



The Centre for Democratic Institutions

PNG PARLIAMENTARIANS AT ANU FOR DIALOGUE

Six Papua New Guinean MPs visited the ANU on 15 October to participate in a Dialogue on contemporary issues in PNG and Australia. The Parliamentarians were in Australia at the invitation of the SSGM program at the ANU. Roland Rich was invited to participate in the dialogue.

The dialogue highlighted the continuing difficulties being faced by PNG and the enormous challenge this posed for the elected leaders. The decay in infrastructure was one indication that was easily visible. The decay in governance infrastructure was less visible but nevertheless just as important. There were a number of issues conspiring to complicate any reform in governance. The economic base was shrinking with the growing loss of interest by Australian mining companies. Health problems were becoming acute in relation to malaria and HIV/AIDS. Population growth was around 3% and there were few jobs for urban youth.

The PNG participants highlighted the importance of the relationship with Australia. There were high expectations of what the aid program could deliver with a number of parliamentarians speaking about the need for roads including the need to fix the Western Highway. Yet AusAID was already spending \$A50m a year on roads, but this was in no way matched by maintenance funds from the PNG government. One parliamentarian explained how all the representatives from his province had pooled their development funds to match AusAID funds for infrastructure. This was an example of using development funds for development rather than for electioneering.

The PNG parliamentarians maintained their enthusiasm and commitment but also understood the difficulties of gaining re-election. The changes in the political system such as the political integrity legislation and the preferential voting system that would be used in 2007 held out some prospects for more stability and better governance. There was considerable interest in Senator Cook's presentation on the report of the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee on relations with the Pacific with particular attention on the recommendation for a review of visa arrangements to allow more Melanesians to undertake short-term work in Australia.

PNG Members of Parliament

Hon Bire Kimisopa MP – Minister for Police

Hon Thomas Petrus MP
Hon Dr Banare Bun MP
Hon Anthony Aimo MP
Hon Conrad Haoda MP
Hon Posi Menai MP

Dr Henry Okole – UPNG

Other Dialogue Participants

Annabel Crabb - The Age
Rowen Callick – Australian Financial Review
Chris Uhlmann – ABC Radio Canberra
Hank Nelson – Prof History – ANU
Ron May – Senior Fellow - ANU
Roland Rich – Director CDI - ANU
Matthew Spriggs – Prof Archeology - ANU
Satish Chand – APSEG - ANU
Wayne Portlock – NSW Rugby League
Bryant Allen – Human Geography - ANU
Heidi Perry – Young Professionals Usyd
Stephen Clark – Young Professionals - USyd
Sue Rider – SSGM - ANU
Stephanie Copus-Campbell
David Hook – AusAID
Paul Lehmann - AusAID
Kate Nethercott - AusAID
Chris Graham - AusAID
Neryl Lewis - AusAID

Peter Larmour – APSEG - ANU

Hon Bob Sercombe - MHR
Senator Peter Cook - APH
Mark Forbes – The Age
Ruth Turia, PhD scholar ANU
Sinclair Dinnen, SSGM ANU
Colin Filer, RMAP ANU
Charles Yala PhD Scholar
Quinton Clements - APH
Audrey Fagin - AFP
Mike Bourke – ANU
James Hyndes – DFAT
David Hegarty – SSGM ANU
Caroline O’Sullivan CCPANU
Dean Murphy – AusAID

Yeshe Smith - AusAID
David Urqhart - AusAID
Christine Bouchard - AusAID
Bill Standish, Faculties - ANU
Martin Golman APSEG ANU
Ben Reilly, APSEG ANU

Mr Petrus Thomas. People's Progress Party, first term Parliamentarian. Mr Thomas holds a degree in surveying from the University of Technology, Lae. Previously Lands Officer with the Southern Highlands Provincial Govt. He has represented PNG in the national rugby league team. MP for Koroba-Lake Kopiago.

Mr Conrad Haoda, is from the Western Province. He is a trained teacher and served as a teacher and public servant for many years and has been involved in community development activities. He is a first term Parliamentarian. South Fly Open, Papua and Niugini Union Pati (PANGU).

Mr Bire Kimisopa, Minister for Internal Security (Police) is from the Eastern Highlands. He holds a degree in Accountancy from the University of Technology in Lae and a Bachelor of Financial Administration from the University of New England, Australia. He returned to his home province to set up his own private business after graduating from his course and has been actively involved as a volunteer working on social welfare programs

for the Goroka community. He is also a first term Parliamentarian. Goroka Open, United Party.

Dr Banare Bun, Henganofi Open, Christian Democratic Party, first term Parliamentarian. Dr Bun is a medical practitioner.

Mr Posi Menai, M.P for Karimuni-Nomane Open, Simbu. B.Ec from UPNG, People's Action Party, born 1972, first term Parliamentarian.

Mr Anthony Aimo, MP for Ambunti Dreikikir Open, East Sepik, M.Ed from UNE, high school teacher. People's Action Party, sits on the Public Accounts Committee, first time Parliamentarian.

Dr Henry Okole, Department of Politics, University of Papua New Guinea, is an academic with particular interests in civil society and governance. Associate and Visiting Fellow at the State Society and Governance in Melanesia Project. Is accompanying the delegation.