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BY: *J. Hooton*



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

5 June 2006

Supplementary Submission 4.1
TT 28 March 2006

Dr Andrew Southcott MP
Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Dr Southcott

During public hearings on 8 May 2008 on Australia's proposed ratification of the 'Agreement Establishing the Pacific Islands Forum', Senator Trood and Ms Panopoulos MP raised a number of questions that were taken on notice.

I attach the Department's responses to the questions raised and also information correcting the record in relation to the budget of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and Australia's contribution to it.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Hooton'.

Peter Hooton
Assistant Secretary
Pacific Regional and New Zealand Branch
South Pacific, Africa and Middle East Division

cc: Committee Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Treaties
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON TREATIES

During public hearings on 8 May 2006 of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties (JSCOT) in relation to the proposed ratification of the "Agreement Establishing the Pacific Islands Forum", the following questions were taken on notice.

The Department provides the following responses:

1. How much assistance does Australia provide to Pacific island countries?

Total Australian overseas development assistance to Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Pacific island countries is estimated at \$766.6 million in the financial year 2006/07. This represents 26% of total Australian overseas development assistance. The expected outcome for the 2005/06 financial year is \$754.2 million. Of this PNG will receive a total of \$332.2 million in 2006-07, and Pacific island countries a total of \$434.3 million.

The expected outcome for the 2005/06 financial year is \$754.2 million.

2. Does the total amount reflect assistance from all relevant Australian departments

The total amount of \$766.6 million reflects assistance from all relevant Australian departments.

3. Is Australia's contribution to the Pacific Islands Forum budget likely to increase in the light of the projected work, including as a result of Leaders' adoption of the Pacific Plan?

Australia's contribution under the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) is A\$3m per annum for the current and next two calendar years, a total of A\$9m for the years 2006 - 2008: this amount will remain unchanged for the life of the agreement (that is, until 31 December 2008).

In March 2005, the Secretariat requested additional Australian funding for activities associated with implementation of specific Pacific Plan related initiatives not identified or budgeted for at the time the 2005/06 workplan was completed. AusAID has considered this request, and has indicated that Australia will support the proposal in order to ensure the Secretariat can meet its responsibilities under the Pacific Plan. Additional Australian support up to A\$1.8m will be provided over the period 2005/06 - 2006/07.

4. How many staff does the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat currently have, what is their level of remuneration and what are the countries of origin?

The Forum Secretariat currently employs a total of 98 (including professional staff, support staff, and secondments). There are currently 19 positions unfilled.

Country of origin of staff is as follows:

Country of Origin	Nos
Australia	10
Cook Islands	2
Fiji	61
New Zealand	4
Niue	1
PNG	3
Samoa	5
Solomon Is.	4
Tonga	1
Vanuatu	2
Sub-total	93
Vacant positions	19
Total	112
Seconded staff	5
Overall total	117

Remuneration levels of Pacific Islands Forum staff

PIFS REMUNERATION AND GRADING STRUCTURE
Effective 1 January 2006

Executive/Professional Staff (contract)

Grade	CED points		Base Salary in SDR* (1SDR = 1.99AUD)									Nos at grade (incl vacancies)	Nos at grade (excl vacancies)
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Point 2	Point 3	Point 4	Point 5	Point 6	Point 7	Point 8	Maximum		
M	1,050	1,310	45,354	48,188	51,024	53,860	56,696	59,531	62,366	65,203	68,029	1	1
L	840	1,049	39,205	41,657	44,109	46,562	49,014	51,467	53,919	56,372	58,808	2	2
K	630	839	34,812	36,348	37,883	39,417	40,953	42,487	44,022	45,558	47,102	3	3
J	470	629	29,256	30,549	31,841	33,134	34,425	35,719	37,011	38,304	39,579	32	23
I	260	469	22,418	23,542	24,666	25,789	26,913	28,037	29,161	30,286	31,396	12	10
												5	5

Seconded staff (not paid by the Secretariat)

Technical/Support Staff

Grade	CED points		Base Salary in Fiji Dollar**									Nos at grade (incl vacancies)	Nos at grade (excl vacancies)
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Point 2	Point 3	Point 4	Point 5	Point 6	Point 7	Point 8	Maximum		
H	350	469	36,720	37,740	38,760	39,780	40,800	41,820	42,840	43,860	44,880	3	3
G	260	349	28,458	29,249	30,039	30,830	31,620	32,411	33,201	33,992	34,782	4	4
F	200	259	22,032	22,644	23,256	23,868	24,480	25,092	25,704	26,316	26,928	44	36
E	150	199	17,442	17,927	18,411	18,896	19,380	19,865	20,349	20,834	21,318	0	0
D	110	149	13,770	14,153	14,535	14,918	15,300	15,683	16,065	16,448	16,830	1	1
C	80	109	11,934	12,266	12,597	12,929	13,260	13,592	13,923	14,255	14,586	5	5
B	60	79	10,098	10,379	10,659	10,940	11,220	11,501	11,781	12,062	12,342	3	3
A	40	59	9,153	9,407	9,662	9,916	10,170	10,424	10,679	10,933	11,187	2	2
											Total	117	98

* SDR = Special Drawing Right (approximately AUD1.99)

** 1AUD = 1.27 Fiji Dollars

The Department also provides the following information correcting the record in relation to information provided regarding the PIFS budget and Australia's contribution to it.

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat has estimated its expenditure over the period 2005 to 2008 to be:

	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total Secretariat Budget (FJD)	27,063,840	36,664,230	31,777,767	30,557,038
Australian Dollar equivalent (approx)	20,500,000	27,800,000	24,100,000	23,200,000

Australia's contribution to this is A\$3 million per annum.