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Cover: Australian nun Sister Margaret
Conway helps a tsunami victim.
Photo: Patrick Hamilton,
The Australian



Natural disasters and economic difficulties continue to affect our near neighbours. Just as PNG was recovering from the effects of the drought, the Tsunami hit the people of the northern coast of PNG. Communities around the world have rallied to assist and there has been an unprecedented national and international response to the tidal wave disaster.

I think the generosity and compassion shown by Australians during times like these underscores the findings of a recent survey on community attitudes to overseas aid, commissioned by AusAID and the Australian Council for Overseas Aid, which suggests that most people see aid as a moral imperative and not up for debate — there remains a strong compassion, felt worldwide, for those in need of assistance.

The Australian Government worked with the PNG Government to provide an immediate emergency response and to play an active coordination role. Church and non-government organisations also mobilised support for the emergency relief operations by providing assistance such as medical care, clean water supplies and counselling.

The peak of the emergency relief operation is now over and the survivors have been settled into shelter. Efforts are now focussed on rehabilitation and helping people to put together their shattered lives. Responsibility for the management, coordination and allocation of responsibilities for this phase rests with the PNG government, but Australia will continue to offer support.

The flood situation in China remained serious in both the north-eastern region along the Songhua river and the southern area along the Yangtze river. More than 3000 reported deaths have resulted from the floods and millions of

people have been evacuated from their homes. Donations have been pouring in from within China and overseas for the victims of the worst flooding in 44 years. Australia has made contributions through the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the World Food Programme.

Meanwhile the social impacts of the economic crisis in East Asia continue, with perhaps the worst hit being Indonesia. As a result of the economic downturn in Indonesia, it is estimated that tens of millions of people are now living in poverty. Women and children are likely to carry the greatest burden as a result of falling incomes, unemployment and family dislocation. Health services are clearly under great strain, and children from poor families

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are being forced to drop out of school as family incomes fall.

The Australian aid program has responded to the serious situation in Indonesia with a significant increase in aid which includes a range of specific measures to assist Indonesia address the social impact of the financial crisis and the drought. In 1998–99 Australia's aid flows will be an estimated \$127 million, an increase of more than one-third on last year's budgeted level. The international community has also taken substantial action. The recent meeting of the Consultative Group on Indonesia — the most important gathering of Indonesia's development partners (including international financial institutions, bi-lateral donors and the Indonesian Government) held since the beginning of the crisis — achieved total pledging of \$US7.9 billion. This was a resoundingly positive outcome at

the upper end of expectations. It demonstrated the international community's commitment to help Indonesia overcome its difficulties and protect its hard-won development gains.

Volunteers make a tremendous contribution during emergencies and with ongoing aid development work. In recognition of the effort made by Australians who have served overseas as volunteers, the Australian Government is awarding volunteer certificates. To date, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer, and the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mrs Kathy Sullivan, have presented certificates in Sydney, the Gold Coast and Ipswich. Volunteers from such organisations as the Overseas Service Bureau, the Australian Executive Service Overseas Program and the Paulian Association attended the ceremonies. Beyond recognition of the individual's service, the certificates are a good way of raising awareness of the need for volunteers and of the contribution that they can make. More award ceremonies are planned across Australia.

Also recognising the contribution of volunteers, the Minister launched the Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development Program in Sydney last month. Key supporters of the Program in the corporate, education and community sectors attended the launch. The launch was a great opportunity to discuss the Program and many organisations indicated their interest in being involved as partners. If you want to know more about the Program, this edition provides a good overview and some key contacts.

In closing, some of you may not be aware that the Director General, Trevor Kanaley, has been ill. His health is improving and I'm sure you all join me in wishing Trevor a speedy recovery. He has asked me to convey his sincere thanks to those who have offered their support and best wishes.

Bruce Davis
Acting Director General

84 per cent of Australians support overseas aid

A national survey conducted by Newspoll in June has shown that 84 per cent of Australians support overseas aid. The poll was part of research into community attitudes to aid, jointly commissioned by AusAID and the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA).

The findings of the Newspoll survey and of the qualitative research conducted by communication psychologist, Barry J. Elliott, provide a benchmark to track public opinion towards overseas aid during the next decade.

A key message from the research is that aid agencies need to more effectively communicate their achievements to the Australian community. In response, AusAID and ACFOA will continue to work together to better inform Australians about how their contributions to aid activities are making a difference to the lives of the poor.

The major findings of the research are:


- Australians believe that reducing poverty, ensuring peace, improving health and safeguarding the environment are extremely important world issues.
- Those trapped in poverty are seen as needing help to survive and hope for a better future.
- Images of overseas aid are dominated by television emergencies and children in need. Impressions are primarily related to activities of non-government organisations (NGOs) with little knowledge of government aid.
- Aid is seen as having only a small impact on global poverty but a big impact on some individual lives. The task of easing poverty is seen as never-ending, but could not be ignored merely because of its enormity.
- The need for overseas aid is taken for granted - for most people a lack of aid would be inhumane. Asked to choose between Australia's long-term interests and "moral responsibility" as the more important reason for giving aid, a majority chose "moral responsibility".
- Those opposed to overseas aid are more likely to cite "needs back home" as being of a higher priority, rather than lack of efficacy or efficiency in aid programs.



The Newspoll was discussed at the August 29 annual conference of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid. Pictured with the survey report are ACFOA's President, Sir Roland Wilson (left), the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer; and ACFOA's Executive Director, Ms Janet Hunt

- More people rate government aid as less effective than NGO aid. While support for aid is very high, faith in effectiveness is considerably lower: 60 per cent see NGO aid as effective, compared with 46 per cent for government aid. Only a minority see aid as "very effective".
- Concern about the management of aid — almost exclusively expressed as "how much of the aid gets to the people who need it?" — is widespread but does not undermine the moral imperative. People are unsure about the achievements of aid, especially government aid.
- Just over half of those surveyed believe that the emphasis should be on long-term development aid (54 per cent) rather than emergency aid (38 per cent). Depending on circumstances, however, Australians strongly supported both forms of aid.
- Respondents believe aid should go where it is needed most and especially to our nearest neighbours.
- As with all previous studies, when it comes to the level of expenditure for overseas aid, the most likely response is to support the status quo (no change). Forty-three per cent

believe the one per cent of government expenditure is the right amount, 28 per cent believe it is not enough and 17 per cent believe it is too much.

- Compared with other Budget expenditure (Defence and Social Security), 42 per cent believe that aid spending should remain the same as now. However, 36 per cent believe Australia should spend more, versus 15 per cent who believe we should spend less.
- Awareness of AusAID as the Australian Government's aid agency responsible for overseas aid is extremely low. World Vision and Australian Red Cross are the NGOs most likely to be recalled without prompting.
- Information about aid is gained primarily from television via news, advertising and current affairs programs. It is also gleaned from women's magazines and from NGO's newsletters to their constituents.
- Forty-seven per cent claimed to have contributed money or time to an overseas aid agency in the past 12 months. 

A tsunami caused by an offshore earthquake struck the north-west coast of Papua New Guinea in Sandaun Province at dusk on Friday, July 17.

Three waves up to 10 metres high swept at great speed across low beaches along a 45km coastal strip, devastating the lagoon area of Sissano about 30km west of Aitape township.

Several villages were destroyed, including the main settlements of Sissano, Warapu and Arop. Other villages were badly damaged.

The waves carried people, houses and possessions up to a kilometre inland. Many were swept into lagoons and mangrove swamps from which, for health and safety reasons, it has been impossible to recover their bodies.

The tsunami killed more than 2,100 of an estimated 9000 people living on the coastal lowlands and over 500 are still believed missing. More than 670 were seriously hurt and many others needed treatment for less severe injuries.

Schools and students were particularly hard hit. Arop school was worst affected — five of 10 classrooms were destroyed and 181 out of 311 students are dead or missing.

Two other schools were destroyed, as well as a health centre and aid post, mission buildings and churches and the government administration centre in Sissano.

At least 6,100 who lost their homes in the tsunami are living in six temporary care camps while the PNG Government gets the huge tasks of resettlement and reconstruction under way.

The burden

From the crest of the first huge swell, the fisherman saw the lights of his village for the last time. Moments later, when his small craft soared high into the darkening sky over a second giant wave, both lights and village were gone. Then a third wall of water knocked him from the boat, and all was black.

Thirty kilometres away at Aitape, puzzled townspeople watched a four-metre swell roll across the harbour, unaware that it had just killed or fatally injured more than 2,000 people on the coastal lowlands to the north-west.

At Malol village, the tsunami crashed into a canal behind the beach, and the mission station on the other side was spared. Margaret Conway, an Australian nun, spent the moonless night at a radio transmitter, trying desperately to raise the alarm, but no-one was listening.

These are stories that Robert Tulip, an AusAID Health Sector officer who was among the first relief assessment workers to reach the disaster zone, will never forget.

At twilight along a 50km stretch of the coast, the roar of the approaching tsunami — reportedly the fourth since 1907 in this seismologically unstable region — had brought many people to the water's edge. As the sea receded and the first wave came into view, some turned back to their dwellings to await the inevitable.

The waves, estimated to be from seven to ten metres in height, struck with great ferocity. Within seconds, several villages were wiped out and a third of the 9000 people estimated to live on the coastal lowlands were dead or injured.

Parents told later of babies and children torn from their grasp. Whole families were swept to the deaths. The number of people carried out to sea and into coastal lagoons, canals and mangrove swamps may never be known.

Losses of children — some home from boarding school for the mid-year holidays — were particularly high. At Arop school alone, the tsunami left 181 out of 311 students dead or missing.



Robert's team, from the Australian High Commission in Port Moresby and the Papua New Guinea Defence Force, reached the inland villages of Pou and Ramo on Sunday, July 19 — the day after news of the tsunami reached the capital.

"It was just terrible to see people having crawled into the villages, being carried in on makeshift stretchers, and there was just nothing anybody could do for them," he said. "People were crushed between trees floating in the lagoon in the midst of the waves. Many had nearly drowned and also had broken bones. A lot of people died at that time because of the remoteness of the situation."

Landing pads were cut in the jungle and two helicopter pilots from mining company Highlands Pacific had been working tirelessly since the Saturday

of the waves



PHOTO: PATRICK HAMILTON, THE AUSTRALIAN

Physiotherapy at Wewak Hospital for young amputees (from left) Abraham Solrir; Sebastian Alosi, Patricia Sinake and Rosella Sanevo

morning on pulling injured people out of the coastal waterways and mangroves.

“It was remarkable to see the work of these helicopter pilots who’d just gone straight in to help out, Robert said. “There were graves all around and people walking around with shovels to dig more. It brought home the immediacy of the problem of a large number of people dying from this disaster.”

Australia responded immediately. AusAID, through Emergency Management Australia, sought urgent assistance from the Australian Defence Force (ADF), which provided three C130 Hercules aircraft to take in medical personnel and supplies and began evacuating the injured to regional hospitals and health centres. The ADF also established a field hospital at Vanimo township.

Robert, who has just finished a two-year posting as Second Secretary Development Co-operation in PNG, paid tribute to the “major and immediate” medical response of the ADF, which he said had saved hundreds of lives. “It shows the depth of affection that Australia has for Papua New Guinea that we were able and prepared to mobilise so fast. There was a great feeling of gratitude towards Australians for coming in and helping at a time of such crisis.”

Other Australian medical personnel who went to help at short notice included an orthopaedic team from Monash Medical centre in Melbourne and a team of eight nurses and a physiotherapist from Royal Hobart Hospital.

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Quick response praised

The level of sympathy and generosity extended by the international community to victims of Papua New Guinea’s tsunami has been overwhelming, according to the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) South Pacific Team.

UNDAC’s report of August 6, three weeks after the disaster, said that although the tsunami was “a small event on an international scale and confined to a small and clearly defined area, its rarity, the lack of warning and the circumstances appeared to catch the imagination and sympathy of the world. There was an overwhelming international response from governments, non-government organisations, private individuals, communities, businesses and local governments.

“The most visible international response was the military assistance provided by Australia, New Zealand and France. Australia provided a field hospital and all three countries provided transport aircraft, medical teams, engineers and supplies. A large Japanese medical team was also deployed, as were a dog search team and a large donation of disaster stores from the United States.”

UNDAC also praised the work of non-government organisations at the scene, including the Red Cross, Salvation Army, Caritas, Adventist Disaster Relief Agency, Medecin Sans Frontiers, the Japanese Red Cross and Global Hope.

The Australian Government acted immediately on July 18 when a request for assistance was received from Papua New Guinea. AusAID and the Department of Defence, through Emergency Management Australia (EMA), initiated the Australian Defence Force (ADF) response that was to prove so valuable during the emergency phase of the relief effort.

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Quick response praised

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First, ADF provided three C130 Hercules aircraft. One Hercules, already in PNG on a training mission, was used to fly immediate relief supplies such as tarpaulins, food and medicines to Vanimo, the nearest large town to the disaster area. The other two aircraft flew in a Health Support Unit of 60 personnel, including rescue workers.

The C130s then evacuated injured people from the disaster area to hospitals and health centres in the region at Vanimo, Aitape and Wewak. They also carried civilians and PNG Defence Force and Police personnel as necessary to maintain law and order and help bury the dead.

An ADF field hospital with emergency surgical facilities was established in Vanimo, an orthopaedic medical team was mobilised from the Monash Medical Centre in Melbourne and a team of eight nurses and a physiotherapist came from Royal Hobart Hospital.

Medical teams were also mobilised by the New Zealand, French, and Japanese Governments.

The ADF field hospital also became the headquarters for preventative measures to combat the spread of disease.

Australia also provided engineers, communications personnel and facilities, aerial mapping, seismographic support, air transport and expert personnel to work with the PNG National Disaster and Emergency Service (NDES) and the United Nations assessment team.

In response to an NDES request for assistance with expert advice, four Australians, including EMA disaster management expert, Mr Phil Stenchion, and a logistics adviser were called in to help the NDES.

Church and non-government organisations (NGOs) in PNG mobilised support for the emergency relief operations by providing assistance such as medical care, clean water supplies and counselling.

The Australian Government committed \$2 million from its Humanitarian and Emergencies appropriation to cover funding for this emergency phase of the relief operation.

Additional assistance was provided to the Australian Geological Survey Organisation to allow the monitoring of after-shocks from the earthquake that caused the tsunami.

Existing AusAID-funded projects provided the PNG National Mapping Bureau with assistance for detailed mapping of the disaster area to assist in relocation of survivors, as well as a medical specialist to join the UNDAC assessment mission to the region.

Medical facilities coped well during the emergency phase, although UNDAC reported that poor infrastructure and communications at a local level “hampered the provision of emergency relief and services and the evacuation of disaster victims.”

UNDAC reported that those directly affected by the disaster should be assisted to return to their normal way of life but with “less vulnerability to disaster”, and that disaster-preparedness should be strengthened.

The unprecedented aid response from the international community proved more than sufficient to meet immediate emergency needs and to provide temporary accommodation and sustenance for more than 6000 people in six care camps. However, the huge tasks of rehabilitating and resettling the survivors into new villages and helping them to take up their shattered lives has a long way to go.

Janet Hunt, Executive Director of the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA), says medium and longer-term assistance programs will provide health care, trauma and grief counselling, shelter, water and sanitation systems and essential tools.

Longer-term needs identified by the UNDAC mission include food for up to two months, medical assistance in the care centres as well as additional

nursing staff in hospitals and health centres, funding for dry weather roads, restoration of bridges, and the provision of education and health facilities. Some of these needs are being met from PNG's own resources and others will be provided by NGOs.

Further assistance from AusAID is likely to focus on continued medical care as well as support in the education and infrastructure sectors. Where possible, rehabilitation supported by the Australian Government will be met through existing and planned development assistance projects.

Meanwhile, Rotary International is planning to help with long-term social and economic development needs including roads, commercial farming activities, improved fishing practices and possibly aquaculture activities. Such projects are common in PNG and are generally supported by the official Australian overseas aid program.

The joint Caritas Oceania Assessment Team representing Catholic Church agencies from Australia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea made a detailed assessment of the effects of the disaster. The report says it is important that women and children survivors be given particular support because of their vulnerability in this male-dominated society in which women's needs and issues tend to be marginalised.

“Traditional kinship structures (the wantok system) would normally serve as a kind of social security in PNG culture and society, but the tragic nature of the tsunami disaster is such that family units and kinship structures have suffered great losses and break-downs.” Caritas says. “There is an immediate need to facilitate reunions with family networks, which would involve specific cultural and traditional considerations.” Long term there would also be a need to support the women with more development-orientated rehabilitation projects.

The Caritas report identifies the need for trauma counselling, physical rehabilitation, women's development programs and emergency preparedness training.



PHOTO: ROBERT TULIP

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Robert visited Wewak hospital on August 12, where many of the 100 patients had severe bone fractures and were still in traction or with external steel fixators on their legs and arms. One of the Hobart nurses later described many of the injuries as being worse than she had seen in road accident victims. The Hobart team also told of a young girl who survived after floating more than 72 hours among the dead.

Another unlikely survivor — the fisherman swamped by the third wave of the tsunami — remembered nothing more until he woke up in hospital. “They were receiving a good level of care in Wewak Hospital,” Robert said. “It was quite impressive to see the commitment there.”

On subsequent visits to the disaster zone, Robert became familiar with the plight of many of the 6,000 survivors from the coast still living in six care camps, along with perhaps 4,000 wantok (kinfolk) who came in from other areas to lend support.

“They were traumatised by the destruction of their traditional villages and by the tidal wave and the loss of 2,000 of their fellows — two to three thousand people from four villages. It’s an enormous loss which people are still battling with. It’s the loss of the livelihood and friends and family that’s the source of the trauma. And then living on other people’s land.”

The Warepu people, subject of a recent ABC Four Corners program, lost 1,500

of their 3,000 kinfolk when the tsunami wiped their village and possessions from the face of the earth. The survivors, left without land, were begging to become tenants on land owned by others. “Even the luckiest of Warapu families feel the burden of the waves,” Mark Davis reported.

Robert Tulip said that many who had been through the tsunami might not want to go back to the sea, adding that the Four Corners program had indicated the kind of disputes likely to arise as people tried to re-establish

‘It’s an enormous loss which people are still battling with’

new lifestyles away from the coast. “They are crowded into places which are not on their land and so there’s the dislocation and the dispossession from all of their goods having been destroyed. “There’s weakened immunity as a result of the trauma and that in itself has led to an increase in malaria cases.

There are concerns about water supply and sanitation because it’s a very high water table and there’s been difficulty in getting adequate sanitation services — there’s a risk of typhoid.”

Robert said that even before the tsunami, health services in the district were rudimentary. “There was a female life expectancy of just 41 years — that

This photo, taken two days after the tsunami, shows the devastation. Before the tsunami, around 9000 people lived on these coastal lowlands west of Aitape

gives an indication of how bad the health indicators were for the people in general. Malaria, malnutrition, pneumonia and TB are all endemic.”

Thanks to the generous level of aid, water supply and sanitation in the camps appeared to have run quite well in the immediate emergency phase. But the camps would have to remain in place for probably some months and the emergency services — the police and the army — had left. On the positive side, the generous aid response had enabled local health services to conduct patrols, immunisations and health programs.

The rebuilding of schools, houses and health centres would demand a lot of resources, but “it looks as though the resources should be available. It’ll take a lot of work, a lot of coordination and time to get it happening. Caritas Oceania (the Catholic Church agency) has launched a major appeal which will be used for much of the reconstruction work of the church facilities such as schools and so on which were destroyed.”


At the time of writing, an AusAID-funded needs assessment team was working with the PNG National Disaster and Emergency Service team and non-government aid organisations on a coordinated plan of action for the resettlement and rehabilitation of the tsunami survivors. 



PHOTO BY SERGEANT BOB O'DONAHOO
Lieutenant Toovey and Corporal Lindberg carry a tsunami survivor to the Field Hospital in Vanimo.
Lieutenant Toovey and Corporal Lindberg are just two of the almost 140 men and women
who make the Australian Defence Force's PNG Disaster Relief effort in PNG's New Guinea Province.
© The Australian Defence Force, Defence Public Information

PHOTO BY SERGEANT BOB O'DONAHOO

Lieutenant Anthony Toovey and Corporal Simon Lindberg carry a tsunami survivor to the Field Hospital in Vanimo

Clean water for tsunami survivors

By Jane Edge, National Director, Christian Children's Fund Australia

Access to safe water became the overwhelming problem when the tsunami survivors moved inland to Vanimo, Aitape and Tadjj.

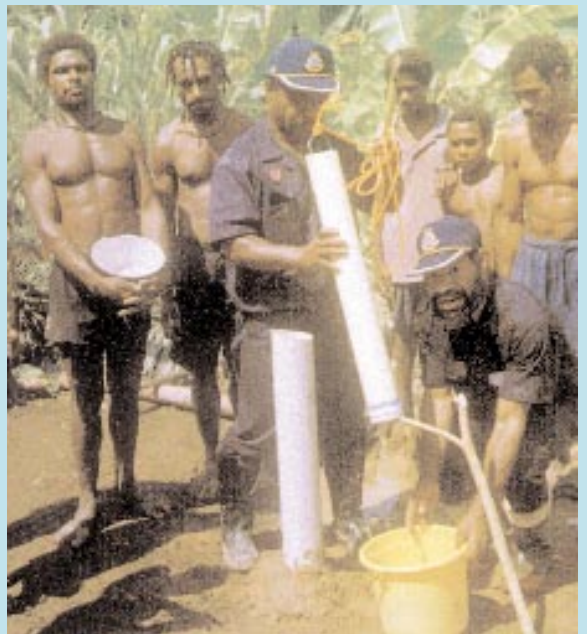
After a request to help find safe water, the Christian Children's Fund of Australia (CCF) and the Salvation Army PNG formed a mobile team which began digging wells.

Using a simple method which proved effective during recent AusAID-funded drought-relief efforts in PNG's Central Province, the first well was sunk about 7km inland at a care centre for about 200 survivors. There was huge excitement and relief when water was struck.

Twenty hand-drilled wells were sunk using the technique, which was developed by an Australian, Nevell Hungerford. Each provided water for an about 50 people.

Nevell, who has also developed simple rainwater catchment systems that use guttering for collecting water and receptacles for storage, was an apple farmer for 35 years. He became a volunteer through the Overseas Service Bureau at 60 and a sought-after consultant on drought relief.

CCF Australia has been active for almost 60 years in both long-term development projects and emergency relief. In PNG, CCF Australia works with the Salvation Army PNG on long-term development projects.



Christian Children's Fund/Salvation Army PNG workers Stephen Aina (holding pipe) and Michael Kilip help survivors find clean water at Aitape after the tsunami disaster

Volunteers honoured at award ceremonies

The Australian Government is honouring Australians who have served overseas as volunteers in a series of award ceremonies across Australia.

On August 12, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer, launched the ceremonies at the Sydney Town Hall where more than 75 returned volunteers were presented with certificates of appreciation. The Parliamentary Secretary, Mrs Kathy Sullivan, presided over similar ceremonies in Ipswich and the Gold Coast.

Australian volunteer programs have existed since the 1960s. Organisations such as the Overseas Service Bureau, the Australian Executive Service Overseas Program, and the Paulian Association have played a vital role in providing Australians with an opportunity to volunteer their services overseas.

More than 5,000 qualified Australians have worked in developing countries in areas as diverse as seed technology, teaching, radiography and panel beating.



Jo and Malcolm Edward-Cole, pictured above in Swaziland national dress, with the Parliamentary Secretary, Mrs Kathy Sullivan, were two of the returned volunteers honoured in the Gold Coast ceremony for their work in the southern Africa nation from 1991–95.

They turned a kitchen, which fed street kids and orphans, into a profitable women's employment scheme exporting bottled food made from local produce to nine countries, including the United Kingdom, Germany and France.

These products provided employment not only for the people who made the food, but also for the women who weaved the gift containers and for the disabled people who made the carved wooden spoons sold with the jars.

Centre for Democratic Institutions to host workshop for Melanesian ombudsmen



CDI Director, Mr Roland Rich

The Centre for Democratic Institutions will harness the best of Australia's democratic experience to support and promote democracy, human rights and effective governance in developing countries, explained the newly appointed CDI Director, Mr Roland Rich.

The CDI's main task is to design and deliver short, intensive training programs in support of the democratic process and the strengthening of civil society.

These will focus on electoral, parliamentary, governmental and judicial procedures, and the processes by which

broader society, such as the media and non-government organisations, can contribute to democratic decision-making.


One of the first activities of the CDI will be a workshop for Melanesian ombudsmen, to be held at the Australian National University (ANU) in November.

"The CDI also has an obligation, I believe, of finding the Australian way of tackling these issues," Mr Rich said. "That does not mean we need advocacy in favour of the Westminster system, Australian legal drafting or tabloid journalism. But we can draw from the strength of our governmental institutions, the openness of our society and the egalitarian tradition in Australian public life."

The Government is providing \$5 million over the next five years for the CDI, located in the Research School of Social Sciences at the ANU in Canberra.

The Centre's activities will be aimed at parliamentarians, senior administrators, journalists, community leaders and others who play an influential role in the governance of developing countries. They will include workshops for politicians, orientation courses for newly appointed judges and technical assistance in the field of good governance and civil society.

Mr Rich has been Assistant Secretary of the International Organisations Branch at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade since 1997.

He joined the Department in 1975, and has served on diplomatic postings to Burma, the Philippines and France, and most recently as Australia's Ambassador to Laos. He has an Arts/Law Degree from the University of Sydney and a Masters in International Law from the Australian National University. 



Indonesia

Support and reform crucial for recovery, says World Bank

A World Bank study into the crisis in Indonesia has recommended increased international support for the troubled nation. It claims that with adequate assistance and appropriate reform, Indonesia will return to sustained growth in the medium term.

While acknowledging that Indonesia, a country which until 1997 boasted decades of rapid growth and stability, is in deep crisis, the World Bank report offers hope to the millions of Indonesians whose lives have been affected by the political and economic upheaval.

But the World Bank report warns that recovery will require dedication to reform and substantial increases in financial and technical assistance. It says the seriousness and urgency of Indonesia's financial and economic crisis cannot be overstated even if positive outcomes can be achieved.

Thirty years of rapid growth have added significant strengths to the economy. It has accumulated an impressive stock of human and physical capital. Agriculture and industry are well integrated with the global community. Savings rates are among the highest in the world. And the economy possesses a rich natural resource base, a large domestic market and an industrious, innovative and educated people.

According to the World Bank study, recovery will be slow and difficult. No country in recent history, let alone one the size of Indonesia, has ever suffered such a dramatic reversal of fortune. It predicts the Indonesian economy will contract by 10 to 15 per cent this year inflation could exceed 80 per cent and the number of poor could well double.

The Bank considers that recovery hinges on sustained support from the international community and it has recommended a five-point agenda to

stabilise and rehabilitate both the economy and society as a whole.

Protect the poor

The highest priority is the protection of the poor - the millions of Indonesians facing falling wages, rising unemployment and enormous price hikes in food and essential services.

These people cannot rely on traditional family and social networks; government intervention is required. Food must be affordable, with subsidies for basic commodities like rice and fuel. Labour-intensive public works programs are needed and health and education services must be restored and upgraded.

International assistance

With Indonesia's budget deficit now reaching 8.5 per cent of GDP, the Government has some difficult choices. To avoid cutting back subsidies and social programs, Indonesia needs foreign capital.

The economy is predicted to contract by 10 to 15 per cent this year, inflation could exceed 80 per cent and the number of poor could well double

For these reasons, the World Bank estimated Indonesia would need about \$8 billion more in foreign financing in 1998-99 than in 1997-98. At the annual Consultative Group on Indonesia (CGI) meeting held in Paris in late July, this target was reached. The international donor community has pledged \$US7.9 million in funding for the 1998/99 financial year. This comes on top of G7 and other efforts

to fund over \$US6 billion to cover the budget funding gap.

Australia pledged a total of \$A120 million in addition to its \$US1 billion support for the IMF loan package, and approximately \$900 million to date in national export cover to ensure the supply of key commodities.

Dealing with debt

The combination of private sector domestic and external debt and the depreciation of the currency have paralysed many enterprises. Restructuring the economy is one of the Government's highest priorities including the implementation of new bankruptcy laws and the reconstruction of the banking system.

Resuscitating the banking system

The rehabilitation of Indonesia's banking system is crucial for recovery. The World Bank recommends four measures to help relatively sound banks restore credit flows and resume efficient banking operations. These include the injection of equity from foreign and domestic investors the revival of the Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency (IBRA), the establishment within the Bank of an asset management unit, and the development of measures to give exporters adequate working capital.

Improving governance

According to the World Bank, social and political developments in Indonesia since April have already led to improved governance and transparency. There are positive signs that the new Government is breaking with the past to end the problems of collusion and nepotism. ✂

A heavy burden on women and children

A report prepared for AusAID's Gender and Education Sector has found women and children in Indonesia are bearing the greatest burden of the economic crisis.

Because women are traditionally the primary carers and household managers, they are the ones now faced with food shortages and unemployment. And as conditions worsen, the health status of women and girls has deteriorated alarmingly.

The report, written by Tamara Baillie as part of the Australian National University's Internship Program, examines the impact on women in a range of areas including health and education.

It found that many women and girls are suffering from malnutrition because of reduced food stocks and soaring prices for basic commodities. For example, the price of rice rose by about 40 per cent in the month of May and milk prices have risen by around 300 per cent.

It's now estimated that the maternal mortality rate has risen to 450 in every 100,000 births — the equivalent of 75 maternal deaths per day or between 25,000 to 30,000 a year. In remote areas like Irian Jaya, the rate is as high as 500-600 per 100,000 births. Many of these deaths are preventable. Around 65 per cent are attributed to anaemia caused by iron deficient diets and poor sanitation.

Traditionally, women and girls receive the smallest portions at meals and are last to eat. With soaring food prices, they are eating even less. Many are existing on famine foods and by bartering and borrowing. Women are often responsible for growing and processing




Indonesian women and girls traditionally receive the smallest portions at meals and are last to eat. Many are now suffering malnutrition because of reduced food stocks and soaring prices

food crops and this is becoming increasingly labour-intensive. For example, in East Flores many women are resorting to meals of bark and mangrove fruit. In West Timor, they are walking more than three kilometres to find putak, a forest food, which takes several days to collect and prepare.

Women are also often considered the most expendable section of the labour force and are the first to lose their jobs, especially those involved in unskilled manual jobs in the textile, garment and footwear industries. Some women who have been working in other parts of

Asia are being forced to return to Indonesia when their work contracts expire but few are finding jobs when they return.

Unemployed women are also being forced into the informal sector to survive and according to the report, this has crucial implications for development aid. It claims that being disproportionately represented in the informal sector means women are usually the last to benefit from development projects, and this will make it difficult to implement programs that bring about real improvement in their lives. 



Indonesia

Australian aid targets rural poor

Australia responded swiftly to the Indonesian crisis, announcing in May a \$30 million package of humanitarian assistance. Through its aid program, the Government is also helping the Indonesian Government take essential measures to rehabilitate and reform the economy in the key areas identified by the World Bank.

As part of the humanitarian package, 40,500 tonnes of Australian wheat has arrived in Indonesia to help feed critically malnourished and vulnerable groups in the poorer areas of Eastern Indonesia. The wheat, which is being swapped for rice, is being distributed through the World Food Programme's emergency operation in Indonesia. This ensures that food is getting to those who need it most including children and pregnant women.

As well as food aid, Australia's relief package includes:

- emergency medical supplies;
- drought relief, including supplementary feeding programs, agricultural rehabilitation and employment projects; and,
- help for a World Bank program supporting the Indonesian Government's own drought relief and employment generation schemes.

This assistance is targeted particularly at the rural poor in the eastern islands and is being distributed through inter-

national agencies, NGOs and a network of Australian aid projects.

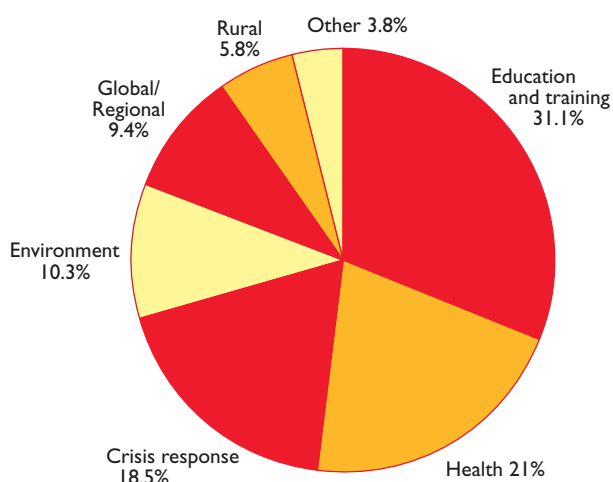
On 10 July, Australia also announced a \$70 million program of new and ongoing activities which will enhance Indonesia's capacity to meet the economic challenges it faces, especially in implementing economic reforms and achieving economic recovery.

Areas of assistance already under way or under consideration include:

- assistance to the State Audit Agency;
- reform of state-owned enterprises;
- bankruptcy laws;
- foreign investment and trade policy;
- capital market development;
- statistics capacity;
- intellectual property rights;
- land titling;
- development of small to medium enterprises; and,
- scholarships to build economic capacity.

Australia recognises the importance of maintaining human and social infrastructure to provide a basis for economic recovery. The aid program is continuing to support long-term development projects.

Australian Aid to Indonesia by Sector: 1998-99 (est.) (%)



| KEY STATISTICS | AUSTRALIA | INDONESIA |
|--|--------------|-------------|
| Total population | 18.4 million | 200 million |
| Projected annual population growth 1995-2010 (%) | 0.8 | 1.3 |
| Life expectancy (years) | 78 | 65 |
| Infant mortality (per 1,000 births) | 6 | 49 |
| GNP per capita (US\$) | 20,090 | 1,080 |

Sources: The World Development Indicators 1998
Australian Bureau of Statistics

Fishing project creates jobs for remote villages

A joint Australian-Indonesian development project on Seram Island in Indonesia's Maluku province has given 26 local people jobs and laid the groundwork for a vigorous fishing industry in the region.

The project, completed in June this year, involved training local people in fish hatchery techniques. It is aimed at helping establish a sustainable fishing industry in remote coastal communities by developing village-based farming units. The fishermen use hatchery-raised fingerlings and grow-out in cages to reduce the adverse social, environmental and economic impacts associated with wild grouper fishing practices.

They use mainly the "grouper" species of tropical and sub-tropical fish because these are highly sought after for the valuable live fish trade in Asian markets. Fishing pressure in the region has led to an alarming decline in fish numbers. Reduced stock and high prices meant traditional fishers were resorting to highly destructive fishing practices including blasting and poisoning the reefs.

The project is also establishing a strong team of trained Indonesian technicians who will use their skills to train others in outlying areas.



Team members cleaning hatchery tanks

Local village communities now have the opportunity to establish and manage a commercial aquaculture industry that is both sustainable and more profitable than traditional fishing practices.

And as economic conditions slowly improve, it's expected there will be significant opportunity for the development of export markets.

The project was funded through AusAID's Private Sector Linkages Program (PSLP), which is aimed at strengthening the capacity of the private sector in developing countries.

It represents a collaboration between the Australian company, WHTG Australia, and PT Moluccas Mariculture. WHTG Australia is based in Devonport, Tasmania, and has particular expertise in aquaculture. PT Moluccas Mariculture has had a long-standing interest in improving aquaculture techniques in Eastern Indonesia. It has a successful pearl farming business and also operates a pilot trochus shell hatchery which is producing juvenile trochus for reseeding onto reefs depleted by overfishing. ✂



A practical session on assessing fish growth

Information on PSLP

The Private Sector Linkages Program (PSLP) is initiated by Australian firms seeking to develop strategic alliances with private sector organisations in developing countries. A committee of government and private sector representatives considers applications up to four times a year. Applications are assessed against their contribution to sustainable development, specific country objectives, the potential for future commercial relations, cost-effectiveness and other selection criteria.

Application forms and details of eligibility criteria can be obtained from: PSLP Secretariat AusAID GPO Box 887, CANBERRA ACT 2601.
Phone 02 6206 4663, 02 6206 4787 fax 02 6206 4875 email: pslp@ausaid.gov.au

| | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| VIC Business Liaison Officer | ph 03-9221 5422 | fax 03-9221 5419 |
| NSW Business Liaison Officer | ph 02-9218 5722 | fax 02-9218 5701 |
| QLD Business Liaison Officer | ph 07-3404 2905 | fax 07-3221 5093 |
| WA Business Liaison Officer | ph 08-9231 4408 | fax 08-9486 1078 |
| SA Business Liaison Officer | ph 08-8237 6908 | fax 08-8231 0354 |

Banking on trust in Indonesia

Indonesia's banking system has been at the centre of the country's recent economic crisis, suffering a severe crisis of confidence. Yet one bank is set to lend \$137 million US dollars to 800,000 poor rural families with no land, no steady employment, and no collateral.

The Bank Rakyat Indonesia (BRI), with funding from International Fund for Agricultural Development, the Government of Indonesia and the Asian Development Bank, is expanding its micro-credit program to benefit an estimated 4 million of the poorest Indonesians in rural areas. The loans, from \$40 to \$100 US dollars, are made at regular market rates. With a small loan from BRI, low-income but enterprising Indonesians can start simple activities such as raising chickens, selling fruit, processing fish, making furniture, or repairing radios, which can significantly increase their incomes.

An evaluation of the scheme found that the incomes of participating families had risen by an average of around 50 per cent.

Ibu Nurlaela, aged 29, explained how two loans, of \$32 and \$64 have helped her. "Before, I used to sell vegetables for Mrs Nasiroh. My husband worked as a rickshaw-puller in Jakarta. We don't own any land and life was hard. Now, I'm selling more vegetables and am getting more profit. I've been able to improve my house, I have enough rice to live on, and I can pay for my children's schooling. One day, I hope to have my own shop at the market."

IFAD has 20 years experience working to improve life for the rural poor. It has found that contrary to most expectations, poor people are indeed credit-worthy if they are organised into self-help groups. The success of IFAD's many micro-credit projects in Asia, including Bangladesh's Grameen Bank, prove that just a small loan can break the poverty trap.

In Indonesia, some 86 per cent of loans, made to more than 38,000 different groups had been repaid in full by July 1997.

"We received our fifth loan on 7 October 1997," explained Ibu Arshih, a small-scale rice farmer from Java. "It



Indonesian women working for their country's future

was for 250,000 Indonesian rupees per person (about \$US105), with a 2 per cent discount since we've never been behind in our payments."

Contrary to most expectations, poor people are indeed creditworthy if they are organised into self-help groups

The number of poor rural Indonesians who benefit from the loans has skyrocketed since the Indonesian Government and BRI began the scheme, called Pembinaan Peningkatan Pendapatan Petani Kecil (P4K) in 1980. IFAD first became involved in 1987, enabling the project to expand from 2,000 to 32,750 self-help groups in six provinces. In this third phase of the scheme, an additional 80,000 self-

help groups, of 8 to 16 people, will be formed in 12 provinces over the next seven years.

Yet according to Mattia Galletti, IFAD project controller, some loan recipients have actually benefited from the crisis. Economic hardship has led many Indonesians to repair rather than replace broken items, boosting business for those micro-enterprises who repair anything from bicycles to radios and televisions. Basket-weavers are also doing a fast trade, as plastic containers become too expensive and consumers turn to traditional bamboo containers for storing food and other goods.

Life for rural Indonesians, with little or no land of their own, has never been easy. The current economic climate makes it even more difficult for them to see a way out of the poverty cycle. A small loan from P4K, a show of trust from their peers and the bank, may be the key to helping poor rural Indonesians regain confidence and control over their fortunes.



HIV/AIDS logo

Australia helps fight HIV/AIDS in Mekong region

Australia is funding a \$5 million initiative to help combat the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the Mekong region of South-East Asia, which takes in Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, the Yunnan Province of China, Laos and Burma.

Fast-moving epidemics in Cambodia and Burma are intensifying the spread of the retrovirus, leading to increasing social and economic costs for individuals, families and governments.

UNAIDS has estimated that across the whole of South and South-East Asia, six million adults and children have HIV/AIDS, most of them infected between the ages of 15 and 35 years.

The Mekong initiative, announced by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer, on 28 July raises direct funding from Australia for activities in the region to a total of \$5 million to be spent over three years.

Australia's assistance will support regional coordination of HIV/AIDS activities and help strengthen local non-government and community organisations working on the disease.

To enable quick, flexible responses, assistance to non-government and community organisations will be partly in the form of small grants managed by AusAID staff in the region.

HIV/AIDS defies national borders. That is why Australia has encouraged a regional approach, which will complement individual national responses to the epidemic.

In December 1997 Australia hosted a meeting in Bangkok of key individuals with strategic planning and program experience in HIV/AIDS in Asia.

The principal outcome of the meeting was a draft Mekong Region Strategy for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care: 1998–2000. The draft strategy document was circulated in the region and finalised in February 1998; copies of the final document are available from AusAID's Asia Regional Section.

The strategy aims to increase the effectiveness of multi-country responses to

the HIV/AIDS epidemic across the Mekong region and will focus on issues such as:

- increased distribution of condoms;
- management, prevention and care of sexually transmitted diseases;
- increased care for affected individuals; and
- education programs.

Australia's \$5 million Mekong Regional HIV/AIDS Initiative will support high-priority activities in areas identified in the strategy. 



Australia is supporting community education activities to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS

AUSTRALIAN

Young Australians makin

Five hundred young Australians will take up development assignments in the Asia Pacific region over the next two years under an exciting new program launched by the Australian Government.

The Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development program will boost the number of Australian overseas volunteers by 500.

Marketing Director, Howard Glenn, spoke to *Focus* about the \$10 million program.

Q. What are the aims of the Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development program?

A. The program is aimed at giving young Australians the opportunity to use their skills, training and experience to help development projects in Asian Pacific countries. By becoming ambassadors, they'll strengthen the bonds between Australia and these developing countries. They'll be a vigorous, youthful public face for our engagement in the region, establishing lasting relationships and networks at both the individual and organisational level. They'll contribute enormously to new and existing projects in a multitude of development sectors - everything from health and the public sector to business and industry.

Q. What sort of projects do you expect they'll be working on?

A. There'll be an enormous variety of projects. For example, Indo-China currently has a huge HIV crisis and it could well be that young Australian community health workers could be placed on assignment to boost local resources. Other projects could include the development of social infrastructure and the enhancement of work already being undertaken by aid agencies. Positions in the private sector, government, education and community organisations are all possible.



The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer, with Professor Lesley Phillips of Curtin University, at the launch of the Australian Youth Ambassadors Program

Q. The program was launched on 27 August by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer, and applications have now opened. What's been the response so far?

A. The response has been outstanding. So far we have had more than 1,700 inquiries from young people wanting more information and 680 applications. We've also had a very encouraging response from government, business and the education sector all keen to become involved as Partner Organisations. Some of the organisations already on board include BHP, accountancy firms Stanton Partners and Ernst & Young, the Institution of Engineers, the Public Health Association and 23 universities.

Q. What role will these Partner Organisations play?

A. The Partner Organisations will be involved in a number of important ways. They'll nominate potential Australian Youth Ambassadors from within their own organisation or from outside. And their overseas contacts and presence will be invaluable in identify-

ing potential assignments in conjunction with the Host Organisations. The Partner Organisations will also have the opportunity to give direct support to particular assignments. But it's definitely not a one-sided equation. By becoming involved in the program, the Partner Organisations will be offered outstanding staff development opportunities for their people including work experience for graduate students and trainees. New overseas linkages will be forged and existing relationships expanded. At home, we'll be encouraging the development of long term networking as part of an alumni program.

Q. What sort of young people are you looking for?

A. We're obviously looking for a group of very special young Australians - people with enthusiasm, commitment and the skills and experience required for a vast range of development projects. They must be aged between 18 and 30 and be Australian citizens. They must also be able to show us that they have the specific skills or knowledge to contribute to a particular project. Now

YOUTH AMBASSADORS

a difference for development



Ms Kate Richardson, of the Australian Wool Corporation, was a speaker at the launch of the Australian Youth Ambassadors Program

this doesn't automatically mean a university degree. We believe there'll be a big demand for people trained in varied disciplines including trades. That's why we are working so closely with state governments and training authorities like TAFE. For instance, in the last couple of weeks I have been in Western Australia and Perth talking to organisations and agencies and our Executive Director, Mark Darby has been doing the same in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria. We also expect our ambassadors to either have, or be willing to acquire, adequate language skills.

Q. When does the first intake of Australian Youth Ambassadors leave?

A. We aim to have the first group ready to depart in February next year. Over the next two years we hope to place 500 young Australians in Asia/Pacific nations. These include Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam as well as the Cook Islands, Fiji, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.

Q. How long are the assignments?

A. Generally the assignments will be around five months, a minimum of three months and a maximum of 12 months. They will involve work on defined projects with government, local business, educational and community service Host Organisations.

Q. What does the program provide?

A. Before they leave, the Australian Youth Ambassadors will receive pre-assignment training, often including language training. We will provide medical and travel insurance, air travel to the assignment and in-country support. Although no salaries are offered, living and accommodation allowances will be paid through the Host Organisation. There'll also be settlement and re-settlement allowances and follow-up debriefings at the conclusion of the posting.

Q. Is there a cost for the applicants?

A. There's no actual cost for applicants but what they'll have to be prepared to give is commitment and time. For example, there'll be the time they'll

need to devote to prepare for the assignment including the pre-departure training program. And there may be extra training courses covering first aid or advanced language skills. Applicants will also be expected to cover their own personal expenses like clothing and equipment.

Q. How does the selection process work?

A. There are three selection steps after an application is lodged. First of all, applications will be assessed according to the selection criteria. As I've mentioned, these criteria include demonstrated skills or knowledge to contribute to the development project, cultural awareness and sensitivity, an ability to work well with other people, adaptability, flexibility and the desire to learn and help others learn. Once this first assessment has been made suitable applicants will be invited to an assessment workshop. From here a short list of candidates will be prepared and these short listed candidates will be matched with appropriate assignments. ✍

WANTED

500 YOUNG AUSTRALIANS WITH SKILLS TO SHARE

For further information or an application form, contact:



The Australian Youth Ambassadors Office
GPO Box 588
Canberra ACT 2601

Phone: 02 6248 0430
Facsimile: 02 6248 0525
www.ausaid.gov.au

Cambodia fast tracks the war against landmines

Australian detectors help clear hidden death

The director of the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC), Sam Sotha, recently visited Australia to raise awareness of landmines. He told Carol Haffke from AusAID of his determination to make his country safer for future generations.

Sam Sotha gently touches the tip of his thumb with the tip of his first finger and holds his right hand up high. A zero is formed. "Our aim is to get zero casualties," he says firmly. "That means zero victims."

Winston Churchill may be remembered for his two-fingered "V" for Victory salute. Former Philippines President Cory Aquino used a raised thumb and little finger on each hand to signify "People Power".

For Sam Sotha, the earnest, hard-working director of the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC), the outline of a zero is his signal to the world. And it's one he used frequently during a five-day visit to Australia earlier this year.

"As long as landmines terrorise people all over our country, we cannot hope to have development in Cambodia," he declared.

"There were between four and six million landmines laid during more than 20 years of conflict in Cambodia. In addition, unquantified numbers of unexploded ordnance still litter past battlefields and contaminate most provinces.

18 "This dreadful challenge — of removing every anti-personnel landmine and unexploded ordnance in the country — will take a very long time. In the short-term, we have a more positive intermediate target: that of zero mine incident casualties."

It is obvious that Mr Sotha has zero tolerance for these deadly weapons as he impatiently looks to the future.



"We want our children to walk and work freely so that there will be zero victims in the future."
Mr Sam Sotha, Director of the Cambodian Mine Action Centre

"At the current clearance rate of 16 square kilometres a year, it will take 20 or 30 years to clear enough land to have a major impact in Cambodia," he said.

Helping to fast-track Mr Sotha's mammoth task is an Adelaide company which has developed new technology to help fight the plague of landmines.

Minelab Electronics, based in Torrensville, has spent many years developing metal detection technology for the gold-mining industry in Victoria, Western Australia and

Queensland. A year ago, it discovered that its detectors — so useful in finding gold deposits — were also adept at locating landmines in Cambodia, sometimes buried up to 20cm deep in heavily mineralised soils.

In the past, other detectors haven't been sensitive enough to differentiate between landmines and background soil minerals. Detection was limited to only four to six centimetres.

In July 1997, the Australian government provided \$1 million to CMAC for the purchase of mine detectors from Australia. Minelab was the successful tenderer for the initial provision of 325 detectors.

"We have been going from strength to strength since then," said Minelab managing director Ronald Wickett. "We have created a niche market for ourselves and this entire project has really demonstrated the potential of Australia's overseas aid program. AusAID provided the leverage we needed to establish ourselves in the market with that initial funding to CMAC.

"In the past 12 months we have become increasingly involved in Australia's humanitarian efforts in global demining and we now have 1,100 units operating in Laos, Rwanda, South Africa, Bosnia and they are also being used by the Australian and Canadian armies."

It is estimated that every 20 minutes, a landmine claims another victim somewhere in the world. Every year, 26,000 people are injured, sometimes fatally.

Lately, the public has been repeatedly reminded about these dreadful statistics. Images of the late Princess Diana meeting landmine victims in Angola and speaking out on behalf of the International Committee of the Red Cross made front page news around the globe. In October last year, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to both

'When we first started, there were between 400-600 casualties every month. Now that's down to 150, sometimes 200...'

the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and the campaign's co-ordinator, Jody Williams, further intensifying the public spotlight on the worldwide war against these weapons.

In Australia, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, appointed his Parliamentary Secretary, Kathy Sullivan, to be Special Representative on Demining in October last year. Mrs Sullivan has recently returned from a global humanitarian demining conference in Washington which pledged greater coordination of demining efforts.

Last December, after signing the Ottawa Treaty to ban landmines, the Minister announced that Australia would commit at least \$100 million to demining and related activities by 2005.

In Cambodia, Australia is by far the largest donor to demining activities with more than \$15 million provided since March 1996

The majority of this assistance has been directed to countries in Australia's immediate region like Cambodia and Laos. Support has also been provided to the severely affected countries of Angola, Mozambique and Afghanistan.

In Cambodia, Australia is by far the largest donor to demining activities with more than \$15 million provided since March 1996. Of this, \$10 million has been invested in CMAC's operations. Australia also continues to provide — through the Australian Defence Force — a number of technical advisors to assist with the training of local staff.

With more than 3,000 staff all up, the Centre has achieved some impressive results since it began operating in 1993. Eighty thousand anti-personnel mines have been cleared and destroyed and 50 million fragmentation pieces have been removed from the soil.

"However, at the moment we are still forced to relegate thousands of hectares of potentially productive land as no-go areas," Mr Sotha said. "This exacerbates the country's food deficiency, prevents the resettlement of internally displaced people and denies a

livelihood to the rural poor. We need to build and develop as a country but while landmines are everywhere, we simply cannot."

An important component of CMAC's operation involves educating people in remote areas about the dangers of landmines. CMAC Program Coordinator for the United Nations Development Programme, Richard Warren, puts the issue in perspective.

"Most of these people have no income," he said. "The only way they can get any resources is to get firewood from the jungle and water from the stream and go to the fishing spot near their village for food. All these areas may not be cleared or marked.

"It becomes a gamble for them. People have to take higher and higher risks just to survive."

To better assist the population, CMAC developed the world's first minefield database which contains information on all known and suspected minefields in Cambodia. Teams also regularly physically mark contaminated areas to prevent people from entering them. Again, that only sometimes works.


"When we first started, there were between 400-600 casualties from landmines every month in Cambodia," Mr Sotha said. "Now that's down to 150, sometimes 200, a month."

This reduction has much to do with dedicated teams of men roving the country and systematically, patiently and ever-so-carefully checking each centimetre of ground.

"We have no trouble finding deminers," Mr Sotha said with a wry smile. "The economy in Cambodia is very down and demining is a high-wage job. A soldier, for example, will earn \$US20-30 a month. A deminer will earn \$US150-160 a month.

While the CMAC continues investigating new methods relating to the use of mine detector dogs and mechanical mine clearance technologies, all evidence to date suggests that manual mine clearance is the most effective.

"Maybe in the future we will find new technology," Mr Sotha said.

"I declare to the world that our goal at CMAC is to make Cambodia safe," Mr Sotha said. "We want our children to walk and work freely so that there will be zero victims in the future." 

Australia helps "Destroy a Minefield"

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer, has announced an exciting new initiative which means all Australian's can participate in ending the scourge of landmines.

The "Destroy a Minefield" initiative, announced on October 12, encourages individuals, schools, community groups and business to "adopt" active minefields which have been given a high priority for clearance by the United Nations. The aim is to raise funds to help clear the "adopted" minefield and raise awareness of the danger of landmines among people living and working near minefields.

"While over 120 countries including Australia have signed an international treaty banning landmines, the sad reality is that millions of landmines remain in the ground, killing and maiming innocent civilians every day," Mr Downer said.

"Despite the progress made in dealing with the landmines problem, there is no room for complacency. The "Destroy a Minefield" program allows Australians to make a real and direct contribution to solving this humanitarian crisis," the Minister said.

The "Destroy a Minefield" program will use funds from the Princess Diana Trust Fund set up to collect the sales tax raised from the Elton John "Candle in the Wind" tribute CD in memory of the Princess of Wales. The tragic effects of landmines were of particular concern to Princess Diana who worked hard to raise awareness of the plight of landmine victims.

The Australian Government has matched the \$200,000 allocated to the program from the Princess Diana Trust Fund. More funds will be raised by an Australian non-government organisation working with Australian sponsors. Every two dollars raised by sponsors will be matched by one dollar from the Princess Diana Trust Fund. The program has the potential to raise up to \$1.2 million for mine clearance and awareness campaigns.

The Australian Government continues to make a substantial commitment to addressing this appalling humanitarian disaster. The Government anticipates spending over \$100 million on demining, rehabilitation and related activities by the year 2005.

NEW CUSTOMS IN SAMOA

Meatu'tua: The very, very best

An AusAID-funded project is helping transform the Samoan Customs Department into an efficient, professional and client-oriented organisation. Brenda Mattick, in Samoa on an AusAID-funded media training project profiles the customs project and its Australian leader.

Years of experience with the Australian Customs Service are standing Ken McCaffery in good stead as the Australian Team Leader on the Samoan Customs Department project.

In 1994, he took on the challenge of doing the first pre-feasibility study for the Samoan Customs Project, an AusAID funded project initiated by the Samoan Government. He quickly identified the challenges, both in management and technical areas. He later accepted the position of team leader, and his energy and enthusiasm for this complex and challenging project are obvious.

So what does the Samoan Customs Department do? Ken McCaffery took me through the basics. First, the border operations: sea, air, coast, post, and community protection.

A good example came in Christmas in 1997, when customs officials discovered an AK.47 assault rifle, said to be one of the deadliest weapons in modern warfare, stashed under the seats of a vehicle shipped to Samoa from the United States in a container of personal effects.

Other guns, a samurai sword, and various rounds of ammunitions (with bullets hidden inside gift wrapped boxes and socks) were also discovered.

The Samoan Customs Department also has an important trade role, clearing goods, ensuring that duty is paid and regulations upheld. Other responsibilities include the collection of trade statistics, important for Government planning, and the collection of Internal Excise Duties on tobacco and alcohol.

According to McCaffery, one of the biggest challenges is to promote the Government's economic reforms through better compliance. But he is keen to stress the positive. "We want to maximise intrusion on illegal or fraudulent operations, but minimise intrusion on legitimate importers, with speedier clearance, less time and cost to them."



Customs officers at work at Faguli'i Airport

PHOTO: BRENDA MATTICK

McCaffery has a strong belief in his team and their shared vision, and stresses that “people are critical to the whole project, using their abilities to implement change. We want to provide an environment which will allow improvements to work.”

The current environment for customs staff is really quite astonishing.

Huge towering piles of paper on every horizontal surface, including the floor, overcrowded, cramped conditions for the surprisingly jovial staff, and a total reliance on manual processes!

Part of the new vision is to create a new environment. Beside the old Customs Building stands a new building which, says McCaffery, “allows for fully integrated customs operations, new and expanded office accommodation, training and conference facilities, warehousing facilities for seized goods and a new computer system.”

This computer system will play a vital role in the transformation of the Samoan Customs Department. Its proper name is ASYCUDA, or Automated System for Customs Data, and it was originally developed by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

According to South Australian Customs officer Roger Paull, now an ASYCUDA trainer and adviser, the system is effective and cheap, and adapts easily to languages...it is simple for national customs staff to install and maintain. The ASYCUDA system greatly improves a country's ability to trade and its benefits include accurate trade data and increased revenue collections.

The Samoan Customs Project invited Sergio Reveros (Assistant Director of Quality and Survey Management with Australian Customs) to deliver training to staff. The successful six-week course led to customs officers' describing their new approach as “Meatu'tua”, meaning “We want to be the very, very best!”

The ASYCUDA system is already running in Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Fiji and Vanuatu.

The Pacific Region will no doubt be watching the Samoan Customs



Customs Office assistant Faavae Leone examines parcels at the post office

Project's implementation of the ASYCUDA system with much interest.

The Samoan Customs Project also reflects AusAID's policy on Women in Development.

Pepi Tevagi is Assistant Project Coordinator. She is responsible for developing the Women in Development Plan for the Samoan Customs Department.

“This was quite a hard document to put together because hardly anyone had ever documented anything before”, she said, “and I had only been with the Customs Department for six months.”

Now there are monthly meetings for the 11 women working in Customs, with female staff representation on management meetings.

For Ken McCaffery, the project has led to better decision making, more corporate responsibility, and more confidence within the Customs Service — a sound basis for the introduction of new systems.

For the Samoan Government, the Customs Project meets the objectives of retaining Samoan culture at the same time as introducing tariff reform — important achievements for an emerging Pacific nation. 🌺

Media training aims to raise standards

Brenda Mattick wrote about the customs project while in Samoa as part of another aid project, dealing with media training.

Raising media standards and improving communications are the main objectives of the five-year South Pacific Media Training Project.

It aims to encourage the development of print and broadcast media at regional and national levels.

It will also improve government accountability and community awareness of development issues.

Training courses are being offered throughout the region, emphasising the role of the media in government and community development.

Funding of \$3 million is being provided through the Australian aid program for the project.

By Andrea Webb

As many as 200 million of the world's poorest people have benefited from taking part in projects financed by the United Nations' International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) since it began operations in 1978.

These people — small farmers, landless poor, small fishermen, nomadic herds-men and poor rural women — generally have few opportunities to break the cycle of poverty. They work together with IFAD, their governments and local non-government organisations (NGOs) to increase their food supply, raise their incomes, and to improve their health and education standards.

Between 1978 and 1997, IFAD spent more than \$US5.9 billion on projects and grants designed to fight hunger in rural areas. In 1997, IFAD's field investments (loans and grants) totalled \$US430 million.

Australia has been a supporter of IFAD since it began and pledged almost \$A6.5 million for the most recent replenishment of IFAD's resources.

In 20 years of working for a world without hunger, IFAD has learnt some valuable lessons:


- Targeting the "poorest of the rural poor", without creating artificial divisions within poor communities, is key to fighting rural poverty.
- Poor people's efforts to survive are often extremely complex; a bundle of tactics are needed if significant socio-economic gains are to be achieved for the poor.
- Poor rural dwellers are credit worthy and enterprising, but lack collateral and confidence. A small loan, in conjunction with group support can help them regain control over their fortunes.
- Women are key players in the development process, with enormous knowledge, skill and responsibility in the welfare of their families and communities. By empowering women through credit, participation and appropriate technology, whole communities benefit.



'Women are key players in the development process, with enormous knowledge, skill and responsibility in the welfare of their families and communities. By empowering women through credit, participation and appropriate technology, whole communities benefit'

- Management of scarce and fragile natural resources is key to sustainable development. Land and waterways, the very thing the rural poor depend on for their livelihood, need to be protected, not destroyed, by the development process.
- Participation is essential for development projects to succeed. Participation by poor farmers in analysing their own constraints and opportunities for development, in implementing and evaluating projects is the key to achieving durable results.

"In retrospect, it may seem that the early lessons learned about the nature of poverty were rather obvious. However, the fact that such knowledge and understanding is now taken for granted by a wide range of development agencies and indeed a large section of the general public is due in no small measure to the Fund's drawing attention to the issues involved in analysing and combating poverty." (IFAD 1997 Annual Report, p.12.)

IFAD has put these lessons into practice in its many projects around the world, with some impressive results. 

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

g for a world free of hunger



Shifting sands in Vietnam

Rice farmers in Vietnam's Quang Binh province are in danger of losing their land and livelihoods. Sand from nearby dunes is moving on to their tiny plots of land, making the soil too sandy to grow rice, and leaving families hungry up to six months a year.

Vo Thi Bac's quarter-hectare plot is now covered with sand. "I used to grow rice", she said, "but with this sand, all my land will grow now is vegetables and a few fruit trees." When she could grow rice, she managed to earn around \$100 per year. But the selling price for fruit and vegetables is much lower than that of rice, and her income has halved since the sand covered her land. Now she and her family are hungry four to six months a year.

IFAD, through the Agricultural Resources Conservation and Development project, aims to replant 20 million trees to stop the shifting sand. Around 50,000 of the poorest people in Quang Binh are increasing their incomes as a result of IFAD's project. In addition to replanting trees on the dunes, the project will boost food supplies by introducing higher yielding rice, improving roads and irrigation and providing micro-credit for small enterprises.

Quang Binh is one of Vietnam's poorest provinces. Estimated average income is just \$100 per year, far below the national average of \$240 per year. One-third of families in Quang Binh survive on less than \$50 per year.

Few farmers in Quang Binh have more than a quarter of a hectare of land; many have only one-tenth of a hectare. Even those with a quarter of a hectare

only manage to produce around 700kg of rice per harvest. If they have irrigation they can produce two harvests per year, but a family of six needs 2,000kg of rice a year for an adequate diet, so even families with relatively large plots of land sometimes go hungry.

Quang Binh is less than 100km from the 17th parallel, the former border between North and South Vietnam. During the war, the sand dunes were the target of US bombing raids which destroyed almost all the trees. Without established trees to keep the sand in place, it is invading rice paddies nearby, making the soil infertile. IFAD plans to replant some 4,000 hectares with trees.

The farmers themselves plant the trees. Chinh, together with her husband and 12-year-old son are planting 10,000 trees on two hectares of dunes. "I am doing this for the rice land," she said, "our family last had a rice crop four years ago."

It will be five years before the trees begin to stabilise the land. When that happens, higher-yielding rice varieties will help boost production by up to 50 per cent in five years. In the meantime, the project provides small loans to enable the poorest people in Quang Binh to increase their incomes by raising pigs, cattle, fish and prawns.

The Vietnamese government replanted around 6,000 hectares of dunes in the 1970s and 80s. But now poverty is forcing people in some areas of Quang Binh to strip those trees for fuel for cooking, damaging the trees' root systems and hampering their ability to keep the sand in place.

The \$14.4 million project, begun in 1997, has integrated many of the lessons IFAD has learnt in 20 years of operation. Participation is a key element in the replanting project; farmers who have a vested interest in reclaiming their rice land are responsible for planting the trees. Credit for those who would normally have no access to loans is crucial to the project's success.

Women, whose skill, responsibility and enterprise has proven to be reliable in IFAD projects all over the world, will receive 98 per cent of the loans from the revolving credit fund in Quang Binh. IFAD's agricultural research and appropriate technology will enable the small farmers of the province to benefit from higher-yielding rice and bigger, better harvests. 🐟



IFAD helps rice farmers in Vietnam improve their livelihood

Wiping out smallpox a highlight of WHO's first 50 years

Vision for 21st century is *Health for All*

The World Health Organisation celebrated its first 50 years in April, highlighting an impressive record of achievement including the elimination of the debilitating and often fatal disease smallpox.

When WHO started its international eradication effort in 1967, it was estimated that smallpox affected around 15 million people a year, leaving about two million dead and millions more disfigured, and sometimes blind.

Just thirteen years later, in 1980, WHO was able to certify that smallpox had been eradicated.

It was a similar story with the crippling tropical disease yaws — affecting 50 million people in 1948, but virtually eliminated by the mid-1960s. Continuing strategies to control malaria have achieved impressive results in many countries. Child immunisation against vaccine-preventable diseases, according to WHO figures,

now reaches almost 90 per cent of the world's children.

The list goes on, and of course it includes new challenges such as the containment of HIV/AIDS and the re-emergence of tuberculosis as the world's leading infectious killer.

WHO's strategy for the 21st Century emphasises health as a basic human right

WHO also places considerable emphasis on prevention, public health policy in areas like food safety, nutrition and, more recently, the effects of tobacco.

The Geneva-based organisation was established by the United Nations in 1948. It now has 191 member nations

and a leadership determined to usher in a vision of *Health for All* for the 21st century. The WHO's *Health for All* strategy will build on the organisation's achievements of the past 50 years, which have seen the average life expectancy at birth rise from around 46 years in the early 1950s to almost 65 years in 1996. It will also emphasise that health as a basic human right.

Australia has been a significant and consistent supporter of WHO. Since 1990, the Government has provided over \$83 million to WHO, as well as funding key programs such as immunisation, tuberculosis control and integrated primary health care. Australian scientists have also worked with WHO to tackle major international health problems.

Through the aid program, the Australian Government has provided around \$6.5 million in the last three years to WHO's Expanded Program of Immunisation in the Asia-Pacific region. The polio campaign has been a priority under this program (see box). It has also contributed around \$3.5 million to WHO's Global Program for Vaccines (GPV) from 1995 to 1998. This global program provides technical support and funding to regional and country programs run through WHO's regional and country offices. 

Polio Eradication

In 1988, the World Health Assembly set a target to eradicate polio from the world by the year 2000. This target was subsequently endorsed by the World Summit for Children in 1990. If the current rate of progress is maintained, the year 2000 target can be reached.

Polio is a disease caused by a virus that causes paralysis. The paralysis is permanent and most often affects the legs. The great majority of polio cases occur in children less than five years of age. Polio cases today are largely

confined to the poorest and most densely populated developing countries where health delivery systems are inadequate.

Polio eradication is feasible because the virus that causes polio affects only humans, immunity is lifelong, and there are no long-lasting environmental sources of polio virus. The concept of eradication was made possible because of the Nobel Prize winning work of Enders, Robbins and Weller, which led to the development of effective polio vaccines. The first, an inactivated polio vaccine, was developed in 1955 by Dr Jonas Salk. That vaccine was largely superseded by the live, oral polio vaccine (OPV) developed in the early 1960s by Dr Albert Sabin.

The progress achieved in the WHO's immunisation strategies has been remarkable. Polio was eradicated from the Americas in 1991; the last case was a 3-year-old boy from Peru. Polio is disappearing from Western and Central Europe, North Africa, Southern and Eastern Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and the Pacific Rim of Asia, including Australia. Polio in China has gone from 5,000 cases in 1990 to 3 imported cases in 1996 and zero in 1997. Eradication is close in the remainder of WHO's Western Pacific Region with the last case reported in March 1997 in Cambodia. In the European Region, wild polio virus was identified only in Turkey. Three clinical cases were reported from Tajikistan.

ORGANISATION

Former PM of Norway new head of WHO

The 50th year of WHO also marked the appointment of a new Director General in July. Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, one of the world's most distinguished public figures, is best known for her work in the 1980s as the head of the World Commission on Environment and Development. The Commission's pivotal 1987 report *Our Common Future* ushered in the concept of sustainable development.

Dr Brundtland was Prime Minister of Norway for three terms, totalling 10 years between 1981 and 1996. She was the first woman and at 41 the youngest person to achieve that office.

Dr Brundtland was born in Oslo, Norway on 20 April 1939. She studied medicine at the University of Oslo, obtaining her M.D. degree in 1963. She received the degree of Master of Public Health from Harvard University in 1965.

Returning to Oslo, she worked her way up through the Norwegian Health Department and the country's Labour Party. Elected to Parliament, she became Minister for the Environment



Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, WHO's new Director General

in 1974 and held that post for five years. At the same time she brought up four children and now has eight grandchildren.

In a speech to the World Bank in March this year, she made clear her determination to put health on top of the international political agenda.

"We need to be innovative and we need to work together. We need to unleash resources — intellectual, political and financial. We cannot allow health to remain a secondary item on the international political agenda.

"Health is pivotal. Health is at the core of human development. Securing that prominent role for health is a challenge to us all. And moving health up the political agenda will require a respected leading agency. And that agency is the World Health Organisation."

The message was reinforced at a teleconference link with WHO staff worldwide on the day she took office.

Emphasising that "serving WHO is a privilege", Dr Brundtland went on to say, "We can help build healthy communities and populations. We can combat ill-health. We can do our part to combat poverty and suffering. Nothing in life — as I see it — has more meaning."



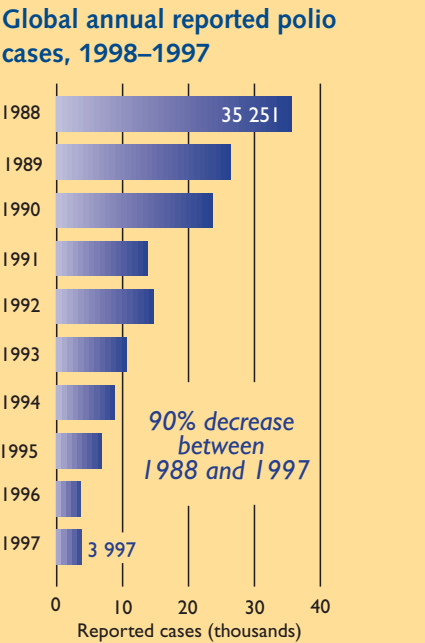
The major remaining reservoirs of polio are South Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan), West Africa (Nigeria) and Central Africa (Democratic Republic of Congo).

The success achieved to date establishes the technical feasibility of polio eradication. Despite some obstacles, it now appears that the year 2000 target for global polio eradication can be met. The challenges on the road immediately ahead are primarily political and financial. Commitment remains weak in a number of polio endemic countries. Wars and civil unrest have destroyed health infrastructure and the consequent fall in immunisation coverage creates fertile ground for polio epidemics. Although

many countries have borne a significant percentage of the costs of polio eradication, virtually all the supplementary costs need to come from external sources to deal with the poorest and most difficult countries that remain.

Source: The World Health Organisation
<http://www.who.int/gpv-polio/overview.htm>.

Following successful mass vaccination campaigns (National Immunisation Days) polio cases have plummeted throughout the world. As of mid-May 1998, the number of polio cases reported in 1997 was 3,997, an 89 per cent decrease from the 35,251 cases reported in 1988, when the polio eradication initiative began. Strong efforts are under way to clear polio virus from the countries where it is still circulating.



China builds on Australian expertise

Launch of the Capacity Building Program

As China continues its transition from a centrally planned economy to a market economy, Australia has formally launched a \$20-million, four-year program of technical cooperation to help strengthen the public sector.

AusAID's Capacity Building Program (CBP) recognises the challenges faced in China through the reform of key sectors such as banking and finance, taxation, state-owned enterprises and public administration.

It was developed in response to the Chinese Government's recognition that international assistance was needed to upgrade the public service.

Specifically, the CBP aims to:

- enhance the ability of institutions to develop and implement policy relating to the transition to a market economy; and
- improve their capacity to deliver public sector services.

This is to be achieved through the transfer and adaptation of leading-edge Australian systems and expertise.

Initially the CBP will focus on:

- social security and social insurance;
- public administration;
- finance and banking; and
- urban planning and development.

Program Launch

The CBP was formally launched on 14 July, 1998, at the Australian Embassy in Beijing with the signing of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOU) by the Ambassador, Mr Ric Smith, and Vice Minister, Sun Zhenyu, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation (MOFTEC), AusAID's counterpart agency in China.

Later, a seminar was held attended by representatives from a number of key ministries and agencies including the Ministries of Labor and Social



Australia's Ambassador to China, Mr Rick Smith and Vice Minister for Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, Sun Zhenyu, sign the Capacity Building Program MOU in July



The Capacity Building Program will support China's historic transition to a market-based economy and contribute to public sector development

Security, Water Resources and Education, and the People’s Bank of China.

The seminar was organised to share information about the program and provide a forum for the representatives to outline the challenges their institutions are facing.

Mechanisms for assistance

A range of measures will be used in the implementation of the project including:

- visits to China by Australian experts and advisers to work with counterpart personnel from policy and management areas of key Chinese departments and agencies;
- the study visits to Australia by key Chinese decision makers;
- work placements of Chinese officials in Australian departments and agencies.

There will also be short-term training opportunities, normally not exceeding three months.

Progress to date

So far, AusAID has received proposals from three Chinese agencies: the National Audit Office of China, the Ministry of Water Resources and the People’s Bank of China. These proposals are currently being refined for implementation. In addition, proposals from the Ministry of Labor and Social Security and the Ministry of Education are expected soon.



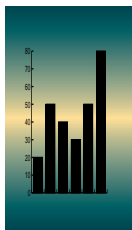
Improving child and maternal health in China is an important focus of Australia’s development assistance program



Rural development is a key priority of Australia’s aid program to China

| KEY STATISTICS | AUSTRALIA (1998) | CHINA (1996) |
|---|------------------|--------------|
| Total population | 18.4 million | 1.2 billion |
| Projected population growth 1996-2010 (%) | 0.8 | 0.7 |
| Life expectancy (years) | 78 | 69.5 |
| Infant mortality (per 1,000 births) | 6 | 33 |
| GNP per capita (US\$) | 20,090 | 750 |

Sources: The Australian Bureau of Statistics and The World Bank: The World Development Indicators 1998



BUSINESS NEWS

Seminars about Australia's Aid Program

Community outreach seminars, hosted by the Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Kathy Sullivan, aim to raise public awareness about Australia's aid program. They also provide information about business opportunities in the aid program, helping to broaden participation by introducing "new players" to the program.

Seminars are advertised in the press ahead of time.

Contracts Signed with AusAID in 1998

So far this year 671 contracts have been signed with AusAID, ranging in value from under \$2,000 to tens of millions of dollars.

Half of these contracts are related to "period contracts", which are standing offers with AusAID, as explained below (either "exchanges of letters" to enable AusAID to engage the services of organisations and individuals on existing period contracts, or new period contracts). The other half include a wide range of contracts including consulting services, construction, and food aid contracts.

AusAID's Period Contracts

A period contract is an agreement with a contractor to provide short-term specialist consultancy services on an "as required" basis. AusAID currently has over 170 period contracts in place, providing the Agency with quick access to the expertise of consultants in a range of sectors including education, health, infrastructure, legal and media services. Period contracts are awarded

through a competitive tender process and are signed for terms of up to three years.

AusAID is in the process of putting information about current period contracts on-line through the Agency's Intranet system. The project aims to improve access by staff members to the services of consultants currently under period contract to AusAID. The new on-line system places information which was previously available only in hard copy form at the fingertips of all AusAID staff, and should help to ensure the best use of the extensive consultant resources available.

As the information includes commercial-in-confidence material, it will be accessible to AusAID staff only.

Consultants on period contracts in a selection of sectors have been contacted by AusAID to request their participation in the project. The high response from contractors to date reflects a recognition of the potential benefits to be gained from a transition to an on-line system of accessing period contracts. All outstanding information should now be forwarded to AusAID to facilitate the completion of the project. The contact officer for the project is Kirsten Bailey. Email kirsten_bailey@ausaid.gov.au.

Please note that the new system will become an important source of information about services available to AusAID under period contracts. All consultants participating in the project should therefore ensure their information is included in the new system.

AusAID's Early Notification System

AusAID's Early Notification System was launched on the Internet in August

1998. The System is designed to assist businesses by alerting them to tender opportunities expected to arise in Australia's aid program and providing general information on projects.

AusAID's contact point for the Early Notification System is the Pacific Contracts and Policy Section, email PCPS@ausaid.gov.au. Please use this email address if you require further information on the tender opportunities. AusAID also welcomes your comments or suggestions on the Notification System.

AusAID Tender Documents on the Internet

AusAID is now making tender documentation available on the Internet following the success of the recent trial (refer July edition of Focus). This means tenderers throughout Australia are able to download documents from AusAID's home page, which can be found at <http://www.ausaid.gov.au>.

The complexity of some tender documents, however, may mean that they can be provided only in hard copy form by AusAID, and this would be indicated in the tender advertisement.

Business Participation in Australia's Aid Program

AusAID will shortly publish the 1997-98 edition of Business Participation in Australia's Aid Program. The publication appears annually and provides a comprehensive listing of AusAID's business contracts by principal contractor, project title, dollar value, country, sector, etc. Many businesses find the publication a useful way of gaining a better understanding of Australia's aid program.