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JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

**(Foreign Affairs Subcommittee)**

**Reference: Bougainville: the peace process and beyond**

**TUESDAY, 13 APRIL 1999**

**SYDNEY**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE PARLIAMENT

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**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE  
Foreign Affairs Subcommittee**

**Tuesday, 13 April 1999**

**Members:** Senator MacGibbon (*Chair*), Dr Theophanous (*Deputy Chair*), Senators Bourne, Chapman, Cook, Ferguson, Harradine, Sandy Macdonald, O'Brien, Quirke, Reynolds, Schacht and Synon and Ms Bailey, Mr Baird, Mr Brereton, Mr Gareth Evans, Mr Hawker, Mr Hollis, Mr Jull, Mrs De-Anne Kelly, Mr Lieberman, Mr Martin, Ms Moylan, Mr Nugent, Mr O'Keefe, Mr Price, Mr Prosser, Mr Pyne, Mr Snowdon, Dr Southcott and Mr Andrew Thomson

**Subcommittee members:** Mr Jull (*Chair*), Dr Theophanous (*Deputy Chair*), Senators Bourne, Chapman, Ferguson, Sandy Macdonald, MacGibbon (*ex officio*), Quirke, Reynolds, Schacht and Synon and Mr Brereton, Mr Gareth Evans, Mr Hawker, Mr Hollis, Mr Lieberman, Mr Martin, Mr Nugent, Mr Price, Mr Pyne, Mr Snowdon, Dr Southcott and Mr Andrew Thomson

**Senators and members in attendance:** Senators Bourne, Sandy Macdonald and Quirke and Mr Gareth Evans, Mr Hollis, Dr Southcott and Dr Theophanous

**Terms of reference for the inquiry:**

To review progress in the Bougainville peace process, from the time of the first meeting at Burnham military camp in New Zealand in July 1997, including Australia's support for that process; and to assess future prospects for the peace process, including ways in which Australia might assist further. This might include:

- (a) an assessment of the current state of negotiations amongst the parties to the Bougainville dispute and of future prospects for the peace process;
- (b) the contributions made towards the peace process by the Truce Monitoring Group/Peace Monitoring Group, including the likely duration of the peace monitoring operation; and
- (c) consideration of Australia's current reconstruction and rehabilitation program on Bougainville, including restoration of civil authority, and ways in which Australia might assist further.

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**Subcommittee met at 9.33 a.m.**

**ACTING CHAIR (Dr Theophanous)**—On behalf of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, I declare open this public hearing.

The committee is inquiring into Australia's contribution to the Bougainville peace process and the prospects for the future of the peace, including restoration of civil authority. The committee's review covers the whole peace negotiation process from the time of the first meeting at the Burnham military camp in New Zealand in June 1997 and extends into consideration of future reconstruction and rehabilitation programs for Bougainville. Today's public hearing continues the program which commenced in Canberra in February this year and resumed in Melbourne yesterday.

Recently, several members of the subcommittee had the opportunity to visit Port Moresby and Bougainville as part of this inquiry; in fact all the people here today were there. In a busy four-day program of meetings, informal discussions and inspections, we were able to meet with most of the key participants in the peace process and to see for ourselves the situation in Bougainville.

The visit was a valuable opportunity for delegation members to gain insights into the problems of the peace process and the work being done to move that process forward. While we did see evidence of the almost total destruction of Bougainville's economic, social and communications infrastructure, we were pleased to see also that there was almost universal support in Bougainville itself for maintaining the peace and restoring civilian authority.

On 31 March 1999 the committee presented a short report to parliament on preliminary conclusions reached as a result of the visit, including some suggestions for future consideration. Today we have invited representatives from the Bougainville Freedom Movement and Caritas Australia, as well as the University of Sydney's urban and regional planning area and the University of New South Wales School of Health Services Management.

The information gathered today will assist the subcommittee's examination of the many issues surrounding the Bougainville peace process, its successes and setbacks and ways in which Australia can assist further. We will now proceed to our first witnesses.

[9.36 a.m.]

**HAVINI, Mr Moses, International Representative, Bougainville Freedom Movement**

**HAVINI, Ms Marilyn, Women's Representative, Bougainville Freedom Movement**

**JOHN, Ms Vikki, National Coordinator, Bougainville Freedom Movement**

**PHA, Ms Anna, Representative, Bougainville Freedom Movement**

**RIANNON, Ms Lee, Representative, Bougainville Freedom Movement**

**RUMAKEIK, Mr Rex, Representative, Bougainville Freedom Movement**

**WHELAN, Ms Ellen, Representative, Bougainville Freedom Movement**

**ACTING CHAIR**—On behalf of the subcommittee, I welcome the representatives of the Bougainville Freedom Movement. The subcommittee prefers that all evidence be given in public, but should you at any stage wish to give any evidence in private you may ask to do so and the subcommittee will give consideration to your request. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence on oath, these hearings are legal proceedings of the parliament, and therefore have the same standing as the proceedings of the parliament itself. I now invite you to make a short opening statement before we proceed to questions.

**Ms John**—We thank you for the opportunity to be here today to express our views with regard to the Bougainville peace process and to assess future prospects for the peace process, including ways in which Australia might assist further. It was only yesterday that we found out that volume 1 of the submissions had been published. We have not received a copy of the submissions until this morning when Cliff Lawson gave Moses Havini a copy of that submission. We are disappointed and now feel extremely disadvantaged that we have not received or seen a copy of the submissions given by others.

The Bougainville Freedom Movement is a nationwide as well as international organisation with public support from churches, unions and community and NGO groups. We are an organisation which interacts with the public irrespective of politics, race or religion. We are open and transparent nationally and internationally. We have been active in campaigning for the rights and concerns of the Bougainville people and in bringing to the public information with regard to the situation in Bougainville. We have assisted the Bougainville people through provision of humanitarian aid, including medical supplies, clothing, school materials, infant needs and other necessities. We maintain close and direct relations with the Bougainville people and their leaders. Much of our submission is drawn from direct communication with the Bougainville people.

We want the Australian government to recognise the democratic process and wishes of the people for self-determination as well as the formation of the Bougainville Reconciliation Government. We want the Australian government to use its good offices to have the Papua New Guinea government fulfil its already accepted obligation to have the Papua New Guinea Defence Force withdrawn from Bougainville. In this respect, we welcome the presence of the

Peace Monitoring Group and strongly recommend that it remain a regionally represented force on Bougainville until such time as the Papua New Guinea Defence Force completely withdraw from all parts of Bougainville.

The Bougainville Freedom Movement and Australian citizens appreciate the promised aid, but with the formation of the Bougainville Reconciliation Government we request that the Australian government deal directly with Bougainville Reconciliation Government representatives in providing aid. We are submitting our detailed report for your consideration. We also include a detailed report received from Martin Miriori, who is currently based in the Netherlands, and our report incorporates updated feedback from Andrew Miriki, the communications officer, and the Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom, who are based on Bougainville.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Do you have copies of that document to present to us?

**Ms Johns**—Yes.

**ACTING CHAIR**—May we please have them for the members of the committee?

**Ms Johns**—Yes.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Mr Havini, do you wish to add anything to these introductory remarks?

**Mr Havini**—No, thank you.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Is it the wish of the committee that we accept the first document as an additional submission from the Bougainville Freedom Movement? It is so ordered.

We will now proceed with some questions. We have now had three submissions from you: one from the middle of last year, one earlier this year, and now this third submission. Events have moved on and I notice that you have adopted some differences, especially about the Peace Monitoring Group, in your submission. Can you tell us what you think about the current election process and the potential for that process to lead to a government that will be accepted by all the people of Bougainville?

**Ms Johns**—I think Moses Havini should address that question.

**Mr Havini**—I am happy to give a brief talk to the committee regarding the election. First of all, the nominations closed on 6 April. We expect the polling to end on the 24th of this month and the swearing in of the new Bougainville Reconciliation Government will occur by about 17 May.

The formation of the Bougainville Reconciliation did not altogether go through a very smooth path. However, the Bougainvillean parties were sticking to the schedule as dictated by the Lincoln Agreement. The Lincoln Agreement stated that by 31 December 1998 a constitution should be developed, and so by January 1999 the people of Bougainville put together and adopted a constitution. Let me correct myself: by 24 December 1998. By 15

January 1999, the Bougainville Constituent Assembly was elected with 40 members. The BCA, as you know, is now the forerunner of the current preparation of the Bougainville Reconciliation Government. The preparations for the BRG, including new electoral boundaries, new electorates, were completed in about February this year. We now expect a house of about 50-plus members to form that new reconciliation government.

There were many criticisms from the government of Papua New Guinea in terms of the legality and the constitutionality of the constitution and, therefore, of the establishment of the BRG. We have nevertheless proceeded with the establishment of the BRG with, might I say, the cooperation of the Skate government. The Skate government has understood the formation of the BRG as a representative body that will eventually sit in front of the government of Papua New Guinea to discuss further details on the kind of charter we would like to establish between ourselves and the government of Papua New Guinea.

In terms of the legality and the constitutionality of the BRG constitution, our preamble is very brief. It simply says that the right to establish such a government of Bougainville lies within the people of Bougainville, it does not lie within the constitution of the government of Papua New Guinea. The last part of that constitution states categorically and succinctly from the very beginning that the resources of Bougainville belong to the people of Bougainville. We do not have a complicated or long preamble, such as the one that has been suggested by Prime Minister the Hon. John Howard, because we feel that we have got to be clear and succinct on what the people want.

The election and nominations have been going very smoothly and we have heard that so far there have been well over 40 nominations from north Bougainville itself. We do expect to have more than 100 nominations right throughout Bougainville, signifying that there is a wide popularity and support of the creation and election of the Bougainville Reconciliation Government.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Thank you for those comments. What I was interested in was this: do you believe that the election will lead to a parliament that is representative of all the groups in Bougainville, including those which perhaps do not agree with the views of the BRA?

**Mr Havini**—As the title rightly says, it is a Bougainville Reconciliation Government. The formation of such a reconciliation government was commonly agreed during the signing of the Lincoln Agreement in January 1998. At that meeting all parties on Bougainville agreed to form a reconciliation government. At the moment more than three-quarters of the people of Bougainville support the election of the Reconciliation Government. A tiny proportion of Bougainville people, mainly some members of the Leitana council of elders and some members of the resistance forces, are opposing the establishment of the BRG.

As we speak there is now a leaders' group flying this morning in a Hercules from Bougainville to New Zealand upon the invitation of the New Zealand government. New Zealand has invited the parties that are currently in dispute to try and resolve the current impasse. The leaders will be meeting in New Zealand until Sunday of this week. My conversations with Bougainville last night, and again this morning just before we came here, indicate that there will be a resolution towards a more firm, positive direction in the



formation of the Reconciliation Government by the parties that are currently heading to New Zealand this morning.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Are the Buka chiefs going to New Zealand?

**Mr Havini**—The delegation includes members of the Bougainville Interim Government, members of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army, and the same make-up is also expected from the top end, from Buka, probably.

**Ms Havini**—I would like to let you know that it was an amazing experience to see the way that true representation has been sought by traditional means. Although it may look on the record that there are only 40 or 50 or something nominations, the process that the individual communities go through to come up with those nominated people is a very comprehensive process and takes into account all the community governments, all the chiefs being consulted and the women's organisations. That is how the women's freedom movement on Bougainville came into existence about two years ago. It came out of having to seek true views of the larger community.

I have been involved in forums right through central and some areas of southern and northern Bougainville and have been amazed at the widespread input that is coming in and the true views that are being sought. With the leaders that are emerging, a lot of them are people that I have never known in my 20 years in Bougainville. There is a wide base for those nominations to exist and I really do believe they are representative. Your own peace monitors would attest to that. I do not know how much they told you on your trip. They have been fantastic in providing and facilitating the communication and travel for all of these forums to occur.

**ACTING CHAIR**—We are aware of that. Thank you, Ms Havini. Mr Havini, is the meeting in New Zealand sponsored by the Peace Monitoring Group or by the Department of Foreign Affairs in New Zealand? How did that come about and who actually sponsored it?

**Mr Havini**—Once again, it was an initiative of the New Zealand government and, as you know, the New Zealand government has been in partnership with the Australian government in making sure that the peace process on Bougainville continues. It is specifically sponsored by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Hon. Don McKinnon, under a study tour program, which is mainly to bring the leaders together so that they can sit down and resolve this conflict. We will also be given tours to see different aspects of development in New Zealand in terms of the reconstruction and rehabilitation on Bougainville.

**Senator SANDY MACDONALD**—You made the point, as I understand it, that there are 100 nominations for 50 positions for the BRG. Is that the point that you made?

**Mr Havini**—Yes, indeed. About 90 seats were recently established by the Bougainville Electoral Boundaries Committee. It is normal in competing for seats that we will, like everywhere else, have 100-plus nominations.

**Senator SANDY MACDONALD**—Will there be some nominated members or will they all be elected members?

**Mr Havini**—We have decided that the election will be by three means: election by secret ballot, election by nomination and election by selection. This is from the point of view that, because of the infrastructure, a full team was not able to go throughout Bougainville to conduct a proper census, update the electoral rolls and carry on with the business of drawing new electoral boundaries. The three modes of election were popularly accepted by all the people of Bougainville.

**Senator SANDY MACDONALD**—I guess if you have about 90 members in the Reconciliation Government there will be many more than 100 nominations. The point I wanted to go on to was that the committee, which visited Bougainville some three weeks ago, found that there was a great variation in terms of preparation for the election in various places. For example, at Buin they had the candidates out, they knew who they were and quite a range of people were seeking to be elected to the Reconciliation Government. At Wakunai, it was at the very early stages, and on Buka they were basically throwing up their hands and saying that they had not been consulted. It was very, very early days. You paint a picture of some sort of corporate understanding of the election process. I do not think that we, as a committee, would agree with that. Would you like to comment on or give an explanation about what might have happened in the last three weeks to give you more encouragement?

**Mr Havini**—Let me put it this way: the reconciliation is continuing amongst all parties on Bougainville. I mentioned to you this morning that right now the groups that are in dispute that you have alluded to are heading for New Zealand to have further dialogue on resolving the conflict so that the election runs very smoothly. As I mentioned earlier, three-quarters of the people on Bougainville support the election and the formation of the BRG, but they are conscious of the fact that it is better to have all parties on board rather than having some people miss out. This is why we are insisting on further dialogue by all parties.

I want to mention to you that, according to our custom and tradition in the Pacific, we sit under a coconut tree and talk and talk and talk until we come to a consensus. This is exactly what we are trying to apply here. However, I must say that nevertheless the election and the formation of the BRG can actually go ahead even with the five per cent that have not come aboard. We are conscious of the fact that this is a reconciliation government and we would like to see it established.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Are you able to tell us how many areas there will actually be an election in and in how many areas there will simply be a selection of a person?

**Mr Havini**—We have been able to establish that the whole of Buka Island plus north Bougainville all the way to Tinputz, which virtually covers nearly half of Bougainville, will enter election by secret ballot. This is simply because the infrastructure in that part of Bougainville is much better than in the rest of Bougainville. Central Bougainville, as you know, was blockaded for nearly 10 years and it was not possible for the electoral committee members to be able to go into there. In central and south Bougainville it will be by selection and nomination.

**ACTING CHAIR**—That does include the south?

**Mr Havini**—That also includes the south.

**ACTING CHAIR**—We got the impression that in the south there definitely would be an election and that certainly there were more than enough nominations for an election.

**Mr Havini**—We have a provision by the electoral officers that they will make the decision on the ground. If they feel that this area can safely have its election by secret ballot, the decision will be made on the spot, so we do have that provision available.

**Senator SANDY MACDONALD**—Ms Havini, you made a point about the role of the PMG that we can all agree with. Having been there, I think we can all feel proud of the job that they are doing. But you also make a point in your submission that Australia must realise that its position does not constitute a neutral one and that it should, in all honesty, decline the leadership role in Bougainville. That sort of advice is quite gratuitous in the sense that what is past is past and the role of the PMG is obviously something that is very much a force for good. Without it, the peace process would not be proceeding as it is now. I think it is a fair thing to say that we do not particularly have an axe to grind. We wish the peace process to proceed well. It is no good looking back to the past, and I do not think the Bougainvillean people are doing that. Surely we must move forward now without that sort of gratuitous advice to us, the Australian government. I would like your comments on that.

**Ms Havini**—That was written in the first submission. I have been to Burnham, and I was full of hope. My personal position was that the New Zealand government was seeming to be neutral and was claiming to be neutral, and I would hope that Australia could be too, but there is a lot of distrust by the Australian public after what happened in the past.

I thought the world of Brigadier Osborne. I thought he was a fantastic ambassador for Australia. I thought he did a wonderful job. He looked after us. He facilitated our getting around to the people and he looked after our welfare in getting us safely in and out of Bougainville, and I appreciate all of that. Then it was a great disappointment to find that as soon as he left Bougainville he made a statement about Bougainvilleans not wanting independence. Just making that political comment actually threw Bougainville and threw us. We began thinking, are there any secret motives? Is Australia still going to try and use a strong hand to suppress Bougainville from actually getting the right to self-determination?

We had been led to believe by members of Mr Downer's secretariat that you are open to whatever is agreed at a negotiation table, that Australia has changed its position from when we spoke with Dr Theophanous in parliament. A couple of years ago we met Dr Theophanous and we had a very interesting talk. Dr Theophanous was saying that the Australian position is that you must have some sort of ironclad agreement that Bougainville would stay within Papua New Guinea but have a certain amount of autonomy. I was putting to him, as you might remember, the argument that we already had that with provincial government. We had what was supposed to be an ironclad agreement and it was cancelled on us.

We settled there in 1975, and I lived in the jungle for a year. Moses and I lived through that, and I was carrying babies through that. I have lived like those women have lived behind the blockade. The security of the next generation is our overriding concern. If a political settlement does not give permanent security to Bougainville, and if the Australian government cannot help us in that—this generation picked up guns; what is going to happen to the next one? Where would they start from in the next generation again? We do not want the next generation to go one step worse. Okay, they are war-weary now and, yes, they will probably be at a vulnerable point to be forced into something if the whole world stands against them when they know they want a secure self-determination, some kind of ironclad agreement, as you say, that they will never be invaded again. But what happens in 12 or 20 years time when the kids grow up and they feel that they have been short-changed? Because that is what happened to our children.

**Ms Whelan**—Could I add something to what Ms Havini said? I think the reason why the Bougainville Freedom Movement updated their submission from last July to this February to now is because we recognise that the situation on the ground has changed in that the role that the PMG is playing now is seen by the Bougainvilleans, I understand, as a very positive role. We wanted to note that in coming before the hearing today.

**Senator SANDY MACDONALD**—That is important.

**Ms Whelan**—It is, and I wanted that to be clear for you.

**Senator SANDY MACDONALD**—It is partly what the committee will report. The Australian government's view is, yes, it might be preferable that Bougainville stay part of Papua New Guinea, but at the end of the day our view, which can only be the commonsense view, is that it is up to the Bougainvillean people themselves.

**Ms Whelan**—Exactly.

**Senator SANDY MACDONALD**—Nobody could take any opposing view to that. I just wanted that clarified. I do have some other questions on aid. Perhaps there may be some other questions on that.

**ACTING CHAIR**—I think we want to follow through here.

**Senator BOURNE**—My question is similar but not exactly the same. We have had a lot of evidence on the problems of reconciliation, which I am sure you would only be too aware of, and the fact that payback probably has not even started yet. We are looking at a couple of generations down the line before that can all be resolved. Assuming that there is a political settlement, what do you think would be the best way to start now and to keep going to achieve reconciliation?

**Mr Havini**—First of all, my first answer to that is that the current climate that we have established with the Skate government is very important. We have never had that sort of climate with former prime ministers, so that is the first on our list, that the dialogue between ourselves and Prime Minister Skate continues to be open and to exist. Are you aware that

there is a threat of a vote of no confidence in July? That is now making our hearts tick a little bit faster at this stage.

We are learning from our past experiences. From 1990 to 1995 we signed five peace accords that were violated weeks after they had been signed. We took a different tack in 1997 when we decided to embark upon a number of peace agreements closer together so that there was some time for parties to violate those agreements, and it has worked so far.

Our position is that the war is over; the peace is ours. We are claiming that the peace is ours and we will make sure that that claim will continue to predicate the current peace process. Our leader, General Kavona, has assured us that we will never go back to the jungle again. We are committed to peace, and reconciliation is a very important factor to this ongoing peace.

**Senator BOURNE**—Is there anything you think it would be useful for us to recommend to start now for reconciliation?

**Mr Havini**—Yes, indeed. A number of issues are contained within the Lincoln Agreement, two of which are the disposal of arms by the BRA and resistance forces and the withdrawal of the Papua New Guinea defence forces from Bougainville. For our part—that is, the BRT-BRA—we worked on a 20-page submission on the disposal of arms, which was presented to the peace process consultative committee last month.

**ACTING CHAIR**—We do not have a copy of that document. Could you provide a copy of it to the committee?

**Mr Havini**—Yes, I certainly will. We see militarisation as an enemy of peace, and we know that this is a common disease within the Asia-Pacific region. We see it in the Asian region quite a lot, and we definitely do not wish to have that within the Pacific region. The presence and existence of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force on Bougainville is militarisation, and our people feel that, until Bougainville is completely and fully demilitarised, peace will never be realised on Bougainville.

**Senator BOURNE**—So you see the establishment of a civilian police force taking over everywhere that the PNGDF is as being central?

**Mr Havini**—Civil authority has been the main denominator in the current peace process. We have attempted to work on that. We have a joint force that is currently looking after law and order. When the BRG is established, it will go into that in full mode. We have a limited level of judiciary at the moment on Bougainville, but throughout the discussions we have talked about having assistance from overseas, from international agencies. In this respect, we have spoken with the International Commission of Jurists at great length about coming in as an NGO to help us in the establishment of a judiciary.

**Ms Havini**—You asked what Australia can do. I feel very strongly that the police should be trained on Bougainville, that they should not be taken to Moresby to be trained. I do not know whether the Peace Monitoring Group or international agencies could be invited in through the United Nations and the Pacific peace monitoring team. That training could

happen because the resistance and BRA are actually working together. They have come together to form that police body that has secured Arawa and it is incredibly successful. The latest police that have been carried over to Moresby have been stranded there without the money to come home. You might know of that.

Bougainville is very nervous of the police training received in Port Moresby because it was the police disgracing themselves in 1989 that led to the bringing in of the Army. The police were brought in when there was an initial civil disturbance at the mine, and those riot squads—they were called black shirt police—inflamed the situation to the extent that the Army was brought in. So if Australia could in any way advise or help or assist in financing the training of police in Bougainville by international bodies with better techniques and that would be sensitive to the bringing together of the BRA and the resistance, we would have a united people and the 'divide and conquer' base would then be eroded.

**Dr SOUTHCOTT**—Who would fund the auxiliary police force?

**Ms Havini**—The Bougainvilleans themselves have been funding what is happening. They are doing it all themselves with their own resources. In fact, the BFM have helped them get walkie-talkies. You might notice from the back of today's report that we get specific requests from Bougainville rather than projects—just their own projects, what they are doing, not the things they are doing through major applications to AusAID and other NGOs. The Bougainvilleans are very resourceful and they get a lot of things up and running, but they do not have the physical bits and pieces to go with it. This is where they reach out to us and they send us faxes. Whenever Moses and I go in on the negotiations, we are hauling in bits and pieces of really useful and helpful aid. That is how they are doing it.

**Dr SOUTHCOTT**—One of the things we had put to us which you did touch on was that the auxiliary police have been trained but there is no money for the salaries, and that has collapsed.

**Ms Havini**—Yes. They have been given the expectation that Papua New Guinea is going to pay them now, but the security that is looking after Arawa is not being paid by PNG—or they were not when they started up. Everybody is unsalaried at the moment and is working with goodwill, except up in Buka where the people have picked up salaries care of the BTG, which no longer exists. I must admit that I do not understand what is happening with those salaries, but you are right: those police people who have been trained in Moresby have the expectation that PNG not only will fly them home—which they have not done—but will salary them.

**Dr SOUTHCOTT**—You have said that the Peace Monitoring Group should not leave until the Papua New Guinea Defence Force has left. Do you have any idea of the size and location of PNG Defence Force on Bougainville at the moment?

**Ms Havini**—I think there are about 500. We know where they are. They are at Wakunai, Loloho and Buka. The Bougainvilleans have as little as possible to do with the Army, and I do not think they are given any figures. Papua New Guinea is not transparent when it comes to what the Army is doing. Whenever I go there—and even on the plane with the Army—

along with the Bougainvilleans, I have stayed as far away from them as possible. So there is no communication. We do not talk with the Army.

**Ms John**—Dr Southcott, I think that is probably a question that you can answer because Australia does deal with the Papua New Guinea Army. From the *Hansard*, I believe it was said that the PNG Army are definitely still on Bougainville, which we know. They do have arms on Bougainville but apparently they are not carrying around guns. I cannot remember which of you said that, but it was in the *Hansard*.

**Dr SOUTHCOTT**—That is right. I cannot remember the exact numbers but they were off the island for a while and they came back on. My understanding is that it is not a large force and it is also not a force that—

**Ms John**—It is a company of about 500, isn't it?

**Senator QUIRKE**—No, about 250, but it could be as much as 500.

**Dr SOUTHCOTT**—I am also interested in the change between your submissions. The first submission talks about the bias in Australia's position and that Australia should not be involved with the Peace Monitoring Group or should have other neutral countries involved in the Peace Monitoring Group. I have read today's submission, which really does not address that. Are you happy that the Peace Monitoring Group is a neutral body and is seen to be a neutral body?

**Ms Havini**—We do accept that it is neutral. We accept Australia's contribution but we do not want to see it becoming Australia only. We still believe very strongly that the safety in the hearts of the Bougainvilleans lies in the fact that Australia is there with New Zealand, with Fiji and with Vanuatu, that the Solomons are still invited in to chair and do things and that the United Nations presence is there. I think it is the fact of all those things being there that gives them the confidence to continue with the peace process, and that is what we see you continuing with.

**Senator QUIRKE**—I wonder if we could go a little further with that. From the old submission you gave to the committee to the new submission here you obviously have significantly changed your perspective in relation to the PMG. Can I ask you prospectively how you would like to see the role of the PMG unfold in the next so many months, possibly the next year or so?

**Ms Havini**—I see that people on Bougainville feel frustrated when they go to the PMG and they ask, 'Can you help us with this or with that?' and the PMG says, 'Well, we are not allowed to do that. We have got this position of neutrality, so we can't do it.' They have got all the facilities, they have got the transport—they are seen to have everything, and the people have not even got a way to walk in. The women in Arawa were distressed at not being able to meet you, for instance. There were a lot of Bougainville Women for Peace and Freedom that really wanted to come in to see you and there was no transport. They felt very left out. It would be wonderful if the Peace Monitoring Group could help. I know they cannot become a taxi service, I do not expect that, but I just wonder if AusAID could factor in that kind of facilitation for people a bit more. Once there is a Bougainville Reconciliation

Government, it is not the BIG versus the BTG, it is not either side, and it should not be seen to be a breach of neutrality to be able to assist people. I think there is a bigger platform that could happen in the way the Peace Monitoring Group interacts with the people.

**Senator QUIRKE**—I am glad you gave that answer, because one of the problems I think we are getting into in a sense is that if the PMG were to take the steps that you are suggesting—I am sorry that those groups could not come and meet us—it is becoming a bit like government services that we take for granted in this country and eventually we are not going to be able to wean them off it. One of the fears that was expressed in your earlier submissions, or that I thought was implicit, was that the PMG was the old colonial authority coming back—pardon me being blunt about this—and that it would be perceived that way. If the PMG is so important that it is providing all the basic services or more basic services, isn't it going to be more difficult for Bougainville to develop its own way forward? That is the nub of my question. I am a bit confused about the role of the PMG. I am very happy you have come around to seeing the PMG as an essential element at this stage, but I am just wondering where it goes from here. Obviously if it is going to be providing more and more services, which presumably the Australian, New Zealand, Fijian and Vanuatu governments could agree to, the problem is that it is going to become too central to the life of Bougainvilleans.

**Mr Havini**—I think we are looking at the PMG from the point of view of the relationship established between the BRA and the Australian government. Once upon a time we saw Australia, especially the former Labor government, as complicit to all the human rights abuses that were committed on Bougainville in terms of your assistance et cetera. Since then a lot of public relations has developed, and I would like to commend the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer, for having been the person who himself went to Bougainville and talked with the leaders and really established a new relationship between ourselves and the government of Australia. I think this is essentially the most important contribution in relation to the PMG that we have established so far.

The PMG is a body that is there to monitor the peace process. There will be a number of things that will come their way which are part of that process. For instance, when we needed more helicopters, PMG would come and say, 'Yes, we are quite happy to airlift the six that were not able to hop onto the private helicopters.' They are doing that quite happily. They have mentioned to us that they are not the ones that are providing services but they would be quite happy to assist wherever they can as part of the peace process. Can I assure you that we are not going to see them as the body that is there to meet our needs. We are going to make sure that it does not happen that way. This is why the establishment of the BRG is very important for social services et cetera. Once we establish it, things will flow naturally to the Bougainville Reconciliation Government.

I have been onto Bougainville since last year. I have seen the relationship between the PMG and the people of Bougainville, especially the BRA, really improved. They go to villages, they attend meetings, they facilitate transportation to meetings. They are generally doing a very good job. From that point of view, I do commend the PMG for what they are doing. Thank you.



**Senator QUIRKE**—I have not studied your latest submission here; I have only just had time to quickly browse through it. You were critical in the original submission of the role of AusAID and, in fact, of how the aid was delivered, to whom it was delivered and where it was delivered. Have you changed your views on that in the last 12 months or so?

**Ms Havini**—We have had several battles both on the ground with AusAID, arguing face to face with them, and down here addressing NGO groups. We do believe that what we said at the time that we wrote that was the case. Most of Bougainville in the south would actually maintain that that is still the case. However, since our trips home to Bougainville and back, we have come to see that the bottlenecks that are existing that give that perception to the people are existing at the district level, at the Buka level and at the Moresby level. That is why we have felt the need to put this third submission in.

If you look at the last two pages on this submission, you will see that I have made recommendations on how to train up and put in more staff, AusAID staff but Bougainvillean people, so as not to make them dependent on the PMG but to get them trained to replace them and build up their own civil service. We need bigger clearing areas at the bottlenecks. Even the Peace Monitoring Group told me they are just amazed when they go into a district office and see that the submissions on the district manager's desk are this high. People have been waiting for three and four months and the submissions are still sitting at the district manager's desk because he cannot process them. There is just not enough happening at that level. And to get it even to that level, those people have to go out getting approval from the chiefs.

For you to get a project up for AusAID funding, you have got to get community support. You have got to get the chiefs, the administrative people and the district manager to sign it. There is a lot of running around. People come in out of the jungle and desperately want to develop and fix their area up. They feel that it is all too hard before they even start. It sits there for months. The peace monitors and some of the DFAT personnel have said that they have been pressured to come in and ask because the people do not even know how to ask. A lot of them are still too overawed by bureaucracy. They do not know how to ask in the way that gets the right answer. They get these people and DFAT to come in to say, 'Could you tell us just where it is up to? How far down the pipeline does it appear?' and it is still on the manager's desk. It has not even got to Buka. When it gets to Buka, it has got to be prioritised. So you have got the whole of Bougainville being prioritised in one spot so far away from where the need is seen.

I recommend that AusAID should set up clearing offices in Arawa and Buin as well as in Buka. When I was on the plane coming to Buka for one of the committee's steering meetings, there was an NGO agricultural officer from Oxfam who was on his way to Rabaul because, even after everything had been ordered and approved, things were being siphoned off. What he received to actually do the project was about a third of what he needed. Three-quarters of it had disappeared, a third of it going missing and a third of it substituted by other things that had nothing to do with what he had originally ordered. There are all these sorts of problems in delivery as well.

**Mr GARETH EVANS**—It would be inappropriate to open up a debate on history but, frankly, I cannot allow to remain unchallenged the proposition that the former Labor

government was complicit in human rights abuses on Bougainville. One of these days I hope the record does reveal how profound our distaste was for some of the things that we suspected the government and military were doing or wanted to do and will also reveal how forcefully that distaste was communicated, including by me on a number of occasions. I will not pursue that but I think the record needs to be not left in quite the form in which Mr Havini uttered it.

I do want to ask a couple of questions, first of all about the political situation in Papua New Guinea. It would occur to most observers that the Skate government is a rather slender reed on which to be hanging one's hopes for long-term political reconciliation. What is your current assessment of the approach of the potential alternative government players? At the moment is the pessimism that came through your earlier remarks really justified, given that I would have thought there was practically nobody left in Moresby who would see any virtue at all in terms of resumption of military hostilities as distinct from a negotiated settlement? Is it really as critical to the successful continuation of the peace process that the present government remain in office? I am interested in your judgment on that.

**Mr Havini**—I do not know whether I will be able to answer all your questions. I have met with someone who is a very close adviser of Prime Minister Bill Skate. In fact, he is here in Sydney now. I went to see him principally on what you are now asking. He did mention to me that, as far as numbers are concerned, if the vote of no confidence comes in July, the Skate government should be able to survive and will be able to muster the more than 55 members they would need to maintain government.

He also told me that a lot of that sort of thing was flowing within the opposition ranks, so everything is up in the air. From our point of view, we would at least like to see the Skate government live and exist, at least towards the end of the year, so that we can at least establish another solid foundation in regard to the peace process.

Apart from the Skate government, we have also been able to deal with new blood in the administration of the Skate government. This is what has really helped the peace process to go on. I am referring to the director of the Prime Minister's department and other departments we have been dealing with. They have all been new blood and that has been really the success of the Skate government. They are the ones that have been really pushing the peace process to go on.

I am unable to predict whether there will be a divine intervention, there will be a new glaring leadership appearing after the Skate government in Papua New Guinea. I have no answer to that.

**Mr GARETH EVANS**—I am not really asking you to predict what the course of PNG politics will bring. I do not think anybody can do that. But, just in terms of the current key opposition players, the Narakobis and so on, do you sense any likely continuity of approach, or are you really fearful that there will be a retreat to a much less conciliatory style?

**Mr Havini**—From the statements that have come so far from the opposition in terms of the peace process, we are very frightened of that. There has not been any degree of conciliation at all from the opposition in terms of, for instance, the sovereignty of the

country, the constitution. The Skate government is very much aware of that sort of scenario, but they are not throwing it into our face because of the respect of being able to push the peace process to go another step further.

**Ms Havini**—There is a great fear on Bougainville that this PNG constitution is being treated as if it was written by God and totally unchangeable when they see that the constitution of Papua New Guinea has already been broken by Papua New Guinea itself in invading a so-called citizenry population—their own population. Several of the atrocities that occurred are all against their own constitution. So the Bougainvilleans do not feel that the constitution is the bible to dictate the outcome of the conflict. We are frightened that the opposition is using it in that way. If they hold that up as their entire defence, there is an impasse; there is no way that they are prepared to actually be open in dialogue. We see that dialogue as the essential way forward.

**Mr GARETH EVANS**—It is not quite the same thing as saying there is a mood among the non-government parties for resumption of military action, though, is it? I would not have thought you could draw that particular connection. They might be adopting a pretty hard-nosed view on the future course of constitutional negotiations which you might find disconcerting. I can understand that. But, in terms of a resumption of the previous military hostility, I would not have thought that was particularly likely. Is that judgment wrong?

**Ms Havini**—We are concerned that, even if they do not mount a campaign, there is the continued presence of the Army. They are just languishing; the Army is there sitting like squatter camps, as Sam Kauona said in his statement. Their insistence on keeping the Army on the island is a threat. We are concerned that the opposition will do that. We are concerned that Papua New Guinea would do that, even if they are looking at making it into a base like Manus in the future as their outward empire-type defence. Bougainville sees that as an opening to anybody who comes along with a renewed military intent.

**ACTING CHAIR**—We are running behind time. Mr Hollis had a question.

**Mr HOLLIS**—To go back to Senator Quirke's question on aid, one of the difficulties we find in this, which I guess is typical, is that we get all sorts of conflicting evidence given to us. For example, the paper that has been put to us today talks about schools and hospitals. In Melbourne yesterday it was put to us quite forcibly by a couple of different agencies that Australia aid was going the wrong way. Instead of building schools like the one at Talena, the Bishop Wade school, it would be much better to build smaller schools, village regional schools. Before we went to Bougainville, and indeed since we have been there, including yesterday, the Buka hospital, which we visited, was very much criticised as being totally inappropriate for the needs of Bougainville, that it would be much better to have these things at a village level. I note that the submission today is suggesting that Australian aid go to building more schools such as the Bishop Wade school and to more major district hospitals similar to the one in Buka. It is a contradiction that we are constantly getting. One group is telling us that this is totally inappropriate and another group is telling us that this is what is needed. Maybe you could steer a middle way for me.

**Mr Havini**—The thing that is now most important is to establish a mechanism that will be able to siphon all the aid back into Bougainville. The current mechanism is unsatisfactory,

and that is from Australia to PNG and then on to Bougainville. As you know, we do not even know whether most of the money that was promised to Bougainville through Papua New Guinea had reached Bougainville. We do have \$100 million that was promised by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. At this stage we do not even know where it is. So we would like to see the establishment of the BRG in May—this is what we would like to recommend to the committee—as the mechanism by which all future moneys coming from PNG, Australia or overseas will be channelled. After that there will be equitable distribution of moneys right throughout Bougainville.

To answer your question in terms of development of infrastructure, within the Lincoln Agreement we talk about two types of development. One is restoration and the other is development. In terms of restoration, which the NGOs in Melbourne were of course addressing, it means establishing more schools and more hospitals like it was before so that the people can come in and begin to get on with their lives. The second one is in terms of development, and there we are talking megabucks. We would like to see some sort of a clearing house where developments, whether it be mining, agriculture or whatever, will be assessed before they can be built. We did have a criticism of AusAID in Bougainville in our first and second submissions. We essentially saw the pouring of well over \$15 million in just one spot on Buka as clearly an agenda from the Australian government, from AusAID.

You are talking in terms of an area that I come from that hardly contributed even one per cent of Bougainville's GNDP to Papua New Guinea. As you know, prior to the good old days, Bougainville used to contribute more than 51 per cent of the country's GNDP to Papua New Guinea—more than 43 per cent of its internal earnings—and was always contributing between 17 to 20 per cent into Papua New Guinea's revenue. So the Bougainville economy was virtually bankrolling and running Papua New Guinea for 20 years after independence in 1975. When you go and sink \$40 million to \$50 million in one area, you can begin to see how it was perceived by the rest of Bougainville.

**Ms Riannon**—I would like to take two minutes. I would really like to urge that the subcommittee supports a recommendation that when aid is delivered from Australia the negotiating point—I am talking about for Bougainville—is with the Bougainville Reconciliation Government. We have seen for decades that the people of Bougainville have been robbed of aid because of it going through Port Moresby, and it is stopping there, for various reasons. I think that that has been well set out in the submission, and I think that that could be a key point for your considerations.

Having Mr Evans open up the comments about human rights, I also think that a short comment needs to be made on that. While we always welcome commitments to human rights, we certainly do not want to be rewriting history. When you do go back to the role of AIDAB—the name for AusAID earlier in this decade—the history of what happened with the police training programs on Bougainville is an absolute blot on our history. It was a great embarrassment to the Labor government at the time when *Background Briefing* exposed how Australian aid money, which we would expect to work for the benefit of people, was training a police service which involved the rape of women, the burning of villages and killing of livestock. That is not me saying those words; that is the mid-term interim report of AIDAB. This really has to be on the record because of what Mr Evans

said. That is the history and that is why we need a change. We really recommend going directly through the Bougainville Reconciliation Government.

**ACTING CHAIR**—We are running out of time, but I have two questions about the political process to conclude. Yesterday most of the groups that spoke to us said that they support the idea of international observers at the elections. Do you support that? What sort of international presence would you like to see?

**Mr Havini**—Yes, we support the presence of the international community during the elections. Right now we have the PMG and the United Nations on Bougainville. Yes, we would like to invite anyone interested to be able to go to Bougainville to witness the election, including NGOs, parliamentarians and private citizens from Australia.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Do you know whether New Zealand is sending any group to observe?

**Mr Havini**—I have not been able to establish that, but I should imagine that their representatives on the ground will be able to represent them.

**ACTING CHAIR**—In addition to that, one of the issues is, for example, whether the BRG is going to be able to do what you said which will depend on this process of negotiation that will take place after the election as to the actual status of the government and its status within Papua New Guinea, or any other status. While you have reached agreement on the question of the formation of the government with many people, there is a very big variety of views in Bougainville about whether there should be independence or whether there should be autonomy, and what levels of autonomy and what role—if there is going to be autonomy—the province would have within Papua New Guinea. Do you want to comment on that?

**Mr Havini**—I think we are entering into a very exciting period as we approach the next millennium. The Bougainville exercise can be seen as an experiment by all parties in the region. There has also been some shift, not in terms of Australia's policy but in the way you have been able to perceive events in the last 10 years. The Labor government, endorsed by the Liberal government, saw Bougainville as clearly an unwinnable war and saw that the only method was through a political settlement. A political settlement is something that will be taken further by the Reconciliation Government. At this point in time we would just like to see the process continue, to be kept alive and on board, and it will go from there.

The Bougainville Reconciliation Government will be the new political body that will enter into some charter negotiations with the government of Papua New Guinea. At this stage there are people who are talking in terms of a much higher form of autonomy within the political framework of Papua New Guinea. The BRG and BRA are clearly talking about self-determination on the way to an independent state in the Pacific. We will clearly have to have the BRG linger further on that issue and then finally come up with an outcome.

**ACTING CHAIR**—What if there is no agreement on this question? Are you all confident you will get an agreement on this question?

**Mr Havini**—All I am confident about at this stage is that the people of Bougainville are moving together as a body and they will together thrash out this issue in the end.

**Ms Havini**—May I ask: with Australia taking the position with Indonesia of suggesting an act of self-determination for East Timor by the year 2000, is there a willingness in Australia to suggest the same thing to Papua New Guinea for Bougainville?

**ACTING CHAIR**—We cannot answer that. The committee will deliberate on these issues; obviously it would not be appropriate today to give an answer to that question.

**Ms Havini**—May I say that we got a fax from Andrew Mariki that the people on Bougainville asked us to ask you this today.

**Mr HOLLIS**—That question was asked when we were on Bougainville—

**Senator SANDY MACDONALD**—And they got very good answers.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Let me just say that the issue has been raised with us, and we will obviously be considering all issues in the course of the finalisation of this report.

Thank you very much for your attendance here today. If there are any matters on which we might need additional information, the secretary will write to you. You will be sent a copy of the transcript of your evidence, to which you can make corrections of grammar and of fact.

**Proceedings suspended from 10.53 a.m. to 11.05 a.m.**

**LEA, Associate Professor John, Associate Professor, Department of Architecture, Planning and Allied Arts, University of Sydney**

**ACTING CHAIR**—Welcome. Can you tell the subcommittee what your specialisation is?

**Prof. Lea**—I manage the postgraduate urban and regional planning programs at the university.

**ACTING CHAIR**—The subcommittee prefers that all evidence be given in public, but should you at any stage wish to give any evidence in private you may ask to do so and the subcommittee will give consideration to your request. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence on oath, I should advise you that these are legal proceedings of the parliament and therefore have the same standing as the proceedings of the House itself. I now invite you to make a short opening statement, if you wish, before we proceed to questions.

**Prof. Lea**—Both my colleague Professor Connell and I have been involved in developments in Bougainville and, more generally, in Papua New Guinea since the early 1970s. Professor Connell apologises for not being present today—he is overseas. Subsequently we have been involved in a number of AusAID programs, particularly with respect to population and urbanisation issues in Melanesia, Polynesia and, most recently, Micronesia. Our interest is very much in the urban planning, the future vision of what this society will become. Specifically, we feel experience gained both in the Pacific—I was regional planning adviser in Tonga for AusAID in the 1980s—and more recently in the Torres Strait with the island communities there is very relevant to the circumstances of Bougainville today. If you would like me to expand on that I will.

**ACTING CHAIR**—We received yesterday an additional submission from you. Would you like to comment briefly on that additional submission?

**Prof. Lea**—Sure. It is not generally understood, I think, that any form of planning really involves an appreciation of an end or a future or a goal or a vision or something of that kind. Papua New Guinea became quite famous at the time of independence with the establishment of its eight aims. We are very conscious that Bougainville has sought more autonomy and would properly like to establish its own vision for the future. This is not an easy task; it is one which requires plenty of participation and input. But, whatever plans and programs follow, they must have some sort of connection with this. We found this very strongly, for example, in the Torres Strait where, back in 1989, there was not much appreciation of what more autonomy in the strait might mean. I was very impressed with the way in which the islander community rapidly grasped the implications of what more autonomy and development could mean to their communities.

The first point I would like to make is that we think Australia could help the Bougainville population in establishing its own eight aims, if you like. They may not be the same as other provinces in PNG, although they would fall under the umbrella of the country as a whole. Secondly, we feel that this whole business of deciding what needs to be done is

very difficult to do in a situation where there is not reasonable security and stability. I am very heartened to see that the BRG looks like it is on its way.

The kind of future which will materialise in Bougainville may be very different from the one in the past. It is quite extraordinary, looking back to the early 1970s, to realise that Kieta had a population in 1966 of only 750 people; five years later, the population in the region, including Arawa, Panguna and Loloho, and in Kieta itself had risen to 12,000. Development is going to be much slower. It is going to be a different kind of development. It is unlikely, in our view, that Bougainville will be anything like as dependent on the externally sourced mine and town infrastructure that existed previously. This has major implications for the way in which development will take place. We have mentioned that Buka, already a focus of AusAID, has stability.

Moving on to the next point, it seems that if we are to involve the Bougainville population properly in owning their own future and their own plans, they do need to be able to become involved in the sorts of structured workshops and things which I guess may already be happening right across the island. It is certainly true that these sorts of workshops are not easy to do. They are not easy for outsiders like ourselves who come with money and education, and often a reputation, and there are ways of facilitating such workshops with Australian aid which might not be as intrusive as perhaps we have been in the past.

I hasten to add that I hold no brief here for the Torres Strait Islanders—of course, I know them very well and I have been privileged to assist up in the strait for a number of years—but it does seem to me to be worth looking at how their experience could assist in this neighbouring part of Melanesia. There are all sorts of other possibilities there too.

Lastly, the actual practicalities of managing some of this prioritisation, participation and all the rest of it require information. And information is not easy to get in a place like Bougainville today. There are all kinds of assumptions that have to be made, since the last set of censuses was done quite some time ago, and we think it is important that Australia could help in providing that body of baseline data, which does not exist except in a most spread out and sporadic way, and perhaps locate that initially in a place like Buka, where it could be useful to all the international groups involved with the situation, including the BRG once it starts operation itself.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Thank you very much, Professor. I think the Torres Strait example is very interesting, especially since obviously they have remained part of Australia and yet they feel that they have sufficient autonomy and control of their affairs to feel comfortable. Could you explain to us exactly what level of autonomy or how much control of their affairs they do have, and how you would see this kind of model if it were to be applied to Bougainville?

**Prof. Lea**—We have to cast our minds back to 1988 when the bicentenary of white settlement was not particularly well received in the Torres Strait. I think the Islanders felt somewhat left out of events and they were able to persuade—I think coerce might be a slightly more accurate word—the government of the time to look very seriously at their issues up there. It immediately became apparent that divided jurisdictions, former assimilation policies and all sorts of things were leading to a fragmented situation where the



voice of the indigenous people in the strait was not being heard particularly clearly, and something had to be done to allow these frustrations to be focused in a positive way.

One thing that Canberra asked for—and in retrospect it was a logical thing—was a regional development plan. This was very hard to institute in the strait because it was divided between the old Torres Shire, which was a Queensland local government, and the Island Coordinating Council, which was the northern protected area of the strait. The Torres Shire was an externally imposed piece of institutional apparatus. It was managed not by an elected local government official but an appointed administrator based in Cairns.

Any notion of planning for an area like the strait was very difficult at the time, so a series of workshops were instituted by the Island Coordinating Council and they enabled village and island communities to get together to discuss these and a lot of other implications. But it was really the ATSIC changes that brought about the main transformation because with the ATSIC regional council came the opportunity for the Islanders to look at the whole strait as an entity. Although ATSIC has been criticised in many places here and there, there is no doubt that in the strait it provided the opportunity for people to get together and discuss their future. Autonomy was one of the key things. Autonomy was a hard word to get to grips with.

**ACTING CHAIR**—It usually is—around the world.

**Prof. Lea**—Yes. The experience has not been without its ups and downs but, nevertheless, in terms of the kinds of things that happened, not only have they been able to establish some coherent planning but they have also been able to agree, of course, with Canberra and Brisbane on a division of powers which allows the Torres Strait Regional Authority—which is an elected body and the successor to the ATSIC regional council—to look after their domestic affairs; to appoint, hire and fire their own civil servants; to have a major say in things like health, education and other services, leaving really only things like foreign affairs, customs, quarantine and defence in the hands of the federal government.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Assuming a model like that were adopted in Bougainville, would you think that would have positives?

**Prof. Lea**—I am very hesitant, of course, to gratuitously offer solutions in this case to a people who are highly educated with a long history. I do feel, though, that it is a stepwise process, and it is not to say that there is a blueprint out there which is going to fit the Bougainville situation. I could not say, for example, that the Torres Strait model would do that straight away. There are a number of reasons for this. Australia has been resourcing the strait as it properly should do because they are full citizens of this country. There is no doubt that the Islanders themselves were able to express the opinion that they wished to remain part of Australia. This has been declared on a number of occasions quite vociferously, so there are fairly basic baseline elements to this which, of course, would need to be examined were one to draw further parallels.

**ACTING CHAIR**—You say in your submission that successful reconstruction in Bougainville requires logically agreed institutional and delivery mechanisms which may

differ considerably from those existing in other provinces of Papua New Guinea. Do you want to elaborate on that?

**Prof. Lea**—Yes. I think my colleague Professor Connell would probably be better equipped to do that. I think what we are saying here is that there is no doubt about it that Bougainville's position as a separately contained island entity would be more parallel to some of the others such as New Britain, New Ireland and Manus and so forth within the PNG firmament. There is no doubt that such remote places, just like the Torres Strait, parts of Aboriginal Australia, do suffer from remoteness, poor communications and a host of other, if you like, disadvantages which demand a rather different approach.

We have seen the example in Canada recently of the autonomous new region in northern Canada being declared. The reason for more autonomy is not to question the sovereignty of PNG as a separate government and country but to recognise that, for countries with that sort of geography to function well and efficiently, they need to adopt different kinds of strategies to suit the purposes concerned. That could mean a lot more autonomy in a place like Bougainville—there is no question about it.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Is it just a question of geography or is it a question of culture as well?

**Prof. Lea**—Of course it is. I am very mindful of the fact that it is not just Bougainville and that there are other distinct communities within the country. If one looks back in history, there have been other such democracies. The one I use mostly with my students is India, which is an extraordinary success given its disparate cultural backgrounds and geographical problems. It has managed to maintain a federation of states quite successfully.

**ACTING CHAIR**—If a different political model—perhaps a federation states model—had been adopted for Papua New Guinea, do you think that might have helped the situation?

**Prof. Lea**—Yes. It is easy to be wise after the event with hindsight and all the rest of it, but the tragedy with Bougainville was that the copper and gold discoveries came at a time when this newly emerging country desperately needed foreign exchange and the sheer pace of development overwhelmed the country.

Had an island like Bougainville been able to adopt a development path more like that of New Britain with plantation development and so forth, it would have been far less likely that we would have seen anything like this at all. The Bougainville people are peaceful people. There is no evidence at all to show that prior to these disturbances anything like this was in the offing.

**Senator BOURNE**—We had some evidence yesterday from Bougainville Copper. They gave us their annual report. One of the most striking things about the annual report is that they are looking at the possibility of getting out of Bougainville altogether—I have to say that would be a good idea.

If that were the case, with all of their assets there may be claims, counterclaims and goodness knows what, so I think that land tenure—both urban and rural—is going to need a

lot of resolution in Bougainville. Do you see that as a real problem? Do you think that workshops are the way to go? If so, who would you have running those workshops and how would you set about doing that?

**Prof. Lea**—You have hit the nail on the head. Land tenure is an absolutely crucial issue not only in Bougainville but right across the whole Pacific. In fact, we find that in Micronesia as well it is a key issue, particularly in the urban areas where they are expanding into traditional lands. Once again, if you look back at the early days of Arawa and Panguna, you will go through the tortuous steps—as I am sure you know—of how plantations were acquired, and this, that and the other, and how compensation moneys were paid.

Fiji is one country in Melanesia that has an evident, reasonably successful land tenure history. It has benefited from having a native land trust board, which was set up almost 100 years ago and which has enabled the country to manage its traditional lands for the benefit of its owners, both in an urban and rural sense. A number of countries, including PNG, have actually sent exploratory teams to Fiji in the past.

I think that a lot more could be done in this direction. The Fijians have a lot to teach other Melanesian communities and us here in Australia, because we are grappling with native title, so I would not like to back out of that one.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Perhaps you could take that question on notice and send us a considered suggestion as to who would be at such a meeting to discuss this issue.

**Prof. Lea**—Certainly.

**Senator BOURNE**—There would have to be a series of meetings. It was something that did come up when we were in Moresby and on Bougainville—for all of the four days that we were there. It is something that we have not really grappled with, and if you have any further ideas that we could use, that would be good. Thanks.

**Dr SOUTHCOTT**—In principle, the idea of having local community involvement and greater ownership in decision making and, ultimately, facilities is a very good one. In terms of your conceptualisation, one of the practical problems is that there are a lot of competing interests within Bougainville. That is certainly something that we witnessed in meeting the government. The government wanted aid to be branded ‘PNG government’, if you like, whereas the Papua New Guinea official opposition were more interested in their local MPs being able to decide where the facilities would go. How would you see that working, dealing with these conflicting claims and having decision making made on that basis?

**Prof. Lea**—There is no easy answer to this. I am reminded of issues here in Aboriginal Australia where we have sought an equitable means of distribution, for example, of ATSIC moneys in remote regions. It is very hard for many communities to realise that a cake is not cut into equal slices when it comes to development. Take the Tennant Creek region, by way of example, where you have a huge desert region. You need to have a hospital somewhere. You cannot have clinics in every remote outpost, you have to somehow be able to marshal your scarce resources to benefit the majority. As a result, there are going to be communities who feel they miss out.

A lot of our assumptions about egalitarianism and equality are based on our own culture. I was very conscious of the fact, in the illustration I have given you, where they wanted that cake cut into small but equal slices, regardless of the fact that by doing that it made it absolutely physically impossible to produce some of the facilities which were necessary for the hierarchy of facilities to be established, and so on. You can see what I am driving at.

So, in a situation like this, I did mention the fact that with the changed economy of the island, the hierarchy of places will be different. I notice that the BRG is looking to Arawa, presumably as its future centre, but the position which used to pertain was that most of the development was concentrated in a very small part of the island to the exclusion of much of the rest of it. In the future, that could well change.

How to ensure that the local constituency appreciates some of the things I have just been saying is the challenge. And particularly when you realise that Bougainville had one of the highest literacy rates in the Pacific prior to all the disturbances, that means there is no shortage of understanding or appreciation of what needs to be done.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Are there any further questions? As there are no further questions, thank you very much, Professor, for your attendance today. If there are any matters on which we might need additional information, and we have already mentioned one matter, the secretary will write to you.

You will be sent a copy of the transcript of your evidence, to which you can make corrections of grammar and fact. As *Hansard* may wish to check some details concerning your evidence, would you please remain for a short time after giving your evidence so that the reporter can speak with you, if necessary.

[11.30 a.m.]

**SCOTT-MURPHY, Mr John, Public Policy and Advocacy Officer, Caritas Australia**

**THOGERSEN, Ms Betty, Pacific Programs Coordinator, Caritas Australia**

**ACTING CHAIR**—We welcome the representatives of Caritas Australia. The subcommittee prefers that all evidence be given in public, but should you at any stage wish to give any evidence in private you may ask to do so and the subcommittee will give consideration to your request. Although the committee does not require you to give evidence on oath, these hearings are legal proceedings of the parliament and therefore have the same standing as the proceedings of the parliament itself. I now invite you to make a short opening statement before we proceed to questions.

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—Looking at the submission that we sent last year, noting its date of July, the events have clearly moved on since then but some of the issues that we raised in the submission continue. What I would like to say in this summary is that we believe it is important that Australia's official aid program places more recognition on the role of civil society throughout Papua New Guinea and in particular in Bougainville. We come from a long history of an aid program almost totally devoted to augmenting the state of Papua New Guinea, which tends to see NGOs as deliverers of aid programs rather than as organisations in their own right in their own country.

We feel that the emphasis which is given to quick outcomes and the emphasis on what is called a peace dividend is not necessarily conducive to the development of Bougainville's own organisations which will enable it to function as an economy and as a society. We are seeking greater cooperation from various aid donors. We try to cooperate with other NGOs as much as possible but there is always an element of competition between organisations. We make a plea for more cooperation between official aid programs and non-government organisations in the planning of aid programs as well as in the implementation, in the monitoring and in the evaluation.

We recognise that there is a particular difficulty with Papua New Guinea. The government of Papua New Guinea is very suspicious of non-government organisations. They tend to function in PNG as a de facto opposition, and that is in some ways an unfortunate development in that the sorts of organisations which have grown up have filled the political vacuum in PNG, but you have not seen organisations grow up which fulfil other necessary needs and obligations in PNG society. So there tends to be a skewing of civil society in PNG. If we as an aid program look upon NGOs as only deliverers of aid and deliverers of government services, I think we are missing the point of the important role of ordinary organisations in the life of Papua New Guineans. That relates particularly to the Bougainville program.

**ACTING CHAIR**—You mentioned in your submission that the prospect of Bougainville secession has occupied a far too prominent place in Australia's strategic thinking. That is an interesting view. Would you explain your statement and your concerns that Australian policy towards PNG and Bougainville has not been based on genuine public debate and on the genuine needs of the people, I think you said?

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—Words like ‘secession’ and ‘independence’ pop up all the time in the language of politics in Bougainville. If you ask ordinary Bougainvilleans, they say, ‘Yes, we would like to be independent’—just as any person anywhere wants to be independent and free from the heavy hand of government, their employer or whatever. There is not necessarily a considered idea about what that really means in practice. For people whose life revolves around a very small community, it is easy to adopt that sort of language without really understanding how it is perceived in other countries. What they perceive by ‘independence’ may simply mean that we want fewer foreigners in our place.

In our country, we tend to perceive independence as creating a new country which will have a seat in the United Nations and which may establish relationships with China, et cetera. There are a whole range of scenarios around the use of that sort of language. I think you have words being used which are interpreted differently on different sides. When we deliberate about secession and independence, we have particular models in mind which may not be in the minds of the local Bougainvilleans. They may be entirely satisfied with a particular version of what we might call ‘autonomy’ or other arrangements. It might mean a different thing to them.

**ACTING CHAIR**—How do you know this?

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—By conversations with Bougainvilleans and talking about—

**ACTING CHAIR**—So your view is that, to Bougainvilleans, the meaning of ‘independence’ is that they want much more autonomy to run their own affairs, rather than that they want an independent state. Is that what you are saying?

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—In broad terms. It is very hard to generalise about everybody’s opinions, and there certainly is a substantial body of opinion there that wants an independent state—people who use that language and who understand the ramifications of that. In the early days of the crisis, I think you could say that nearly all Bougainvilleans supported the notion of independence. But when it became clear that there was a civil war going on—that Bougainvilleans were fighting Bougainvilleans and it was no longer a struggle for independence but rather a sort of anarchy within the island itself—they stopped using that language. They could see that there was more to independence than simply this notional separation from Port Moresby and the sort of perception that all problems derive from Port Moresby or from the mine corporation and so on. There was a significant shift, I think, in ordinary people’s opinions about what independence might mean and what was actually going on and why people were fighting each other.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Say there was an act of self-determination in Bougainville: would you say that people would be divided between wanting an independent state and wanting to be part of PNG? Is that what you are saying?

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—I am not sure how you would run an act of self-determination in a country like Bougainville without a very long period of settling of differences. In New Caledonia, for example, you have the issue of a referendum now being postponed, even by the indigenous leadership, for another 10 years because of the recognition of a need to settle old scores and enable people to become accustomed to more autonomy from France. The

level of violence in New Caledonia was nothing compared with Bougainville, and yet their own leadership is looking to postpone those sorts of decisions. We have a very cut and dried notion of democracy, and we are quite satisfied that a majority in the House will run the government. But that winner-take-all idea does not necessarily suit communities, and the idea that you can have a vote at one particular time and make a decision like that is not necessarily something that they are comfortable with or able to do.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Do you think there are too many aid agencies on the ground in Bougainville?

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—I think there is a perception among Bougainvilleans that is a suspicion of foreigners, whether they are from Australia, New Zealand or the highlands of PNG, and that has been the focus of a lot of discontent. When you see foreigners with their cars, their lifestyles and so on coming into your place, and you have a perception that they are living off what is rightfully yours, there is resentment. I am sure there is resentment against NGOs as well as against official aid programs, but I would not go so far as to say that there are too many NGOs.

I think the diversity of organisations in civil society is a very important principle to maintain. If you try to over-organise and give a contract to one organisation to implement all this range of programs, I do not think it is necessarily going to solve the problem. Community organisations grow out of a grassroots base, and when you have a number of NGOs there working with different communities, you probably have more hope of having genuine organised attempts coming from communities than if you have a top down programmatic way of going about it.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Are you aware—I guess you are—of resentment in other parts of PNG about the amount of aid, perceived or otherwise, going to Bougainville?

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—Yes, that is commonly expressed. People say, ‘We did not kill each other here in our province like they did in Bougainville, and yet they are getting all the money.’ That is an outcome of aid programs that are perceived to be deliverers of goods rather than aid programs which are fostering local initiatives. For as long as it is perceived to be a deliverer of goods, you are going to be scrambling for your fair share.

**Mr HOLLIS**—I know that it would be a very wise person, or a very foolish person, who would foresee the future of either Bougainville or PNG. War and conflict have been going on there for 10 years or longer, and many people, say, in Moresby, are tired of the problem. Some people have put it to me that there is a feeling that the PNG government—the official government in Moresby—would like to just wash their hands of Bougainville and let them go their own way, whether it is independence or not, and let them sort it out. Do you hear that view?

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—No, I have not heard that view expressed. It may be the case.

**Mr HOLLIS**—Do you think there would be any validity to it?

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—I would have thought that most parliamentarians in Port Moresby would be keen to keep Bougainville within PNG. There is a sense of nationhood in many parts of PNG and a pride in their nation, despite their diversity. I would be surprised at those sentiments.

**Mr HOLLIS**—But it could well be within PNG, under a scenario like you have outlined, that there could be not independence as we perceive it, or autonomy, but a particularly Bougainvillean solution.

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—I think the tendency towards more autonomous government throughout PNG is something that we should recognise is going to happen. My fear is more that the sort of anarchy that was let loose in Bougainville might pop up in other parts of PNG, because the discrepancy between what is promised by the modern world and what is actually there in your village is so great. The building up of resentments accompanies that and it is very easy for people to take up weapons, especially if they are available, and think that they can solve their problem.

**Mr HOLLIS**—I do not know whether you were here when the Bougainville Freedom Movement gave evidence this morning.

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—No, I was not.

**Mr HOLLIS**—They put it to us quite strongly that, instead of the aid being filtered through Moresby, it should be directed straight to Bougainvilleans, albeit with the new government. What is your view on that?

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—I think, as a general principle, in aid programs the more directly you can deal with the operational end the better off you are. Whenever you add another layer to the decision making process, it becomes more cumbersome and expensive and sometimes creates outcomes that you did not want in your program at all.

**Mr HOLLIS**—There is a small problem though in that PNG is a sovereign independent state, and if the government insists that aid goes through there you have to respect that sovereignty.

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—That is true, but I think we could have been exploring more subtle and sophisticated ways of delivering programs rather than the old reliance on going through Port Moresby at every opportunity. It derives from our history of budget support and colonial responsibility in Port Moresby. There needs to be some more lateral thinking on how you deliver.

**Mr HOLLIS**—But we have changed the budget support.

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—Yes, we have, but I think those same patterns of thinking continue. It has become more programmed and there have been certain outcomes and measurements and so on, but we are still operating out of a similar world view. What we need is more lateral thinking and more subtle ways of going about this sort of task. We do not necessarily need to spend so much money at it either.



**Senator SANDY MACDONALD**—You said that you had a two-year aid program. What are the major initiatives of that program?

**Ms Thogersen**—The program design is to support local grassroots initiatives in Bougainville in key areas to do with women's programs, health activities, education activities and reconciliation and rehabilitation of young ex-fighters. In the first year of the program the support of these activities will focus in the southern region and thereafter in the central region. The program operates through the local parish network of the Catholic Church and is locally managed by a Bougainvillean and supported by a New Zealand field adviser.

**Senator SANDY MACDONALD**—Are you able to provide some indication of what the budget is for that two-year program?

**Ms Thogersen**—It has an annual budget of \$US200,000, and it is funded through the Caritas network only.

**Senator SANDY MACDONALD**—What percentage of the population is Roman Catholic?

**Ms Thogersen**—I believe it is about 80 per cent of the population. The program does not target Catholics only; it is interdenominational.

**Senator SANDY MACDONALD**—Was there at any stage a bishop of Bougainville?

**Ms Thogersen**—Until 1994 I believe there was a local bishop. There has not yet been another bishop instated. The current bishop is from Rabaul.

**Senator SANDY MACDONALD**—Do you see a time when your aid program would include the re-establishment of schools?

**Ms Thogersen**—It will provide small-scale support to local initiatives to re-establish their infrastructure in health and education.

**Senator SANDY MACDONALD**—Are you involved in the attempt to re-establish a school at Buin?

**Ms Thogersen**—I do not believe we are yet.

**Senator SANDY MACDONALD**—Can you identify anywhere where you are involved in the re-establishment of schools?

**Ms Thogersen**—It is still in the early stages of the program, in the sense that the initial months have been focused on assessments and awareness raising amongst the local communities.

**Senator SANDY MACDONALD**—I think you were involved in the Bishop Wade school. Is that right?

**Ms Thogersen**—No.

**Senator QUIRKE**—You were not involved in the Bishop Wade school at all? So who was involved in it—just AusAID? They must have been talking to the church up there.

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—I cannot really answer that. They would have had discussions, I imagine, with the diocesan education secretary, who is located in Buka. The operations of the Catholic school system are enmeshed with the national school system anyway. As far as I have been able to see, it is primarily an AusAID program.

**Ms Thogersen**—Can I just add that any assistance in these areas of health and education will be coordinated through the respective diocesan secretaries of those areas.

**Senator QUIRKE**—I find the submission quite fascinating. You are dealing with a number of issues that I am pleased that you have brought in. I am interested and I think you make the case out pretty well that you have to understand the origins of the rebellion before you start to proceed with sorting a number of things out and particularly supporting certain types of aid and all the rest of it.

On page 2 of your submission—on page 124 in my booklet here—you make a number of points after you say that the Bougainville crisis ‘started as a rebellion which proceeded to become entrenched into local fighting’. Can you take us through that a bit? When we met with the BRA representatives at the BCA—there are an awful lot of initials here—at Arawa, I think it was, on the Wednesday morning of our visit, they said, ‘Look, you can have whatever programs you want, but ultimately we want independence.’ That was the message that came across pretty loud and strong, that all roads, according to them, were leading to independence. But you are saying that the crisis did not start out as that. What did it start out as? And is it true that it has become a struggle for independence now, or is that still not so?

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—Getting to the bottom of the causes of the crisis is something that will take some time, I think, before we are comfortable with a reasonably complete understanding. My thinking on it has been influenced by the work of Tony Regan at ANU and his paper, ‘Origins of the conflict of Bougainville’, which you probably have, as well as discussions with the parish priests and in other village-level meetings that I have had in Bougainville. The description that comes out of that of the process of events is of a rebellion which is more on the model of the Indian Mutiny than of what we would normally define as the classic struggle of national liberation that you got in post-colonial Africa or South-East Asia.

The outbreak was certainly in the Panguna area and over the concerns of the landowners and the impact of the mine and of the pace of development in that Arawa-Kieta-Panguna area. But there is a long history, I believe, of resentment against colonisation, both from the church as well as from government and companies, the plantation system, and against the unconscious denigration of locals that expatriates tend to bring with them in Papua New Guinea and in Bougainville. There was a rebellion against those foreigners. It took the form in the Panguna area of that particular issue, and the proposed solution was independence. And there is a completely logical argument around that.

But when the PNG defence forces withdrew after the initial fighting and the BRA essentially had the run of the main island of Bougainville they could not control it. Local interests then surfaced, and local antagonisms, disputes and conflicts then became the method of fighting. So when the enemy disappeared a new enemy was found. There were a lot of young blokes running around with guns, and a long history of various disputes and a lack of central authority or policing or a court system. There was a descent then into local fighting, which could be based on events which took place decades ago or perhaps even as far back as the Second World War. That sort of local fighting then becomes labelled 'BRA' and 'Resistance'. The ones who left the BRA because they perceived that their local interests were not being represented in this BRA became called Resistance in that they resisted the BRA from the central area. It just became incredibly messy.

You would have to look at the individual villages and what caused disputes to be able to be satisfied as to the cause of conflict. There is not a single cause of conflict; there are many. I would suggest that a process of storytelling over a long period of time will enable us to get to the truth of events—what caused conflict, what actually happened—and will lead us then into a reconciliation between the previously disputing parties.

**Senator QUIRKE**—One of the other fascinating things about your submission is the role that Australia is currently playing in the whole process. On page 4 of your submission you refer to the way we currently deliver aid. There is a perception, reading your submission, that Australians are pursuing a goal of maintaining Bougainville within Papua New Guinea and that that basically is the thrust of aid, of the way it is delivered; that in fact we have a very narrow view of security in the area which requires that Bougainville remain safely ensconced within a PNG framework. Is that a correct reading of it?

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—That is my understanding of Australian policy as regards Bougainville. The Australian government was really prepared to put up with a very long period of conflict in Bougainville, the withholding of humanitarian aid from people who were desperately in need of it, partly because of an agenda which preferred to see Bougainville stay within Papua New Guinea, in much the same way that the government preferred to see East Timor stay within Indonesia.

**Senator QUIRKE**—I am fascinated by that, but I will hand over to someone else now.

**ACTING CHAIR**—The committee agrees with your assessment that the establishment of civil society will be critical to the long-term peace process, as you say on page 5 of your submission. How would you suggest that development of genuine civil leadership might be further encouraged in Bougainville?

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—That is a very difficult one. I believe that there is an existing leadership at the village level in many parts of Bougainville that surfaced during this time of crisis. Sometimes that is a traditional leadership and sometimes it may be a different set of people. But they have grown naturally out of a sort of organic process; they have not been put in place by a foreign process. They are not necessarily people with guns.

What worries me about the negotiations that tend to happen is that we recognise the leaders of people with guns—on both sides—and we allow them to negotiate on behalf of

everybody, but in fact there is a village level leadership and respect for particular elders which can play an important part in the future government of Bougainville. The attempt to form a Bougainville Reconciliation Government recognises that in many ways and tries to incorporate the existing power structure—people with guns—with those village level and traditional elders to try to bring them together in one forum. That is an essential thing to happen.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Are you satisfied that the processes put in place for the election will reflect that?

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—I am not sure. I think that the holding of an election is an important thing to happen, almost regardless of the outcome, in that it allows everybody to start thinking about the whole of Bougainville and who should represent their area and to at least commence the debate about how that ought to take place. The development of a civil society—in other words, organisations separate from the state and separate from private corporations in the market—will derive naturally from grassroots initiatives that commenced some years ago during the crisis itself. When our aid programs talk about the crucial nature of civil society, there is almost no detail on how they are going to go about that. There is a recognition of that fact, but no-one really knows how to do it. We cannot give any easy answers on how to do it, either, except that somehow you have to get out there at a village level talking to people to find out what exists and then try to foster it in whatever way it can be done.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Are you optimistic about getting beyond what you have called simply consulting self-proclaimed political military leaders or former political leaders?

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—I would hope that our program does not involve those senior leaders—that it works directly with grassroots people.

**ACTING CHAIR**—What about in terms of the formation of the new political structure?

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—I am sure that they will be involved. It is the nature of power and politics that those people will be involved. That will happen.

**ACTING CHAIR**—You talk about the possibility of a truth and reconciliation commission. What is the value of that?

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—It is simply a discussion paper that we have circulated amongst some of the parish priests at village level that we are interested in workshopping with Bougainvilleans to see if lessons can be learnt from other conflict situations about how to resolve conflict and how to reconcile disputing parties and move on to a new way of doing things. There are some important lessons to be learnt from the South African experience, but also from other countries—Latin America and Africa—which have attempted to set up ways whereby people can tell their story in a public sense and that can then become public knowledge and part of the process of healing and the process of a wider understanding of what actually happened and how Bougainville can move forward from that place. We have to recognise the facts of what happened.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Is there a discussion paper? Is that available to the committee?

**Mr Scott-Murphy**—I could make it available, if you like. It is an internal discussion paper.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Thank you very much for your attendance here today. If there are any matters on which we may need additional information, our secretary will write to you. You will be sent a copy of the transcript of your evidence to which you can make corrections of grammar and fact.

[12.06 p.m.]

**FORBES, Mr Ian Frederick Waldie, Head of School and Director of the Centre for Public Health, University of New South Wales**

**ACTING CHAIR**—Welcome. The subcommittee prefers that all evidence be given in public but should you at any stage wish to give any evidence in private you may ask to do so and the subcommittee will give consideration to your request. Although the subcommittee does not require you to give evidence on oath, I advise you that these hearings are legal proceedings of the parliament and therefore have the same standing as the proceedings of the House itself. I invite you to make a short opening statement before we proceed to questions.

**Mr Forbes**—I am here to address the third term of reference to the committee dealing with reconstruction and rehabilitation in Bougainville. My colleague Dr Whelan put a submission in but it was hardly a detailed document so I thought I would briefly put the position that she would have put in a more detailed document. I will go through the key elements and try to sort those out.

There were three things that I and my colleagues at the University of New South Wales and other universities who are doing research particularly into PNG and the lesser developed countries in the region were interested in saying. The first of those is that an opportunity exists now in Bougainville to redevelop the health system in a fashion that can be Bougainvillean community based. It can be a properly balanced system between primary and secondary care. This opportunity could provide a model process if it was handled properly.

The second thing is that there is a set of unique resources which have not been very well focused in a number of Australian universities where health services research and development, particularly over the last few years in PNG, is being done. With some better orientation this information could be used more effectively by the Australian government and others who are working in the region.

The third major issue that is of interest is the problem of resolving the issue of where to place funding. There is a debate amongst those who have been working on AusAID projects and certainly the government themselves about whether to do sector funding or project funding. This applies particularly to Bougainville where there needs to be some kind of Bougainville solution without destroying the integration that is trying to happen across the health system in the country.

I will highlight some of those points to give you something to look at. Nobody says that an ideal system can result, but what the system can do that will be different is build on the well understood cultural and primary basis of the communities in Bougainville which, with streams of care, are able to connect both primary and community services—pre-hospital, if you like—with some hospital services and a post-hospital process. Those streams of care could be less expensive, more effective and, if handled correctly, an opportunity now to begin something useful.

The other thing is that it could be inter-sectoral from the beginning. In other words, the crisis provides us with this kind of opportunity. There are many theories that say you really

need some kind of a crisis to get fundamental change to occur and we felt this was an opportunity one could not miss. And regardless of the huge amounts of investment that Australia has made in the past, it might be worth stopping for a moment and taking a look at how that could be done differently in this instance.

To talk a little bit about the resources, a great deal of investment has been made from the World Health Organisation, and our school happens to be one of the regional training centres. We have a large number of PNG students, graduates and undergraduates, who come through. We have an understanding of some of the issues that need to be dealt with at a managerial level. The technical stuff is fairly easy, it is the managerial stuff that is going to cause a problem. That is the one that perhaps needs a little more attention paid to it.

We feel that some of those resources are there. They are generally individuals doing bits of work. Perhaps a little more consideration in the way that funding is done, to draw on those resources, may provide an opportunity which has not yet presented itself.

Finally, concerning the issue of funding, there is obviously a need for a Bougainvillean solution to this. There is now a requirement to have community involvement, particularly in primary care, in education, and in the business of preventative care. The problem with all that is that if you then go for project funding, which is the sure way to ensure that it occurs, you start to then break down the sustainability. You have to deal with questions such as, 'How do we manage across the system? How do we get common standards? How do we get those kinds of projects?'

I do not think the issue about facilities, equipment, these kinds of things, are so much of a problem. But certainly the whole issue of managing centrally is one which needs addressing in a much more serious fashion. I do not have an answer for you today. At least, I do not think I do. But that is where a lot more energy needs to be put, much more research needs to be put, and a great deal more thought has to be given to the historic and cultural issues that exist in Bougainville. How to make that work effectively without destroying the so-called national structure that has been put in place is the challenge.

Those are the three things that we wanted to address. Perhaps I could enlarge on those if members wish to ask me questions.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Thank you very much, Mr Forbes. We are very concerned about the health problems in Bougainville. We witnessed some of the facilities and the problems in relation to things such as the high incidence of malaria, for example. Obviously, we are interested in any specific suggestions that may come forward. I would invite you to supplement your verbal report here with a more detailed submission as to some of the things that you think might be undertaken in relation to assistance in this health area.

Having said that, what assistance could the University of New South Wales and other Australian institutions provide for the reconstruction of Bougainville, especially in the health area?

**Mr Forbes**—The way to deal with that question is in two parts. Let me mention the health status issues which are similar to work that is being done in other lesser developed

countries in the region. Obviously, the Solomon Islands has a huge problem with malaria. We have research projects in Laos where there are communities with similar problems in the mountain regions. The World Health Organisation, of course, has a preference for dealing with lesser developed countries.

Obviously, the critical involvement of community and the requirement to take charge of many of those programs is what is important. I think we found from work that has been done that where people come in from outside—and to Bougainvilleans, Port Moresby is outside—and try to implement projects according to some kind of technical rational approach it has been decidedly unsuccessful. What it does require is an understanding of the complex network that in fact allows people to have a sense of ownership and to be involved. Simple things like impregnating mosquito nets, having them involved in cleaning up communities, putting water supplies and some of the fundamentals of public health into place and taking pride in that and understanding how to deal with it have helped. We have seen that working certainly very well in places like Laos in the mountains. Also, they can give guidance in what is the best way to spend the next dollar and how to get the most use of that in the sense that there is this myriad of things going on. There are ways of allowing decisions about budget, work force and energy. There are some examples that one could look at to see how they might be applicable in the Bougainville case.

I think we have a unique situation in the sense that public health itself in Australia and the federally funded PHERP, the Public Health, Education and Review Program, has about 20 universities who receive direct funding in Australia. That has been an extremely successful program in bringing resources together in a way that has certainly had a huge impact on Australia's public health education. I think that kind of network comes from things like the grouping of Australian universities that are involved in health management. There exists a series of networks that are already in place of people who are interested and who are doing research, particularly in international settings and in the neighbourhood.

To be good neighbours, we have involved ourselves a great deal in that. I think that these are resources which, from a university point of view, are interested in looking at knowledge and development. They occasionally get opportunities to use those when they are involved in, say, an AusAID contract project or something like that.

My colleagues and I believe that a much more integrated effort to bring some of those thoughts together in a much more kind of focused way would in fact be beneficial. I could go specifically into some of the stuff if you wished me to, but I think you have the picture of stuff from social development programs through training—anything from clinical training to management training. We specialise in management training obviously and the cultural context of that management training is not something you are going to get in business schools. It is not the same kind of training. It certainly has not got that context.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Let me be more specific and ask you this. Are you prepared to have some of your people go to Bougainville to give on-the-spot advice or assistance or do some research there? Conversely, are you prepared to have some Bougainvilleans study under the auspices of your university or other Australian institutions in terms of what they can deliver in health care?



**Mr Forbes**—Absolutely. In fact we certainly have people who take six months or a year, more if necessary, to work with projects and they are doing that in many cases as individuals, as I said, on particular projects in the region. I am sure that would be no difficulty. We are already taking people from PNG. We get five or six postgraduate students a year, usually doctors, who are interested in looking at health management issues, particularly health management and planning. We also get some clinical training. I would say the answer is, yes, of course. Many of those do come to us under Australian aid funded scholarships and we have, I think, built up a reasonably good base of individual knowledge about the system.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Can you comment on the severe shortages of medical and non-medical supplies in remote and rural areas of Bougainville? Do you know much about this problem—for example, the aid post clinic at Lagui, which the committee delegation heard about during its recent visit?

**Mr Forbes**—No, I do not think I can speak specifically about that, other than generally the issue of resources. It is a matter of priority somewhere, and I think this is part of the problem. The problem is that the criteria for making choices about what has priority and what does not for the use of available funds are often very vague. I know that management of the process is probably the problem. Every lesser developed country has a problem with how to make the most effective use of limited resources. That sounds like a simple problem, but it is actually a huge problem if you have commitments, obligations and all sorts of requirements to service obligations outside of what is normally a fairly transparent management process. There is no difficulty with community development when you have a barter and mutual obligation arrangement. When you move to a system of money, you have a problem with systems which are transparent, systems which become bureaucratized. The biggest problem they have had in the whole of PNG—Bougainville as well—is moving from this value system, which is a traditional one, to a more transparent, bureaucratic process. How that is managed is critically important to whether or not you will solve many of the distribution and resource problems in PNG.

**ACTING CHAIR**—You are aware of the hospital in Buka?

**Mr Forbes**—Yes.

**ACTING CHAIR**—Do you have any liaison with that? Do you know much about what has been happening there?

**Mr Forbes**—Yes, it is going to need a fair bit of work. Again, I do not think that the technical aspects of that are particularly complicated; it just needs money. It also needs a good look at its role. Again, this is one of the things that has not happened in the past. That is, what is the role of hospitals in the primary delivery of care, the public health role; in other words, to be the first point of diagnosis, to be able to provide appropriate access to get blood smears done and those kinds of things? How it provides an educational role in the community is one of the things that it can do in a unique kind of way. We could say that about any community. But, as I said, the opportunity presents itself. Here is a starting point and here is the thing to be done. Yes, it needs a lot of work, and it may be a case of saying,

‘What can it do in a new role, and how should we spend money to ensure that that happens?’

**ACTING CHAIR**—Have you talked to AusAID about the possibility of your university delivering such projects to Bougainville?

**Mr Forbes**—We have not directly, because AusAID normally request packages based upon their own sector programs. If in fact there is a call made, normally we would respond to that either in consortia or parts of other groups, but not specifically in this instance, no.

**Dr SOUTHCOTT**—Do you develop anything in terms of education—maternal education or community education; those sorts of projects?

**Mr Forbes**—Yes, we do. We have modules. Again, most of it is in response to a request for something—because there is almost no other way we can respond—where we have had individuals who have been involved in community development projects. We are involved in a quite big AusAID project at the moment, which involves training exercises. Then we produce this material. Again, it tends to be one of those things that becomes sustainable by people in management, then deciding where else to place it. I just have the sense that there are resources around the place that have not really been drawn out, where we have not said, ‘How do we make this holistic?’

**Dr SOUTHCOTT**—What do you think are the priorities in that area of education? One thing that came up while we were up there was the subject of malaria. There are certain things that communities can do to try and minimise the risk of malaria. Is the pattern in Bougainville similar to other developing countries?

**Mr Forbes**—Yes, it is. It was interesting just a minute ago to talk about the NGOs’ role. There are a number of NGOs which are working in very primary areas and putting in good effort. One of the things we have been involved in is strengthening the ministries of health. That has had a fairly high priority, to be able to get not just a series of projects but the system stronger. Maybe that is where some of the education is required.

To deal with malaria directly, I think what you need is well known. At least in those systems which have attempted to do something it is not such a problem. So certainly village health workers and protocols and procedures are involved. People who do not read you have to deal with by some kind of oral program, putting things in a context that they can understand. Getting people on board is the difficult part. That is not going to happen through formal education; it is going to happen through community based education. It is going to be of a very specific nature. It is going to have to mix the cultural understandings. I do not think a lot of that is happening at the moment. That may be again in the NGOs but it is not happening, let us say, at the formal level. Those are certainly priorities that need to be looked at.

**Dr SOUTHCOTT**—Is anything happening with maternal education? Is there anything you can offer in terms of modules?

**Mr Forbes**—As a part of the faculty of medicine, yes. The obstetrics and gynaecology people have projects that they are doing in less developed countries. I am not specifically sure personally as to what is happening in the PNG area but there is a lot of work that is being done in that and how to understand and how to work with midwives. There was a grandmothers' program in Laos that was very interesting because the grandmothers are the ones who help. You help the grandmothers to help understand the variances, what to do about rehydration and some of these things—very interesting and unique ways of dealing with problems that are not looked at at the moment. Those could be replicated and they could be made better use of.

**Dr SOUTHCOFF**—I think that is a very important point. Ten years ago I worked in southern Africa and it was quite interesting the number of people who were traditionally poorly educated but had a very good understanding of the WHO oral rehydration scheme and how many teaspoons of sugar and salt and so on to add to a litre of water. That had been very successfully promulgated in that community; they all knew it quite well.

**ACTING CHAIR**—You have obviously opened up a number of possible areas of support, in the administration, in modules and in on-the-ground advice through the communities. I would again urge you to reflect on some of these things in more detail and you might like to make a further submission to us, especially drawing on the experience of your unit in other similar countries. That would be very useful.

**Mr Forbes**—Yes.

**ACTING CHAIR**—With that, I thank you for your attendance. If there are any matters on which we might need additional information, the secretary will write to you. You will be sent a copy of the transcript of your evidence, to which you can make corrections of grammar and fact. I thank the members of the committee and all concerned.

Resolved (on motion by **Senator Sandy Macdonald**, seconded by **Mr Hollis**):

That this subcommittee authorises publication of the proof transcript of the evidence given before it at public hearing this day.

**Subcommittee adjourned at 12.29 p.m.**

