



Focus on the Pacific Samoa sets the standard for
stability **Soccer hero wins a battle for conservation**
Solomon Islands — 'No more guns'

focus





From the Minister

Australians have long been closely involved with the people of the South Pacific islands based on their proximity, history and a shared commitment to the principles and institutions of democracy.

The Pacific is a region in which Australia has significant interests at stake, both strategic and economic. Whatever occurs there to affect the peace and stability of our neighbours will have a direct impact on our own national well-being, and deserves our closest attention. This is a part of the world that every Australian should know more about.

The areas in which the aid program works are as numerous and varied as the challenges these small, vulnerable countries face. Our aid program is strongly focused on building the capacity of Pacific islanders to establish and maintain robust institutions, in both government and in civil society.

It is improvements in both these areas that will ultimately enable Pacific islanders to manage their resources sustainably, modernise their health and education systems, improve their legal and security environments, and enhance economic growth.

As the region's democratic institutions come under pressure, the aid program has been reinforced by activities to support democracy.

I am very proud of the work of Australian peace monitors in Solomon Islands, who are helping to maintain peace in a country that has suffered an enormous setback as a result of ethnic violence. The work of peace monitors both here and in other troubled areas of our region continues to enhance the abilities of people and opportunities for them to overcome their differences and to find new ways to live peacefully together.

Our activities in the promotion of peace also give Australian volunteers an opportunity not only to support peace in countries where it is fragile, but also to gain valuable expertise in these unique processes.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alexander Downer'.

Alexander Downer
Minister for Foreign Affairs

contents



7

Scientists bait the fruit fly
and protect the taro



Fijians work toward
a healthier
community

18

23

Building peace in
Solomon Islands



From the Minister **inside front cover** Message from the Director General: The Pacific in focus **2** Looking beyond paradise **4** Operating at the heart **6** Scientists bait the fruit fly and protect the taro **7** Strengthening media skills around the Pacific **8** Soccer hero wins a battle for conservation **9** 'Mosquito Police' patrol the streets **10** Samoa sets the standard for stability **11** Customs have changed at Samoa's borders **12** Reforms create new skills and better service for all **13** Samoa builds a sustainable tuna industry **14** Strengthening the legal system of Vanuatu **15** Young women make the most of their expanding horizons **16** Centre continues the struggle for women **17** Fijians work toward a healthier community **18** New skills for teachers make learning fun **19** Campaign tackles diabetes in Tonga **20** Tuvalu's first female doctors return home **21** Addressing the needs of remote island nations **22** Building peace in Solomon Islands **23** Getting the message across – 'No more guns' **24** Encyclopedia focuses Australia on its Pacific neighbours **26** Parliamentary Secretary visits aid projects in PNG **27** Colombo Plan celebrates its 50th anniversary **28** Snapshots **29** Business news **30** Global education **31** AusAID website information **32** New on AusAID's bookshelves **inside back cover**

COVER Two boys and their pigs, Taveuni island, Fiji, see story page 18. Photo: Peter Davis



Australia, as a leading aid donor in the Pacific, is continually seeking to improve social and economic development, and to find ways to contribute to the region's progress and stability.

The Pacific in focus

This edition of *Focus* provides a snapshot of the way Australians are working with the people of the South Pacific islands, supported by Australia's aid program. Youth ambassadors, peace monitors, tissue culture experts, customs administrators and fishery management advisers are just a sample of the range of people who are assisting Pacific island countries meet their many needs.

The major contribution Australia makes in the Pacific is in helping build the capacity of Pacific island nations to improve their own governance arrangements. Improved capacities in these areas will ultimately enable Pacific islanders to enhance their economic growth, manage their resources sustainably, modernise their education systems, improve their health standards, and strengthen and improve their quality of life.

Australian aid supports Pacific governance in a number of ways, by:

- strengthening general economic policies and financial management
- supporting sustainable resource management
- supporting political institutions and civil society, including parliaments, electoral offices, the media and community-based organisations, and
- acting as a catalyst in progressing good governance in the Pacific through provision of early, flexible and responsive assistance to reforming governments.



Agnes David (left) and Terry Firiari are outreach workers with Vanuatu's drop-in clinic, Kum Pussum Head. The clinic, supported by the Australian aid program, gives advice on a range of issues such as family planning and sexually transmitted diseases. Photo: Peter Davis

One of the key mechanisms we have developed to allow the aid program to respond flexibly in support of reform-minded governments is the Policy and Management Reform Fund. This fund has been running since 1996, and provides resources – \$20 million in the 2001–02 financial year – that are allocated competitively between Pacific countries on the basis of their demonstrated commitment to reform.

The fund is highly regarded by countries in the region, and we see it as a successful initiative to support those countries committed to improving their economic performance and self-reliance.

There are many successful examples of Australian assistance for Pacific capacity building. In Vanuatu, as a result of Australian assistance, there are more accurate records in the health department, better medical records systems and modern budget and financial management arrangements. Using Australian technical assistance, Samoa now has output-based performance budgeting, more efficient tendering procedures and improved government audit systems. In Tonga, with Australian support, the Ministry of Finance has unified all their revenue departments. The resulting efficiency gains led to a 23 per cent increase in revenue collection in 1999–00. Similarly, in Fiji, Australia's work in supporting the amalgamation of revenue and customs agencies resulted in an annual increase in revenue of \$58 million.

The political crises in Solomon Islands and Fiji underline that there is still significant work to be done in the Pacific to strengthen governance. We are working at local and provincial levels to shore up the delivery of services in the community during the time that it takes to improve governance.

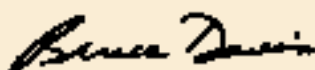
Improving health service delivery in the Pacific is a particular concern for the Australian Government. For example, we are continuing to support a regional HIV/AIDS project to assist in educating Pacific authorities in how to combat this terrible disease.

Australia's support to civil society in the Pacific also continues to grow. We have

begun a program of support to national Red Cross societies, who often play a crucial role in resolving and ameliorating conflict and civil strife. In both Fiji and Solomon Islands the humanitarian work of the Red Cross has been extremely valuable.

The community suffering in Solomon Islands over the past year and a half has been enormous. Australia's aid program is helping with support for reconciliation activities, and with humanitarian assistance to meet basic needs for food, shelter, health supplies and education services for young people. Our program contributes resources and expertise to help with peace negotiations and to support international and national peace monitoring bodies.

Our strategy of supporting capacity building, and providing highly targeted aid interventions at critical times, remains the most appropriate for Australia over the long term, enabling us to make a very significant contribution to stability and development in the Pacific.



Bruce Davis
Director General

AUSTRALIAN AID TO THE PACIFIC

The Australian Government will provide an estimated total of \$164.6 million to Pacific island countries through its overseas aid program during 2001–02. Estimated total aid flows to each country are:

Vanuatu	\$19.5 million
Fiji	to be determined*
Solomon Islands	to be determined*
Samoa	\$15.1 million
Tonga	\$11.8 million
Kiribati	\$10.7 million
Other Pacific island countries (Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Palau, Nauru and Tuvalu)	\$13.8 million
Regional programs and other	\$38.6 million

*Australia's aid program allocations for Fiji and Solomon Islands will be determined during the course of the year. The uncertainties over political developments in these two countries make it difficult to determine in advance appropriate levels of funding for activities there. However, given a higher overall allocation to the Pacific in 2001–02, there will be sufficient flexibility for the Australian Government to respond quickly and appropriately to developments as they occur.

Looking beyond paradise

For many Australians the South Pacific islands are an ideal holiday destination where you leave your worries behind as you unwind in the cocooned comfort of a luxury resort. But venture beyond the resorts and the picture is very different.

Small populations, geographic isolation, fragile environments, depleted resources and poor infrastructure make life far from luxurious for most Pacific islanders.

The average income per person may be higher than in many other developing nations, but the cost of living is also higher. Add to this the pressures of trade liberalisation in a globalised world as well as the higher aspirations of an increasingly mobile population, and the development challenges for the region soon become apparent.

'Perhaps the greatest resource of the Pacific island nations is their people,' says Savenaca Siwatibau, the recently appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific. 'The big development challenge is to enable people to realise their potential.'



Village children of Mangaliu, Vanuatu, benefit from having a trained health officer to operate a local aid post. As part of the Australian Government's support of Vanuatu's Comprehensive Reform Program the aid posts are being strengthened to offer better health services for those far from towns. Photo: Peter Davis

'Potential' is a word often used in relation to development in the Pacific. There is potential for a strong ecotourism industry, for more viable export markets and for significant small business development. But such potential demands strong, sustainable institutions. And it is to this end that much of the \$145 million of Australian Government aid that flows annually to the Pacific islands is directed.

According to Brij Lal, director of the Centre for the Contemporary Pacific at the Australian National University, and co-editor of the recently published *The Pacific Islands: An Encyclopedia*, making institutions in the Pacific stronger is the only way forward. 'Governments must be accountable and their operations must be transparent. Only then can stability be achieved and only then will other benefits flow.'

Kevin McQuillan, a producer of 'Asia-Pacific' with ABC Radio National has spent a lot of time in the Pacific as a journalist. He shares Brij Lal's views of the need for stronger institutions. 'There are many islands where strong and transparent governance is thriving but, as far as the overall region is concerned, there is still much to be done in this area. One problem is the continuing conflict between traditional values and the need for democratic processes.'

A free media is one of the essential ingredients in strong and transparent government. The Australian Government's Pacific Media Initiative has done much to train Pacific islanders in media management

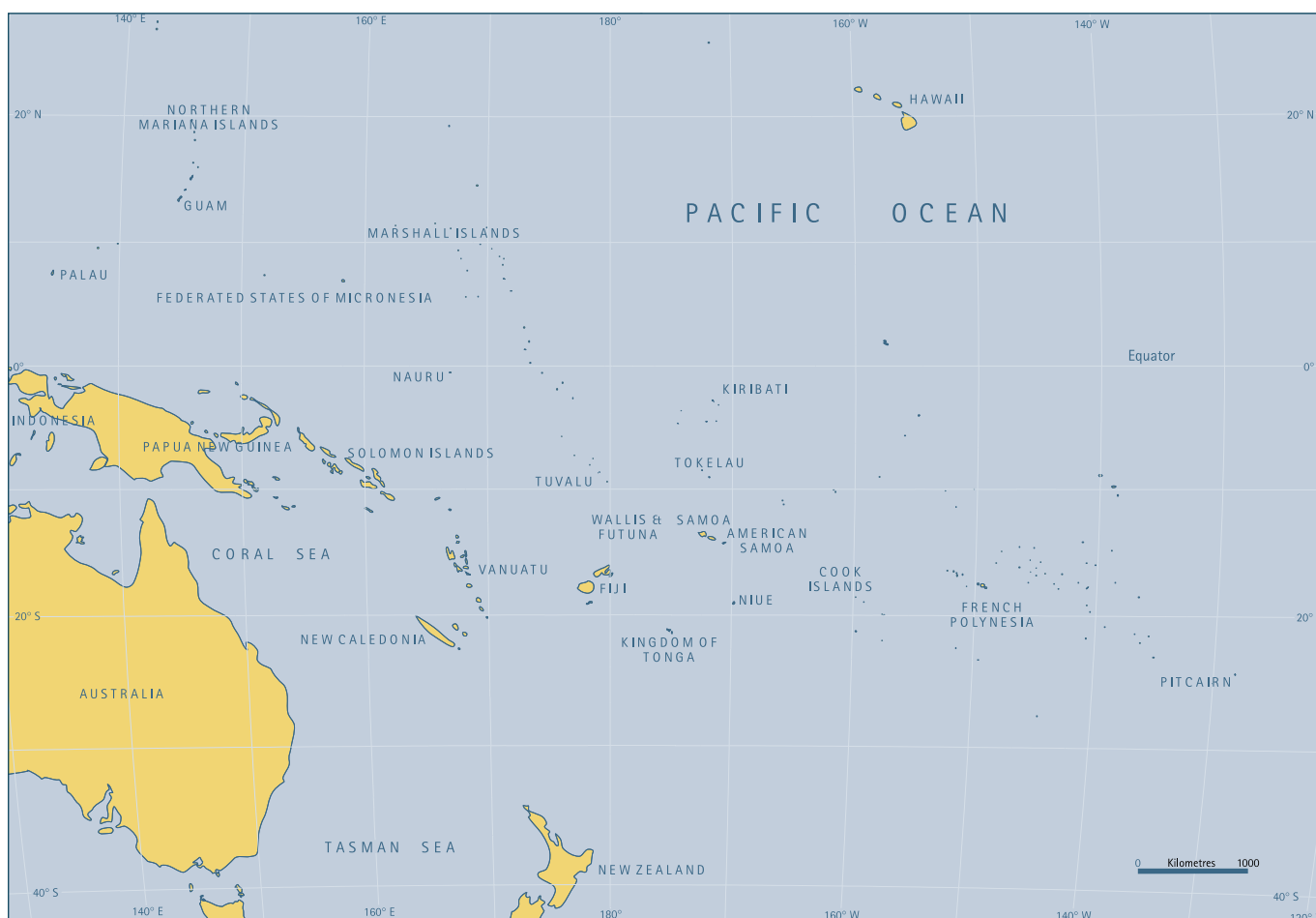
and production. Jese Sikivou, CEO of the Pacific Island Broadcasting Association, recognises the value of such a scheme. 'We are now more able to tell our own stories rather than rely on others to tell them for us. This has to be good for the region,' he says.

While many of the stories that emanate from the region concern political instability and corrupt governments, a myriad others are about positive changes – about Pacific island people being at the forefront of helping their communities become more viable and more vital.

There are stories of young film-makers and actors whose creative energies convey messages about the need for environmental protection, safe sex practices and an end to domestic violence. There are stories of teachers revamping the education system and lawyers reforming the justice system. Stories also abound of scientists finding ways to protect plants, women breaking into non-traditional occupations and health workers creating more efficient and appropriate health care systems.

'Come back here in five years and you'll find a role model for integrated community health,' says Sister Mary Tiko, a senior health officer with the Taveuni Community Health Project, the biggest single Australian Government aid project in Fiji and one of the largest in the region. 'This project involves extensive consultations with people at village level,' explains Sister Tiko. 'It is being constructed from the bottom up, and that's why it is successful.'

Successful development is contingent



The Pacific region: There is a 'tide of goodwill generated by the energy and dedication of hundreds of people, young and old, who are helping to develop the potential of their communities.'

upon many factors, including appropriate health care. And one of the biggest challenges in health care is the threat of AIDS (a topic that featured in the December 2000 edition of *Focus*). In this regard there is still a good chance for preventive measures to be implemented. 'The Pacific region doesn't have the infrastructure to deal with an AIDS epidemic so it's far better, and cheaper, to do something now before the situation gets out of hand,' says a senior spokeswoman from AusAID. The Australian Government is currently supporting research and development of an AIDS prevention strategy in the Pacific region.

In October Australia will also host the Regional Ministerial Meeting on HIV/AIDS and Development, *A Lengthening Shadow: HIV/AIDS in the Asia/Pacific*. The regional ministerial meeting will immediately follow the 6th International Congress on AIDS in

Asia and the Pacific, to be held 5–10 October in Melbourne.

All these development initiatives might be wasted if the Pacific islands were about to disappear beneath rising sea levels. But the news here is good. 'As far as we can tell, and contrary to popular belief, there are no major concerns,' says Wolfgang Scherer, Director of the National Tidal Facility at Flinders University in Adelaide. With Australian Government support, Wolfgang and his team are monitoring sea levels in the Pacific region over the long term. 'So far we have ascertained that the sea levels are rising at 0.8 of a millimetre a year. This is below the estimated global level.'

The next phase of the monitoring project is to look at levels of land movement. 'Sometimes an island might disappear, not because sea levels are rising but because the land is being eroded,' explains Wolfgang.

Rising tides can be potentially destructive. But there's another tide sweeping the Pacific that is highly constructive. It's a tide of good will. And it's generated by the energy and dedication of the hundreds of people, young and old, who are helping to develop the potential of their communities. Some of their stories are featured in this edition of *Focus*. – PD n

For this special edition of *Focus* on the Pacific, journalists Peter Cotton and Peter Davis visited projects in the region funded by the Australian Government.

Readers interested in Australia's aid to Papua New Guinea should obtain a copy of the September 2000 edition of *Focus* which examines Australia's major commitment to PNG in detail.

Operating at the heart

In Fiji Peter Davis journeys to the heart of the nation to witness a remarkable piece of theatre which is bringing dramatic improvements to the lives of many Pacific islanders with cardiac problems.



Dr Allan Gale (right) and his team perform open-heart surgery at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital, Suva, Fiji. The team operates on patients with heart problems around the Pacific. Photo: Peter Davis

It is early Sunday morning and Annette Baldwin is on location. All around her people are unpacking expensive looking equipment, putting on costumes and rehearsing routines as they prepare the theatre.

Annette knows where everything is and exactly where every one of her 42 crew members must be and at what time. All this activity has nothing to do with making movies. But it has a lot to do with heart-throbs.

As the head of the Medical Extension Program at the Sydney Adventist Hospital, Annette is responsible for coordinating the voluntary cardiac team that flies around the Pacific bringing renewed life to people whose hearts don't throb quite as they should.

The team is sponsored by Sydney Adventist Hospital and the Adventist Development Relief Agency with support from the Australian Government.

Today's location is the Colonial War Memorial Hospital in Suva, Fiji. This is Annette's 10th visit with the cardiac team to Fiji. The team members not only sacrifice their holiday time; they also contribute to their costs.

'They could be on holidays with friends or family but they prefer to come here and help others,' says Annette.

Jenny Rankin is an intensive care nurse from Sydney. This is her first stint on the team. 'I volunteered because others who have been [here] claim it is such a valuable experience. I also like the idea of giving something to people in real need,' she says.

Rhoda Tuma, an intensive care nurse from Western Australia, is a veteran. She's on her eighth mission. 'I absolutely love the work. It can be exhausting but I know I'm making a difference and the experience has made me much more flexible in my skills.'

On Sunday afternoon the Australian cardiologist, Dr Allan Gale, sits in conference with Dr Shiva Roy from Sydney's Prince of Wales Hospital and locally based doctors, Dr Bekama and Dr Nasarova.

'We can't fix everybody,' Allan says calmly. 'We have to choose those who have the best chance of leading a normal life without the sorts of drugs that would be hard to obtain in this country.'

Some on the shortlist have congenital heart disease. Others suffer with faulty valves. It takes the rest of the day to make the final assessments.

By Monday afternoon, the first patient is sitting up in the recovery room. She's surrounded by machines and the volunteer nurses who monitor every function as well as pass on their intensive care skills to the local nurses.

'This patient has had her faulty valve repaired,' explains Annette. 'She's in her mid-30s and every day she would have felt as if she was continually running up a staircase. In two weeks she'll be out of here and living a perfectly normal and healthy life.'

Over the following two weeks, Allan Gale and his team operated on 30 patients. 'This program began in 1985,' says Annette Baldwin. 'Since then over 1,000 volunteers have helped nearly 300 patients.' n

Scientists bait the fruit fly and protect the taro

Deep in the research laboratories of the Suva branch of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), scientists support Pacific food crops.

Not all development work involves the visible front-line action of installing water systems, building schools or practising medicine. Many achievements result from those who work behind the scenes.

TACKLING TARO BLIGHT

In 1993 an outbreak of taro leaf blight in Samoa decimated the taro crop, which forms a key part of the Samoan economy. The impact of the blight highlighted the need for a repository of blight-resistant taro as an insurance against future outbreaks.

'The big challenge has been to get the sort of taro that people want to eat. There are many types, all with different tastes,' explains Danny Hunter, a team leader with the Tarogen Research Project, an initiative of the SPC which receives Australian Government support.

Mary Taylor is a tissue culture specialist. Her laboratory contains many hundreds of taro samples from over 200 varieties of the plant. The samples have been collected from many countries for storage, analysis and breeding. The project has enabled a blight-resistant variety to be identified, and the crop in Samoa is slowly recovering.

'What you see in this room is security for the future,' explains Mary. 'When an economy is so dependent on one crop, it's important that we understand as much as we possibly can about that crop, and that we devise ways to ensure its survival.'

In the grounds of the SPC laboratory, technician Eliko Lesione examines a taro plant, '... we spend a lot of time getting to know it but there's still a lot to learn.'



Dr Mary Taylor, a tissue culture specialist at the Suva branch of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, examines some of the hundreds of taro samples from more than 200 varieties of the plant. Photo: Peter Davis

FRUIT FLY IN NAURU

Ema Tora Vueti and Luc Leblanc in Nauru are both entomologists. What they don't know about fruit fly isn't worth knowing. And their years of painstaking research, supported by the Australian Government, mean that the people of Nauru can now eat ripe local mangoes.

These luscious and highly nutritious fruits grow wild on Nauru. They also have an export potential. But until recently they were so afflicted with the mango fruit fly that they were inedible. 'After researching the characteristics of the mango fly, we developed a system of using a protein bait with some insecticide. This attracts and

destroys the females,' explains Ema.

Although the fly is not totally eradicated, it is now manageable. 'But proper management means quarantine and this involves a shift in the mind-set of the people of Nauru,' says Mick Lloyd, a plant protection adviser to the SPC.

By introducing the term 'biosecurity' rather than 'quarantine', Mick and his team have successfully secured local support for restricting imports of certain foodstuffs into Nauru.

'There's a sense of ownership rather than exclusion with the term biosecurity,' says Mick. 'We're now trying to get that term officially changed in the hope that there will be a change in the operational areas as well.' – PD n

Strengthening media skills around the Pacific

The Australian Government's Pacific Media Initiative is helping islanders tell their own stories and present a Pacific viewpoint to the world.



Christine Gounder (left), media officer with the Fiji Women's Rights Movement, with Australian film-maker Vanessa Gorman, at a workshop held in Fiji in April to help women from the Pacific tell their own stories in the media. Photo: Peter Davis

'There's a lot that needs to change about the way women are represented in mainstream media. Too often, we are seen simply as victims of domestic violence or as fashion statements. We have serious viewpoints and we have a right to be seen and heard.'

These are the words of Gina Houng Lee, Coordinator of the Fiji Women's Rights Movement. As a member in a panel of gender experts at the opening of an eight-day television training workshop, she echoed the thoughts of many women frustrated by media misrepresentation.

The 16 workshop participants came from a wide range of Fiji media organisations. Their task over the eight days was to script and shoot two eight-minute stories on women's issues for 'Dateline', a program produced by the Fiji Film and TV Unit.

Their mentor is Vanessa Gorman, an Australian journalist and documentary film-maker. 'This has been very much a hands-on workshop,' said Vanessa after the first four days. 'The women have learnt much about research, interviewing and story telling as well as the technical side of TV production.'

Christine Gounder, a media officer with the Fiji Women's Rights Movement, is one of the participants.

'I used to be the business editor of the *Daily Post* here in Fiji. I was the first woman in that position but I had to work twice as hard to get there and stay there. In this workshop I'm learning how to make women's stories more visible in mainstream media.'

The television workshop is just one of the activities of the Australian Government-funded Pacific Media Initiative. Since it began in 1996, the program has helped around 200 people who work with media to increase their skill base as well as their confidence levels.

Not far from where the Fiji women were planning their own TV stories, another workshop sponsored by the initiative was unfolding. It drew together 11 media practitioners from eight Pacific countries to learn how to construct web pages.

'When I get home I'll be able to develop our web pages so people in other countries can learn about my country and the things that matter to us,' said Fulitua Tavaora from the Broadcasting and Publications Authority of Kiribati.

Included in the workshop was a tour of USPnet, the satellite communications system at the Suva campus of the University of the South Pacific. With support from the Australian and Japanese Governments, USPnet enables video conferencing and email across 12 Pacific countries.

'The visit here helps the participants gain an understanding of the broader applications of these communication technologies,' said Damien Dempsey, Executive Producer of Multimedia for Radio Australia and the tutor for the Internet workshop.

According to Jese Sikivou, CEO of the Pacific Island Broadcasting Association, 'the Pacific Media Initiative has helped media people present a Pacific viewpoint to the world. We are more able to tell our own stories rather than rely on others to tell them for us. This has to be good for the region.' – PD n

Soccer hero wins a battle for conservation

It took a sporting hero to end a feud between two villages in Vanuatu. At the same time the future of a unique forest was ensured.

When a feud between two villages threatened the preservation of a unique Vanuatu forest, environmentalists used a universal love of soccer to save the day.

At risk was Vathe, 2,000 hectares of unusually flat, alluvial forest, and home to six endangered bird species. 'It is unsurpassed in Vanuatu in terms of biodiversity,' says Joe Reti, program manager of the South Pacific Biodiversity Conservation Program (SPBCP).

As it is with 80 per cent of land on Pacific islands, the Vathe forest is owned by local people, in this case the villages of Sara and Matantas, which are 40 kilometres apart on opposite sides of the forest.

Vathe has never been logged, but logging companies operate in the area and want to buy it. The two villages have refused the loggers' money and some years ago their chiefs began talks with Joe Reti's staff about preserving the forest.

SPBCP, which runs in 14 Pacific island countries, is a 10-year project aimed at protecting biodiversity by establishing land and marine conservation areas.

In return for declaring the Vathe forest a conservation area, the chiefs of Sara and Matantas wanted electricity installed in their villages, clean running water, a health clinic and a school. 'Our project funding obviously wouldn't allow for things like that,' says Joe, 'so we organised other agencies to provide them.'

But the big challenge in securing Vathe as a conservation area was reconciling the villages that had been feuding for decades.

As Joe Reti soon discovered, the



Striker Charles Vatu, Vanuatu national soccer representative, on the Natora Trail, named after the Natora tree he is leaning against, in the Vathe Conservation area in Vanuatu.

Photo: François Martel

beginnings of their enmity were buried in time, making it very difficult to broker a truce. 'We had separate meetings with the two villages and it was soon clear that we needed an outsider to resolve the conflict.'

The man they turned to was Charles Vatu, a member of the national soccer team, a local sporting hero who happened to have an environmental background.

The villagers were more than happy to have Charles involved in their

reconciliation. After spending a good deal of time visiting and talking, he eventually convinced the two chiefs to meet.

'They shook hands and shared kava and then they agreed to put their differences aside for the sake of the forest,' says Joe Reti.

People from the two villages later met at Matantas to plant a tree and share kava. They decided to work together to protect the forest, and to regularly visit and stay in each other's village. 'It is a great story of getting people to resolve their differences, as well as conserving the forest,' says Joe.

SPBCP, which finishes this year, boasts 17 conservation areas in 12 countries covering 1.4 million hectares of land and sea. The program is part of the South Pacific Regional Environment Program (SPREP). SPREP is made up of 22 Pacific island countries and territories, the United States, France, Australia and New Zealand. Australia is SPREP's largest donor, contributing \$1.5 million a year to its \$15 million budget.

According to Joe Reti, the real test of the success of creating conservation areas will come once SPREP has moved out. Will the communities maintain their interest in protecting the forests? Will they do things the way they've been trained to?

'I don't know, but I have some confidence things will work out,' says Joe Reti. 'There's been a growth in environmental awareness in the region in recent years and convincing people to protect their natural assets is not as difficult as it used to be.' – PC n

‘Mosquito Police’ patrol the streets

At night as the children of Port Vila climb into bed, they pull their mosquito nets tightly around the mattress. Outside the net lurks Vanuatu's public enemy number one – the mosquito.



George Taleo, from the Vanuatu Public Health Department has initiated a program to collect old tyres, which create breeding grounds for mosquitoes. This regional program, funded by the Australian Government to eradicate malaria and other vector-borne diseases, operates also in Fiji and Solomon Islands. Photo: Peter Davis

Sometimes children in Vanuatu wake up to strange hissing noises. These come from the ‘Mosquito Police’ – the spray rigs fighting the mosquito and the deadly diseases it carries to town.

The National Vector-Borne Diseases Control Unit works not only in the larger urban areas but also in the most remote villages on the islands of Vanuatu.

The team of ‘Mosquito Police’ was set up through an Australian Government-funded

regional project, the Vector-Borne Diseases Project, and has the job of keeping down the mosquito population.

The project, which began in 1994 and is managed by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, is also combating vector-borne diseases in Fiji and Solomon Islands.

The Control Unit in Vanuatu runs education campaigns to make people more aware of just how dangerous mosquitoes can be. They not only bite and make you

itch but also carry life-threatening diseases such as malaria, dengue and filariasis.

Malaria and dengue are real concerns to all who live in Vanuatu. The Control Unit constantly screens and tests for the presence of mosquitoes that carry these diseases.

As well as providing bednets, the Mosquito Police tell people how to reduce the numbers of mosquitoes living around their homes.

Recently, in a well-publicised exercise coordinated by the Control Unit, the Director-General of Health, Johnson Wabaiat, changed his suit and tie for an old T-shirt and shorts, picked up his bush knife (a big multipurpose machete) and led fellow workers to clean up around the Ministry of Health building.

Targets in the clean-up campaign were long grass, old tyres, coconut shells filled with water and discarded cans – just the sort of places where mosquitoes might be lurking.

It's not just clean-up campaigns that the Control Unit focuses on. The project fights mosquitoes on every front and has trained workers in how to use microscopes to test blood samples so that malaria and dengue cases can be identified quickly.

Learning how to use and maintain microscopes in hot, sticky tropical weather and to correctly identify the life-threatening diseases carried by mosquitoes is important work.

Workers from the unit use boats, motorcycles and four-wheel drive vehicles to take the battle against mosquitoes to wherever they threaten the health of the people of Vanuatu. – MM n

Samoa sets the standard for stability

Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielagaoi aims to build a prosperous future for Samoa through economic reform. Peter Cotton spoke to the Prime Minister in Samoa's capital, Apia.

At first glance, the Pacific state of Samoa may seem an unlikely benchmark for other developing countries wishing to promote growth and stability through economic reform.

Samoa is small, covering less than 3,000 square kilometres. The 174,800 Samoans who live on its two main islands are outnumbered by the 180,000 who live overseas, mostly in New Zealand and Australia.

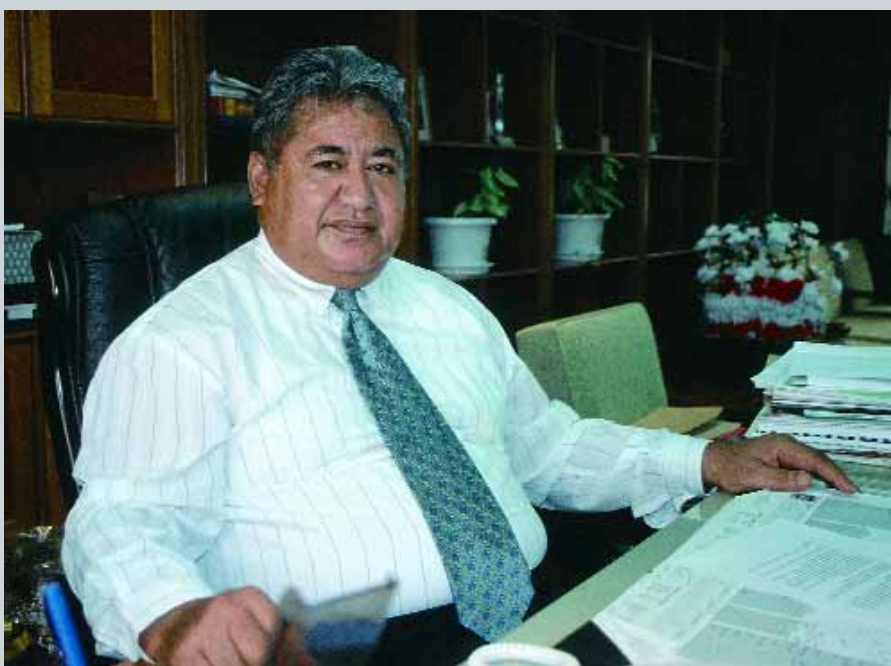
Samoa's gross national product is slightly more than \$2,000 per person a year, about half of Fiji's GNP per person. One of the most reliable sources of income for Samoa's economy are remittances from expatriates.

Nonetheless, Samoa is setting the standard for other developing countries through the economic agenda promoted by its stable, reform-minded Government, led by Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielagaoi.

ECONOMIC STRATEGY

Prime Minister Tuilaepa's economic strategy hinges on the need for his country to make the most of what little it's got. 'We are a country of very limited resources,' he said. 'We need to gear up to reap more and more with those same resources. If we do that, we'll be OK.'

Along with revitalising the village economy and sustainable tourism development, the Government's Statement of Economic Strategy aims to improve health and education, public service efficiency and private sector growth – all keys to an improved quality of life for Samoans.



Samoa's Prime Minister, Tuilaepa Sailele Malielagaoi: 'Ultimately we want to raise the standard of living of our people through a continuous increase in the growth of our economy.' Photo: Peter Cotton

To that end, the Australian Government provided project funding of \$13.2 million to Samoa in the financial year 2000–01.

Over the past decade, the Government of Samoa has worked to deregulate its economy by liberalising the financial sector while slashing tariffs from 60 to around 20 per cent. It's also introduced a goods and services tax and reduced taxes on corporate income.

The tariff reduction, coupled with the removal of some Central Bank controls over lending, has stimulated a building boom in Samoa. Along with a recovery in agriculture, growth in tourism, a rapidly expanding commercial fishery, plus generous aid funding, the building boom

produced annual growth last year of seven per cent. At the same time, inflation was held to less than one per cent.

CHALLENGES TO FACE

While Samoa is intent on a balanced approach to growth, there are factors outside its control that can 'king hit' an economy of its size. In 1990 and 1991 major cyclones devastated the country's infrastructure and vegetation, and in 1993 its economically important taro crop was all but wiped out by a leaf blight disease. Last year, the cost of fuel in Samoa almost doubled in the wake of OPEC's decision to increase the price of oil.

These setbacks have not deterred the Government in its push for reform, and

(to page 12)

Prime Minister Tuilaepa says assistance from Australia remains crucial to that reform effort. 'If you don't have a full range of skilled human resources in an economy, you can't achieve much,' he says. 'That's why we place the highest priority on the sort of institutional strengthening and capacity building that the Australian Government is helping us with.'

As well as its burgeoning tuna fishing industry, another bright spot in Samoa's economy is tourism, with receipts from the industry increasing steadily over the past five years. However, the Prime Minister acknowledges some limits to growth in tourism.

'A lot of our tourism services need to be boosted,' he says. 'We need more rental cars, buses and small motels. And we don't have enough hotel rooms. Also, we need to develop the entertainment industry so that when tourists come to Samoa they spend more time here. The more time they spend, the more we benefit.'

As for the big challenge facing his country, Prime Minister Tuilaepa is clear.

'Ultimately we want to raise the standard of living of our people through a continuous increase in the growth of our economy,' he says. 'The way to achieve this is by boosting the activities of our private sector, and that means continued reform.'

SAMOA'S STRENGTHS

Ask about the particular strengths of his country – those things that give it a comparative advantage – and Prime Minister Tuilaepa nominates the Samoan people. 'If our population was educated,' he says, 'I think we could do wonders. We already have a culture that ensures that we maintain our balance and that we forge ahead at our own pace.'

'It's a very competitive culture,' says the Prime Minister. 'In the village, "talking" chiefs must always be ready to deliver the most appropriate speech at the most appropriate time and they put a lot of effort into securing that honour.'

'It produces a highly competitive spirit that cuts across all aspects of life in Samoa. There's always an element of trying to beat the best and it's that sort of competitiveness that sets you up for prosperity as a nation.' n

Customs have changed at Samoa's borders

People on each side of the customs regulations are feeling the difference an Australian-funded project has made to doing business at the border.

Samoa's business community is praising an Australian Government-sponsored overhaul of the nation's Customs Department.

Processing is faster. Customer relations are working better, and the public and private sectors are communicating more than ever before.

'The reform of Customs has resulted in a remarkable 75 per cent reduction in the time it takes to clear goods off the wharf,' says Mark Paul, whose company imports auto spares and accessories, plus plumbing supplies. 'The "us and them" mentality has changed into a good working relationship between Customs and the private sector.'

From a business point of view, Mark says that the Australian Government's investment in the project was money well spent.

These impressions are echoed by Klaus Stunzner, who imports auto spares, oils, hardware and home wares. He says the Australian-supported Customs project has more than halved the time it takes Customs to process documents.

The three-year project finished in 1999, and the players are in a position to assess its longer term impact. Has it improved the efficiency and effectiveness of a department that collects 52 per cent of Samoa's revenue? Has it simplified procedures for business, and cut delays and costs?

The word from the big end of town is uniformly positive. Klaus Stunzner now completes much of his Customs-related compliance work electronically. 'It's saved a lot of staff hours,' he says, 'particularly given that the new forms are so much simpler.'

The Government's tariff reduction, which



Samoa customs officers Samuelu Sua (left) and Nanai Sua examine a container being unloaded by Roger Chongnee in the freight yard of Ah Liki Wholesales, Apia. Photo: Peter Cotton.

saw levies plummet from 60 to 20 per cent, has clearly played a part. 'Customs is collecting more revenue since the reforms because those who previously avoided payments are willing to pay the reduced tariff rate,' says Mark Paul.

Samoa's Comptroller of Customs, Fuimaono Poufa Te'o, agrees that the project has ensured goods and people at the nation's borders are processed quickly and efficiently.

Fuimaono says Customs enforcement in Samoa used to be like a game of hide and seek, where Customs and business were on different sides.

'Now we see ourselves more in partnership with business. We keep red tape to a minimum.' – PC n

Reforms create new skills and better service for all

Samoan Government employees are acquiring skills through reforms that not only strengthen Samoa's institutions of government but also make their employees sought after throughout the island nation and overseas. Three leading women in Samoa's bureaucracy explain.

Three of Samoa's top public servants put a positive spin on the fact that their best staff are always leaving.

The Head of Samoa's Treasury says her staff are forever being poached by private sector employers. But Ms Hinauri Petana says she's happy to see her people move on.

'It's a vindication of the reform process,' says Hinauri. 'It would be a real loss if they left Samoa altogether, but if they go to other ministries or the private sector, it means we're strengthening the whole Samoan system.'

Eleven government departments or agencies in Samoa have completed an Australian Government Institutional Strengthening Project, are currently running a project or have one in the pipeline.

The second senior public servant, Secretary of Samoa's Public Service Commission, Fa'amausili Dr Matagialofi Luaiufi-Moli, is also philosophical about losing her best Australian-trained people to business.

'Even if these people go overseas, it's good,' she says. 'They'll be exposed to how things work in other countries. And their remittances are one of the highest contributors to our foreign earnings. So they're not lost to us.'

But there are some people Lofi would prefer to see stay at home – those with skills in computers and information technology, engineers and doctors.

The third senior public servant, and who is at the forefront of managing Australia's aid program for the Samoan Government is also a woman. She's Ms Noumea Simi, an Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



FROM LEFT Secretary of Samoa's Treasury, Hinauri Petana, says seeing her skilled staff move on to other jobs is 'vindication of the reform process'; Secretary of Samoa's Public Service Commission, Fa'amausili Dr Matagialofi Luaiufi-Moli, is philosophical about losing her best Australian-trained staff to business, saying even if they move overseas their remittances are 'one of the highest contributors to our foreign earnings'; Samoa's Assistant Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Economic and Aid Division, Noumea Simi. Photos: Peter Cotton

All three women agree that the public sector reform in Samoa being financed by the Australian Government is significant and comprehensive.

Hinauri says the \$7 million Australian Government Treasury Project was crucial to the reform that's taken place in the rest of Samoa's Public Service. 'The Treasury project became the linchpin that allowed us to push on with the rest of the public sector reform program.'

The five-year, \$5 million project to reform the Public Service Commission began in 1999. It will reduce the number of government departments from 27 to about 18 and thereby slash red tape.

'At the moment, someone wanting to establish a little shop must go to the agencies in charge of health, quarantine, finance, inland revenue, and probably police,' says Lofi.

'In a few years, you'll only have to apply to a couple of agencies, or maybe even go to a one-stop shop. The reduction in the number of departments will also mean that our scarce skills in the professional and corporate areas won't be spread so thinly.'

It will take two or three years before the population as a whole will benefit day-to-day from a public sector that is more efficient and effective across the board.

Lofi says public reaction is the key test of the reforms. 'One of the aims of the Australian-supported program is for agencies to develop service standards. If we don't reach the standards required, the public will no doubt let us know.'

'The reforms will be successful when public servants realise that we are paid by the public, and that we are here to serve the public,' says Lofi. – PC n

Samoa builds a sustainable tuna industry

As well as boosting the value of Samoa's tuna fishery, an Australian-funded project is showing other countries how successful community-based programs can be.

Ten years ago, Samoa had no tuna fishing industry. Today, tuna is the country's biggest export earner, bringing in about \$20 million a year.

Last year, Samoan fishermen landed 5,271 tonnes of albacore tuna, compared with a catch of 2,479 tonnes in 1995. This growth in the industry is due, in large part, to a \$4.5 million Australian Government project.

Since early 1999, the project has worked to ensure the sustainability of the country's tuna fishery.

The Samoa Fisheries Project has developed a management plan for the fishery and trained Samoan fishermen in everything from boat construction and safety, to handling and grading tuna.

'Without the project,' says boat operator and tuna processor, Kim Levi,

'the industry would have nothing like the value it has today.'

Four years ago, Kim owned an engineering workshop employing six people. Now he employs 25 people who operate his boats and process his catch for export.

'Before this project, a lot of our fish were rejected,' he says. 'The Australian Government gave us technical advice and helped develop our grading system for tuna. Without the Australian Government team, we wouldn't have known how to look after our fish.'

The Manager of C J Exports, Tala Saaga, agrees. 'We have a new processing regime which minimises wastage and I expect it to increase our income from tuna exports to the United States by up to 30 per cent.'

'The project has ensured the sustainability of our industry,' says Tala.

'We now feel secure about the future of the tuna fishery and our place in it.'

Mike King is the team leader for the project. He says that, as well as training, crucial to the success of the project was an early decision by his team to push for a limit on the number of boat licences operating in Samoa's tuna fishery.

'Without the limit on boat numbers,' says Kim Levi, 'this place would have been flooded with cowboys wanting to make a quick buck, fish the place out and then goodbye.'

The project has also helped develop and conserve the country's village-based fisheries. Since 1995, this part of the project has worked to improve the nutritional intake of village people, as well as end environmentally damaging fishing practices.

According to Mike King, the 64 villages involved in the project accept that conservation measures may mean smaller catches. However, two years on, the catch rates of villages in the program are quite a bit higher than those that are not.

Delegations from Africa, Indonesia and Japan recently visited this community-based fisheries program. 'It's a hit around the world,' says Mike. 'Our visitors want to see how they too can empower village people to conserve their fisheries.'

Since the beginning of the project, the Australian team has worked alongside officers of the Samoan Fisheries Division. 'They've been partners in everything we've done,' says Mike. 'And they're well equipped to continue the work long after this project ends.' – PC n



Robert Fane (left), skipper of a Samoan long line tuna fishing boat, the Sea Angel, examines the catch while unloading with his crewmember, George Tanoa, after two days fishing between the Samoan Island of Upolo and Pago Pago in American Samoa. Photo: Peter Cotton

Strengthening the legal system of Vanuatu

The Australian Government is supporting the redrafting of legislation in Vanuatu as part of the country's Comprehensive Reform Program.

'Drafting legislation is really like writing a story. But the story has to be absolutely exact. We have to cover every possible scenario,' says Michael Wright, an Australian Government adviser to Vanuatu's Legal Sector Strengthening Project.

'There's really no limit to how many changes we can make. What's important is that we produce laws that accurately take account of what is happening in this country and that we train others in the process.'

Angelyne Saul and Eric Csiba are learning the ropes from Michael. Both graduated from law school on Australian Government scholarships – Eric from the University of Papua New Guinea and Angelyne from the University of the South Pacific.

'Drafting law is very difficult,' says Eric. 'It requires intense concentration. But I know that what I am doing is really important.'

Angelyne agrees. 'What we are writing here will be around for a very long time and hopefully it will have a positive impact on the way people live.'

The redrafting is a slow and complex process. The Acts are written in English, but under the Vanuatu constitution they must all be translated into French. In the Parliament they are debated in Bislama, the local language.

'Last year we drafted 54 different Acts,' says Michael. 'Currently we're working on the National Disaster Act. This might take several days. Then we might be looking at the Public Service Act. There is so much to do.'



Heather Lini, Chief Public Prosecutor in Vanuatu, studied law with support of an Australian Government scholarship. Photo: Peter Davis

Working with Michael, Eric and Angelyne is Anna Green. She's a commercial lawyer from Sydney who is in Vanuatu as an Australian Youth Ambassador for Development.

'I'm doing things here that I wouldn't have done until I had much more experience in Sydney. Drafting is something I have always wanted to get into. You have to be incredibly precise. And doing it here in Vanuatu means I'm helping to build a system from the bottom up. That's a good feeling,' she says.

Training is an important part of the legal strengthening program in Vanuatu. And a significant success story is Heather Lini, the recently appointed Chief Public Prosecutor who studied at the University of

Papua New Guinea and then through the Victorian Barristers Association in Melbourne with the support of an Australian Government scholarship.

'In my position I have a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses of our legal system,' says Heather.

'I can see things improving, albeit slowly. We have worked hard to clear a backlog in the courts and we've developed a series of videotapes to help train other lawyers as well as the police.

'Sometimes I feel the Comprehensive Reform Program is too slow, but I know you cannot rush these things. Certainly when the redrafting of our laws is complete, our system will be much stronger.' – PD n

Young women make the most of their expanding horizons

A group of young ni-Vanuatu women looked forward to a bleak employment future until an Australian-supported scholarship scheme gave them new hope.



Mary Tony is a graduate motor mechanic of the Institut National de Technology de Vanuatu. She now works as the only female mechanic in an abattoir in Vanuatu. Photo: Peter Davis

Rima Alau knows her way around electrical installations. She can identify faults, fix fuses, run cables and do whatever else an electrician needs to do.

'Ever since I was young I imagined being an electrician,' she says. 'I used to wonder how it all works and now I know.'

In one year, when Rima graduates in electrical studies from the Institut National de Technology de Vanuatu (INTV), she will join the swelling ranks of young women moving into non-traditional vocations.

These new opportunities for women have been generated through the Equity Scholarships. These form just one part of

the Australian Government's commitment to expanding and strengthening educational opportunities in Vanuatu for young women.

So far the scholarships have been made available to 32 women and five physically disabled students. For many who have not been able to gain a place in the formal education system, the scholarships offer a second chance to gain access to employment.

'We thought there would be a lot of barriers for the women to overcome when taking on non-traditional studies,' said Berlin Rose, Equity Officer for INTV.

'In fact we have all been surprised at

how well the women have adapted and how the men have accepted their choices. It's very encouraging for the future.'

Part of Berlin's job is to promote the Equity Scholarship Scheme to high schools throughout the country.

'Many girls have never thought about taking up these sorts of studies,' she says. 'But when I tell them what our graduates are doing a whole new world opens for them.'

Mary Tony is another INTV graduate who inhabits that new world. After studying mechanics she secured a job as a motor mechanic with an engineering company but now works as a mechanic at the local abattoir.

'There are 60 workers at the abattoir including five mechanics and I'm the only female,' she says with obvious pride. 'The work is really tough but I enjoy it and the people are good to me.'

When graduates combine non-traditional skills with an entrepreneurial flair, the opportunities are even broader.

Last year two women who were carpentry graduates established their own business undertaking small repairs to wooden boats in the Port Vila harbour.

'This may be a tiny country but there are terrific opportunities for skilled people,' says Chris Cookson, team leader with the INTV Strengthening Project.

To walk into a village and see young women fixing an engine, running cables or building a house is to know that there has been a significant and positive shift in educational and employment opportunities.

– PD n

Centre continues the struggle for women

The Vanuatu Women's Centre receives Australian Government support for its counselling, community education and legal advocacy services. Centre coordinator Marilyn Tahī explains the centre's achievements.

Even a glimpse of Marilyn Tahī's workspace reveals something about her and what she does. Piles of magazines dealing with issues of women's rights dominate her office.

Numerous brochures promoting organisations and seminars from around the world are scattered throughout the building.

Noticeboards overflow with similar information. In one corner is a large T-shirt bearing the message 'We want Rainbows, not Rambos'.

'That T-shirt comes from the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre,' says Marilyn. 'We work very closely with them.'

The Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, itself a recipient of Australian Government assistance only a few years ago, is now engaged by the Australian Government to share its expertise and lessons learnt through both program and management advice to the Vanuatu Women's Centre.

As coordinator of the Vanuatu Women's Centre, Marilyn works closely with many individuals and organisations, not just around the Pacific but around the world.

The centre was established in 1994 and it receives support from the Australian Government for a wide range of projects and services.

'If I have to sum up what we do here, I'd say we fight for the recognition of women in all areas of life,' explains Marilyn.

'Since Vanuatu achieved independence women have made some significant gains, but our battles aren't over. In fact they're ongoing. We have a very long way to go and we cannot afford to be complacent.'

The battles are on many fronts. Every



Marilyn Tahī, coordinator of the Vanuatu Women's Centre. Photo: Peter Davis

day at least half a dozen women arrive to see a professional counsellor.

'Many come because they have been subjected to violence. Some are in financial trouble. Many are single mothers struggling, not just with finances but also with the stigma of their situation,' she says.

'We also have 14 mobile clinics for women on outlying islands. Vanuatu may

be small but not everyone can easily come to the office here in Vila so we must go to them.'

Beyond the counselling service is advocacy and education. 'One of our greatest achievements has been our role in making changes to the Family Protection Bill,' she says.

'This was the first ever Government Bill to be sent out for consultation. We lobbied hard to make amendments so that it becomes more workable and relevant to the lives of Vanuatu women.'

While Marilyn has a highly practical grip on the every-day issues facing women in Vanuatu, she has not lost sight of the bigger picture.

She's one of those creative visionaries who know how to achieve their goals. Perhaps this stems from the 20 years she served in the Foreign Affairs Department of the first independent Vanuatu Government and later from the short time she spent as a tour guide. 'Showing other people around our country helped me develop an outsider's perspective,' she says.

It is this perspective that reinforced Marilyn's belief that positive and lasting change must be facilitated from inside rather than outside the community.

'We have to work hard with all groups, young and old, men and women. We have to bring the people along with us, otherwise we risk losing their trust. And if there's one thing that we are very proud of at this centre, it's the trust we have established in all areas of our community.' – PD n

Fijians work toward a healthier community

Trained village health workers form the foundation of Australia's biggest aid project in Fiji which aims to combat disease and improve health on Taveuni.



Anna Sulheo (right), village health worker in Lavena, Taveuni, Fiji, meets with fellow villagers at the health post. Photo: Peter Davis

It's the monthly clean-up day in Lavena village on the Fijian island of Taveuni. Earlier this morning, Amania Waqalevu, the village headman, coordinated the removal and burial of rubbish. Now he's mowing the lawns.

Over at the health post, voluntary community health worker Anna Sulheo attends to her regulars, including Catarina Biaukala and her 14-month-old boy, Joseph.

'There has been a big improvement here since the health post was established,' said Catarina. 'The voluntary health worker has made a difference. She introduced the clean-up days and our village is now cleaner, happier and healthier.'

Taveuni island has 12,000 inhabitants, 237 of whom live in Lavena village. There are around 90 voluntary community health workers across the island. Training them

and supporting the communities that support them is a key aspect of the Australian Government's Taveuni Community Health Project – the biggest single Australian aid project in Fiji.

The project aims to reduce disease and improve the key health indicators. The main project components range from educating and training staff and strengthening referral systems, to upgrading infrastructure, including the building of a new hospital.

This may be a complex project but it relies on a very simple principle – that the foundations must be in place before anything else can be built. And the foundations for the improved health of Taveuni islanders are clearly the village-supported health workers.

'I did my refresher training last

December,' said Anna Sulheo. 'There were about 30 of us and we learnt so much about disease prevention and hygiene. I now feel more confident in what I can do at the health post.'

Sue Earle is the Health Promotion and Training Adviser attached to the project. 'One of the biggest challenges of the training is to make it interactive. People are used to rote learning but the best results are achieved when the students participate.'

Thirty minutes along a dirt road from Lavena village is the Bouma clinic run by district nurse Mela Mare. 'In the two years that I have been here I have seen so many improvements, especially in the training program. I think everyone is now more aware of the key health issues and is willing to help develop preventive strategies. We also have much better resources. My job is very enjoyable.'

With the two-way radio at Bouma clinic and the new ambulance on the island (provided as part of the Australian project), Mela can offer a vastly improved service to her clients.

Sister Tiko is the senior health nurse on Taveuni. She oversees all the training and she has a firm grasp of the big picture.

'By strengthening the skills and resources at clinics such as this we are lessening the dependency on the new hospital,' she explains. 'This is the major strength of the Australian project. It's reinforcing our communities and providing an integrated health system rather than a centralised system that divides communities.' – PD n

New skills for teachers make learning fun

A training program for primary school teachers is bringing a more child-centred approach to Fijian classrooms.



Teacher training officer Meleniani Gavadi uses puppet gloves to show new, more child-centred teaching skills being taught to Fijian primary teachers. Photo: Peter Davis

When Meleniani Gavadi and Jone Keteca don glove puppets they are illustrating much more than simple fun.

'With these puppets school students are able to communicate with much greater confidence, and learning becomes more child-centred,' explains Meleniani, an Education Officer with BEMTUP (Basic Education Management and Teacher Upgrading Project).

BEMTUP is an Australian Government-funded program aimed at improving the skills and resources of primary school teachers across Fiji.

Although Fiji is a tiny nation of around 18,000 square kilometres, a tyranny of distance prevails. Schools are scattered across many islands and transport connections are expensive and infrequent.

For this reason, the teachers upgrading their skills through BEMTUP do so mostly by correspondence. BEMTUP also produces a weekly 15-minute radio program that is broadcast nationally but which is geared to the subject needs of the classroom teachers.

Where possible, education officers from BEMTUP visit the teachers to see how they are applying their learning. During the end-of-year break, the teachers gather for a three-week intensive training session. That's when they share experiences and make those glove puppets for their students.

'Since this program began in 1996 we've trained 450 primary school teachers of grades seven and eight,' says Collin Hindson, the Australian team leader of BEMTUP.

'That's 40 per cent of all teachers taking those grades – enough for significant changes to begin filtering through the system.'

Collin's role finished in April and the work of BEMTUP has now been transferred to the Fiji Ministry of Education.

Meleniani Gavadi now runs the training project. 'We're taking on a very big job but we are all well experienced to continue the teacher training. I'm looking forward to the next residential workshop later this year and to helping facilitate more changes in the classroom.'

According to Jone Keteca, 'The traditional way of teaching in this country has been for the teacher to stand in front of rows of students and simply recite material that the students have to know for the exam at the end of year eight.'

'That's not very stimulating for teacher or student. Now we have group activities where the students experience a sense of discovery.'

At Lami Convent, a Marist Catholic School of 350 students from grade one to grade eight, teacher Angela Lee was having as much fun as her students. Angela has completed the BEMTUP training and examples of student projects adorn her classroom, including student essays.

Jone observed: 'In the traditional system, it's teacher reports that you see on display, not student assignments. This is a big difference.'

'Students still have to sit an exam but they are more confident and the results are improving a lot. And primary school teachers now proudly claim they have been "bemtised",' says Meleniani. – PD n



Students' work adorns this classroom at Lami Convent, a Marist Catholic school in Suva, Fiji, where newly trained primary teachers focus on student-centred approaches to learning. Photo: Peter Davis

Campaign tackles diabetes in Tonga

Reducing the incidence of diabetes in Tonga involves major challenges not only in keeping medical records but also in changing lifestyles.



Dr Taniela Palu (right), personal physician to the King of Tonga and Director of the Diabetes Clinic in Nuku'alofa, Tonga, measures the blood pressure of a patient at the clinic. Photo: Peter Davis

Taniela Palu is personal physician to the King of Tonga. He is also Director of the Tonga Diabetes Clinic, established with Australian Government support.

'We found 13 per cent of the population had some form of diabetes. In the over-60 age group, the prevalence was around 20 per cent,' Taniela said.

The extent of diabetes in Tonga was last assessed in 1998. The next official survey will be in 2003 and Taniela is optimistic that the indicators will reveal a marked improvement.

'With the establishment of this centre we have been able to embark on a widespread education campaign. We have trained health officers in every village across all the islands of Tonga and we are setting up a diabetes interest group that will involve volunteers discussing all the related issues at village level,' he says.

Taniela may be optimistic but he is under no illusion that reducing the incidence of diabetes will be easy.

'What we're really trying to do is achieve a shift in cultural attitudes. In our culture people express concern about their health only when they feel pain. People have to become more health conscious so that we can implement preventive measures. Diets must change and people have to learn the value of exercise,' he says.

As well as diagnosis and treatment, the clinic is involved in collecting data and registering patients. 'By keeping proper records the health workers know who is due for a check up,' explains Taniela.

'This sort of information is the backbone of our preventive strategy. With this clinic and with trained health workers in the villages, I am confident that we are moving in the right direction.' – PD n

Tuvalu's first female doctors return home

The people of Tuvalu live on a group of nine tiny, low-lying atolls in the mid-Pacific. With a total land area of only 26 square km for 11,000 people, many resources are scarce, including doctors. But two young women supported by Australian scholarships have made a difference.

When Miliama Simeona and Nese Ituaso returned home it had a dramatic impact on their country's health system. The number of practising local GPs doubled.

It had been a long haul – studying for nine years away from Tuvalu. But the Australian aid program had supported them all the way.

'My parents were really proud,' recalls Miliama. 'Their own education had finished at primary school on Nanumaga and they didn't have the opportunity to go to high school.'

Miliama and Nese spent their childhood years together on Nanumaga, one of the more remote islands of Tuvalu. Here, fewer than a thousand people occupied three square kilometres of land. There was no electricity, telephone or airstrip. Outside communication was limited to inter-island boats that visited a few times a year for the slow two-day trip to the capital, Funafuti.

With their parents' encouragement, the two young girls went on to attend Tuvalu's only high school.

In those days, the school didn't offer the senior year courses needed to gain entry to higher education and universities. While an Australian initiative was in train to help Tuvalu set up a senior high school program, a small aid project offered the brightest students the opportunity to study in Australia.

So with Australia's assistance, Miliama and Nese were able to complete their secondary education at Townsville's Cathedral School.

'I was 17 when I went to Townsville. It was my first time away from Tuvalu,' recalls



Tuvalu's first female doctors, Dr Nese Ituaso (left) and Dr Miliama Simeona, spent nine years training away from home supported by Australian funding. Photo: Geoff Adlide

Miliama. 'It was a very big change for us but the people there were really nice and the climate was a bit like Tuvalu's, so we didn't get too cold.'

Success at Cathedral School gained both young women entry to the Fiji School of Medicine. With the support of Australian scholarships, both emerged with their medical qualifications.

But before they could begin work as doctors, Miliama and Nese needed to do an

internship in a hospital. As Tuvalu's only hospital doesn't have the capacity to take interns, the new graduates spent their year as interns in Fiji at Suva's main hospital.

By mid-1999 they were ready to come home and Tuvalu – one of the smallest and most remote countries in the world – had its first female doctors. – GA n

Addressing the needs of remote island nations

With their isolation, limited land and fragile resources, the Marshall Islands and Kiribati face some major challenges. This report outlines Australia's assistance to the people of these countries.

MARSHALL ISLANDS

The Republic of the Marshall Islands spreads across five islands, 29 coral atolls and two million square kilometres of the central Pacific. Its small population of about 62,000 faces the difficulties of isolation, limited land and low living standards.

But through a regional fisheries project, women in the Marshall Islands are improving their economic and social standing, with spin-off benefits for their families, communities and the environment.

The Women in Fisheries Development Project, which is supported by the Australian Government through the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, aims to have women more involved in developing the fisheries industry and so increase their opportunities to generate income.

Traditionally, Marshallese women have been closely associated with fishing activities but they have long faced limitations on the nature and extent of their work.

The project is helping the Marshall Islands Government and community groups to run public awareness campaigns on the benefits of women participating more freely in fisheries. It is also providing women with loans to support their business activities.

Women are being encouraged to establish farms to produce pearl oysters, clams, shrimps, seaweed, sea cucumbers and sponges. This will take the pressure off areas that are over-harvested.

Training is an integral part of the project, as is setting up markets to handle the larger and more diverse produce of women.



Locally employed workers dig trenches for water pipes to be laid in the town of London, Kiritimati (Christmas) Island, in February. Aimed at improving health on the island, the project is funded by the Australian Government. Photo: Doug Melvin

KIRIBATI

Kiribati's 85,100 people live across 33 small and widely scattered islands in the middle of the Pacific. Their mainstay is fishing.

The total land area of this isolated nation amounts to only 811 square kilometres. With the population set to double over the next 20 years, Kiribati is facing some major challenges. But with Australian support it is improving its outer island infrastructure, education and training, and public sector management.

In an effort to improve the health of people on Kiritimati (Christmas) Island, the Australian Government has funded the installation of water supplies and environmentally-friendly sanitation on the island, such as composting toilets.

Another Australian-funded project has been helping to develop a comprehensive

strategy for Kiribati education. Among other things it aims to upgrade teachers' skills and develop infrastructure. In February this year, four new junior secondary schools were completed on Kiribati's outer islands.

Currently about 80 students are studying in other countries under Australian-funded scholarships. These are offered to students who are training in much-needed vocations for the future development of their country.

In addition, Kiribati is able to draw on the skills of a number of Australians who currently work there in the areas of law, cartography, architecture, auditing and general medicine.

Australia also assists the Government of Kiribati with its financial management and revenue collection. This has led to more cost-effective spending and better use of resources. n

Building peace in Solomon Islands

The signing of the Townsville Peace Agreement in October last year brought to an end two years of traumatic ethnic unrest in Solomon Islands. As part of Australia's commitment to supporting its neighbour's peace process, a number of Australians have volunteered as peace monitors. Jenny Booth was one of the first.

Within a week of responding to a call for peace monitors in Solomon Islands, Jenny Booth was on her way there.

Jenny's recruitment as a peace monitor was so fast there was scarcely time for her to develop expectations about the job.

'I didn't have time to think about it. I had worked for Australia's overseas aid program for five years and I was in a position to leave quickly,' said Jenny.

Jenny was one of 49 Australians and New Zealanders who formed the first team of peace monitors in Solomon Islands following the signing of the peace agreement.

The team had three main objectives: to receive the surrendered weapons, to report any breach of the peace agreement, and to build confidence in the community about the peace process.

Jenny was among peace monitors based in Auki, the provincial capital of Malaita. Initially they focused on spreading the word that 15 December was the key day for ex-combatants to surrender their weapons. They usually worked through village elders and influential church groups.

'Before I left I had no idea what to expect – what the reception of the locals would be like. I was very pleasantly surprised at how supportive and grateful the people were for our help,' she said.

The socially divisive nature of the Solomon Islands conflict was apparent everywhere. Families needed counselling to accept returning husbands and sons who had fought in the conflicts. And ex-combatants needed help to let go of the fear



Jenny Booth and fellow members of the International Peace Monitoring Team with whom she served in Solomon Islands. From left to right team members from the Australian Federal Police are: Danny Kindermann, Vince Pannell, and Dean Portway. Photo: Fionna Douglas

that they would need their weapons again.

Peace efforts culminated in an initial handover of weapons involving some 300 ex-combatants from the Malaita Eagle Force who arrived in Auki on the morning of 15 December on an overnight ferry from Guadalcanal.

About 1,000 people lined the streets of Auki to watch the ex-combatants, dressed in odd combinations of camouflage, many sporting sunglasses and bandannas.

'It was a tense situation – there were occasional shots fired into the air. We didn't know exactly what would happen. After marching through the streets they lined up outside the police station with their guns, fingers still on the triggers, to await their formal disbandment,' said Jenny.

'Once the formal speeches were complete, they came, one by one, and laid down their weapons.'

Following the amnesty peace monitors continued to work with community groups to persuade those who still held weapons of the benefits of surrender.

Since Jenny's return to Canberra and the safety of a desk job, a second rotation of peace monitors has gone to Solomon Islands and a third is on its way. But she remembers those who did not have the luxury to leave.

'I worry about some of the people I got to know well,' she said. 'Against all adversity, they work tirelessly to help their own people. I often wonder how they are going.' – CTS n

Getting the message across – 'No more guns'

It's hard to miss the 'No more guns' message in Solomon Islands these days. Bumper stickers have appeared on almost every taxi, mini bus and delivery truck. Posters are displayed in office and school windows. And the children are speaking out.

'If you venture down the road west of Honiara these days, two things strike you. One is the burned-out shells in village after village of houses, shops and other shelters that were destroyed by militants in the weeks after the coup. The second is the instant response of the children as they spot the logo of the peace monitors. Grinning, they fling their arms across their chests, shouting: "No more guns" – little knowing just how much their future rests upon this message.'

The Australian, 21 March 2001

'We want peace – no more guns,' chant school children at morning assembly. 'No more guns,' say the ex-militants as they lay down their homemade rifles at the surrender sites. 'No more guns,' say the headlines in the *Solomon Star* on a story about crime.

'No more guns' is the theme of one of the information campaigns flowing from an Australian Government communications project that began in November last year after the peace agreement was signed in Townsville ending two years of ethnic conflict.

The project funds an Australian communications adviser to work with the Peace Monitoring Council (the PMC is the indigenous body responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Townsville agreement). It also covers the production and marketing costs of the campaigns.

Other PMC campaigns include *Takem kam baek* and *Givem baek*, which are encouraging the return of stolen property, and *Follow em law*, which is promoting law and order.



Children from the village of Chapuru in West Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, have been quick to learn the signal promoted by the Peace Monitoring Council of arms across the chest, which means 'No more guns'.

The campaigns use newspaper advertisements, radio spots, radio interviews, posters, newsletters, school and church presentations, public addresses by councillors, and community seminars and meetings facilitated by peace monitors and councillors.

The PMC communications adviser worked with communities to identify the three key messages that Solomon Islanders wanted to convey to those who had been involved in the conflict.

These messages were then expressed in simple themes that could underpin the process of explaining the peace process and the terms of the Townsville Peace Agreement. After field testing, the campaigns were rolled out in early December.

The PMC campaigns are designed to encourage the public to participate. This allows the PMC to harness the considerable influence of the community, church and family in persuading ex-militants and others to comply with the peace agreement.

The PMC recently extended the campaigns to Marau to the east of Guadalcanal where a separate peace agreement was signed in February to end the fighting there.



Has it been effective? *The Australian's* Pacific correspondent, Mary-Louise O'Callaghan, who lives in Solomon Islands with her four children and is married to a Solomon Islander seems to think so.

'The state of the economy, along with the awareness campaign of the Peace

Monitoring Council appears ... to have finally galvanised Solomon Islands civil society – the trade unions, chamber of commerce, churches and peace and educational bodies – into a coherent voice of reason, arguing for peace,' she wrote in her article on 21 March. n

The long road to peace

- Simmering ethnic unrest flared into violence on the island of Guadalcanal in the first half of 1999 with the formation of the Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army, which later became known as the Isatambu Freedom Movement (IFM).
- An estimated 20,000 ethnic Malaitans fled to escape the violence. Many returned to difficult conditions on the island of Malaita.
- Members of the paramilitary sections of the police force took sides, with the majority forming a joint operation with the Malaita Eagle Force (MEF) which emerged in January 2000. Using

weapons stolen from the Auki police station armoury in Malaita, the MEF conducted retaliatory raids on former Malaitan villages in northern Guadalcanal.

- Some members of the paramilitary section of the police force took sides and formed a 'Joint Operation' with the MEF. Open fighting between the Joint Operation and the IFM followed and culminated in a coup which overthrew the Government on 5 June. Open fighting between the combined MEF and paramilitary force (known as the Joint Operation) and the IFM followed in

June. It was not until August that a ceasefire was achieved.

- The Townsville Peace Agreement which followed in October committed all parties involved in the conflict in Solomon Islands to a number of peace measures.
- Among others things, these included setting up an indigenous Peace Monitoring Council and the surrender of weapons and ammunition.
- An International Peace Monitoring Team was set up to receive the surrendered weapons and maintain safe custody of them for two years. n

Encyclopedia focuses Australia on its Pacific neighbours

With the recent release of an excellent source of information on the islands of the Pacific, the region should no longer be 'a forgotten part of the world' for both the Australian and international communities.



The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Alexander Downer (centre), examines a copy of *The Pacific islands: An Encyclopedia* at his launch of the book in Canberra with co-editors, Kate Fortune and Brij Lal.
Photo: Irene Dowdy.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Alexander Downer, officially launched an encyclopedia on the Pacific islands which, he said, will help Australians refocus on the importance of their Pacific neighbours.

The 664-page volume, *The Pacific islands: An Encyclopedia*, launched by the Minister in April, was published by Asia-Pacific Press with funding from the Australian Government.

Mr Downer said the encyclopedia would be a valuable source of data on the Pacific region. It covers all of the islands and island countries of the Pacific with thousands of

entries from some 200 writers, including the world's leading Pacific scholars.

'Within the international community, the Pacific has become a forgotten part of the world and has experienced a steady decline in interest during the past 20 years,' Mr Downer said at the launch.

'Regrettably the south-west Pacific has been unfashionable. However, this is not true for Australia. The Pacific is one of our three important homes, along with South-East Asia and the Indian Ocean,' he said.

'To all Australians, I would say do not be guided by fashion, be guided by

commonsense. The south-west Pacific is an important home to Australia and it is in our national interest to have a stable neighbourhood.'

Mr Downer pointed out that Australia and New Zealand had put a lot of effort into areas of conflict such as Bougainville, Solomon Islands and Fiji, without which these situations could have been much worse.

'We have invested an enormous amount of time and effort to ensure the Pacific is as stable as possible,' he said.

'Together with the New Zealanders, we have a particularly sensitive role in the region, which has the potential to breed resentment. We never want to become a neo-colonial power. But, at the same time, we are determined to help. Finding the right balance is the difficult task.'

Co-editor of the encyclopedia, Brij Lal, Professor of History and Director of the Centre for the Contemporary Pacific at the Australian National University, said the Australian Government's support enabled the book to be completed on time.

The encyclopedia, which is sold with a CD-ROM version, was co-edited by New Zealander Kate Fortune, formerly from the Division of Pacific and Asian History in the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the Australian National University. – CTS n

Parliamentary Secretary visits aid projects in PNG

When Senator Kay Patterson, in her role as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, recently visited Australian aid projects in Papua New Guinea, she saw first-hand the extent and variety of Australia's assistance there.

On a recent visit to Papua New Guinea, Senator Kay Patterson spent a week visiting projects ranging from building construction to immunisation programs.

Senator Patterson's first port of call after arriving in PNG was Nissan Island in Bougainville Province to visit the Nissan Holy Cross High School. With Australian Government support, the high school has been extensively renovated and new facilities have been built. Many Bougainvilleans send their children to this school because it's far from the civil conflict on the main island.

'The restoration of essential services such as education is a very important part of Australia's commitment to the peace process, Senator Kay Patterson said, 'Education helps to give the younger generation of Bougainvilleans hope for a brighter future.'

At Buka, the Senator met Helen Hakena, Director of the Australian-funded Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency. Recently this agency received international recognition for its work (see Snapshots, page 29).

During the past year close to 8,500 people have attended the agency's workshops on violence and alcohol awareness, and hundreds of people, most of them women, have received counselling on domestic violence, rape and child abuse.

Later, after travelling by four-wheel drive to remote areas of Western Highlands Province, Senator Patterson saw first-hand the Women and Children's Health Project.

Improving health services in remote



Senator Kay Patterson administers an oral polio vaccine to a baby in Opiapul village. The vaccine was supplied by an Australian Government-funded mobile vaccine clinic. Photo: Dominic Morice

communities is a major focus of Australia's aid program in Papua New Guinea. Here, immunisation, village health volunteers and mobile clinics make a difference.

Speaking to Opiapul villagers about a Village Health Volunteers training project, Senator Patterson said, 'I am impressed with the dedication and enthusiasm of village birth attendants trained under the program – one birth attendant has told me that since receiving her training she had successfully delivered 25 babies.

'It is very pleasing to see the support Australia is providing to the national and provincial health authorities reaching those who need it most – the children, women and men of Opiapul village, and thousands of other villages like it across PNG.'

In Banz Senator Patterson met Sister Rose Bernard of the Sisters of Notre Dame. Sister Rose, 70, established the Sisters of Notre Dame Pastoral Care Program in the late 1990s in response to the growing impact of HIV/AIDS in Western Highlands Province.

The Australian Government has provided an initial grant to help establish the program and Australian funding is set to continue.

Senator Patterson also visited the Simbu Women's Resource Centre in the provincial capital, Kundiawa, where she met with the Niglkande Women's Group. Funded by the Community Development Scheme, the group processes local food for the benefit of more than 5,000 families. – DM n

Colombo Plan celebrates its 50th anniversary

It's 50 years since Australian overseas aid was expanded into Asia through the Colombo Plan, one of our region's most formative aid programs.

Looking through Australian images from the 1950s – beneath the photos of Hills hoists, Holdens and suburban security – you find the occasional one of tractors bound for Bali and trucks at the Melbourne docks en route to Bhutan.

These pictures captured the start of the rapid expansion of Australia's overseas aid program through the Colombo Plan.

Australia played an active role in establishing the plan in 1951 when the Menzies Government recognised the link between reducing poverty in developing countries and improving regional security.

The plan gave support and training for economic development to member countries from across the Asia-Pacific region.

A highlight of the plan was its scholarship program which saw thousands of students from developing countries study at Australian universities before returning home with valuable skills.

The plan's scholarship scheme encouraged stronger ties between Australians and people from neighbouring countries – a radical move in the conservative climate of the 1950s.

One of the plan's original signatories, former Australian External Affairs Minister Sir Percy Spender, said that the flow of Asian students, trainees and observers to Australia brought Australians and Asians into direct, personal, day-to-day contact.

'They are mingling at work, in private homes, in sport, in social gatherings and in community activities of many kinds, and in so doing, changing social attitudes,' he said.

During the 1950s and 1960s other



An English teacher coaches five Thai students participating in the 1972 Colombo Plan intensive English course at the Western Australian Institute of Technology in Perth, enabling highly qualified trainees to learn the language quickly before further professional training. The English lecturer is Thelma Grant and the students are (from left) Sununt Yesuwan, Natyana Sirisinha, Sumalee Sukhvirach, Somjit Ratanapunta and Suthep Visvakul. Photo: courtesy of the National Library of Australia.

aspects of Australian overseas aid also blossomed under the plan.

Road building in Thailand, development of town water supplies in Vietnam and the enhancement of civil aviation telecommunications in Indonesia were just some of the programs Australia supported.

The plan not only helped improve development in individual countries. It also stimulated engagement between Australia and its Asia-Pacific neighbours.

Some of the participants of the plan, such as Singapore, have since become

major trading partners with Australia, and the plan continues to play an important role in the region.

In recent years Australia has helped member countries strengthen their systems of financial, legal and public sector governance. Australia has also supported the plan's Drug Advisory Program, which helps combat drug abuse among school-aged children in developing countries.

Following 50 years of the plan's influence in our region, Australia has cause to celebrate this anniversary. – CS n



snapshots

MOST AUSTRALIANS SUPPORT OVERSEAS AID

An overwhelming majority of Australians support Australia's overseas aid program according to a nationwide Newspoll survey commissioned by the Australian Agency for International Development, and the Australian Council for Overseas Aid.

Conducted in March this year, the survey showed that 85 per cent of Australians surveyed supported overseas aid – an increase since the last poll in 1998. The number of people who 'strongly support' overseas aid has risen from 52 to 58 per cent.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Alexander Downer, said that the Australian Government was firmly committed to overseas aid. 'The survey shows the vast majority of Australians strongly support this commitment,' he said.

'Poverty reduction, ensuring peace, improving health and safeguarding the environment are regarded by those surveyed as some of the most important issues facing the world today.

'Australians believe we should give aid to look after those less fortunate, for humanitarian and moral reasons, and because Australia is wealthy and can afford it.'

There has also been a 30 per cent increase in donations by Australians to overseas aid agencies since the last survey.

AUSTRALIAN RICE FEEDS KALIMANTAN VICTIMS

Australia has provided 1,000 tonnes of Australian rice for people affected by the unrest earlier this year in Kalimantan.

Violence in central Kalimantan left many hundreds dead and up to 45,000 people displaced from their homes. The rice was distributed through the World Food Programme and was aimed at providing enough food to meet the needs of the displaced people for two months.

The Indonesian Government and non-government organisations responded swiftly to deliver food and other assistance to the affected people, including those remaining in Kalimantan and those who returned to Madura.

The Australian Government and the Australian Ricegrowers' Co-operative jointly arranged the urgent shipment of rice to Indonesia. The value of Australia's contribution was about \$800,000, including freight and distribution costs.

WOMEN'S AID PROJECT WINS PEACE AWARD

The Leitana Nehan Women's Development Agency (LNWDA) in Bougainville, funded by Australia, has been awarded the International Millennium Peace Prize for Women by the United Nations Development Fund for Women.

The prize recognises LNWDA's outstanding achievements in resolving and preventing conflicts and building peace after many years of civil war on the island of

Bougainville. Helen Hakena, the Executive Director of LNWDA, accepted the award in New York.

Commending the women at LNWDA on International Women's Day this year for their tireless efforts in promoting peace, Mr Downer noted the important role that women across the Asia-Pacific region play in resolving and preventing conflicts and building peace. Australian support for their efforts was important in enhancing stability and security in the region, he said.

JOINT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR EAST TIMORESE STUDENTS

A new joint scholarship program will assist 56 East Timorese people to study in Australia. Under the program, to be known as the Eduka Scholarships (*eduka* being the Timorese word for 'educate'), 21 participating Australian universities will waive course fees and the Australian Government will meet the living and support costs of students.

Commenting on the assistance, Mr Downer said, 'The Australian Government is committed to offering meaningful assistance to the people of East Timor. The Eduka Scholarships will help produce the highly skilled people so necessary for East Timor's development in areas such as health, education, agriculture, public administration and engineering.'

The Eduka Scholarships are in addition to 20 Australian Development Scholarships for East Timorese students already fully funded by the Australian aid program. n

business news

OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PACIFIC

Businesses play a fundamental role in delivering Australia's overseas aid program. The Government draws on business expertise to identify, design and implement aid projects. In the Pacific, Australia has projects in all sectors of the aid program: gender, health, education, rural development, infrastructure, environment and governance.

The largest sectors, providing the most contracting opportunities, are health, governance and education. For example, in 1999–2000 AusAID managed aid program contracts valued at almost \$60 million in the health sector and almost \$50 million in the governance sector. Some of these projects have run for several years and provided opportunities for subcontracted specialists.

Most of the aid program's work is undertaken by small-to-medium-sized Australian and New Zealand businesses. Some are winning work in the Pacific for the first time. For example, APac Health Systems is a new contractor to the aid program and was recently awarded the Samoa Health Project and the Health Procurement Contract for the Commodities Assistance Program.

GETTING INVOLVED

Individuals and businesses that have never held a contract with AusAID, which administers the Australian aid program, are encouraged to submit tenders. AusAID is committed to providing easy entry for new players.

What should you do?

- Register your details on AusAID's Consultants Register.
- Regularly check the Future Tender Opportunities and Current Tender Opportunities pages of the website, and get in touch with other possible tenderers who have registered their details on the site.
- Register for the many opportunities to work as a subcontractor provided under AusAID's capacity-building projects (a full list will be on AusAID's website soon).
- Request membership to an AusAID Technical Assessment Panel assessing tenders received for a particular project.

For further information, visit the Business page of AusAID's website (www.ausaid.gov.au/business/default.cfm).

BUSINESS PUBLICATIONS

Further information about Australian aid projects and major contractors (Australian managing contractors), and AusAID's tendering and contracting methods, can be obtained from the following business publications:

- *Business Participation in Australia's Aid Program 1999–2000*
- *Contracting Out*

These publications can be downloaded from AusAID's website at www.ausaid.gov.au/business/publications/index.cfm or they can be requested from the Canberra Mailing Centre by phone (02 6269 1230) or email (books@ausaid.gov.au).

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information about doing business with AusAID, please contact Pacific Contracts and Policy Section: Craig Gallagher, Manager Policy (02 6206 4502) Sherrie Choikee, Future Tender Opportunities, Publications (02 6206 4046) Mal Osborne, Current Tender Opportunities, Consultants Register (02 6206 4790) Email: pcps_ausaid@ausaid.gov.au



global education

WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE PACIFIC?

The Pacific islands, with their diverse cultures, specific regional issues and proximity to Australia, are an important focus for a variety of learning topics. Studies in globalisation, politics, geography, health, history and international relations all provide opportunities to explore the Pacific islands, their people, cultures, environment and the region's unique standing in our current global environment.



The Pacific islands, with their diverse cultures, specific regional issues and proximity to Australia are an important focus for learning in Australian schools.

The Global Education website has more than a dozen case studies on the Pacific region. Learn how small islands deal with their waste, or how some bigger islands avoid overexploiting their marine resources. Read about how Samoa is improving its trade. Look at Vanuatu's innovative approach to reducing sexual reproductive health problems. Find out how mozzies are managed in Solomon Islands and how Nauru is restoring its land.

These issues and more can be explored by going to the website (<http://globaled.ausaid.gov.au>), clicking on either Primary School Material or Secondary School Material, and then on Countries. There you will find a list of Pacific states and associated case studies from which to choose.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Global Education Program supports the professional development of teachers in global education throughout Australia. Learn how to include a global perspective in your classroom, and find out what resources are available to do this by contacting your State's professional development organisation. Go to the Global Education website (<http://globaled.ausaid.gov.au>), get into the website and select Professional Development from the side menu. Or contact the Global Education Unit on (02) 6206 4898 for more information.

NEW VIDEOS

Far from Home (for school years 5–6) and *Rebuilding Shattered Lives* (for school years 7–10) are two new classroom videos that examine the consequences of refugee movements. The videos consider the refugee issue at the local, national and global levels. Both videos include teacher notes and student activities. To obtain copies, contact Classroom Videos by phone (02 9913 8700) or email (orders@classroomvideo.com.au).

For other classroom videos, go to the Global Education website (<http://globaled.ausaid.gov.au>), click on either Primary School Material or Secondary School Material and then click on Resources.

GLOBAL ED. NEWS

Have you subscribed yet? Global Ed. News is a quarterly email that lists new resources such as case studies, classroom videos and educational publications on important global issues – globalisation, human rights, poverty and HIV/AIDS, for example. To subscribe, either go to the Global Education website (<http://globaled.ausaid.gov.au>), click on Global Ed. News, click on Subscribe and then fill in the blanks, or call the Global Education Unit on (02) 6206 4898.

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Contributions are welcome and should be sent to:
The Editor, Dr Susan Nicholls

Focus Magazine
Publications Unit,
Public Affairs Group,
AusAID
GPO Box 887
Canberra ACT 2601
Tel 02 6206 4727
Fax 02 6206 4695
Email susan_nicholls@ausaid.gov.au

Editorial Coordinator
Caroline Taylor-Steele

Contributors to this edition of *Focus* include Geoff Adlidge, Margaret Callan, Peter Cotton, Jeremy Cox, Darren Curnoe, Peter Davis, Margaret Macfarlane, Dominic Morice, Tony O'Dowd, Catherine Snow and Caroline Taylor-Steele.

Photography by Tim Acker, Geoff Adlidge, Peter Cotton, Peter Davis, Fionna Douglas, Irene Dowdy, François Martel, Doug Melvin and Dominic Morice.

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Canberra Mailing Centre
PO Box 462, Fyshwick ACT 2609
Tel 02 6269 1230
Fax 02 6269 1229
Email books@ausaid.gov.au

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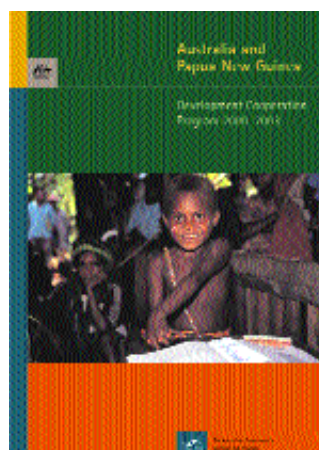
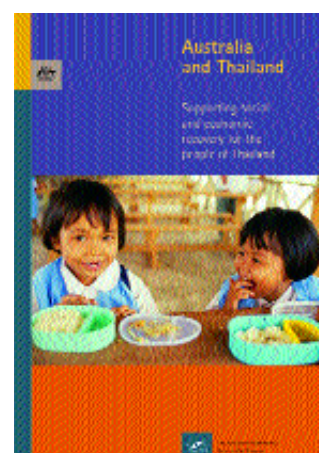
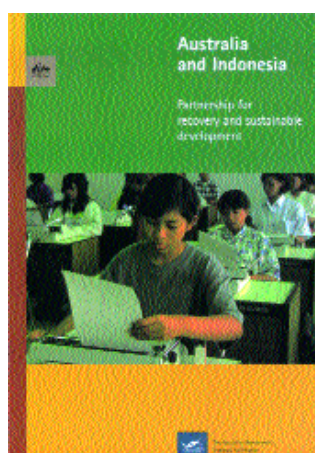
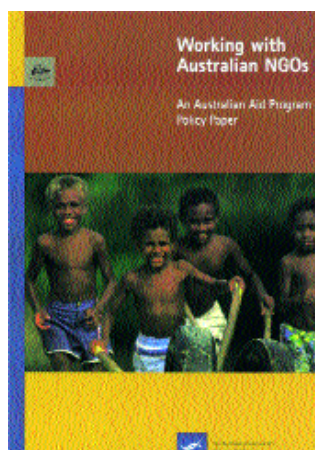
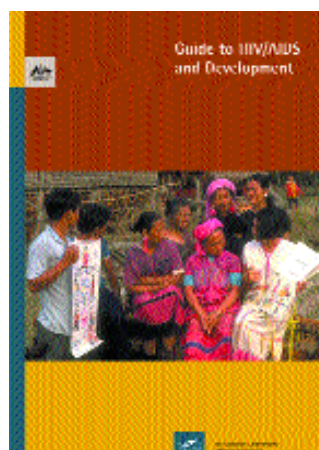
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