands for five years before taking the office of Special Secretary to the Prime Minister in 2012. In his latter capacity, among other issues, he advises the government on mining law and policy.

Nanette Tutua
Nanette Tutua is the Managing Director for Zai na Tina (ZNT) Organic Center
at Burns Creek, Honiara. Ms Tutua holds a Certificate in Tropical Agriculture, a Diploma in Education, a Bachelor’s degree in Food and Nutrition and a Masters in Business Administration. The Center specializes in growing organic vegetables, fruits, spices and trial poultry for its manure use on the farm. The Center runs a seed bank of local and imported seeds. It also has a small flower section and markets its produce to targeted customers, but also to the public when it has a surplus.

Ms Tutua is also the Vice Chair for Kastom Gaden Association (KGA), a non-government organization that completes programs to strengthen food security and livelihoods, targeting people in the rural areas and low income earners in urban areas. Apart from Ms Tutua’s passion in agriculture, she is the owner of a timber industry company, Timol Timbers Limited, which encourages sustainable and responsible harvest of the forest. She also owns a small travel and transport company, a coconut oil company and a consulting company which together do consultancy work on forestry, environment and agriculture. Ms Tutua is a director of the Board of Solomon Islands Electricity Authority and is one of the four Commissioners in the Solomon Islands Public Service Commission.

**Nick Warner**

Nick Warner was appointed as the Director-General of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) on 17 August 2009. Prior to taking up this position he was the Secretary of Defence, a position he occupied from December 2006. Mr Warner has held a number of senior positions in his 30-year distinguished career of public service. Prior to taking up the position of Secretary of Defence, he was the Senior Adviser (International) to the Prime Minister (2005–2006). Mr Warner has previously held several senior management and policy positions with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). Overseas, Mr Warner has served as the first Special Coordinator of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (2003–2004); High Commissioner in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea (1999–2003); Ambassador in Tehran (1994–1997); Deputy Head of Mission in the Australian Permanent Mission to the Supreme National Council, Cambodia (1991–1993); Head of the Australian Liaison Office, Namibia (1989–1990); and in the Australian Liaison Office, Salisbury, Rhodesia. Mr Warner worked with the Office of National Assessment and the Joint Intelligence Organisation before joining DFAT in 1988.

Mr Warner was awarded a Public Service Medal in 2006 for outstanding public service as High Commissioner to Papua New Guinea, Special Coordinator of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands and leader of the Emergency Response Team which dealt with the kidnapping in Baghdad of Mr Douglas Wood.

Mr Warner holds a Bachelor of Arts with honours in History and Asian Studies and a Master of Arts in History from the Australian National University.
This Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) 10th anniversary seminar began with a passionate appraisal by Prime Minister Hon. Gordon Darcy Lilo of his nation’s future, and a brief scene-setting look back from Nick Warner, the first RAMSI Special Coordinator. A further five participants, all young Solomon Islanders who will help steer their nation during the next ten years, provided the bulk of the proceedings: Jude Devesi, Sebastian Ilala, Genesis Kofana, Phillip Tagini and Nanette Tutua. Robert Chris Tarohimae was an able facilitator and master of ceremonies, skilled at drawing comments from the wide range of participants, particularly the groups of school students who will also be integral to the next generation of leaders. Nicholas Coppel, the RAMSI Special Coordinator, provided initial welcome and also closing remarks. Pastor Eric Takila, representative of the Solomon Islands Christian Association, provided prayers to open and close the event. My task was to be rapporteur, the person who summarised the proceedings and provided overarching concluding remarks. My thanks to all of the participants.

While we were the public face of the seminar, the proceedings would not have been possible without many assisting behind the scene. The seminar was held at the conference room of Forum Fisheries Agency in Honiara. My thanks to the FFA staff whose efficient organisation made the day pleasant and successful. Thanks to the Office of the RAMSI Special Coordinator, particularly to the previous Media Manager Mary-Louise O’Callaghan who was part of the early planning and to Johnson Honimae, the current Media Manager. Thanks also to Nicholas Coppel for having the vision to ensure that this seminar was part of the 10th anniversary of RAMSI and for following through to a publication stage to ensure that the proceedings were widely distributed in Solomon Islands. Justine Braithwaite, his successor as Special Coordinator, has helped with the final stages of the publication.

At lunchtime during the seminar, the launch was held of my *Solomon Islands Historical Encyclopaedia, 1893–1978* which is available on the World Wide Web.
at http://www.solomonencyclopaedia.net/. While this was not strictly part of the proceedings, the digital version of the *Historical Encyclopaedia* was funded by RAMSI. My thanks to RAMSI for their financial support. Along with the 2003-2013 bibliography at the end of this book, these extra sources are part of an endeavour to provide Solomon Islanders with an extended set of resources on which to build the history of the nation.

Serena Bagley and Margaret Higgs in the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics at The University of Queensland helped with formatting and deftly assisted whenever my technical incompetence threatened to slow the final stages.

Finally, thanks to the audience on the day of the seminar, whose involvement and questions showed their level of interest in the future of their nation.

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November 2013
The future belongs to the children of Solomon Islands.
Welcome Remarks

Nicholas Coppel, RAMSI Special Coordinator

I wish to thank all of you for accepting the invitation to be here this morning for this seminar on what Solomon Islanders wish and hope for their nation’s future. I would like to thank Prime Minister Hon. Gordon Darcy Lilo for agreeing to deliver the opening address and Mr Nick Warner, the first RAMSI Special Coordinator, for coming back to Honiara to reflect on why RAMSI came on 24 July 2003 to helpem fren (to help friends).

Solomon Islands has made enormous progress over the past ten years. But the purpose of this seminar is not to talk about RAMSI and what RAMSI has achieved since it arrived ten years ago. No, the seminar is about Solomon Islands and it is about the future. The aim of this seminar is to provide a forum for Solomon Islanders to think about the next ten years.

It is an opportunity for the next generation of leaders to discuss issues such as economic development and governance, and to speak about their vision for the future development of their country. It aims to encourage discussion around how the enormous progress of the past ten years can be built on so that progress continues to be made. Because it is about the future, senior high school students – both male and female – have been invited to participate alongside representatives from both the government and private sectors.

I hope discussion today will be in an optimistic spirit and that the proceedings are about solutions, as much as challenges. I am sure that whatever comes out of today’s deliberations it will help Solomon Islanders clarify and articulate their thoughts about the future of their country. However, while the focus is on the future we need some understanding of the past to help set the scene for the day’s discussion. The seminar begins with the opening address by the Prime Minister, setting the scene for looking ahead, and Nick Warner, RAMSI’s first Special Coordinator, has provided a quick look back with his account of why RAMSI came to Solomon Islands to helpem fren.
Solomon Islands national celebrations are held at Lawson Tama in Honiara. This 2008 scene is of the 30th anniversary of Independence. The colours of the dress of the children and the balloons signify the design of the national flag.
Looking Ahead: Challenges and Prospects

Prime Minister Hon. Gordon Darcy Lilo, M.P.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, first of all, let me take this opportunity to thank the RAMSI 10th Anniversary Organizing Committee for convening this public seminar. It is a wonderful opportunity for Solomon Islanders to take a closer look at various aspects of their country’s development before, during and after RAMSI. I am privileged to be part of this seminar and very happy to note that many of the speakers today are the young and up-coming generation of leaders. Their generation will need to steer clear of the pitfalls of the past and drive towards building a stronger, resilient, united, and peace-loving society.

The Issues for Discussion
I have been asked to present a short address on the theme, “Looking Ahead: Challenges and Prospects.” This is a timely topic, given the transition of RAMSI into bi-lateral relations and the eventual closure of the mission. Indeed, whilst we now enjoy law and order, the challenges of maintaining the peace and advancing economic growth post-RAMSI remain significant. I will first outline six issues which I believe are crucial to the future of the nation, and then conclude with my view for the building of the nation.

Maintaining law and order
First, whilst law and order has been restored to a level where our nation is capable of handling large-scale civil disorder, our ability to curb petty crime over an extended period of time and to ensure sustainable peace, remains to be seen. There are many police officers and RAMSI senior managers within the force and the justice sector who discharge their duties to the highest professional standards. As senior RAMSI personnel and advisors withdraw and reduce in number in the police and Ministry of Justice this cover may be entirely eroded leaving gaps within the systems rife for mediocrity and even disregard of professional standards.
The conflict trap and challenge to nation building
Second, studies in other conflict situations where international intervention forces such as RAMSI were used demonstrate that it is possible to return to the civil chaos if development assistance, institutional capacities and people are not harnessed to hold together state machinery and build the nation. Oxford University’s Professor Paul Collier talks about “the conflict trap” and suggests that where development assistance is used wisely to increase people’s income and domestic consumption, and within good governance structures, “the conflict trap” can be broken. This will however take discipline, perseverance and keeping a very long term focus on the goal of advancing peace and economic prosperity.

With our diversity, distance and diseconomy of scale, nation building will continue to be challenged. The nation building project which began in 1978 was tested by the ethnic tensions. We have come through this and found out that violence and conflict do not benefit anyone. If anything, it simply hurts everyone. The challenge facing Solomon Islands on this score is to embrace diversity, respect the rule of law and work hard to earn a just living for ourselves and for our families.

The natural resources trap
Third, as many of you also know, Solomon Islands has a very narrow economic base and heavily relies on natural resources for its revenue. This has been the case since Independence and is the case today. Paul Collier also talks about the “resource curse” and points to dependence on minerals or other natural resources as being risky to the long term viability of any national economy.

That is going to be another immediate challenge to the economy. Expansion of the economy through development assistance, technical assistance or foreign direct investment is necessary to expand the revenue base and provide economic growth. Access to land and sea resources will therefore be essential to create opportunities for investment and production. Good policy on access to land and sea resources would therefore be necessary. Landowners and resources owners must be willing to engage and avail their land and resources for the benefit of their children and those around them. Agriculture, tourism, small scale processing, manufacturing, mining and other industrial developments must take place. These must move from policy on paper to reality on the ground.

Unemployment
Fourth, unemployment and lack of gainful engagement of a large proportion of our population, especially males, is a pressing problem. Over the years, many people have left our secondary schools and tertiary institutions in search of gainful employment. Only a handful of them find employment. Without job opportunities being created, the problem will linger on. This is increasingly
evident on the streets of Honiara. More and more young people are roaming the streets every year without any purpose or useful economic engagement. These youth often opt into criminal activities such as illegal sale of “kwaso” and marijuana to sustain their livelihood. For a similar purpose, they are also engaged in petty theft and burglary. Criminal activities and violence are also caused by unemployed youths who have much time on their hands and energy to spare. Now with the establishment of the Solomon Islands National University, more people should be able to access tertiary education. The focus of training should shift from finding employment to creating employment.

**Macro-economic and fiscal management**

Fifth, macro-economic and fiscal management continues to be a challenge in Solomon Islands. This has been the case for some time. Many attempts at public and institutional reforms have been carried out to varying degrees of success.

The chronic problem lies in weak institutions, processes and personnel. The mechanisms for determining, monitoring and assessing the use of public funds and resources are weak. To add more difficulty, many of the personnel tasked to operate these processes lack capacity. Worse still, they are often tempted to operate the system for their own ends. However, through fiscal policy management since 2010, the buffer zone for foreign reserves has also improved, reducing risk of financial exposure due to international prices in imports.

The Ministry of Finance and Treasury, with the help of RAMSI, has increased capacity in financial management and monitoring. According to the Ministry of Finance, this tighter control over spending, as well as improvement in revenue collection has been responsible for the revenue growth in 2012. Macro-economic discipline and management will continue to be required more than ever during RAMSI’s transition.

**The bad governance trap**

Sixth, another major challenge to Solomon Islands for some time had been bad governance. This was worse during the ethnic tension years when rogue elements laid claim to the national Treasury and other government institutions. Paul Collier also refers to this as the third trap, the “bad governance trap”. He argues that weak institutions and weak leaders make for a cycle of bad governance which is self-perpetuating.

Although RAMSI eliminated those rogue elements and reinstated the machinery of government, weaknesses in government machinery still exist. Government systems and the public sector must not only operate fairly and efficiently, but be seen to do so. With weak accountability systems and procedures to illuminate and assess decision making that affects the public, the perception of corruption in government will be perpetuated, further eroding any attempts
for establishing government legitimacy. At present, the Leadership Code Commission, Ombudsman, Auditor General’s Office and the media are playing this role but much more is needed to check decisions in a timely manner and to ensure that decisions that are erroneous or corrupt are identified and exposed early. A system of monitoring performance of public officers and placing the decision making of public officials and statutory bodies in the limelight is needed.

Honest public servants and a smoothly functioning bureaucracy must be the rule and not the exception. This had begun to take shape under RAMSI but must continue to improve as RAMSI leaves. A robust and fair electoral system, and an independent judiciary and media are important checks and balances and they are necessary to break out from the “bad governance trap”.

Building the nation
All is not lost, and there are good prospects for Solomon Islands. In response to some of these demands, the government has taken some steps. Parliament this week will be looking at the Political Stability and Integrity Bill which will provide the opportunity for parties to behave in a transparent manner. There has also been a significant investment in airport infrastructure around the country. The government has also begun to implement its obligations under the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). In terms of building productivity in the rural areas, the government has also through the Constituency Development Funds directed capital to the rural areas where most of our people and resources remain.

But to accomplish building involves more than the government. Communities, churches, NGOs and other institutions have also built platforms to ensure that the country does not return to the ethnic tension period. It is by working together that the nation will be able to build itself and rise to the new challenges of the future.

Conclusion
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen I have outlined those six major challenges to signpost the road ahead. I am confident that our recent history of armed conflict will teach us that violence can only take us in two directions, backwards and downwards. It is my hope that we do not forget too quickly the effects of conflict but learn from the shortcomings and failures which led to the conflict and makes the hard shifts in action necessary to create a different and better country. We must leave the past behind and build a community that we can be happy to be part of and proud to pass on to our children and their children.

I take this opportunity to wish you all good deliberations in this seminar.
Nick Warner was the first RAMSI Special Coordinator, 2003–2004.
Well educated children will provide the future citizens to guide the nation.
A Look Back: Solomon Islands,
24 July 2003
Why We Came To Helpem Fren

Nick Warner

Introduction
Before I start my speech today, can I just say how pleased I am to be here. This is only my second trip back since my time as Special Coordinator and although I barely recognize Honiara, I do remember just how warm a Solomon Islands welcome can be. It has been great over the past few days to see so many familiar faces and to catch up with so many of you. And I’m doubly pleased that my friends Ben McDevitt — the very first commander of RAMSI’s Participating Police Force — and J.J. Frewan — the head of the military contingent — are also with us today.

There are, of course, many new faces here today that I don’t know. Perhaps some of you were in your home provinces or away at university and I guess some of you were only school-age when RAMSI arrived in July 2003. Perhaps the events of those times — RAMSI’s arrival and the events leading up to it — seen through young or even adolescent eyes are now a bit foggy and lacking in detail. So can I just say at this point, we — your friends and neighbours in the Pacific — did it for you.

We came to help all Solomon Islanders, of course, but it was people like you, young Solomon Islanders, kids who could not go to school because their teachers weren’t getting paid and their schools were not being funded, for whom we particularly wanted to secure a better future. We wanted to make sure you would have the chance not only to have an education but also to grow up in a safe and secure environment. And that you would eventually have the opportunity to contribute to the life of your nation.

So it gives me particular pleasure to see all these faces, new and old, and to take part in this seminar, which really is not about RAMSI, not about the bad old days, but about what lies ahead, about how you can not only learn from the mistakes of the past, but how you can best build on the achievements of the past decade to secure a better, a brighter, a more prosperous future for you and your children, for all Solomon Islanders.
The nation that greeted RAMSI

So for those of you who cannot recall in detail or did not witness the events of a decade ago perhaps I can start by reminding everyone of what we found, of the state of this nation, when RAMSI touched down at Henderson airport in the early hours of 24 July 2003.

Imagine, if you can, a country where hospitals, schools and medical clinics had simply ceased to function, where the police and other public servants were going weeks without pay — not surprisingly, some were turning up to work, but many were not. Imagine roads that are no longer passable, that were not only falling apart but were frequently controlled by drunks and thieves. Imagine a government that cannot govern, a police force that cannot police, teachers who cannot teach, doctors who have no medicine to treat their patients, and then to complete the picture add to this mix guns, ethnic tensions, and rampant corruption.

This was the state of the nation that greeted the 300 police and 1,700 soldiers that made up RAMSI ten years ago. The government’s loss of control was so great and had been going on for so long, it was widely acknowledged by the Prime Minister at the time, Sir Allan Kemakeza, his senior Cabinet Ministers, public servants and most especially by the people of Solomon Islands, who knew full well that their elected representatives were no longer in charge of the nation.

But what also greeted us at Henderson — and it is an image that will remain in my own memory forever — were hundreds upon hundreds, maybe thousands, of Solomon Islanders — men, women, children, even their dogs! — pressing up against the cyclone fence around the perimeter of the airport, crowding in to get a closer look at the intervention force that their government had requested, that their parliament had authorized, their region had formed on their behalf and was now finally arriving right before their eyes.

I am sure there were some in the crowd that day who were apprehensive — I certainly did not know exactly what to expect. But what I saw as I stepped off the plane were people who were happy, who were excited, people who were overjoyed to see us; people who were smiling, who literally were clapping their hands in prayers of thanks, and most importantly people who reached out to greet us and welcome us to their shores.

And there you have the ‘secret’ of RAMSI’s success. For our success was really the success of Solomon Islanders; RAMSI’s achievements — especially in that first year but also everything that has been accomplished over the past decade — really are the achievements of all those good and brave Solomon Islanders who reached out to us from day one, to join hands with us and support us in the ambitious task of changing the course of your nation’s history, of getting it back on track, so that all of you could look forward with hope and confidence.
What we promised to do

For my part, I knew it was important to reassure Solomon Islanders that RAMSI had come in friendship but with a firm mandate to help them take back control of their nation. So my first action as Special Coordinator was to brief the Prime Minister and his Cabinet and to deliver a statement to the people of Solomon Islands. Here is some of what I had to say.

People everywhere have a right to live their lives peacefully, to go about their daily business without threats or violence or intimidation, to have their children educated in schools, to have illnesses attended to in hospitals and clinics, to have a government that is permitted to govern for the benefit of all people, free from intimidation or coercion by armed thugs.

Solomon Islands used to be such a place. But for too long this country has suffered at the hands of a small number of militants and criminals who have terrorised Solomon Islands society, brought the country to its knees, and done a disservice to the reputation of Solomon Islanders as a good and generous people... Solomon Islands is a young country of great promise. We, your partners in the Pacific, and with God’s help, are here to help Solomon Islanders fulfill that promise.

I made clear that the partnership that RAMSI was entering into with Solomon Islands that day would be a long-term commitment. The problems confronting Solomon Islands were not going to be fixed overnight. Our immediate purpose was to restore law and order and return the rule of law. To do this our police would be working hand-in-hand with the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force to provide safety and security on the streets and in the villages and to get the guns out of communities.

While this was being done, we would also be working with the government to bring stability to the budget, to rebuild the machinery of government, re-establish the government payroll and restore the delivery of essential services to people. This would then provide the conditions for the revival of the economy, for the promotion of economic growth and improved living standards in the community.

I emphasized that Australia, New Zealand, and the other Pacific countries involved in RAMSI were here at the formal and explicit request of the Solomon Islands government and that all of us respected the fact that Solomon Islands was an independent and sovereign nation, that we were here to help restore that sovereignty — to restore the capacity of the government to represent its people and to act in the public good. That the men and women from around the Pacific who arrived on Solomons shores that day came as part of the regional assistance mission and knew they were guests of the Solomon Islands people.

I also said that those individuals who had profited — at the expense of the nation — from the disorder of the past few years would no longer be permitted
to do so. That RAMSI intended to stop the claims of extortion that had helped bring the country to its knees in an ugly distortion of Solomon Islands customs and traditional values. I made clear that the men and women in military uniform were here to support these efforts. So should criminals seek to sabotage our assistance, endanger public safety, or prevent the police from doing their duty, the military would not hesitate to act.

Thankfully for all of us, the overwhelming support for RAMSI and Operation Helpem Fren from the country’s Governor-General down through the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Opposition to ordinary Solomon Islanders, meant that RAMSI’s military contingent was rarely called upon to intervene. This extraordinary embrace by Solomon Islanders of the mission and its objective also saw the Solomon Islands-RAMSI partnership clock-up a most extraordinary set of achievements in our first year.

Successes of the first year
The most stunning achievement, the most long-lasting achievement, was undoubtedly the return of the guns and the fact that this task was virtually all achieved in the first few months of deployment. A firearms amnesty was declared shortly after we arrived. Nearly 4,000 weapons were surrendered and destroyed in this period; a success-rate which when compared with the size of the country’s population at the time, to my knowledge, is yet to be beaten anywhere else in the world.

None of this could have been achieved without one of the most significant partnerships that the mission was to enjoy, the partnering of RAMSI by the National Peace Council and in particular its chair, Paul Tovua. Originally set up to monitor and implement the earlier Townsville Peace Agreement, the Council provided RAMSI with the networks on the ground as well as the grass roots intelligence needed to get back the guns, while RAMSI as a neutral outside force was able to provide the Council with the protection it needed to do its job properly. And I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge here today the close and productive working relationship that Ben, JJ and I enjoyed with Paul Tovua throughout that first year.

The next big achievement — again just a few weeks into the mission — was securing the surrender and the arrest of Harold Keke, the Guadalcanal militant leader who had terrorised his own people on the Weathercoast, but had also given others the excuse to carry arms and threaten and intimidate their fellow countrymen and women, in the name of protecting the nation.

In my view, the arrest of Keke and the subsequent arrests of militants from all sides of the conflict that flowed from it was the key that unlocked this nation from the rampant criminal activity and corruption that was being committed under the guise of the ethnic tensions.
As a result and quite quickly Solomon Islanders were once again able to move freely and without fear through the breadth of this quite stunningly beautiful country. A little more slowly, public finances, finally freed from extortion and demands for ‘compensation’, were stabilised and basic services gradually restored to the people. Within just a few months, public servants were getting paid on time, the sick were able to be treated and have access to medicines and children were going back to school. There was a new sense of purpose apparent in the life of the nation.

Less than a year later, Keke and his cohorts were to be the first of many militants to face their country’s own criminal justice system when they stood trial for the murder of the former cabinet minister and catholic priest, Father Augustine Geve. Convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment, they were placed in the secure confines of the newly refurbished correctional centre at Rove, one of the many facilities and institutions that the RAMSI partnership was to help rebuild.

Long term achievements
Although I completed my term as Special Coordinator in August 2004, over the years since then I’ve followed the progress of both RAMSI and Solomon Islands closely — both remain close to my heart. And I have to say that apart from the setback of the 2006 riots, it has been heartening both to see that Solomon Islanders’ great support for RAMSI has not waned and to learn of the steady achievements that the Solomon Islands-RAMSI partnership has continued to realise.

Top of the list for me is the new-found confidence and competence of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force — whose impressive acting Commissioner I met just this week — the continuing robustness of the country’s legal system and most especially the continuing absence of weapons in Solomon Islands society, ten years after we all pledged to make this a gun-free nation. The modernisation and reform of the police force as well as Solomon Islands Correctional Services and the new Acts which now govern both these agencies, as well as the fact that all the country’s key justice institutions are once again headed by Solomon Islanders, are all huge achievements when compared with the sorry state of affairs in this sector just a decade ago. Add to this, the great work that continues to be done by institutions under the leadership of Solomon Islanders such as the Office of the Auditor General and the National Parliament, and you can see just how far your nation has come.

Certainly it was evident to me almost instantly on my arrival this week that this is not the same nation that greeted me a decade ago. The cars for starters! Where did they all come from? But more cars, more people, many more new and big buildings all confirm for me the huge lift in the Solomon Islands economy that I have heard so much about. Clearly the fiscal discipline of successive Solomon Islands governments, the reduction in the country’s debt and the streamlining
of processes for foreign investors have all contributed to this. The size and bustle of Honiara is quite extraordinary, although I can see in it too some of the challenges that lie ahead and that I know some of you will be discussing during the seminar today.

A reason to hope once again

It is clear to me that the areas where the most has been achieved is where RAMSI has had the most support from Solomon Islanders who wanted to see things improve for the better. Conversely, it seems to me that where progress has not got as far as we had hoped, it is where RAMSI has not had as much support from Solomon Islanders and their leaders.

For my part, and in my experience in that first extraordinary year, RAMSI has been a success because it was the right plan at the right time. We also had the right team, with the right level of political backing and resources with the right approach – one of partnership and trust. Decisions were taken together, after discussion. We worked hard to keep both the government and all Solomon Islanders informed about RAMSI activities and plans, always building consensus as we went, so that Solomon Islanders partnered us every step of the way in this unique endeavour.

It was intense, it was exhilarating and I will never forget it. We were here by invitation and we had the complete support of the government and importantly of the people of Solomon Islands. People had suffered terribly, they had felt abandoned by their government but also by their friends and neighbours, and yet when we arrived on 24 July 2003, they did not hesitate to reach out and embrace us. The success of RAMSI in that first year of operation lay as much in the willingness of Solomon Islanders to seize the opportunity our mission presented, as it did in the region’s commitment to doing the right thing.

I was very lucky to have some excellent colleagues to work with in RAMSI as well as some excellent – and courageous – Solomon Islanders who partnered us in getting back the guns, in stabilizing the government’s finances and most importantly giving the country a reason to hope once again.

As RAMSI moves into its latest and perhaps final phase, Solomon Islanders have an increasing responsibility to shape the future of your nation wisely. It is my fervent hope that in the months and years ahead, the lessons of the past will not be forgotten nor the good work that all of us achieved, be squandered. The deployment of RAMSI will always remain that crucial turning point in this nation’s history which ten years and a day ago, we all pledged it to be.
Honiara, with its bustling port and thriving commercial centre has become a major Pacific city.
Gold Ridge mine in Guadalcanal Province is the first large scale mining operation in Solomon Islands. The government would like to increase the number of mines in the country.
What Should Sustainable Mining Look Like in Solomon Islands?

Phillip Tagini

Introduction
Solomon Islands is a country dependent on natural resources. For some time, natural resources, particularly round logs, have been the mainstay of the economy. Since the opening the Gold Ridge mine in central Guadalcanal in 1996 (restarted in 2010) mining was seen as one of the major sources of revenue for the country. With the decline of harvestable logs, mining is now seen as the mainstay. The government has indicated this direction but landowners around the potential mining areas are still divided on mining development. Among contentious issues are environmental impacts, benefit sharing, land rights and social dislocations. These are legitimate concerns and require attention and solution. Whilst these are important concerns, this talk is pitched at the higher policy level. It discusses sustainable mining policy. In other words, what should sustainable mining look like in the mining communities and Solomon Islands generally? Having an idea of what sustainable mining looks like would allow us to imagine the positive transformations mining can make to our communities in the next thirty-five years. The author has some fair idea of what mining entails, but more importantly, God willing, will live through the next thirty-five years to witness the transformations, for better or for worse. This paper attempts to discuss the model of sustainable mining and makes some broad suggestions for policy attention.

Relevant context of Solomon Islands for mining
The Solomon Islands is an island nation located north-east of Australia in the South Pacific, between Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Vanuatu. It has a population of about half a million people with the major population groups self-classifying themselves as Melanesians, Polynesians and Micronesians. People of European and Asian origin are also present in small numbers. Land remains the most important source of livelihood for a large part of the population, with many living in villages and communities outside the national capital (Honiara) and the provincial centres.
The archipelago consists of a series of high, rugged islands, with smaller islets and atolls running north-west from Bougainville (now part of PNG) to Temotu in the south-east. Bougainville, the islands of the Solomon Islands and those in Vanuatu form the ‘Greater Melanesian Arc’ which marks the collision zone between the Australian and Pacific geological plates. These also sit on the ‘Pacific Rim of Fire,’ a location of extreme seismic activity which explains the regular earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic activity of the region and underpin its mineral potential. Cyclones also occur regularly.

Within the archipelago, there is a great diversity of languages and cultural practices, particularly within the Melanesian group, a feature shared with other Melanesian groups in the Pacific. As far as cultural aspects are concerned, family and tribal affiliations continue to remain extremely important and significantly inform key social, economic and political organisational arrangements. Whilst the resilience and adaptability of these affinity-based systems of organisation are a laudable achievement and reflect the uniqueness of the Solomon Islands, they often conflict with the Weberian institutional premises and expectations associated with the introduced Western economy and its requirements. As is well known, achieving the right balance between these two poles is one of the most pressing issues currently facing the Solomon Islands, as well as more widely in the Pacific.

The Solomon Islands was a British Protectorate between 1893 and 1978 when it became politically independent and adopted a Westminster system of parliamentary democracy which was by and large superimposed on pre-existing systems of governance. In the last three and half decades the attempts to merge these systems of governance have generally been unsuccessful. This has also been the case in the other Melanesian countries like PNG and Fiji, prompting commentators to describe the region as an ‘arc of instability’ in a political sense.

In comparison to its Polynesian and Micronesian neighbours, the Solomon Islands has a larger stock of natural resources but since independence it has always struggled with its balance of payments, forcing the government to borrow from the international financial institutions or rely on aid donors to fund its budget. The principal reason appears to be reliance on a limited number of unprocessed primary product exports. Thus, with the exception of some processing in the fisheries sector, there is virtually no complex manufacture or value-added production generated by the Solomon Islands economy. Due to this limited ability to produce and generate income, the economy is under severe stress, with declining employment opportunities, education, health and social services.

The World Bank estimated the annual income per capita to be US$620, the mortality rate to be 23 for every thousand births and life expectancy to be 62 years. In general, the Solomon Islands is ranked among the least developed countries and is viewed as being at real risk of developing a vicious and entrenched
cycle of poverty. Faced with these realities, successive governments have been
determined to take steps to arrest the downward slide towards endemic poverty.
This is why fully understanding the value of mining and the policy options open
to the Solomons is quite important. Will it help to improve the situation, or
will it simply compound the existing precarious situation? Looking specifically
at mining, the following are some realities which must challenge policy and
leadership.

- Mineral resources present one of the few opportunities for a form of eco-
nomic development based on industrial scale activity and the possibility
of higher levels of value-added and positive feedback into the economy,
including technological innovation. This places all stakeholders under
great pressure to extract these resources. Successive governments have
attempted to develop the sector and it appears that this interest will con-
tinue into the future. To add even more pressure, most exploration and
mining companies are now looking for undeveloped ore bodies in devel-
oping countries such as the Solomon Islands — in response to high costs
of regulation in developed countries. Developing countries as a whole
are also competing with each other to attract mining investment by com-
prehensively liberalising their regulatory frameworks thereby generating
another layer of pressure on decision-making in the Solomon Islands.
- Solomon Islands is a country where most people still depend on land
and the natural environment (forests, rivers, lakes and the sea) for basic
survival. The impacts of mining on the environment can be severe and
may jeopardise important sources of livelihood for a significant propor-
tion of the population, particularly those in and around areas dedicated
to mining. The long-drawn out crisis in the PNG’s North Solomons
Province (Bougainville), physically, socially, and demographically close
to the Solomon Islands, justifies concerns that exist on this score.
- Experience elsewhere has also indicated that, after many years of min-
ing, people may not be any better off. The literature explains this as
a ‘Resource Curse’12 where countries that depend on natural resources
tend to perform poorly, even regress, compared to their counterparts
that do not depend on natural resources. In other words, the Solo-
mon Islands is a classic example of a country at risk of suffering from
‘Resource Curse’ should it be successful in extracting significant rents
from the minerals.
- Current estimates of mine life for both Gold Ridge in Guadalcanal Pro-
vince and at Bugotu, Isabel Province, the two most advanced projects
in the Solomon Islands, indicate a twenty years mining life-span (Gold
Ridge 11 years and at Bugotu 20 years). This is a short period in mining
terms, which places a premium on the mineral resources, how they are extracted and, importantly, managed to ensure sustainability after mine closure.

• Social impacts such as displacement and social dislocation are also common and threaten mining communities. Drawing upon the statistics on Gold Ridge while it was operating briefly before forced closure, when mining contributed 30 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP), the Solomon Islands has the potential to fit the category of a mineral dependent economy for a significant period. However, although royalties are being paid to landowners, and payroll taxes and general prosperity flows from the mine, there is a ‘tax holiday’ on Gold Ridge contributing to government revenue, which slows the gains for GDP.

Given the above realities, it is of concern that there seems to be minimal past or ongoing research into the Solomon Islands mining sector — its history, the stakeholders, policy and regulatory frameworks, definition of legal rights and responsibilities, implementation of such rights, and options for stakeholder participation. The Solomon Islands is eager to re-start its mining sector after the forced closure of the Gold Ridge mine between 2000 and 2010, but it is important to appreciate that, beyond establishment (or re-establishment), a significant level of commitment is required from all stakeholders in order to translate anticipated and/or actual activities and benefits into sustainable and resilient outcomes for mining communities and the wider society.

Defining sustainability generally
There are two schools of thought on sustainability — strong sustainability (SS) and weak sustainability (WS). The essence of SS is that it regards natural capital as fundamentally non-substitutable through other forms of capital. Herman Daly’s book *Steady-state Economics*, first published in 1977, marks the foundation of SS. Daly’s logic is that both human capital and natural capital must be preserved if development is to be sustained.

Daly insisted that human capital and man-made capital are not substitutes, but complementary:

... if man-made capital were a near perfect substitute for natural capital, then natural capital would be a near perfect substitute for man-made capital. But if so, there would have been no reason to accumulate man-made capital in the first place, since we humans were already endowed by nature with a near perfect substitute. But historically, we did accumulate man-made capital — precisely because it is complementary to natural capital.
He maintained that no amount of human capital can substitute natural capital and rhetorically asks “what good is a saw-mill without a forest; a fishing boat without populations of fish; a refinery without petroleum deposits; an irrigated farm without an aquifer or river?”

Based on his non-substitutability argument, he proposes that, since natural capital and human capital are complementary, the one in short supply is the limiting factor (natural capital). Further, proposing a formal management rule for sustainable development, Daly states that a sustainable society must be based on using renewable resources at rates that do not exceed their capacities to renew themselves, using non-renewable resources at rates that do not exceed our capacity to substitute them and using no resources at rates that exceed the capacity of the natural world to assimilate or process the waste associated with their use.

Weak Sustainability (WS) on the other hand argues that if the total stock of both man-made and natural capital are maintained and not allowed to decline over time, it is possible to maintain sustainability. WS is often called Solow-Hartwick sustainability because it is based on ideas put forward by these two. The Solow-Hartwick sustainability principle proposes that if all net returns from the extraction of resources are invested in reproducible capital (e.g. technology) which in a closed economy is equivalent to a constant value of the aggregate capital stock then the consumption path can be sustained indefinitely.

Solow states that a “sustainable path . . . is one that allows every generation the option of being as well off as its predecessors. The duty imposed by sustainability is to bequeath to posterity not any particular thing — but rather to endow them with whatever it takes to achieve a standard of living at least as good as our own and to look after their next generation similarly.”

What matters is not the particular form that the replacement takes, but only its capacity to produce the things that posterity will enjoy. WS does not require the preservation of a particular stock of forests or sawmills, but rather that the total of both natural and man-made capital be maintained over time.

**Sustainable mining**
Minerals are exhaustible resources, a category of resources that has been the subject of much study. Questions surround what policy directions might be appropriate to ensure sustainability of such finite resources.

Auty and Warhust stated that:

> [s]ustainable development requires that the consumption by present generations should not be at the expense of future generations. For mineral economies, this imposed two conditions. First, that investment must be made in alternative wealth
generating assets in order to substitute for the depleting mineral asset. Second that the environmental damage caused by mining and smelting should be minimized.

The view put forward by Auty and Warhurst above is essentially a WS prescription for mining (substitutability) but it also emphasises the importance of preserving the environment. Whether that requires the protection of critical natural capital as demanded by SS is not clear but often such views treat environmental integrity as an equally important condition.

Mikesell does not conceive sustainability in SS or WS terms. In fact, he sees sustainability as a combination of both, i.e. preserving the critical natural capital but also allowing for substitutability. He suggested that:

> While recognizing that little or no substitutability is possible for the basic environmental assets such as the atmosphere, water and soil, I believe that over time substitutability of reproducible capital for mineral inputs into the production process is very high and that sustainability of output can be assured by maintaining a constant capital stock of minerals.

Hamilton, while acknowledging both SS and WS views, settles for the economist’s definition which sees a development path as sustainable provided that total welfare does not decline along that path. He believes that the welfare function in the economic definition is sufficiently expansive to include not only the traditional consumption functions but also environmental quality, social equity and other factors contributing to the quality of life. It appears that, in the mining industry, sustainability is not strictly viewed as SS or WS but rather a mixture of both, depending on the needs and conditions of the country.

As in the case of sustainable forestry and sustainable fisheries, sustainable mining represents the same core values for responsible mining and is thus an extension of the ethos of sustainable development to the mining sector. Building on the sustainable development construction, a definition of sustainable mining may be fashioned as a holistic approach to minerals development which attempts to satisfy economic, social and environment needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generation to meet their needs. This definition will be used throughout this paper. In other words, communities should be able to live a decent standard of life and allow the next generation to enjoy the same or better. The sum of all these benefits must not decline over time.

**The Resource Curse thesis** and sustainable mining
The Resource Curse thesis is also called the paradox of plenty and describes the phenomenon observed when resource rich countries perform poorly compared to their resource poor counterparts. This phenomenon was originally observed
during the oil booms of the 1960s and 1970s when the Arabian economies received large amounts of oil ‘windfalls’ from the high price of oil. Coincidently, there was no evidence to show that these windfalls led to any marked improvement in the general standard of living in those economies.31

There are three popular explanations for the Resource Curse, and policy must target these weaknesses to ensure sustainable mining. The first explanation holds that mineral development creates few linkages outside the mining sector (the ‘linkages’ argument). This creates what are now commonly known as ‘enclaves’ where few benefits flow to areas outside the mining region. Active policy engineering must therefore be aimed at creating linkages with other sectors and other geographical regions.

The second explanation for the Resource Curse is the Dutch Disease which emphasises the role of labour and capital movement in resource rich economies. In the 1970s, the oil booms led to an increase in production of natural gas from the Groningen fields (Netherlands) which attracted labour and capital away from other sectors, principally agriculture and manufacturing, leaving these sectors weak.32 A number of measures have been suggested including diversification of production, stabilisation of oil revenues, control on spending (sterilisation) and prudent investments.

The final explanation for the Resource Curse lies in the political economy. This view holds that large revenues received by government from natural resources lead to irresponsible economic management. Resource rents often lead to a ‘feeding frenzy’ which exhausts the public good. First, politicians often redistribute the rents to support their powerbase.33 Second, governments are often locked in a spending habit which depends on projections rather than actual revenue.34 Third, resource rich countries often attempt industrialisation based on a single staple commodity which is overly protected and non-competitive.35 Auty warns against over emphasising the minerals sector. He stated:

The mineral sector should not be regarded as the backbone of the economy; instead it should be viewed as a bonus with which to accelerate economic growth and healthy structural change.36

Invest well and demand a minimum return on investment
Paul Collier, in his book The Bottom Billion37 talks about the ‘resource curse’ as the “natural resource trap.” Explaining why resource rich countries perform poorly economically, he said:

The reason the resource rich democracies underperform is not simply that governments spend too much. We then turned to the composition of expenditure — was the problem one of spending on the wrong things? The most basic influence on economic
growth is investment. Once we controlled the share of investment, the remaining adverse effect of democracy became smaller. This suggests that the resource-rich democracies underinvest. In fact, this is no surprise. Other researchers have found that quite generally democracies tend to underinvest: governments are so fixated on winning the next election that they disregard what might happen after-ward, and so neglect investments that only come to fruition in the future. In resource-rich societies investment is evidently particularly important since this is how the resource surplus can be transformed into sustained increases in income; underinvesting becomes an even more important mistake. However, the main story turns out to be not the rate of investment but the return on investment. The resource-rich democracies not only underinvest but invest badly, with too many white elephant projects.

In Solomon Islands, it can be safely said that income is not wisely invested either by the national government or by the landowning groups who receive royalties. At the national level, income is obtained from income tax, royalties and export duty. Although there are provisions in the Gold Ridge Mining Agreement (1996) for the establishment of special funds for the landowners and Provincial Government respectively, there does not appear to be any proper management of funds to ensure infrastructure, educational, health and other facilities can be sustained for the community after mine closure. For wider developments in the country, many of the projects distributed throughout the constituency development programs are either consumables or investments that were never monitored for their returns. To date, government has spent money on downstream processing projects, cocoa projects and rural electrification. There is however no national accounting for the success or otherwise of these projects. This is necessary. Government has also, through the National Provident Fund, invested in Telekom, South Pacific Oil and other portfolios but has stopped at this without considering other viable international investments.

A similar challenge exists in the use of royalties by landowning groups. By virtue of Schedule 1 of the Mines and Minerals (Royalties) Regulations 2011 [Legal Notice No. 56], 16 landowning groups are entitled to receive 1.5 per cent of the royalties from gold and silver from the Gold Ridge Mine. Just in the last eight months, from August 2012 to March 2013, a total of 49 shipments of gold were exported with a payment of SD$13,892,388 paid out to landowners. But out of that, there is no tangible investment in terms of real property purchases, cash savings or other forms of investment. Most if not all of it was spent on consumables. Since royalties have been paid from 2011 to the present this has been the story. It does not take much imagination to conclude that if there is no intervention, the landowners will end up with an empty pit in two decades with no investment for themselves or their future generations. In short, they will be much worse off.
At the national budget level, this is similar. Many of the projects distributed through the constituency development programs are either consumables or investments that were never monitored for their return in investment. To date, government has spent on downstream processing projects, cocoa projects and rural electrification. To date, there is no national accounting for the success or otherwise of these projects. This is necessary. Government has also through the National Provident Fund invested in Telekom, South Pacific Oil and other portfolios but has not considered other viable international investments.

Mineral wealth funds or other forms of trust funds which save the value of the wasting assets for future generations are also worthwhile consideration. This applies for instance to the royalties paid out to landowners as well as royalties paid out to government such as that prescribed in the Mines and Minerals (Royalties) Regulations 2011 for the Gold Ridge operation. The short mining life for the Gold Ridge and the future Choiseul and Isabel operations gives further justification for why it is wise to invest some of the mineral rent for future generations (which in fact is just the next generation).

The literature also suggests the need to diversity to other sectors, perhaps those that are not dependent on rent. Such sectors include manufacturing, agriculture and tourism. As Auty suggested, these should be the main stay, whilst mining or logging rent should be bonuses to the economy.

**Incorporating sustainable mining in Solomon Islands mining policy**

Although Solomon Islands has a regulatory system comprising of the Mines and Minerals Act [Cap 42] and its various regulations, and environmental and other legislation, there is no policy to provide an overarching guide. In 2000, the South Pacific Geoscience Commission (SOPAC) assisted the government to prepare the 2000 Draft National Minerals Policy, but this has not been formally adopted by the government. In 2013, with the assistance of the World Bank, and taking into account the provisions in the 2000 draft, a new National Minerals Policy has been drafted. This also has not been adopted. Whilst formal mining policy alone is not determinative of a successful mining industry, it is a necessary administrative tool as it points the industry to the direction the country wants to proceed in terms of developing its mineral resources.

**Replace inefficient public officials with honest and efficient people**

Paul Collier in his *The Bottom Billion* also talks about the “bad governance in small islands” trap. Fundamentally, countries with weak governance and electoral systems allow poor leaders to rise up the ranks and take leadership. It then becomes difficult to get productivity and efficiency out of these people. A few good people who try eventually become frustrated and leave the country or get forced to leave the country. In Solomon Islands, capacity to regulate the
mining sector according to the regulatory framework is difficult because there is simply no one to perform the tasks set out in the legislation. If people, vehicles, computers and some equipment are available, these are insufficient to fully discharge the obligations. Good people need to get into positions of authority and poor performers needed to be shown the door. This is the first step to improving performance in the sector. In the medium term, other resources can be increased to incrementally improve the rate of successful discharge of the regulatory obligations. This of course is not only required for the mining department, it is required in the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Infrastructure and the other relevant line ministries. It should be a policy imposed across the public service and entire government machinery. The efficiency can only be measured after a considerable time.

**Conclusion**

Mining as an economic activity must be seen in its proper and fair context. Mining is not the savior of any economy, nor should Solomon Islanders expect mining to do that for their nation. It can make a contribution, and that is where focus should be directed: to harness mining for broader development platforms. An overdependence on mining as a source of employment and revenue is the first wrong move. The resource rents obtained from mining should be invested and be made accessible to other generations in the future. Anything that is not saved should be placed in investments that have a certain minimum rate of return. Also, capacity across the mining, environment, finance and other relevant ministries must be increased to ensure that governance and macro-economic management is capable of harnessing mineral wealth for broader growth development. At the same time, the mining and environment regulations should be implemented to safeguard the environment and local populations.
Solomon Islanders say that they do not ‘own’ their land – the land ‘owns’ them. They are custodians – caretakers – who live on and cultivate the land and preserve it for future generations. Rural land is cleared and then reverts to forest to regenerate. However, for development most investors want certainty over ownership or at least long leases over the land. They also want to be free to sell their business without further negotiations with traditional owners. The customary ownership of land is a barrier to investment and is one reason why development is concentrated in Honiara, and is low in rural areas. Building a modern economy means that there needs to be reform in land tenure to accommodate development while preserving customary lands.
The Auluta River has its headwaters in the Kwara’ae mountains and winds its way down to the east coast at Fakanakafo Bay, the boundary between the Kwara’ae and Fataleka language areas on Malaita. The lower Auluta basin is one of the largest areas of flat land on Malaita and has been selected as a possible site for an extensive oil palm plantation. Registration of the land is the first priority to enable future development.
Land: Liability or Asset? Real options for utilising our most available resource

Genesis Kofana

Introduction
The opening paragraph of the National Coalition for Rural Advancement’s policy framework for land reform clearly described our situation even after thirty-five years of independence. It says:

When Solomon Islands achieved independence on 7th July 1978 its hopes for self-sustenance lay in its abundant land resources. More than three decades on those hopes remain distant dreams. Today Solomon Islanders and the nation as a whole are unable to fully realize the economic potential of their land resources. Both the government and investors find it extremely difficult to access land for development purposes. Constant and never-ending land disputes have become the hallmark of our land tenure system. Issues of landownership, boundaries, usages and occupation rights create social disharmony and conflicts at all levels of our society. We have become victims of our own making.

Customary land accounts for about 85 per cent of the country’s total land area but is the most difficult to access. This presentation will attempt to throw some light on why access to customary land for development is a challenge. The topic, “Land: Liability or Asset?” will be dealt with in detail. How can we best utilise our most available resource? First, I will briefly outline the background to the current land situation in the country. Second, we will look at current arguments for and against land registration and arguments for recording. The focus will be on customary land recording as a way forward for the country in terms of formalising customary land rights in the hope of preparing it for engaging in development.

Background to the land situation in Solomon Islands
The two types of land tenure systems prevailing in Solomon Islands today have evolved over time from the interplay of socio-political forces and the various land
policies and regulations. Colonial rule and the subsequent introduction of the Land and Titles Act 1969, post-independence politics and urbanisation equally played leading roles in shaping the current land administration. About 85 per cent of land in Solomon Islands is still held under customary tenure arrangements as provided for under the Constitution and Land and Titles Act (LTA). As a result it has the potential to stifle development.

Through historical interactions with global forces over the last 100 or so years, customary and Crown land are the two remaining tenure systems that dominate current land administration in Solomon Islands. After the implementation of the Independence Order of 1977 all alienated land become Crown land, while all land that was not previous alienated became customary land. As a result of the Order, about 15 per cent of the total land area of the country became Crown land.

Much of the land affected by the Independency Order was acquired through the use of land policies and regulations enacted by the colonial government. The following are means at which land was alienated from Solomon Islanders by the colonial government.

- Wasteland Policy
- Native Lease
- Individual ownership by foreigners through direct dealing with landowners
- Land held by foreign companies

After Independence, governments continued to implement land policies that were seen by many Solomon Islanders as destructive to the continual survival of customary land tenure systems. These came in the form of provisions in the Land and Titles Act such as the Land Settlement Scheme, the infamous Land Acquisition Process (LAP) as provided for in Section V of the LTA and the Compulsory Acquisition Power to forcefully obtain land for the government. Implementation of the Land Settlement Scheme in particular was prevented by Parliament because of its unpopularity and the negative impact it had on the customary land tenure system, while the Compulsory Acquisition Power has rarely been applied. This left the government with the only option: acquiring land for development through the Land Acquisition process. When both the national and provincial governments want land for public purposes the most likely provision to be used is the Land Acquisition Process.

Current situation of land in Solomon Islands
Currently, access to land is a challenging proposition in Solomon Islands and especially on customary land, by far the largest portion of the land in the
country. From personal observation, the answer to why we have most development concentrated only in Western and Guadalcanal Provinces is because it is in these two provinces that the government has the most Crown land. This trend will continue into the future unless we find a solution to ensure customary land is made available at all times for development purposes.

The challenge is balancing the interest of customary landowners, to be part of development by benefiting from leasing their land and enjoying other benefits derived from development as part of the nation’s economy. It is however sad to note that lack of legal mechanism to ensure that happens is in fact what prevents access to customary land for development. This answers the question, is customary land a liability? It is not a liability if we have the right legal mechanism in place which first recognise customary land owners’ rights through recording, then protects those rights through formal recognition, and lastly puts in place a robust administrative system to manage our customary land system. With this in place then only custodians of customary land can open up their land for development. In the absence of such a system, classical economists will continue to see customary land as a liability.

You may ask why we are so concerned about protecting customary land, at the expense of the country’s economic growth? Dismantling the customary land system would be harmful to the nation, especially when the majority of our rural population rely entirely on the customary land system for their livelihood. Most private farming and economic activities undertaken by rural people are done on customary land. To change the tenure of the land overnight and replace it with another system would destroy the nation and its rural peoples’ livelihood. Furthermore, in the absence of a vibrant private and public sector to create employment for people, it would be unwise to destroy our customary land tenure system. What the people are asking for is a hybrid system that formalises customary land rights, giving them recognition and protection, to allow customary owners to engage in development and also be able to develop their land and resources.

Challenges facing customary land

Customary land is at risk of becoming individualised if the current legal mechanism is applied to its registration. Landowning groups throughout the country are always suspicious of registering their customary land using the acquisition process and other provisions provided in the Land and Titles Act.

Landowners are frustrated to realise every time they go to the Ministry of Lands seeking a way to secure their customary rights to their land, that under current legal mechanisms it is impossible. Landowners have always supported the concept of recording customary rights, to ascertain ownership of land. However, past governments have not shown interest in doing so until the
impressive result of the pilot project on recording for the Auluta oil palm project on Malaita Island was there to prove to them that recording is the best way forward if customary land can be made available for development. The Auluta pilot recording project has proved that when recording is done carefully with landowners, customary land can be freed up for development. It also showed that if attention is focused on customary aspects of land and not on meeting legal requirements, proper identification of people who own the land can be accomplished without dispute.

**Customary land defined**
The definition of customary land is land owned and controlled by tribes, clans or families where traditional and customary norms and practices govern their tenures and administration.

Customary lands, according to Gideon Zoloveke, belong to the past, present and future generations. Land existed before humans, so, in the context of customary land, the land owns the inhabitants because each person is born into a family that has links to tribal land. The classic Western definition of ownership cannot be applied to customary land. A person technically only has rights to land and can never ‘own’ the land. The customary land sector controls roughly 85 per cent of the land holdings in Solomon Islands. It is governed by customary law, and the rights and interests range from allodial (free-hold), through usufruct to tenancy. Customary land also supports the livelihood of more than 70 per cent of our country’s population.

Under the current laws:

- Customary land is governed by customary laws, which differ from place to place and are not written down;
- Customary land is inalienable, except to Solomon Islanders, and in other very limited circumstances;
- Those entitled to deal with customary land, as owners, and as holders of various interests in the land and its natural resources, are not readily identifiable;
- The boundaries of customary land are not surveyed and are often disputed;
- There is no suitable mechanism for customary landowner groups to join together as a legally recognised entity to hold and manage the resources and to distribute benefits in an open and transparent way.

Custom or the custom law of each island or tribe or language group normally defines the types of rights and their holders. There are stronger rights and weaker
rights. Under custom, whoever holds stronger rights to the land often is the leader of the group. They control and manage the land on behalf of everyone. The individual has the authority to speak about the land. In the process of recording outlined below, to show proof of links and rights to the land, the owners must present their genealogy and are asked to form themselves into a legal grouping with a constitution.

Customary land tenure systems operate using two different descent systems. For most of the Solomon Islands transfer of land rights within a tribal group is through the female, with the exception of Choiseul, Malaita and the Polynesian outlying islands which have patrilineal descent systems. Under the latter system, rights to land within the tribe transfers through the brothers to their children, and all the male children to their children, with the first male child providing the leadership role.

The former system operates from a matrilineal base, recognising the role of both brother and sister in the tribe, while rights to land are transferred through the sister to her children. Respect however, continues to be accorded to the brother of the mother as he is the great uncle who normally becomes the chief of the tribe. Under this matrilineal system, women cannot be the bearer of the tribe and the chief at the same time. Outsiders often make derogatory remarks to members of the matrilineal system, questioning why with a system that recognises women are the landowners, women are denied the right to speak about land. Those remarks only reflect people’s shallow understanding of the intricate relationship and power play within the matrilineal system. Under the matrilineal system, secret knowledge about the land is transferred through the brother of the sister, so it is difficult for women to speak on land issues because they do not have the secret knowledge of the land. Discussions on land matters can only be done between males of the tribe.

Arguments against registration of customary land
When government acquires land from customary land owners through the Land Acquisition Process, it has two options: one is to lease, and the other is to do an outright purchase of the land. The second option is straight forward; the land is removed from the tribal group and its Perpetual Estate title or Fee Simple interest is vested in the Commissioner of Lands. However, it is the second option that is problematic for tribal owners of land. From experience, many land owners have shared their concern.

- The five trustees appointed do not always represent the true interests of the tribe.
- The trustees have failed on many occasions to behave appropriately as specified under Common Law.
• The trustees should not be given the Perpetual Estate title. The Perpetual Estate on customary land should always be the property of the tribe.

Trusteeship is best held by respected individuals who are not landowners, because there is an element of conflict of interest in being a landowner while also a trustee.

These concerns were expressed by some tribal members who have seen firsthand how their trustees subdivided their tribal land amongst themselves using the Perpetual Estate power vested in them. Some trustees, without the consent of their tribe, went ahead to subdivide the land and started selling blocks of land to settlers from other provinces. The above examples are extreme cases, but true cases none the less, and cases that as custodians of tribal land we must not entertain. The legal mechanism of registration and creation of trustees can be premised on an ulterior motive of creating private ownership of land. Rogue trustees can cause this disastrous situation, even at the expense of creating landless individuals.

Current arguments against the acquisition process
The Acquisition Officer (AO) is restricted and bound by limits. On some occasions people who the AO contacted to be recognised as the rightful owners able to sell or lease the land to the government are not the right people. By calling for objections in the second meeting, when there was no proper process of identification you are almost certain to have several objections. This invites litigation and therefore delays in development. Court decisions can also favour the wrong people. AO officers often select individuals who knew little about the system of ownership of the area. The provision assumes that identification of the vendor and lessor will be straight forward, however that cannot be said for customary land.

Arguments for recording
Recording will help in defining rights to land. Recording provides proper identification of tribes and individuals who have claims of ownership. Recording empowers the House of Chiefs as the legitimate body under the Local Court Act to confirm and approve materials collected. This allows information to be shared for the benefit of everyone. In this way, rights of ownership are confirmed by neighbours and the process is transparent and not time bound. Recognition by all stakeholders confirms any customary ownership claim.

Recording as the way forward
In 2007 when Dr Marjorie Sullivan reviewed the land recording program at Auluta, she said:
Formal recognition by Government of agreed customary land boundaries and associated traditional owners may be sufficient for economic purposes, without the need to proceed to registration.

This was exactly what the people have wanted all along, that their rights to their land had to be recognised and confirmed by neighbouring tribes and the government. It would be enough to prevent any dispute over who owns the land. The whole tribal land does not have to be registered; instead a recognition certificate issued by the government would be provided for the tribal land. However, for development purposes, on parts of the tribal land, registration must take place for that particular space. Dr Sullivan went on to say that an appropriate objective now would be to design an agreed form of recording customary land and the names of its custodians that may be held in either a provincial or national register. Below is a recording process refined as a result of the pilot study at Auluta Basin.

The example below is based on Customary Land Recording Act 1994 with modification according to the Auluta experience.

The process
An area is identified for development in a declaration by the Minister who declares the area is a recording area for proposed development. Tribes within the area fill out application forms to be part of the recording. Then the application forms are processed. Applicants are asked to provide a rough sketch of the tribal lands included in the declared area. These materials are endorsed and verified by the House of Chiefs responsible for the declared area. Awareness and training for the recording process and requirements is developed, the boundary is surveyed and the recorded information is submitted to be registered by the Tribal Land Trust Board. Three months’ notice is given and then a Certificate of Customary Ownership is issued to the Trust Board. The national government then issues a certificate to the tribal group as the landowning group and copies are filed in the provincial registries. Application is made to the Local Court to adopt the decision of the House of Chiefs as the decision of the Local Court. This registration process identifies the areas available for development.

The process includes a map of the land boundary, a constitution of the tribe, a signed certificate by the House of Chiefs, a copy of the three months’ notice document, a copy of tribe’s family tree, a copy of minutes of the Tribal Association’s meeting, and signed copies of Boundary Agreement Forms.

The framework below shows the three basic components in customary land tenure systems: land and property, owners of rights, and bundle of rights. Recording of properties is straightforward: we deal with the boundaries. The other component, social circumstances, is the most troublesome. Customary
laws define what rights a person possesses and their status on the land. Often, disputes over customary land exist at this level and recording can ensure that individuals and the rights they hold are recognised and protected.

**Figure 1: Conceptual framework of recording**

*Untangling the bundle of rights in customary land*

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**Conflict resolution in recording**

You may well be asking, how do you resolve conflicts when doing recording? From experience with the pilot recording scheme in the Auluta area, the approach taken is holistic. Recording uses a conflict resolution method; because we view customary land as a problem, the process designed to do recording is itself an alternative resolution method.

The use of awareness and the importance of time allocated for these stages of the process showed our concern for the dangers of lack of awareness amongst the landowners. Also, the choice of language used during presentation of records is important. For instance, when someone disagrees with another tribe’s presentation, they will immediately be given the opportunity to raise their points of concern. The recording officer asks the people to avoid using the word ‘dispute’.

Most records are collected by the tribes themselves and one way of gathering the information is to hold what was termed a reconciliation meeting, where all tribal group members throughout the country, even those living overseas, have to attend to show and register their interest over the land. From the Auluta experience, it was during these ceremonies that breakthrough often was achieved, especially between parties that had differences. They managed to resolve their difference and made commitments to work together as a unit for the betterment of the tribe.
Figure 2: Example of a recorded customary land

Recording as a stepping stone to further development
Recording is not all that is needed. In fact recording only formalises the customary institutions that hold land under custom and is the stepping stone for many things to come. Once all land in Solomon Islands is recorded, then the question we will ask is what next? You and I know very well that next thing is to enable and empower the tribal authorities to lease land for development. Land recorded it only that – a record. However, recording formalises and protects aspects of customary land. There is a need for a legal mechanism to create a body that would eventually manage and lease the recorded land on behalf of the people. The body will have many functions and these should be spelt out clearly in the legal framework.

This administrative law will deal with issues of leasing recorded customary land to investors. The body must sign agreements with landowning groups to lease their land on their behalf, with all benefit sharing clearly spelt out in the law. Once this is in place, access to customary land would be made easier and development in both traditional and new forms such as carbon trading, conservation, mining, tourism and others aspects of development will thrive in the new setup.

Conclusion
Customary landowners were left alone by the colonial government to manage their own affairs through traditional institutions. This remained the situation
long after Independence in 1978. It has now reached a point that these institutions cannot withstand the pressure of globalisation and therefore need the support of the state to straighten the administrative processes. The question we need to ask is are we going to continue to allow these institutions to face undue pressure from development? One thing we must understand is that the traditional institutions cannot handle the pressure and today most of these institutions are showing signs of coming apart. If we do not rescue them urgently we are at risk of creating a landless society.

Land management and administration has therefore been on an *ad hoc* basis, mainly based on the custom of each island, tribe, and clan. Effective and efficient management of customary lands in the country has therefore not been achieved. This situation has created constraints and challenges for both customary land owners and users which impedes development. However, with the commencement of the government’s Customary Land Tenure Reform Project there is hope that there will be an overhaul of the system. Recording is one way of ensuring that these institutions are recognised and given authority to deal with land matters while a new body is created to deal with leasing the land for development. The project, when fully implemented, will develop a sustainable and well-functioning land administration system that is fair, efficient, cost effective, decentralised and that enhances land tenure security. Strengthening customary land administration will bring sanity into the system.
Women engage in many commercial activities and are the major retailers in the markets.
Trish Dallu of Trish’s Beauty and Hair Salon is one of Honiara’s most successful business women. For over twenty-four years her salon has provided a focus for women in Honiara, showing that with perseverance and good commercial sense women can be successful in business. She was the recipient of an Excellence in Service Delivery Award at the Solomon Islands Chambers of Commerce and Industry inaugural Business Awards in 2013.
Empowering Women in Business and Politics

Nanette Tutua

As a woman in business, I will be sharing my experiences with you and present to you my views on the best way forward. I may not be able to discuss gender issues in business because I am not an expert in this area and neither am I privy to gender based reports that might relate to business. I am also not an expert in politics, hence what I will say here is based on my experiences and my personal view on these issues.

Thanks to RAMSI

I would like to revert back to when RAMSI first arrived on the shores of this country. I was in Choiseul Province participating at a Lauru Women’s Conference organized by Ms Ruth Lilogula. Three women came from New Zealand to assist us in the conference. The women participants came from all over Choiseul Island and were taught life skills, crafts, governance and how to manage themselves. It was an enjoyable time for all the women. We were far away from all the troubles in Honiara, but I had some nagging feelings that back in town life was not normal and the future looked so bleak. We were not free to express ourselves, neither were we at ease to move around due to the presence of ethnic tension and rising criminal activities.

We were winding up our one week program when the good news came to us as a flood of joy that the Australian army had landed in Honiara. People are celebrating and jubilant all over town. The delight was contagious; it reached way down to the rural areas. I for one did not hear any fore-warning or prior information that this rescue was on the way, therefore the news brought so much pleasure to my heart that I wept for joy. Even now as I write and recall that moment, I can feel my eyes welling up in tears.

The arrival of RAMSI was a relief for 98 per cent of the population who lived through the tirades of those who disturbed the peace of this country and longed for our normal way of life in the pre-tension period. I must repeat that I was overwhelmed with joy. Life now seemed to have some meaning. We now had a future for
which to plan. Life had been bleak and gloomy up to that day. I returned to Honiara and continued to support my father in our family farm as the marketing manager.

I was working for the second largest Australian food company, Goodman Fielder International, until only a few months before the landing of RAMSI. The company had to discontinue its operation in Honiara and sold out due to the unrest and rising criminal activities. When that company left, some 200 plus employees lost their jobs including myself. Life was gloomy. We were living one day at a time. There were no future plans for anything.

Our farming business had been thriving because people had to eat, and not many people could come into town to sell their vegetables because they feared for their lives. However, in the meantime we suffered loss at the hands of the ruffians who had no respect for the law. Our farm truck had been stolen three times and on all occasions returned to us with much repair to be done. We had to put up with thieves who would harvest a whole plot just as it was ready for marketing. Night or day it did not make a difference. We were competing with the thieves. There was no ending. Some people could not help it. They had to steal to survive and feed their families.

Our family home was broken into a few times; on one occasion mum’s kitchen was cleaned out of all utensils and cutlery. These were not stealth break-ins. These were break-ins where the perpetrators threatened members of our family and took all our valuables. My father woke one night to find the barrel of a gun pointing at him, with demands that he turn over any money in the house. These incidences occurred after the peace agreements were signed. These snippets of episodes are just a few examples; they led us to desire a better, free, and a peaceful Solomon Islands. Therefore, when RAMSI arrived, it was like a new beginning for me and my family. The majority of the nation was jubilant. At this stage only the perpetrators, those who profited from the situation and those with selfish agendas, did not want RAMSI.

To me RAMSI’s intervention or ‘invasion’, as some would like to call it, is the greatest blessing to Solomon Islands this side of Independence. Peace and stability returned to Solomon Islands, fear and anxiousness over issues of unrest subsided. For that let us give a round of applause to RAMSI.

So RAMSI came and unrest subsided and created an atmosphere for this country to freely participate in politics, the economy, speech, religion, etc. Business started to boom, and women were able to express themselves in their own way which brings me to my topic.

In 2004 I entered the timber industry and saw profits from the sale of timber increase over the years as repair work was needed and new buildings sprang up due to the atmosphere of peace and freedom. I faced resistance from men when I first entered this industry but after a while they got used to it and it never became an issue.
Women in Business

Women of Solomon Islands have proven themselves in many ways since the return of peace to this nation. And in the context of business we have come a long way. We have not overcome all barriers but we are not being disadvantaged as such. One of the major achievements for women in business is the formalization of the Solomon Islands Women in Business Association (SIWIBA) and its office. The executives worked hard and sourced funding to operate their office. There are 450 members of this organization and 85 of this membership are women in the formal business sector. SIWIBA is affiliated to the Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce, which also has women members.

The SIWIBA runs and sources support services for their members, such as training, workshops and seminars on various business topics, health and environment issues, life skills and general issues. Their Mere Market allows their members, especially in the informal sector, to market and showcase their products. They also meet on a monthly basis. As a woman, I can proudly say that women are naturals in business operation. It is one of our attributes that we do not realize, but comes naturally to us. We begin at home; mothers every day make sure that food is placed on the table. Some mothers do it splendidly, others do not and that is the same with business. Not all come out super splendid but all who go into business have a sense of how to operate a business. Because women are good at it from home, they tend to thrive better when it comes to business. It is an undisputed fact that most women manage the home far better than men. If women can understand the whole concept of running a business properly, they should be very successful in their endeavor. Due to the environment of peace brought about by RAMSI’s presence, many women, especially in Honiara, are venturing into self-employment or doing something with the hope to make money.

Running a business as a woman can be challenging. One of the major challenges is that we women have extra domestic responsibilities that can hinder our full performance. Also, in a male dominated society like ours, women are not confident to perform fully on their own, but that is changing.

My aim today is not to highlight challenges but to highlight the advantages we as women have in running a business. I cannot speak on other women’s experiences but I will share my thoughts from my experiences.

There are certain success factors suggested by Professor Helen Fisher of Rutgers University and confirmed from my experience as to why women are successful. They are as follows:

- Good Communication skills — Many women tend to be better communicators than their male counterparts in expressing and articulating their ideas during sales and during meetings.
• People skills — Many women tend to be very effective at reading emotions in the faces of others and in deciphering postures, gestures and voice inflections. As a result they interact well and in doing so can make successful sales.

• Web thinking — women gather information or data from their surroundings and construct intricate relationships between the pieces of information. Men, in contrast, tend to compartmentalise information and focus only on what they feel is important or the only answer.

One typical example in my timber yard came during one of my overseas trips when our suppliers brought in oversized timbers 6" x 6". We do not have the formula for certain sizes on our template. I often fed that jobs like that in manually, however I was away, so the supervisor told the office either we wait for the boss to return next week or feed the tally at a lesser rate, which means we will short change the customer. A smart female said; “the suppliers need their money now, and we would be cheating, so why don’t you guys take the timber, run it through the machine, get two pieces and tally them accordingly.”

A very smart thought but it had to come from a female. Men tend to use linear thinking in problem solving. Women who do otherwise are better able to view the complexity of the situation and to weigh and assess more of the factors critical to decision making. Women tend to make better use of intuitions and imaginative thinking. They have an ability to employ multi-task analysis, have a capability for long term planning and possess a higher than average tolerance for ambiguity.

• Consensus building — Successful business women tend to be good negotiators; they view situations in win-win terms seeking to create harmonious relationships with the parties involved. A typical experience I had was with a boat load of timber. I was called to the wharf to buy this shipment. However, another buyer was already at the boat when I got there. He was getting very persuasive, abusive and aggressive with the timber owner because the timber owner insisted on giving the timber to me. The timber owner was confused as the other buyer was also very convincing with his price. I came up to the buyer and the timber owner and spoke very nicely to both, assuring the other buyer that the next trip would be his to purchase. I needed the stock more than him, so I suggested that he could wait. Perhaps it was the tone I used or the idea I presented, but he calmed down and left the scene.

• Building and nurturing relationships — Maintaining long-term client relationships in business often requires the development of friendship and the use of effective networking. Successful business women tend
to be very good at these things. This explains why successful business women and even women in leadership roles as managers and executives is now becoming normalized and important here in this country.

As purported earlier, I would like men to appreciate the fact that one of our major challenges in business is the home/work role conflict. This comes as time pressures, family size, and marriage status, and these challenges may put a strain on women attempting to be successful in business. I am only able to do what I do now, because the men in my home/work sphere are very supportive.

If all men of this country supported their women who possess the above qualities, their women will be very successful and the men will benefit. Less support from men will definitely decrease the success of the women.

Because of some challenges faced by women business entrepreneurs, I would like to suggest the following actions as a way forward.

- Financial communities should establish loan funds and training programs for women business owners and women’s entrepreneurial initiatives.
- Government, State-owned Enterprises and the private sector should establish training and technical assistance programs for women business owners. These programs should provide business women with the tools they need to grow their businesses and make them more successful.
- The government should take initiatives to foster continuing growth of women-owned businesses.
- Educational Institutions, and in this case the Solomon Islands National University (SINU), should create new opportunities for women who are interested in business.
- Corporations like supermarkets, hotels and big companies must develop national marketing initiatives so that women can tailor their products and services to specific needs.
- Media must highlight the efforts of business women who participate in the market at large.
- Research findings and testimonials on success of other women in business must be made available to women to inspire and empower them.

Women in Politics
Politics in Solomon Islands is said to be very corrupt. It is often echoed by many that our government process is corrupt because there are no women in Parliament, and men are often bribed to make bad decisions based on greed for money. US Supreme Court Judge Robert H. Jackson said “Men are more often bribed by their loyalties and ambitions than by money.” That may be true for
men in the US but men in Solomon Islands are bribed for loyalties, ambition and money as evident by the continuous switch from government to opposition in Parliament and vice versa.

Do we need women to go in to Parliament to stop corruption? I truly believe women should be represented in Parliament and at all levels of leadership. However, we must earn our positions the same way men go into Parliament or any leadership position. If we enter any other way, then it is the same corruption of which men are accused. Men and women must go through the same channels and systems.

We are only a young country; we have not evolved for many years like more affluent countries where more women hold leading positions. These countries have evolved for many years to what they are today; they have experiences and hurdles to overcome before getting to where they are today. If we jump the hurdles and experiences, we might miss out on certain things to prepare us for the inevitable.

I feel the cause of corruption is not because there are no women representatives in Parliament. I strongly believe it has to do with a spin-off effect of this country teaching it’s people to receive hand-outs in the forms of grants, Community Development Funds (CDF), Rural Constituency Development Funds (RCDF), projects, donor funds etc., from the highest level down to the grass roots. Therefore, we have high expectations of receiving financial assistance and are not doing things for ourselves. Because we do not have a clear cash-based livelihood we kept going to the politicians for help. They have their loyalties and ambitions and because the RCDF and other development budgets are under their disposal, they make bad decisions to use this money to give to the people to please them, and in the meantime those monies are not used for their proper purposes and so these politicians are now considered corrupt. Who corrupted these politicians? It is the people from their constituency who pressure them to give the money.

My father, who was a onetime Minister for Education and Minister for Agriculture, told me as a child “Do not spend your money before you earn it”. I have lived by that principle. We must teach our people to earn what they spend. Parliament is not meant to be a financial charity outlet; it is meant to be where laws of the land are written and decided upon.

I am confident that one day soon Solomon Island women will become leaders in politics and other crucial organizations. As a Commissioner in the Public Service Commission I am proud to see more women starting to hold senior positions in the ministries. Let us evolve towards our success. Let us not jump the gaps.

I would like to appeal to our men folks and suggest the way forward. Provide the women of this country with choice. Choice builds and develops character for
both genders, and it is character that makes us strong. As a Christian country we believe in God. God offers free choice; it is humans that like to control. Abraham Maslow is famous for his hierarchy of needs: self-actualisation, esteem, love/belonging, safety and psychological. Anne Roiphe in her 1991 book *In Pursuit of Happiness* added three more to Maslow’s list: fun, freedom and faith.¹ These are very powerful tools available to our country since we embrace Christianity. If we claim to be a Christian country then we must ‘Walk the Talk’. There are more females than males in this country. Allow the women to make the choice as to who they want during the elections. It will make a big difference to the way in which we choose the leaders of our country.

In conclusion, the simple formula below should be the answer:

\[ \text{EWBP} = \sum (W+M+R)G^2 \]

EWBP: Empowering Women in Business and Politics
\( \sum \) = Sum of
\( W \) = women
\( M \) = men
\( R \) = RAMSI
\( G^2 \) = working together to the power of God squared.
Honiara is a modern city with a thriving harbour and docks. Business today is increasingly international. Many of the inter-island ships delivering people and cargoes around the provinces are owned by Solomon Islanders.
Solomon Airlines provides the main air transport for the nation, internally and internationally. Solomon Islanders are now travelling overseas as seasonal workers in the New Zealand and Australian fruit industries.
Honiara's market (top) is the largest in the nation and operates each day of the week. For most Solomon Islanders, markets like old Auki market (bottom) are more casual and often outdoors.
Putting Common Sense into All this Business Talk: What’s happening, what to do, what to look forward to.

Sebastian Ilala

Let me take this opportunity to thank RAMSI and the government of Solomon Island. My presentation is based the simplest facts that I have experienced. It is by no means judgmental upon others, nor it is a criticism on anyone but like the saying goes, “what doesn’t kill you make you stronger”. At the beginning, let me ask three questions.

What’s been happening?
I would like to look at what actually has been happening in the country for the past ten years, and forget the economic indicators and the advice that has been given. Just look at where people are now. We have GDP growth. Yes, we are working on positive growth indicators since the ‘Tension’ years, but are people well off? I think the standard of living, the lives, the homes and the food we eat is the same as or worse than in pre ‘Tension’ years. Generally, people are still living on rice, Taiyo and probably vegetables, or worse, nothing at night. The rural economies still subsidize the national economy, the three largest commodity contributors to GDP still are less than 3 per cent of the national budget and the infrastructures are still worse off than before.

What have we been doing?
What have we done to alleviate ourselves from indicators which suggest that we are not doing well and to ensure that we are actually moving ahead? Do we have solid examples to back this case? I will go through this with you in the presentation.

How can we improve on things?
What ways can we work on to improve the good things we are actually doing? How can we as a country, not just a government, work to improve ourselves and get it into our heads that we need a bit of common sense thinking. Looking to the future, where are we going and what can we do?
What’s been happening?

**Infrastructure**

With the nation’s population well over 500,000 and Honiara’s population thought to be over 80,000, we need to develop a supporting infrastructure, not only to ease the lives of citizens but also to create a pleasant environment for visitors and to encourage investors. Basic infrastructure needs to be improved dramatically, particularly in establishing a steady and reliable supply of water and electricity, and improving health and communication facilities. The Solomon Islands Water Authority (SIWA) deals with water supplies throughout the Solomon Islands. However, water provision in the villages is better than in Honiara. We all know and dread the times in Honiara when we turn on a tap and nothing comes out. It depends where you live and the hilly areas are always worse. Honiara seems to be getting some traction in this but we are a couple of years off from getting a consistent water supply. At the same time, the Solomon Islands Electricity Authority (SIEA) needs to improve power supply and penetration of power throughout the Solomon Islands. I am enjoying my role on the SIEA Board and feel that I can make a difference. There is still inconsistent power supply throughout the capital and the various provinces. Electricity costs are constantly moving higher in Solomon Islands with the country’s monopoly provider SIEA trying to build itself up again after huge losses, and still using old networks and out of date generators. World Bank involvement has been outstanding and this has made SIEA profitable again, but I think the next step is to provide reliable electricity.

The nation’s main medical facility is Honiara’s National Referral Hospital. Clearly, these medical facilities need to be upgraded urgently as population is increasing and there is no other way to go. It is a disgusting place to work or stay. I know that the nurses and doctors hate it but what have we been doing? Much of the equipment comes from donors like AusAID, Rotary, and the Solomon Airlines Infant Programmes. Why are we so reliant on donors? Surely this major medical facility should be a national priority to provide decent standards of health care for all people?

We now have the two telecommunication providers here which has improved communication, but the costs of international communication are still high, which makes commercial communication expensive. There communication companies should be able to assist in other areas throughout the country, such as providing improved commodity trading, information of health and emergency services and so on.

**Human resources**

The Solomon Islands does not have a developed nation profile. Where as Australia has 93 per cent employed and 7 per cent unemployed, we have 7 per
cent employed and 93 per cent unemployed. We need to develop our national economy to provide as much employment and capacity to earn cash.

There is a large ‘brain drain’ of skilled workers overseas. For a country the size of Solomon Islands this is emerging as the greatest risk. For instance, we train top doctors and they are offered far superior pay packets by our neighbours within the Pacific. Can we blame them? Probably not, as they are not wealthy nations, yet they have prioritised their needs better than us, and are willing to pay. How can the ministry say they have under budgeted, and be proud of that when the hospitals are deteriorating? That’s just plain stupidity. Our first priority should be to keep our doctors, nurses and PhD graduates at home. These people can all make significant contributors to the national growth strategy.

There is a huge gap in employment in the Solomon Islands, and it makes no difference from where we view it, from rural areas to all the way up. Increased unemployment and underemployment in provinces has led to migration to the capital, and then when this happens, it in turn leads to a greater strain on resources in Honiara. This view has been echoed by the Honiara City Council but nothing has been done about this. There is no plan to build employment opportunities.

**Tourism**

Past planning decisions did not encourage tourism in the way that Vanuatu has clearly made a choice to build on its potential to attract tourism. The Solomon Islands has the same potential. Yet, arrival numbers are still low and focused more on meetings and conferences than on tourists staying here, relaxing and exploring Solomon Islands. I think the Visitors Bureau are genuinely working hard but without any strong results coming through with other stakeholders like the Tourism Ministry, civil aviation, shipping and planes. This links with current infrastructure and the need to make it alluring for tourists to stay and relax in Honiara before flying or boating to the other islands.

**Climate change**

The issue of climate change has not been addressed fully at a national level. Sea water levels on the lower and artificial islands and atolls throughout the country are eating through homes, gardens and communities. Even on larger islands, villages close to the beach will be affected. This will eventually push refugees from climate change through to the higher islands. Our current agriculture stocks will be affected. Climate change in our island nation will have a huge effect on migration of people, businesses and our future.

**Exports industries, trade and taxation**

Funding of contracts for incoming revenue need to be addressed in-country to take full accountability of revenue streams addressed by the Central Bank.
of Solomon Islands (CBSI) and the Inland Revenue Department (IRD). Trade agreements are a national joke in business circles as they are not really benefiting Solomon Islands. On-going negotiations of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (Pacer Plus) and the South Pacific Regional Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement (SPARTECA) is an issue that is not carried forward. The current format of the trade agreements, especially that of the Pacer Plus agreement, has some enormous loopholes that allow Asian trade to increase through the islands. I think that is why PNG and probably Fiji are not too keen on the current format of the Pacer Plus. Add taxation to all of this. The problem with current tax structure is that it is not pro-business or pro-growth. Everything is taxed: our children’s education is being taxed, bonuses for hard work are being taxed, housing allowances are taxed, utilities allowances are double taxed, and donations are being taxed. Tax concessions and just saner tax structures in regard to basics could enable the economy to grow without government assistance. It is the government and its attitudes which are holding us back.

**Land**

An earlier paper in this workshop by Genesis Kofana, helped us focus on ways to develop our land. We are a land rich Pacific nation, compared with most of our neighbours. But the issue of how we deal with customary land tenure is holding up a lot of development in this country. There are ways forward, but while we have such a high percentage of the nation’s land tied up in customary communal ownership there will always be limits on what businesses can accomplish. We all appreciate the value of our customary ways, but there needs to be an accommodation reached so that modern development can move ahead. This should also be a Government priority, but I do not see signs that this is the case. Land issues must be resolved for bigger investments throughout the country. On a smaller scale, family units of land have been an economic driver. Commodity crops such as cocoa and coconut have been used and are a substantial contribution of SD$250 million per annum to the economy. We need to create systems for land transfers to be seamless. The Vanuatu experience needs to be researched and this is now in motion.

**What have we been doing?**

There needs to be greater coverage of reforms happening with State Owned Enterprises (SOEs). Solomon Airlines is now making profit after reform programs putting the right people in the right jobs and working to deal with things like the International Air Transport Association’ International Operational Safety Unit (IATA/IOSA) accreditation which will no doubt open doors to strategic alliances through the region and outside. The corporate objectives that Solomon Airlines
Putting common sense into all this business talk

Putting common sense into all this business talk share with the government are in place to not only build an airline but to build the country, and this is vice versa. SIEA has experienced strong governance, and compliance with the State Owned Enterprises Act and an improved financial situation in 2012–2013. However, we are still yet to see tariffs and consistent supply improve. New generator equipment has been ordered and it is likely that this is the first time in twenty-five to thirty years that proper procurement of electricity generators is being done for the company. The move to what is known as ‘G-2’—having spare generator power—is possible.

Generally there is business growth and improvement in ways of doing business in the Solomon Islands, but then we are also making it harder to sustain a business here. Tax is still an issue. And when we do ask questions of the government, no-one replies. Investment packages are weak and negotiations end with the issue of land. Locals should be enabled to grow their businesses and be provided with the basic skills to enable these businesses to grow. However, attempting to do things within a four year parliamentary term is not sensible; we need assurance of long-term planning and stability. Business confidence reflects a stable environment. I know the private sector will be looking closely at the national elections next year.

How can we improve on things?

Infrastructure
We need to make improvements with basic infrastructure such as water, electricity and market access. Market access for the fundamentals of getting our commodities out to markets is a possibility but we also need proper quarantine facilities to make sure our goods can be accepted in other countries such as Australia and New Zealand. Road networks are improving, but some of the construction work involves poor workmanship. We do not have people checking on these contractors and therefore in the end we waste tax payer’s monies on these infrastructures. Our wharf network is improving, but our ships are not. Just go down to the docks at Point Cruz. Some of these ships look like they are nearly sinking and we risk our lives by going on board. Other crucial infrastructure in the provinces also needs upgrading, i.e. the wharves at Kira Kira and Vella Lavella, the airports at Taro and Rennell-Bellona. We are building these airports without consulting with our national airline. Some of the airports we are constructing are for Twin Otters, but they are out of the range for this style of aircraft. We are making things harder and more expensive for us to get to our outer regions when if we consulted we could build facilities suitable for Dash 8 aircraft.

Aviation and tourism
What I want to stress is that too often there is very little evidence of dialogue between stakeholders and authorities. One example is aviation. Currently I sit
on the Solomon Airlines Limited Board. Authorities have failed to support Solomon Airlines as our national carrier. When there were negotiations over the current Air Service Agreement there was no mention of the airline being invited to participate, although past minutes showed that Qantas and Virgin were present at negotiations. And our Air Service Agreements allows Air Pacific to fly into Honiara and onwards, but Solomon Airlines cannot fly to Nadi and onwards. Where is the fairness in that arrangement and should not our membership of the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) be able to sort it out? Does our Department of Foreign Affairs know about these Air Service Agreements negotiations?

Aviation links to tourism. Currently, sixty-five percent of available seats are taken up but we cannot fill the rest because tourists do not have a place to stay here. The Solomon Islands needs another 2,000 beds for tourist accommodation. We need another hotel of the calibre of the Heritage Park Hotel to feed the demand currently expected in Solomon Islands. Each province should have a niche tourism market developed. This will allow a broader marketing strategy that allows tourism to grow. Businesses cannot grow unless we can market Solomon Islands properly.

Solomon Airlines deserves government support. It has strong governance, good management, and improving projections for its future. Support for Solomon Airlines is not just about building an airline; it is about building a nation.

**Human resources: employment and the brain drain**

We need tax breaks for first home buyers. We need some initiatives for our children to stay in Solomon Islands and work here. Our neighbours are offering duty exemptions for vehicles and stamp duty exemptions with a cut in interest rates for first home buyers. There is a new educated generation that has studied for four years in overseas tertiary institutions, especially at the University of the South Pacific in Fiji, and at tertiary institutions in Papua New Guinea, Australia and New Zealand. They want to set up life here but the country needs to make them comfortable. We need to encourage them to stay working for the government and to stay stably with one employer, not moving around amongst the business houses in Honiara, shopping for the best deals in employment. We need to think about all ways to get these recent graduates to stay and develop our nation. The government should be considering dropping stamp duty for first home buyers and first car buyers, and there should be more negotiation with the banks over the level of interest on home loans.

**Employment**

We need to get the businesses to create employment. The business houses can create employment, but, as I have experienced, once people work harder and
receive pay increases, the tax office also grabs a larger chunk. A stronger economy makes for a stronger base to get companies growing to enhance employment but this must be with a stable government that will work as custodians rather than over paid project managers who are single signatories to the public’s purse. Stakeholders must allow businesses to grow. Stakeholders such as the government ministries need to be aware of changing economies and therefore approach the private sector to see where they need to go.

Exports and Trade
Logging and fishing stocks are depleting and how are we going to replace these commodities in our economy? We must make sure that local businesses are not being pushed to the side by larger businesses that are branches of international companies. Commodity trade must focus on making sure Solomon Islanders are not destroyed by foreign businesses undercutting prices on the domestic market. Local businesses must be protected or assisted to grow the local economy. Funds for exports must be accountable in-country rather than through off-shore processing of funds. Trading in commodities makes a large contribution to our economy but relies on less than 3 per cent of budget assistance.

Current trade agreements highly benefit PNG and Fiji. We do not have real benefit at this stage. Trade agreements like MSG, PACER Plus, EPA, and SPARTECA must work to benefit the Solomon Islands. Their rationale must be for local benefit rather than to assist superpowers to take over the economies of smaller nations. I believe that Pacer Plus is not going to work in its current formation. EPA is still going on after ten years – what a waste of time. SPARTECA is worthless without trade from the Pacific getting through Australian and New Zealand boarders, held back by quarantine. The MSG should work on creating trade regulations which are favorable for Pacific nations. And how should we react to cheap products from China and other Asian areas flooding into the Pacific?

Looking forward to the future
The Solomon Islands economy needs to be stronger to enable continued growth. We need to develop ways of market access for the rural areas to bring their commodities into ports. We need better dialogue between businesses and the stakeholders, especially the government, on key areas of development. In conclusion, we all need to remember that progress and change will come from evolving and involving the private sector. The days of centralised economic development sponsored by government have long gone. Government does need to be involved in making laws to regulate land tenure, production and exports, and clever granting of concessions to ensure that individuals and companies can prosper, but nevertheless the centre of economic development will always come
from the private sector. We need to expand dialogue between government and the private sector.

The 2014 National Elections are looming, so we are watching with great interest to see what will happen after that.
The Crest of the Solomon Islands nation reminds us that “To Lead is to Serve”. The National Parliament is the home for making laws for the nation where leaders should put their constituents and the national interests first.
The office of Governor General, at present occupied by Sir Frank Kabui (pictured above), is the highest in the land. Sir Peter Kenilorea, the first Prime Minister and later Speaker of the National Parliament (pictured below), is considered one of the leading statesmen of the Pacific Islands.
Getting Leaders to Lead: How do we get Solomon Islands politicians to think and behave in the national interest?

Jude Solomon Devesi

Introduction
The occasion of the tenth anniversary of the arrival of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) presents us with an opportunity to take stock of how far we have come with the support of our regional ‘friends’. It is also a time to reflect on the many challenges that still lie ahead, and how we as Solomon Islanders can successfully address them. This paper discusses the issue of leadership and the challenges of advancing the national interest in Solomon Islands. It also attempts to discuss possible ways of addressing these challenges, as a way of looking forward to a post-RAMSI future.

Before we do that, I wish to qualify my views in this paper. I am not qualified to fully analyse or recommend solutions on the issue of leadership in this nation. Moreover, I have been asked to comment on a question that we as a country has struggled with for decades; a question no one has yet answered satisfactorily to this day. My views in this paper are thus meant to add to the ongoing debate on this topic and hopefully help us to reflect on it on today’s occasion. Needless to say, the views expressed in this paper are the author’s own and do not represent those of my employer.

What makes a leader?
To truly grasp the magnitude of the question before us, we must go back to the basics, starting with what we define as a ‘leader’. Most of us instantly think of politicians when we hear the word ‘leaders’. However, we all know that leaders do not only exist at the national level, but also in other levels within our society as well. It is also important to note from the outset that leadership is behaviour, and not a position. Therefore, one does not automatically become a leader solely because of appointment to a certain position. There are countless definitions of what a leader is. Rather than attempt to provide a single definition of leadership I would rather point out the different characteristics of a leader by borrowing from the literature on business and management and applying it to our case of political leadership.
First, it is said that leaders must have followers, otherwise there will be no one to lead and the entire role becomes pointless. Also, only followers can decide who their leader will be; at least in a democratic society. Second, a leader is typically committed to change and progress so that he/she can make things happen. Ideally, leaders focus on progress for the advancement of their followers with the ultimate goal being to improve their people’s lives. Third, a leader provides vision and empowers others to achieve their desires. The leader does this through his/her ability to change people’s behaviour and the ability to influence others to apply his/her way of thinking, thus creating a strong team. In the political context, the team can be the entire nation. Fourth, a leader is expected to have effective communication skills because this underpins the effectiveness of all the other characteristics. Lastly, a leader is someone who takes risks. In political leadership, this implies that one has to take a decision for or against an issue and be prepared to defend one’s actions; and there is rarely political neutrality exercised. An ancillary to this is that the leader must take both credit and blame, whilst leaving his/her followers to cop a beating when errors occur.

The characteristics described above are the individual traits we expect of our leaders regardless of the context. The other side of the equation of course is the standpoint of the followers. For a leader, public perception is the reality; it is everything. This is particularly true for political leadership. Often, it does not matter whether an action of a leader is not legally prohibited or technically correct. What does matter is how his/her people see the action. If they judge it to be unethical or simply wrong, no amount of legalistic explanations will stop the people from losing faith in their leader; by his/her action that leader will lose reputation/popularity and thus become less of a leader. For this reason, we often use perception surveys or polls to assess a lot of the activity surrounding government performance and action, such as the RAMSI People’s Survey. The recent People’s Survey conducted in 2013 shows that, when compared with the 2011 Survey, a higher percentage of respondents perceived honesty, equitable funds distribution, consultation and helping their supporters as characteristics of a good leader. It is in light of the above observations that I now wish to turn our focus to the issue of national interest and how national politicians represent this.

**What is ‘the national interest’?**

On one level, ‘the national interest’ is a simple concept: it is what is best for the nation. Put succinctly, for a political leader to think and behave in the national interest, he/she must always put the best interests of the country ahead of his/her personal interests and those of his/her relatives and voters. Consequently, this means that a leader must never use his/her position for personal gain or to favour his/her people, friends or acquaintances. To do so would amount to abuse of office and corruption. This highlights a very strong inverse correlation
between national interest and corruption. Acting in the national interest does not only mean taking positive steps to benefit the nation but also to refrain from acting corruptly; for corruption is the ultimate undoing of national interest.

Acting in the national interest in developing countries is rather complex because such nations are often bedevilled by all sorts of divisive factors. For instance, can an elected political representative like a Member of Parliament (MP) or Member of a Provincial Assembly (MPA) truly represent the interest of the wider group (nation or province) when they hold office at the pleasure of a small number of voters confined to a very small locality? This also gives rise to the question of mandate, usually understood to be a command or authorization to act in a particular way or ways on public issue/s given by the electorates to their representatives. What is the true mandate of a political leader in our country?

I do not have any answer to this highly debatable issue. Some think MPs in this country may never be able to act in the national interest. Ashley Wickham, for instance, argues that given that incentives are often for MPs to do well for their constituency instead of the nation, if there is a mandate it must surely be a local one. If they fail the nation, they can still get re-elected so we must ask: who then works for the nation? With these questions in mind, let us take a look at where we are today on this issue.

The current situation
We have a centralised system of government supported by agencies (the provinces). We elect our political leaders through a ‘first past the post’ electoral system. Hence, most of our elected representatives are put into office by a small percentage of their respective constituency or ward. Since we do not have a strong political party system, governments rise and fall through rather fluid arrangements amongst individuals as opposed to established parties. The question is whether, in this context, our political leaders have been thinking and behaving in the national interest. Sadly, it appears they have not.

Over the ten years since the arrival of RAMSI, we have seen progress being made in the revival and strengthening of state institutions, such as the courts, judiciary and the Parliament. However, the trust and confidence of the majority of Solomon Islanders in our national leaders still remains a major challenge. The 2013 RAMSI People’s Survey, for instance, indicates an increase in the percentage of people (56.3 per cent) who are not satisfied with their MP. I suspect that the figure would be a lot higher if a wider sample of our population was surveyed, especially those residing in rural areas. We do not need a formal survey to realise the high level of dissatisfaction people have in national leaders. Just flick through the newspapers any day or ask any random man or woman in the street and you will find more ‘negatives’ than ‘positives’ as to opinions on MPs. The public perception appears to be that, generally speaking, our politicians
have a tendency to only act in their own interests and place national interests in second or third place, something to be brought up only in speeches of grandeur and only when convenient.

Why do our people think this? One does not have to be a political scientist or psychologist to figure this out. The reasons for people’s dissatisfaction are well known to us. For a start, it is quite likely that people are unhappy with their representatives because they feel he/she is not their true representative. This goes to the heart of the electoral system we have. The issue of representation is highly questionable because under the ‘first past the post’ system most MPs are voted in by a ‘minority’ of the constituency. Further, all MPs in the current Parliament between them have the support of only 35 per cent of all those who voted in August 2010. Those who make up the present government received only 27 per cent of votes cast. This situation can create an ‘illegal’ or ‘minority’ government and Parliament. As Ashley Wickham bluntly puts it, if our parliamentarians do not represent the majority of people who voted, how can they legitimately claim a mandate from the people to elect a Prime Minister and then approve national policies and the budget?

Another source of discontent is the use of Constituency Development Funds (CDF), which are no more than slush funds for each member of the National Parliament. It is likely that the criteria used by the public to judge MPs has changed dramatically as their roles have shifted with the introduction of these slush funds. Most MPs (if not all) have now been given the responsibility of fund management and project management instead of the usual policy and law-making responsibilities. The recently enacted Constituency Development Act 2013 has legitimised slush funds and increased funds that will be available to a MP to unprecedented levels. With the slush fund mentality, a MP who performs well in normal parliamentary duties may not necessarily be seen as effective unless he/she performs well in the affairs of CDF management. This is the expectation that CDF have created for our national leaders. Logically, one would expect that the more slush funds are available for MPs to spend on their respective constituencies, the more satisfied their people will be. The findings of the recent People’s Survey and comments in the media, however, indicate the exact opposite. Naturally, the only satisfied people are often the relatives, friends, business partners and voters of the MP. Slush funds are most likely not being used in the whole constituency’s interest, let alone national interest.

It is also becoming a common thing that national leaders are starting to ignore people’s perceptions. Ashley Wickham described this state of affairs as a lurch towards oligarchy – government by a small group who capture the people’s authority and act mainly for themselves. To a large extent, the oligarchy, born of logging, casinos, corruption and big money is already in place. They are the puppet masters who control the rip-off of the nation’s logging resource and who
want to remain in place for the mining boom that is starting again. More often than not, we hear national leaders using the ‘voice’ of the constituents through the mandate given to them on election to office as a justification for supporting a particular cause in debates of national interests. But there are certain flaws in these arguments, one of which is that this assumes that constituents have access to information and are able to understand it. Sometimes, information is also withheld deliberately from constituents, and this ignorance provides a platform for advancing personal interests at the cost of national interests and public popularity; an insignificant cost as it would not affect election results for reasons given above.

Another striking feature of our current system that our people dislike relates to executive decision making. Over recent years we have seen a decline in the importance of Cabinet as the sole executive policy decision making body under our Constitution. In its place we have the Caucus comprising backbenchers and political appointees (cronies). The Caucus has now replaced the functions that were once performed by Cabinet. Government MPs act on the wishes of the Caucus and not the majority in Parliament because the Caucus has the numbers to remove the Prime Minister (PM). They assume that because they had the majority to elect the PM, they have the right to dictate and approve national policies. However, when Caucus meets privately and secretly it includes non-elected officials and cronies as the ruling government sees fit. The Caucus is also not an institution of the government. It is a private meeting. When Parliament is in session, only elected MPs debate issues and this is done in public so that people can hear their MPs speak. That is the crucial difference. In the secrecy of the Caucus, strange deals can be and are being cooked up.

These are some of the characteristics of our national leadership that has led our people to distrust politicians and see them as selfish profit-making people who put national and people’s interests last. It may be that this is not true and people might simply be disgruntled for other reasons. Whatever the truth is, however, perception is reality in politics and this particularly negative and low perception cannot be ignored.

That being said, the situation is not all terrible. Our country continues to develop, even if slowly. Institutions are functional and some positive steps in the national interest are being undertaken. Many factors contribute to our nation not becoming a completely failed state because of the problems described above. Amongst the biggest of these over the past ten years has been RAMSI’s presence and work. In my opinion, as far as national leadership goes, RAMSI’s most useful contribution has been ensuring that corruption does not go wild and that there is no civil unrest or conflict. In terms of the former, although we still have high levels of corruption, as illustrated by the recent released Transparency International corruption barometer, RAMSI has provided an overarching
framework for reducing corruption through the re-institutionalization of systems of checks and balances. With regards to preventing unrest, law and order and security rank amongst the highest in RAMSI’s mandate and we must appreciate RAMSI’s hard work in that regard. These two contributions are absolutely critical to the issue of leadership because our recent history indicates that corruption was a major cause of the ‘Tension’ years and both corruption and civil unrest undermine any leadership quality that our politicians might have. In a setting where corruption is at its worse and civil unrest is frequent, national interest will be further demoted to mere academic debate. The crucial question now is whether these two evils will remain at bay after RAMSI departs?

Looking ahead
Granted, our current situation does not bode well for our future. That, however, does not mean we should give up in despair. What country ever gives up? What sovereign nation would be so bold to take positive steps only because an intervening force (RAMSI) is around? A tough situation leaves us with only one option: to keep working hard to find solutions or mitigate our problems if solutions prove too ambitious. In my humble layman’s opinion, if we are to look ahead to a better future, we must look back and also look outside the square so to speak. When undertaking this exercise, we must not look to lay blame on any particular individual or government, but rather to see how we could correct the wrong paths that we as a nation have taken as well as learn from other nations.

Mistakes from the past
Let us first look back. What went wrong? The first mistake clearly was our choice of electoral system at independence. Our choice worked for a few years but thereafter it started producing undesirable results. In the end, the represented feel unrepresented whilst the representatives are seen as only looking after themselves and their cronies. If we are to get better results, we must at least try another more representative system such as the limited preferential system.

The second mistake from the past was the introduction of slush funds in the 1990s. As noted earlier, this has changed the behaviour of both politicians and voters for the worse. It has also reinforced notions of a traditional big-man style of leadership at the national level. As a starting point, the control and management of constituency funds should be removed from the direct control of the MP. This may be easier said than done but this is the view of the majority of Solomon Islanders as highlighted in the recent People’s Survey and discussions in the media.

Another major mistake was the introduction and abuse of political appointments. Whilst this kind of appointment is normal in any government, we all know that in this country we have taken it to a whole new level. The concept was
possibly adapted from US’s presidential system but it is absurd to think that a concept from a system in which an entire administration is politically appointed can work in the national interest in our system which is based on a permanent Public Service where officers are selected on merit. The idea of political appointments only serves to create space for political manoeuvrings by close friends and cronies of any ruling government. This is not to say that all political appointments are high-jacked for personal gains, but by having it as an accepted way of making appointments to public office it paves the way for cronism to flourish.

How we have dealt with local level governance has also been one of our big mistakes. Successive governments have experimented with all sorts of governing systems, some partly successful, others completely useless. This level of governance directly and personally affects the vast majority of our people, so this matters very much to them. Successive governments have, however, not invested the kind of time, effort and resources into figuring out the right system that an issue of such importance demands. The national interest, which hinges on people’s wellbeing (most of whom live in the provinces), requires that leaders and governments take this issue seriously and deal with it genuinely. To raise it as a campaign topic only is to act selfishly.

Conflict has been our other big mistake. We allowed frustrations and corruption to get the point where people snapped, found justifications and resorted to armed conflict. By now, there is ample evidence of what really caused the conflict. We must set aside any concerns about sensitivity and openly discuss these causes as our future is at stake here. We must do this while our friends (RAMSI) are still around to keep outright corrupt interference and violence at bay. In anticipation of RAMSI leaving, we should at the same time make regional arrangements to ensure that our security is never compromised again at a national scale. If we let ethnic conflicts become the norm in this country, we might as well forget leadership and national interest; warlords will walk all over these.

The future beyond RAMSI
As stated earlier, our search for answers and solutions/mitigations requires us to also look outside. We are part of the global village and our integration with the rest of the world increases each year. From this perspective, lessons from other countries, donors and trading partners are invaluable tools from experience sharing between neighbours and not interference with sovereignty. The latter view is merely a convenient argument for those who put personal interests ahead of national interests.

I do not propose to identify all the lessons that we could learn from our neighbours. Instead, I wish to point out some areas we should seriously look at today. The best way of discerning what others have that would be best for our nation is through education. The importance of education to leadership and
perceptions of leadership in our country is absolutely critical. Voters need to be educated on concerns raised in this paper because they ultimately control who the leaders are. Public officers must also be educated on these issues and on how to use the machinery of government effectively to counter any shady moves by corrupt politician. Moreover, the Public Service is the breeding ground for politicians. Subscribing to corrupt and unethical practices in public office means future political leaders start off on the wrong foot. For borrowed concepts that work better in a modernised society, our hope must lie with educating our children well. Our generation has put its hand in the fire and though it burns, we choose to keep our hand there. The next generation must be taught to do otherwise and better.

Specifically on the public sector, I suggest that we learn from more developed nations in terms of how to avoid misuse of public resources. In many other countries, typically the public sector is smaller than the private sector. This means that more money and resources are available in the private sector. In this context, individuals whose ultimate goal is personal gain/advancement tend to end up in the private sector. That is where all the money and opportunities are. Conversely, those who enter Parliament and public office often go there not for the money. This makes it relatively easier for them to put national interests first.

Our situation is quite the opposite. In Solomon Islands, the public sector is larger than the private sector. This makes the Public Service a place where one could potentially make good connections and secure lucrative contract awards by teaming up with questionable companies. Given the amount of resources available within the public sector and increasing MPs’ entitlements, Parliament has become very attractive as a place to make money. This is part of the problem and we must adapt the approach used abroad to deal with this. We need to continue to encourage private sector growth, not only as a means of growing the economy but also as an alternative to attract individuals who should never be national leaders and are best suited to follow the money trail.

Let me finish with some remarks about the approach to change we might take. Much has been said in this paper about changing the institutions and laws that govern how we choose and interact with our nation’s political leaders. At this juncture, I would also make the suggestion that efforts need to be re-focused on changing people’s behaviour as well. It is well-known that Solomon Islands inherited sound and reasonable institutions from Great Britain, that of course needed some fine tuning, but were considered sufficient for the purpose of building a new nation. Over the years, Solomon Islanders assumed the running and management of these institutions and the commitment to ensure that it remains effective has gradually declined. As highlighted in the point above, education should also play an important role in making sure that we do not only change institutions that we currently have, but also the drivers of these
institutions, i.e. the public servants. This will require a huge mental shift from where we currently are. Just as it is necessary to have open, honest and transparent leadership, there should be more emphasis placed on creating a culture of honesty and integrity in the Public Service.

Conclusion
Let me conclude by reflecting on the topic at hand and its significance to this occasion. For the last ten years our leaders have been relying on our friends at RAMSI for guidance and assistance as they try to steer our country forward. It is true that we have made progress in this partnership. RAMSI has provided us with the environment to search for solutions to rectify our past mistakes and to produce better leaders, always with the ultimate aim of advancing our country. Whether RAMSI departs sooner or later, this occasion reminds us that help may not always be around and that our issues with leadership cannot be solved by other countries. This is our problem and we are the only ones who will suffer from not fixing these issues soon. We cannot hope that individual politicians will suddenly have a change of heart and start acting selflessly and in true charity towards our people. What we can do to change their thinking and behaviour is to select the right leaders, make it in their interest to aid national interest and remove factors that corrupt leaders hide behind.
Housing in Solomon Islands varies from traditional village houses made from bush materials, to modern Honiara houses where some use the techniques of village houses, adapted to urban surroundings.
Looking Beyond RAMSI:
Concluding Remarks

Clive Moore

Over the last ten years, the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands has become a temporary but substantial presence in Solomon Islands. Its headquarters in Honiara, known as GBR, Guadalcanal Beach Resort, are typical of its rationale. Many of the facilities are housed in demountable buildings, a sign of efficient and practical impermanence. RAMSI was established under the auspices of the Pacific Islands Forum to assist Solomon Islands. Ten years on from the beginning, when RAMSI is beginning to wind down, is a perfect time to look forward. As RAMSI’s current Special Coordinator Nicholas Coppel noted in his welcome remarks, the purpose of the seminar was not an analysis of RAMSI, but to look into the future and to ask leading younger Solomon Islanders to discuss the ways that they think their nation should move forward. The organisers wanted to have their vision for the future.

Prime Minister Hon. Gordon Darcy Lilo set the scene for moving forward and building a stronger, more resilient and peace-loving society. He discussed the challenges for ensuring an enduring peace and developing the nation. Mr Lilo outlined the economies of scale that were necessary to expand the land and sea revenue base. He stressed the accountability of government agencies and the need to reform the Leadership Code, while maintaining an independent judiciary and a strong media and voter presence. His government is conscious of youth issues and sponsored the development of the Solomon Islands National University as a vehicle for building educational opportunities for the nation. Mr Lilo also made clear that he valued women’s participation in Solomons’ society and looked forward to more women standing for the elections to National Parliament. Finally, Mr Lilo discussed the use of the Constituency Development Funds and the participation by Churches and NGOs in the development of the nation. The Prime Minister’s concluding remarks set the scene for the seminar: “We must leave the past behind and build a community that we can be happy to be part of and proud to pass on to our children and their children.”
Nick Warner, the first RAMSI Special Coordinator from 2003 to 2004, was warm in his praise of what had been accomplished over ten years, and reminded the audience just how daunting a task RAMSI had faced in 2003. It is easy to gloss over how desperate the situation was. As I wrote in 2003:

Firearms began to be surrendered almost immediately and within a few weeks almost 2,500 weapons and 300,000 rounds of ammunition had been handed in, including SR88s and light machine guns, shotguns and revolvers . . . Honiara’s residents felt a weight lifted off their shoulders. During 1998-2003, Honiara had been dominated by fear and hopelessness but it was now possible to move about freely and to enjoy recreational activities in the outskirts of town.”

Nick Warner and other participants, particularly Nanette Tutua, reminded us that RAMSI gave the Solomon Islands a second chance. Mr Warner paid tribute to the 2003 Prime Minister Sir Allan Kemakeza for his selflessness and foresight in calling for outside intervention, but stressed that the progress achieved under RAMSI was part of a partnership between RAMSI, the Solomon Islands government and the people of the nation. He also praised the reformed Royal Solomon Islands Police Force for the impressive changes that the Force had undergone.

The next speaker was Dr Philip Tagini, Special Secretary to the Prime Minister. Dr Tagini completed his doctoral thesis at Monash University in 2007 on the policy and regulatory framework for mining in Solomon Islands. His presentation concentrated on sustainable mining, arguing that mining could offer balanced development and an alternative stream of revenue. He advocated a holistic approach whereby sensible mining could be the flagship for future economic development. The success of the Gold Ridge mine, halted by the ‘Tension’ years but now back in production, was cited as a prime example of the opportunities and shortcomings of large scale industrial production. Dr Tagini argued that while the revenue from fishing and logging was slipping, revenue from minerals was increasing, sustaining, and could be the best large-scale economic development for Solomon Islands. He spent time discussing what is called the Dutch Disease, whereby mining is inclined to attract labour and capital away from other areas. He also stressed the need for an efficient public service and for proper use of royalties, both by the government and the landowners. In both cases the revenues should be kept in Sovereign Funds to provide for the next generation, not squandered on immediate requirements. At question time there was further discussion on environmental impacts, royalties, regulations and the possibility of deep sea mining (a concept roundly condemned by many in the audience).

The seminar then moved from mining to land and the difficulties of development in a nation where land tenure was linked to communal ownership of land. Genesis Kofana, previously from the Land Reform Unit, Ministry of
Lands, Housing and Survey, and now with the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, argued the case for recording customary land as the best path to achieve development. The Solomon Islands has many different land systems, but in general 85 per cent is held as customary land and 15 per cent is alienated in some form. The old Melanesian adage that the land owns us and we do not own the land was used, to signify the binding and all-encompassing relationship that continues to exist between Solomon Islanders and their land. There is overwhelming support for customary land to be maintained; the question discussed in the paper and afterwards by the audience was how to create a system that can maintain customary rights while allowing development. Most of the presentation was centred on the case study of the Auluta Basin in central east Malaita and the way that recording mechanisms had been developed and used. Questions centred on the need for a master plan for land registration, and the meaning of development, which meant different things to rural people and to the government and investors. In my summing up I noted that the continued existence of customary land was one of the strengths of Solomon Islands, not a weakness. Many peoples around the world have been alienated from their land through the process of colonialism. Taking a long view, the colonial years did not lead to large scale alienation and since Independence in 1978 it has been up to Solomon Islanders to create a land system that fits with the needs of all of the people.

Nanette Tutua chose another difficult topic, the empowering of women in business and politics. She described the jubilation she felt when RAMSI arrived in 2003, mirroring the feeling of the vast majority of Solomon Islanders. Her message was that women must be allowed to express themselves and in that in many ways women performed better in business than men, when it came to communication skills, being able to think through issues, connecting webs of information and people, consensus thinking and long-term relationships. She discussed these in an applied way in relation to her own business dealings. Ms Tatua’s attitude to women in politics was clearly supportive, but she did not want to see any short cuts. Papua New Guinea has similar problems getting women into politics and has chosen to reserve seats in the National Parliament; and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville, neighbouring Solomon Island, has taken a similar path. Ms Tutua felt quite strongly that women had to achieve their place in politics through their own efforts, not through reserved seats. The discussion following the paper was informative. The Temotu and Choiseul Premiers both spoke, offering their support. The point was made that gender equity began at home and at school; accepting equality of women and equal opportunity was a key factor for the future of the nation, as was institutionalising gender equality.

The next speaker was Sebastian Ilala, another representative of the business community. His line was that he did not want to talk about “fluffy” stuff and would get straight to the point. Mr Ilala discussed a series of issues that could
make all business people and particularly national business people function better: infrastructure issues such as water and power, and support from government to provide incentives to keep qualified Solomon Islanders working in the country. Encouraging tourism, aviation and trade agreements all fell within his argument, as did taxation. The clear message was that economic development was not just a government issue and the nation’s development was essentially in the hands of the private business sector at all levels. The questions afterwards ranged around the need to keep the recent tertiary educated Solomon Islanders working at home, and how to raise the standard of living. It was an airing of private sector business views with practical suggestions on how the government through reforms to export and taxation regulations could build and advance the whole network of economic stakeholders.

The final speaker was Jude Devesi, who talked about how to get politicians to behave in the national interest. Mr Devesi first defined leadership and the national interest, and made clear that many citizens were dissatisfied with their leaders. He was critical of the ‘Slush Fund mentality’, as well as the power of shady caucus figures in politics who made national level decisions that should be decided in Parliament, and the unfortunate politicisation of the public service. The analysis went back to Independence in 1978 and the slow creep of unwelcome elements into the political and administrative processes. Discussion centred on the Constituency Development Funds and reforms to voting systems. Many participants seemed to fear that the RAMSI presence had been keeping a cap on corruption. Overwhelmingly the message was that the future security of the people was not negotiable and that under no circumstance would Solomon Islanders be willing to allow any return to the ‘Tension’ years.

**Conclusion**

RAMSI itself was not discussed, which was quite intentional given that the emphasis was on the future. The Solomon Islander audience all realised that the future and its decisions belonged to them. However, at the end of this book there is a select bibliography for anyone who wishes to read assessments of Solomon Islands since 2003. During the day-long seminar phrases were used like “the move forward depends on us”, “this country belongs to the future generations” and “collaborative vision”. The intention of the seminar, that Solomon Islanders should discuss their own future, was achieved. The presenters all provided great food for thought spread over a wide range of issues: mining, land, empowering women, encouraging the private sector, and confronting concept of leadership and national interest. The audience was vocal and questioning, and the most impressive aspect of audience participation was the questions and statements from the student participants. The facilitator, Robert Chris Tarohimae, ensured that question time was a useful participatory experience for the audience.
The atmosphere was heated at some stages but always humorous and always thoughtful.

There were many questions that could not be fully answered. The challenges for the future were outlined and everyone was encouraged to think about what sort of nation they wanted to live in ten or twenty years into the future? Honiara is now home to more than 80,000 people: what does this mean for customary land on Guadalcanal? How central is urban growth to the future of the nation? What speed of change was possible? What were the consequences of development? What emphasis should be put on education? How could gender and family issues be incorporated into change? How can youth issues be accommodated? What is the future for employment at all levels? How does civil society mesh with government and the private sector? One thing that was never questioned was belief in and the centrality of religion: Solomon Islanders are willing to negotiate over many things but not their religious beliefs.

In my concluding remarks I took an historical approach, taking twenty year slabs of time. If the discussion had occurred in 1973 there would have been reliance on British guidance to shape the way forward, far less Solomon Islander participants, and there would have been more discussion of Kastom. In the 1970s in the lead up to Independence there was extensive discussion of the type of national constitution the new nation would require, and Solomon Islanders were arguing about the future of Pijin English. Localisation was occurring as fast as possible after British neglect during the 1950s and 1960s. Women did not have a voice. In 2013 Solomons Pijin is taken for granted and Kastom was represented only in discussions about land tenure. The key points of discussion in the 2013 Looking Beyond RAMSI seminar were about how to develop the nation without damaging the evolving social fabric. The British and Solomon Islanders in 1973 could never have envisaged a Honiara approaching 100,000 people, or the 'Tension' years, nor a politicised public service. If the discussion had occurred in 1993, the more discerning would have been able to see the beginnings of the cracks that brought the nation low between 1998 and 2003. Fishing was an established mainstay of the economy and the dependency on over-logging was beginning. An indigenisation of the political process was underway, and tensions over migrants on Guadalcanal were beginning to rise, and there were the first signs of politicisation of the public service.

I also did what historians usually do not. If we try to future forecast, to 2023 or 2033, the modern nation will have emerged with its British past hardly still relevant in the national memory. The government will certainly be less central to economic decision making, although it will still be regulatory, and the private sector will be stronger. Most customary land will have been registered; mining will probably be established on at least two other islands and will provide the largest input into the government Treasury. Sadly, logging will be still in decline,
although let us hope that sensible regrowth will once more provide a future for sustainable logging. The fishing industry will remain strong and a supplement to agricultural production. We will by then know the truth about climate change predictions; environmental change may force people off the atolls and artificial islands. Technology, particularly in communications, will have altered at least as much as it has over the last ten years: mobile phones will be totally ubiquitous and the cost and technical advances should make them cheaper and more powerful. Education will no longer be totally paper-based and on-line systems will be in place. Internal migration will have increased and it will be harder to define Solomon Islanders by their islands of origin: a sense of belonging to the nation will be paramount, not regional loyalties. Negotiations over regionalism and federalism will have been played out and it may well be that provinces will take a larger role in partnership with the national government than at present. Parliament will no longer be a male bastion and women will also have taken their place in private enterprise and senior public service positions, even more so than today. Readers in 2023 or 2033 may well smile at what I have got wrong and what has been left off the list. And let us hope that the one desire of everyone in the nation in 2013 has been achieved: that there never again be a period that can be described as ‘Tension’ years.
Notes

Sustainable Mining

1. I mention two distinct categories of beneficiaries (i) mining communities and (ii) Solomon Islands generally, quite deliberately and throughout this paper. These two levels of beneficiaries must be kept in mind when dealing with benefits. Mining benefits can be restricted to mining communities because of their capital intensity creating “enclaves” where only those around the enclaves benefit.


4. For the origins of these classifications in the colonial era and an account of current criticisms of these distinctions, see Nicholas Thomas, “The Force of Ethnology: Origins and Significance of the Melanesia/Polynesia Division.” Current Anthropology 28, no. 1 (1989), 27–34.

5. Lal and Fortune, eds. The Pacific Islands: An Encyclopaedia, 609.


10. The term ‘arc of instability’ was used within Australian foreign policy circles to justify Australian intervention in politically unstable countries such as in the Solomon Islands under the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) and other places like PNG, Fiji and Indonesia. See for example Ron Duncan and Satish Chand, “The Economics of the ‘Arc of Instability’.” Asia Pacific Economic Literature 16, no. 1 (2002), 1. See also Ben Reilly, “The Africanisation of the South Pacific.” Australian Journal of International Affairs 54, no. 3 (2000), 261–268 for a contentious view; and the reply by David Chappell. “‘Africanization’ in the Pacific: Blaming Others for Disorder in the Periphery?” Comparative Studies in Society and History 47, no. 2 (2005): 286–317.


12. See below for a fuller treatment of this concept and some references.


14. Since the large scale commercial mining at Gold Ridge became feasible (after 1997), the only studies have been academic theses by Qopoto, Naitoro and the case study by Tolia and Petterson referred to above. See Cromwell Qopoto, “Comparative Geochemistry of Some Volcanic Suites of the Solomon Islands and Bougainville: Implications for Metallogenesis”, MSc thesis, Australian National University, 2002; John Naitoro, Articulating Kin Groups and Mines: The Case of the Gold Ridge Mining Project, PhD thesis, Australian National University, 2002, 149, 151. All these authors have contributed to the Department of Mines and the mining sector in various ways. Cromwell Qopoto was the Director of Mines, while the late
John Naitoro was the Permanent Secretary of the Department when Gold Ridge Mining started. Don Tolia held various senior positions and Petterson has written extensively about the geology of the islands. The case study by Tolia and Petterson is of value because it provides geological information and discusses the participatory process. It incorporates current thinking about sustainability but has no treatment of the regulatory framework for mining.

17. Ibid. 49.
18. Ibid. 50.


Empowering Women in Business and Politics

Looking Beyond RAMSI: Concluding Remarks

Tulagi market is situated along the beach road, shaded by large trees.
Many important books about Solomon Islands have been published in the previous decade.
Select Bibliography on Solomon Islands, 2003–2013

Clive Moore

This select bibliography was published in Clive Moore (ed.), Looking Beyond RAMSI: Solomon Islanders’ Perspective on their Future. Honiara: Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands, 2013.

As Nicholas Coppel, the Special Coordinator of RAMSI, made clear in his welcoming address, the seminar was intended to look beyond RAMSI. However, it is relevant to include a substantial but still select bibliography of publications on different aspects of Solomon Islands between 2003 and 2013, to enable interested readers to pursue other issues.


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LOOKING BEYOND RAMSI

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———. “The Duel: Is Intervention in the Solomon Islands a Mistake or a Moral Obligation?”


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Ocean and river transport is crucial in a nation made up of hundreds of islands. Wooden ‘dug out’ canoes are still in use but increasingly fiberglass ‘banana’ boats with outboard motors are used.