

1 September 2008

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Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee
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Dear Secretary,

Please find attached Oxfam Australia's submission for the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee *Inquiry into the economic and security challenges facing Papua New Guinea and the island states of the southwest Pacific*.

Oxfam Australia has a distinct perspective on human security in the Pacific region and beyond. This submission presents the preliminary findings of a body of research examining human security and violence issues in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea. These findings have been used to extrapolate recommendations for practical ways the Australian Government can contribute towards supporting human security and violence reduction in the region.

We hope this submission will be given due weight in future policy decisions regarding Australia's involvement in Papua New Guinea and the island nations of the southwest Pacific.

Yours sincerely,



James Ensor
Director of Public Policy and Outreach



Oxfam Australia Submission:

Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee

Inquiry into economic and security challenges facing Papua New Guinea and the island states of the southwest Pacific

1 September 2008

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We would like to thank Rachael Hinton from the Oxfam International – PNG Highlands Programme for providing research findings for this submission.

Thanks also to Philip Alpers, Adjunct Associate Professor at the School of Public Health, University of Sydney and Marcus Wilson from GunPolicy.org for their input on this submission.

Oxfam's vision is a just world without poverty

1. Executive summary

This submission presents the preliminary findings of a body of research examining human security and violence issues in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea (PNG). These findings have been used to extrapolate recommendations for practical ways the Australian Government can contribute towards supporting human security and violence reduction in PNG and the island nations of the southwest Pacific.

Resolving human security challenges in Papua New Guinea and the southwest Pacific will require addressing the underlying causes of conflict as well as the demand and supply for small arms and light weapons. This will necessarily require adopting a human security framework. Often a range of steps will be required, varying from supporting strengthening of the rule of law, assisting in poverty and inequality reduction, small arms reduction and community-led peacebuilding initiatives.

As minor disputes have the potential to turn violent and to escalate into wider conflict, an effective strategy to address human security and armed conflict will also focus on local mediation mechanisms and enhance Papua New Guinean's capacity to resolve their problems peacefully. This strategy is one that promotes restorative justice, in that it seeks to provide restitution to victims and to restore relationships between offenders and victims.

Oxfam Australia welcomes many of the earlier changes we have observed in the Rudd Government's approach to engaging with the Pacific region on development and human security issues. It is now crucial that the Australian Government build on these early commitments and support Pacific Island nations and communities in their efforts to achieve sustainable development, gender equality, greater human security and the realisation of their basic human rights.

2. Recommendations

Oxfam Australia makes the following recommendations to the Australian Government in order to advance human security in PNG and the island nations of the southwest Pacific:

1. Broaden the policy discourse about security to encompass human security. This shift also requires the government of PNG and other agencies working in PNG to recognise the importance of placing human beings in particular localities and not states, at the centre of security concerns;
2. Support the PNG Government to implement systematic and ongoing training programmes with police and other security sector actors at all levels to mainstream human rights and gender issues and provide specific training to increase GBV-related skills and to create non-discriminatory police organisations respectful of human rights;

3. Prioritise programmes that aim to give young people opportunities for empowerment and voice and enhance their ability to participate as active members of their families and communities, including, through leadership training;
4. Support and encourage the implementation of recent PNG Government announcement by Police Commissioner, Gary Baki, of gun buy back schemes and gun registration procedures which are hugely positive steps forward;
5. Invest in supporting further research and analysis of the effectiveness of blanket buy back campaigns and gun amnesties as they develop in PNG as well as the socioeconomic context contributing to gun use;
6. Continue and increase provision of assistance for PNG and other Pacific Island nations to participate in regional and international processes to curb small arms and light weapons proliferation (such as the UN Programme of Action and Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects);
7. Support Weapons for Development programmes and gun free zones as well as other community led disarmament initiatives;
8. Invest in livelihood strategies and the rejuvenation of the rural sector with positive activities to improve self-esteem, generate income for women and men, male and female youth;
9. Establish and support programs aimed at developing skills and job opportunities for young people, and, in particular, young men;
10. Invest in research and interventions, in partnership with the PNG Government and local communities, to examine, encourage and expand alternatives to compensation in local-level dispute resolution;
11. Support civil-society involvement in peace and development and the promotion of peace and human rights education;
12. Focus on supporting programmes that build the capacity of communities to resolve disputes through mediation, negotiation, and conflict resolution; supporting civil-society involvement in peace and development; realizing human rights and promoting peace education, adapted to the local security context. Such an approach would incorporate peacebuilding values, skills, and techniques into broader governance and development work;
13. Examine policies and approaches that contribute to conflict (resource development, roads, electoral system) and mainstream peacebuilding and conflict sensitive planning in relevant sectors of government and in national programmes;
14. Clarify and strengthen links between peacebuilding work and state institutions, in particular the relationship between informal justice and the courts;

15. Review the role, approach and practice of formal mediation structures in PNG (such as Peace and Good Order committees), and strengthen the village court secretariat and village court reform process in the Highlands; and
16. Promote evidenced-based police reform in key Highlands provinces as one core part of security sector reform.

3. Introduction

Oxfam Australia is a rights based humanitarian aid and development organisation which works as part of the Oxfam International confederation of 13 affiliates and more than 3000 partner organisations. Oxfam Australia works in over 30 countries around the world including countries in the south west Pacific region.

Oxfam's work in the Pacific focuses on conflict reduction and peace building; livelihoods – particularly the impacts of mining, forestry, and trade; disaster management; and sexual health and HIV. Gender, youth, and social and active citizenship are cross cutting themes in our work that recognise the significant role of increasing the rights and opportunities of women and young people in the development of the Pacific Islands. Oxfam is committed to promoting sustainable development and human security in the Pacific, with particular attention on four focus countries: Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji. Oxfam has offices in Papua New Guinea (Port Moresby and Goroka), Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu.

4. Scope of this submission

While the scope of our work in the Pacific region covers economic and security issues broadly, this submission will focus on our analysis on human security challenges, particularly in PNG. This submission is intended to contribute new research findings arising out of the Oxfam International PNG Highlands Program and fresh analysis about the way security threats impact on the lives of people and their communities in PNG.

This submission will thus address the following section of the Terms of Reference for this inquiry:

The major *security* challenges facing Papua New Guinea and the island states of the southwest Pacific

- i. The implications for Australia
- ii. How the Australian Government can, in practical and concrete ways, assist these countries to meet the challenges

5. Human security challenges in PNG

There are a range of security challenges facing PNG and the island states of the southwest Pacific. These can be broadly categorised as human security, national security and regional security challenges. Human security is an issue that has been overshadowed in Australia's Pacific policy discourse in favour of a focus on national and regional security threats. Oxfam's research and programme experience in the Highlands of PNG suggest, however, that a human security framework needs to be at the very core of any intervention to address security challenges in PNG.

The Oxfam International PNG Highlands Program has been conducting action-based research with young and adult men and women in two tribal fighting communities from the Tari-Pori District, in the Southern Highlands of PNG. The findings of this research provide contextual and programme learnings that have emerged from Oxfam's work across the Highlands Region since 2004.

A human security approach requires that human beings be placed at the centre of any analysis of security threats or intervention to address them. The approach recognises the need to broaden conceptual understandings of "security" out from a narrow focus on national and regional security, to one that prioritises the security of human beings and their communities. A human security approach further requires that the underlying factors generating security threats be understood and addressed.

In the Highlands of PNG, human rights abuses, underpinned by a culture of impunity, deteriorating law and order and weapons use represent serious threat to human security and development.

In order to address the security challenges facing Papua New Guinean and other Pacific Islander people, Oxfam Australia recommends the Australian Government;

1. Broaden the policy discourse about security to encompass human security. This shift also requires the government of PNG and other agencies working in PNG to recognise the importance of placing human beings in particular localities and not states, at the centre of security concerns.

Causes of human insecurity

According to preliminary findings of Oxfam's research, security in PNG Highlands is broadly understood and encompasses social, economic, political and psychosocial factors. Security concerns commonly mentioned by men and women include the ineffective law and justice sector, frustration associated with poor service provision and inequitable distribution of resources, polygamy and male control over women, the lack of social and economic opportunities and instability associated with internal displacement due to tribal fighting and support (payback) for violence. The perceived frequency and impact of different types of violence differs amongst men and women and across age groups. Tribal violence, physical and domestic violence are perceived to be frequent.

The triggers and effects of violence are multiple, as are the forms of violence participants experienced. The most commonly cited triggers of violence identified during community-based diagramming exercises were stealing, gambling, land, alcohol, jealousy and envy associated with inequitable distribution of resources, payback, gossip and marital problems, including polygamy, infidelity and non-payment of brideprice (see insert 1 overleaf). Although not all of these triggers are considered common, they are reflected on in terms of their consequences if they did arise.

Perhaps one of the most common triggers of violence was violence itself. Payback or retribution, particularly for death, is common when effective interventions to mediate conflict are not undertaken. Effective mediation usually requires the reasons for the death or crime to be brought out in the open and compensation paid. The culture of payback creates a vicious cycle of violence, and has multiple impacts. On their own, the impact of different types of violence are small, but left unmediated violence can easily escalate into much larger disputes or conflict.

The root causes of stealing were seen to be related in some part to the effects of conflict and the down turn in law and order and service provision in communities. Lack of income generation and access to cash is an impetus for stealing, associated with envy and jealousy for what others had. The disparities between the “haves and the have nots” are an underlying trigger of stealing and cause of other disputes. Stealing is one outcome of being jeles (meaning jealous, envious). Acting on this is to punish those who are perceived to be selfish and not responsive to the demands of reciprocity. Land and disputes over land boundaries are also major triggers of violence, an issue which has become more acute with the distribution of resource development payments to landowners. Alcohol and gambling are regarded as a trigger of small scale violence and is perceived to be a growing social problem in communities.

Insert 1: Most commonly cited triggers – Interpersonal violence survey

Female		Male	
Violence	20%	Violence	29%
Stealing	11%	Stealing	19%
Polygamy	11%	Alcohol	11%
Unknown	11%	Land	9%
Money	10%	Verbal abuse	7%
Control spouse	9%	Infidelity	7%
Infidelity	9%	Jealousy	6%
Verbal abuse	6%	Compensation	5%
Jealousy	6%	Family demands	5%
Disobedience	6%	Brideprice	4%

Together drug and alcohol use was listed as a trigger for 10% (42/438) of all incidents. More than one reason was cited as the trigger for violence for almost half (49%, 215/438) of incidents.

Gendered nature of interpersonal violence

The findings of an interpersonal violence survey conducted by Oxfam over a 6 month period from 14 October 2007 to 13 May 2008 with Tari hospital indicated a disturbing trend toward high levels of gender-based violence and abuses against women. A total of 438 cases were recorded, 299 (68%) women and 139 (32%) men. Two-thirds of all people violently injured during the period were female.

For all age groups more females than males were injured. Adult women (aged 26-54 yrs) made up almost half of all people violently injured (46%). 56 children and 1 infant presented to health services. More than 10% of all violent injuries reporting to health services were under 18 years. Married women were the most commonly presenting group (174/438), making up 40% of all people injured. More than twice as many married women presented with violent injuries than any other group. Single males (15%) and single females (17%) also presented. 40 (9%) of the victims were living in a polygamous family.

Adult and young women also mentioned that triggers of violence are associated with interpersonal relationship with men, in particular their marital and natal relationships. This includes disputes arising around a woman leaving her husband and children, as she is from an enemy tribe and as a result feels she is a potential target of retribution, and disputes over late payment of brideprice, polygamy and infidelity.

Rape is seen by men and women as a serious, although less common, trigger of violence. The non-consensual sex of young, unmarried women is seen to be a theft of a woman's sexuality and because consent has not been granted by the natal group. What is important is whether compensation is paid to her family for the "theft", whether a marriage ensues or whether warfare is threatened by the girl's brothers. Men framed triggers of violence within the domestic realm as related to female disobedience and women flirting. Men are responsible for controlling women and women are generally expected to subordinate themselves to the needs of their families and clan.

In order to address this critical human security issue PNG police and other security sector actors must be better equipped to address gender based violence. Oxfam Australia recommends the Australian Government should;

2. Support the PNG Government to implement systematic and ongoing training programmes with police and other security sector actors at all levels to mainstream human rights and gender issues and provide specific training to increase GBV-related skills and to create non-discriminatory police organisations respectful of human rights.

Displacement

The displacement caused by tribal fighting in the Highlands is the source of many interrelated security concerns. There is now a diaspora of affected people, who have fled their communities for safety, medical care, educational and employment opportunities to other parts of the Highlands and Port Moresby. The psychosocial impact of displacement is significant and dependence on the goodwill of others is seen as a disempowering experience. Displacement contributes to fragmented family units and instability created by people not having access to their own or enough land.

The shortage of land, combined with limited freedom of movement, has a negative effect on people's quality of life, food security and opportunities to earn an income. The burden on the host community can be significant, not only in terms of providing care and shelter for those who are displaced, but also, by showing their alliance, they

too become a potential target of attack. The longer a displaced community remains on another person or communities' land the greater the potential for land disputes and other domestic confrontations. Land disputes in general were identified as a major risk to security, having an intergenerational reach and the ability to fuel large scale violence.

Leadership, social cohesion and youth

The debilitating social and economic costs of violence have a corrosive effect on social cohesion and leadership. This in turn undermines informal processes for conflict resolution and reduction (local mediation, village courts etc), as these mechanisms are only effective where there is a high degree of trust and social cohesion in communities. Effective leadership reinforces community cohesion by ensuring there are opportunities to respond to the needs and concerns of community members.

A common complaint in Oxfam's research related to the lack of respect shown to village leaders and customary authority, particularly by youngsters. Likewise, alcohol abuse has weakened social cohesion in communities in and around Tari town and the association between alcohol and violence against women and children is seen to be becoming stronger. Young men who were interviewed from outside tribal fighting areas claim the ineffective and unresponsive informal and formal authority structures, increasing lawlessness and limited opportunities to be active members of society fuels their disobedience. Feelings of marginalisation are contributing to a frustrated youth population in some areas, who feel the need to retaliate against a society they no longer feel part of.

In order to support local leadership and social cohesion, Oxfam Australia recommends the Australian Government;

3. Prioritise programmes that aim to give young people opportunities for empowerment and voice and enhance their ability to participate as active members of their families and communities, including, through leadership training

Militarisation of police and state

Another growing security concern in PNG and more broadly throughout the Pacific region is the militarisation of police forces and security sector actors. There appears to be a growing cultural acceptance of the use of force by the State to resolve political and social conflict within society. Military doctrines have now turned inwards, to deal with threats to the security of the State from resource and landowners, indigenous groups and movements for democratic rights. In a worrying development, a number of states have seen the intervention of military forces in the civil affairs of the society (such as the coups in Fiji).

The blurring of roles and responsibilities between military and unarmed constabulary police is also a major concern. For example, PNG Defence Force (PNGDF) military

troops have been used in the policing of industrial disputes; clashes with land and resource owners over mineral and timber projects; and crackdowns on criminal “rascal” gangs and unemployed youths.

The process of militarisation of state security actors has led to the proliferation of state-owned high powered weapons. Often it is these weapons that end up in the hands of civilians. For example, according to Philip Alpers, 73 per cent of the 7664 M16 and SLR assault rifles delivered to the PNGDF since 1971 have been stolen or otherwise taken from armouries. Similar numbers are reported to be missing from police armouries.¹ In the Southern Highlands of PNG, high-powered weapons are obtained almost exclusively for use against humans. As a result, an illicit, factory-made firearm is seven times more likely to be used in homicide than in more ‘high-risk’ areas such as Ecuador, Jamaica, Colombia and South Africa.²

These trends undermine the legitimacy of state security sector actors and potentially undermine human security and community perceptions of safety.

Arms proliferation

The demand and availability of small arms and light weapons in PNG, and more broadly throughout the Pacific region is a serious security issue. The increasing demand and availability of illicit weapons, including ammunition, is encouraging a shift from forms of tribal conflict towards armed conflict, with devastating consequences on public health, livelihoods and human security.

In 2006 there were an estimated 120,000 legal guns in civilian hands in the Pacific region, compared to 19,000 state owned guns. While there are no official figures on illegal weapons, it is estimated that illicit weapons at least equal legal weapons in circulation.³ While trafficking is currently not a widespread problem, increased demand for illicit firearms could also lead to increased trafficking of small arms into the region in future.

The problem of weapons proliferation and gun violence is particularly acute in the Highlands of PNG. Oxfam’s research has shown that in the PNG Highlands a small number of weapons have led to large scale violence, and insecurity continues well after armed violence comes to an end, affecting community cohesion, income generation, settlement of the displaced and the safety and psychosocial health of men, women and children. There is a complex array and interplay of independent variables shaping demand for small arms related to people’s perceived security and socioeconomic needs. Even with a widespread gun surrender, the knowledge of how to make homemade guns remains within the community, ensuring that guns can be easily reproduced if necessary. As a consequence Alpers argues that one of the

¹ Alpers, P. (2006). *Gun-Running in Papua New Guinea: From Arrows to Assault Weapons in the Southern Highlands*. Special Report No. 5. Geneva: Small Arms Survey, p23.

² Alpers, P. (2006). *Ibid*, p24.

³ Australian Labor Party. (2006). *In the line of fire: Addressing the spread of illegal arms in the Pacific*. A policy discussion paper by Bob Servombe MP, Shadow Minister for Overseas Aid and Pacific Island Affairs, p7.

most effective ways to reduce gun violence through supply-side initiatives is to curb the trade in ammunition.⁴

Nevertheless, small arms are just one component of the security paradigm in the Southern Highlands, and guns are only one of several weapons used to fuel insecurity in people's lives. For example, while Oxfam's study on interpersonal violence indicates that a weapon was used in the overwhelming majority of cases involving violent injury presenting at Tari Hospital (80%), the most common weapon used was a bush knife (50%).

The Australian Government is leading the Pacific in regional firearm assistance and is regarded as a world leader in firearm injury prevention and gun control policy/legislation. This contribution is welcome, and there are further practical measures the Australian Government can take.

In order to curb the supply and demand for illicit firearms in PNG Oxfam recommends the Australian Government should;

4. Support and encourage the implementation of recent PNG Government announcement by Police Commissioner, Gary Baki, of gun buy back schemes and gun registration procedures which are hugely positive steps forward
5. Invest in supporting further research and analysis of the effectiveness of blanket buy back campaigns and gun amnesties as they develop in PNG as well as the socioeconomic context contributing to gun use
6. Continue and increase provision of assistance for PNG and other Pacific Island nations to participate in regional and international processes to curb small arms and light weapons proliferation (such as the UN Programme of Action and Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects)
7. Support Weapons for Development programmes and gun free zones as well as other community led disarmament initiatives.⁵

Existing interventions to reduce and resolve human insecurity

Oxfam's research suggests that interventions to reduce and resolve conflict should strengthen access to essential services, build on community strategies that work at the local level and ensure the criminal justice system is, and is seen, to be a legitimate instrument for conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Interventions must address both the demand and supply of illicit weapons, by addressing the underlying

⁴ Alpers, P. (2006). *Op. Cit.*, p74.

⁵ Note this recommendation was made in Australian Labor Party (2006) *In the line of fire: Addressing the spread of illegal arms in the Pacific*. A policy discussion paper by Bob Servombe MP, Shadow Minister for Overseas Aid and Pacific Island Affairs, p2. This policy brief is attached to this submission (see appendix 4) as it contains several recommendations relating to the Terms of Reference of this inquiry and its substantive content is supported by Oxfam Australia.

causes of conflict and feelings of insecurity as well as restricting the import and production of weapons. In the PNG Highlands at present, however, the triggers and causes of violence are further exacerbated by the failure of current interventions to resolve disputes and prevent further conflict.

Lack of access to services

There is a strong relationship between violence, illegal guns and poor public health as a direct human security hazard in the PNG Highlands. Worry and anxiety about the impacts of tribal violence are commonly perceived to be associated with poor health outcomes. People feel in a constant state of anxiety and threat from attack and the longer a tribal fight persists and the more deaths that occur as a result, the fear of being attacked simultaneously increases.

The lack of availability and deterioration of basic government services in the PNG Highlands further compounds this chronic security concern. Lack of access to health care, education, roads, and economic markets produce ripe conditions for insecurity, social stress and conflict. Access to existing government services such as healthcare are then in turn reduced by the increased demand on the system caused by violent conflict. Access to government services is also further undermined by restrictions on human movements due to tribal alliances and security concerns such as payback.

To address the root causes of conflict and assist in stemming the cycle of violence Oxfam Australia recommends the Australian Government;

8. Invest in livelihood strategies and rejuvenating the rural sector with positive activities to improve self-esteem, generate income for women and men, male and female youth
9. Establish and support programs aimed at developing skills and job opportunities for young people, and, in particular, young men

Reliance on compensation

In present times even the most minor dispute results in some amount of compensation being demanded. Declining effectiveness of the police, courts and other law enforcement agencies of the central government, jealousy and exaggerated and often unfulfilled expectations may have contributed to the increase in compensation claims. Oxfam's research suggests that although paying / receiving compensation demonstrates individual and corporate pride, addresses the risk of shame, and reaffirms people's membership of a network, the payment of compensation does not always provide closure on the specific issues that were the basis for the compensation claims. Furthermore, those who injured others physically and psychologically through their behaviour do not always realize their obligations and responsibilities.

The pressure put on others to provide support for compensation is immense and well beyond people's means. While local economic structures support the payment of

compensation to resolve all types of disputes, compensation often does little to prevent the offender from causing further trouble.

There are beginnings in some Highlands communities of a move away from the payment of compensation in some circumstances. Oxfam Australia recommends the Australian Government;

10. Invest in research and interventions, in partnership with the PNG Government and local communities, to examine, encourage and expand alternatives to compensation in local-level dispute resolution

Marginalisation of vulnerable groups in peacebuilding efforts

Despite suffering the most during conflicts, poor and vulnerable groups often have very little say in how conflicts are resolved and grievances redressed. This is true both in PNG but also more broadly in the Pacific region, with local community members often being left out of national conflict and peacebuilding frameworks and regional initiatives such as the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI).

In PNG, existing measures to promote security through targeted disarmament programmes, MoUs, state of emergencies and amnesties are not succeeding in the majority of situations. However, little has been done to try to ensure that families, communities, and tribes – the fundamental units of PNG society – relate better to each other.

In spite of this, churches and women's organisations carry out key roles in brokering and maintaining peace in PNG and throughout the Pacific, as shown in recent crises in Fiji, Bougainville and Solomon Islands, and ongoing conflict reduction activities in the PNG Highlands. Women are often the first to be motivated to initiate peace and reverse trends of violence, given that it is they who commonly experience the negative impacts of conflict most acutely.

It is essential that interventions to reduce conflict prioritise a participatory, bottom-up approach, based on the premise that people are the best resources for building and sustaining peace. Such an approach aims to strengthen community capacities to resolve disputes peacefully; to develop trust, safety, and social cohesion within and between communities; and to promote inter-ethnic and inter-group dialogue. Peace work at a community level strengthens community cohesion, reduces violence, and enhances resistance to belligerent behaviours.

In order to ensure that bottom-up interventions to reduce violence and build peace are supported, Oxfam Australia recommends the Australian Government;

11. Support civil-society involvement in peace and development and the promotion of peace and human rights education

12. Focus on supporting programmes that build the capacity of communities to resolve disputes through mediation, negotiation, and conflict resolution; supporting civil-society involvement in peace and development; realizing human rights and promoting peace education, adapted to the local security context. Such an approach would incorporate peacebuilding values, skills, and techniques into broader governance and development work

Failure of law and order mechanisms

Men and women involved in Oxfam's research identified that poor governance and law and order structures at the ward and district level was a significant problem. The law and justice system simply does not provide adequate avenues to redress wrongs. This, coupled with the breakdown of traditional institutions and structures advancing conflict mediation and resolution, has led to serious human security problems in the Southern Highlands.

Many ordinary Papua New Guineans have little faith in the efficiency or fairness of the formal justice system. Due to the mistrust of the formal law and justice systems, perceived corruption of Peace and Good Order (mediation) Committees and the inability of the local leadership structure to mediate a dispute, the support of kin is often relied upon instead. There is a popular perception of a widening gap between 'law' and 'justice' which is a contributing factor to people's insecurity. Lack of capacity and inability to care for offenders serving their time, poor community relations and the superficial 'strength' of reactive policing have contributed to popular distrust and fear of the police.

The present formal law and justice system lacks legitimacy and institutional capacity to resolve conflict and as a result the onus for solving disputes remains at the community level, whether they have the capacity and authority to cope with the responsibility or not. When structures at the community level are unable to cope and are not supported / complemented by the formal law and justice hierarchy, minor disputes can erupt into violent conflict and the repercussion on security are widely felt.

In order to assist the PNG Government to strengthen law and order mechanisms, Oxfam Australia recommends the Australian Government supporting the PNG Government to;

13. Examine policies and approaches that contribute to conflict (resource development, roads, electoral system) and mainstream peacebuilding and conflict sensitive planning in relevant sectors of government and in national programmes.
14. Clarify and strengthen links between peacebuilding work and state institutions, in particular the relationship between informal justice and the courts.

15. Review the role, approach and practice of formal mediation structures in PNG (such as Peace and Good Order committees), and strengthen the village court secretariat and village court reform process in the Highlands.
16. Promote evidenced-based police reform in key Highlands provinces as one core part of security sector reform

6. Implications of security threats for Australia

Australia's engagement with the Pacific region is influenced by our physical proximity and shared history. Australia plays significant roles in the Pacific islands through trade, aid, defence, tourism and cultural relations.

There are two interlinked perspectives from which to analyse the implications of the abovementioned security challenges to Australia. The first perspective considers Australia's responsibilities as an active and engaged member of the international community. These responsibilities are enshrined in the various bodies of human rights law, international humanitarian law, refugee law and emergent principles such as the Responsibility to Protect. Australia further has accepted responsibilities towards advancing sustainable development in the Pacific region and the more generally the Millennium Development Goals.

Thus Australia has an interest in supporting the realisation and enjoyment of human rights of our neighbours. Part of fulfilling this responsibility is ensuring that our approach to economic and security challenges in the region prioritises the human security and sustainable development interests of Pacific islanders and their communities.

The implications of the security challenges for Australia can also be viewed through a regional security and stability lens. Conflict and violence not only undermine social cohesion at local level, they also exacerbate poverty, which is itself an underlying cause of insecurity. Gun violence contributes to the breakdown of health and other services, the disruption of local economies and can cause shocks or emergencies that require outside assistance to address. The spread of illicit firearms also threatens the operation of democratic institutions, as evidenced in PNG during the 2002 elections when up to 50 people were estimated to have been killed.

Human security threats can escalate into national and regional security threats and general instability, placing pressure on Australia to respond. As a leader in peacekeeping in the region, Australia should also clearly be concerned about the proliferation of illicit firearms in potentially volatile areas where we may be expected to intervene.

Appendix 1: *In the line of fire: Addressing the spread of illegal arms in the Pacific*. A policy discussion paper by Bob Servombe MP, Shadow Minister for Overseas Aid and Pacific Island Affairs, Australian Labor Party, 2006.

IN THE LINE OF FIRE: ADDRESSING THE SPREAD OF ILLEGAL ARMS IN THE PACIFIC.



Philip Alpers, www.gunpolicy.org

We men and boys are gathering our guns. If we don't get our province by 2007 we will fight. It will be bigger than Bougainville. They had only a few guns. We have plenty – not just homemade guns but high powered weapons. (As told to researchers in the Southern Highlands for the Small Arms Survey 2006)

A policy discussion paper by Bob Sercombe MP, Shadow Minister for Overseas Aid and Pacific Island Affairs.



Executive Summary

Globally, small arms proliferation has become a major barrier to improvements in public health, law and order and economic development. ¹

In the Pacific region, conflicts in the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Bougainville, Fiji and, to a lesser extent, Vanuatu highlight the increasing availability of small arms and their role in regional instability.

Small arms and light weapons significantly exacerbate the impact of political conflict, tribal warfare, crime and domestic violence, pushing young, under-resourced states to the limit. Their availability is a key factor in the escalation of conflict, underscored by the fact that prior to 2000 there were almost no military weapons in the hands of ordinary Solomon Islanders. ²

The potential for future conflict is highlighted by the April riots in the Solomon Islands, ongoing tension between the government and military in Fiji and the recent declaration of a state of emergency in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea, where local grievances echo issues that sparked the long-running Bougainville conflict.

These events and the prospect that increasing demand for guns could precipitate major arms trafficking in the region, point to the urgent need to develop further weapons reduction initiatives.

More concerted prevention makes sense given Australia's unprecedented involvement in the region to promote stability.

While demand for and supply of small arms in the Pacific have complex economic, social, political and cultural origins, donors can play an influential role in assisting community-led disarmament.

Ultimately, the continued spread of small arms will severely compromise, if not prevent, attempts to achieve security and good governance in the region.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has argued that curbing the spread of these weapons "would be the single most important contribution to greater stability, peace and security". ³

Therefore, sustainable regional economic development and security demand discrete and comprehensive policy measures to assist in small arms reduction.

Key Policy Options (Summary)

1. ***Australia to lead an urgent push for harmonisation of firearms legislation at the Pacific Islands Forum but particularly export/import controls and penalties.***
 - Expansion of Australian technical assistance to Pacific countries to introduce model firearms laws under the Nadi Framework
2. ***Priority be given to the prompt resolution of negotiations over a revised package for the Enhanced Cooperation Program. This should include:***
 - The establishment of an independent taskforce of eminent persons to review problems with the legal and practical implementation of ECP Mark 1.
 - Negotiations should be undertaken about a possible deployment of a regional policing unit to Papua New Guinea in the lead up to next year's elections. Australian officers could backfill Pacific Islander positions in their home countries, freeing them up to serve with the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary.
3. ***An internal review of the Australian Federal Police's International Deployment Group in light of the government's planned expansion and lessons learned from the deployment of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands.***
4. ***The establishment of a pilot AusAID-funded Weapons for Development program strengthening existing community-led disarmament initiatives.***
5. ***The establishment/support of programs aimed at developing skills and job opportunities for young people, and, in particular, young men.***
6. ***Funding for further research in the areas of illicit trafficking, cross-border trade, the relationship between licit and illicit trade and ammunition supplies.***

Angry young men

In the early 1990s Australian documentary film maker Bob Connolly captured the outbreak of tribal warfare in Papua New Guinea in his acclaimed Highland Trilogy series.

Tribal conflict is a traditional feature of Highlands society. However, before guns arrived in the 1980s, tribal leaders could negotiate peace by providing compensation for deaths through an exchange, for example, of pigs.

“With the advent of guns, casualties were high (and) the ‘big men’ lost control of the situation.”⁴

Losing control meant that tribal leaders were unable to negotiate settlements, undermining their authority as central peacemakers within their tribes.

Young men and, indeed, some community leaders, are increasingly taking control simply by obtaining a gun, which provides status, protection and livelihood.

The situation in Papua New Guinea and elsewhere in the Pacific mirrors the key demand demographic for small arms across the globe - young men with no alternative occupation.

An important part of reducing demand is to provide these young men with gainful employment to eliminate a perceived need to take up arms as a way of generating an income, forging an identity or relieving boredom.

Recent violence in Timor Leste revealed how young disenfranchised and bored young men can easily form armed gangs.

Latest research from the Geneva-based Small Arms Survey also shows a worrying new trend of inter-group fighting in the Papua New Guinea capital, Port Moresby, and, in turn, urban ‘raskol’ gangs emerging in the Highlands.⁵

The survey’s authors have warned that people in the Hela district of the Southern Highlands are arming themselves in support of claims seeking their own province.⁶

Given there are high-powered weapons readily available in Hela, disputes over the future distribution of resource wealth and a virtual absence of government services, there are fears there will be an escalation of conflict in the region with parallels to that experienced in Bougainville.⁷

The following are comments made to researchers working on the 2006 Small Arms Survey in the Southern Highlands:

“There are no services here... If they don’t give us a Hela province we will fight ... If we don’t get our own province forget about the gas pipeline project. It won’t go.. We men and boys are gathering guns. If we don’t get our own

province by 2007 we will fight. It will be bigger than Bougainville. They had only a few guns we have plenty – not just homemade guns but high powered weapons. Bougainville was a small fight. We number 300,000. The government must hear our talk.”⁸

The imposition of a state of emergency highlights the current state of tensions in the province. While a large police presence may help alleviate some of these grievances, including the need for security, the conflict has a long history and demands more attention than is available under a short-term, emergency deployment.

Social, political and economic costs

The impact of guns on the ability of tribal leaders to maintain authority and keep the peace is one of many negative impacts on Pacific societies.

There are documented direct and indirect impacts from the spread of these weapons, including increasingly higher fatality rates, which in turn fuel more conflict, forced displacement, trauma, suspension of basic services and human rights violations.⁹

The costs of the growing prevalence of guns in Pacific states are high including the breakdown of health and other services, and the disruption of local economies.



The displacement of government services has led to greater demands for guns for economic need and security, creating a vicious and protracted cycle of violence and social disruption.

In many rural areas in the Southern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea, for example, it has been virtually impossible to get access to medical services.¹⁰

Prior to the state of emergency there were only eight regular police officers for 350,000 people in and around Tari in the Southern Highlands province which is spread over many villages in difficult and, sometimes, impassable terrain.¹¹

This lawlessness in the region, enhanced by so few police, a lack of government services and widespread claims of corruption, led the Papua New Guinea Government to declare a state of emergency in August and send in nearly 800 police.¹²

Concerns that the province suffers similar grievances and tensions that led to the 10-year conflict in Bougainville are disturbing.

The experience of Bougainville, which once had among the best social indicators in the Pacific, provides a salutary lesson about minimising the escalation of conflict through reducing small arms.¹³

The Bougainville conflict caused thousands of deaths, enormous suffering, widespread destruction of infrastructure and the collapse of the economy.¹⁴

It also had a serious impact on regional stability and influenced the outbreak of conflict in the Solomon Islands through the transfer of weapons.¹⁵

In the Solomon Islands more than 150 people are estimated to have been killed and more than 300 wounded by guns during the conflict, which led to the displacement of more than 50,000 Solomon Islanders throughout the Guadalcanal and Malaita, in particular.¹⁶

In 2003, there were around 4000 weapons in circulation including homemade guns and high powered weapons such as the standard issue Australian army rifle SLR, AR15s and Ultimax light machine guns, many of which were stolen from state armouries.¹⁷

What is striking in the case of the Solomon Islands is that prior to 2000 there were virtually no military weapons in the hands of civilians.¹⁸

These were largely stolen from the Royal Solomon Islands Police armoury, purchased from Bougainville, or homemade.¹⁹

When deployed in 2003, the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) had a clear mandate for weapons collection, similar to Bougainville under the final peace settlement.

Since then, more than 4000 guns have been surrendered under an amnesty sponsored by the RAMSI, which is estimated to be represent 90 to 95 per cent of the small arms in civilian hands.²⁰

The violence in the Solomon Islands in April 2006, following the election of Snyder Rini as Prime Minister, was remarkable for the absence of firearms.

Indeed, the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police, Mick Keelty, recently commented that had guns been available the number of fatalities would have been “significant”.²¹

Relatively, Vanuatu has suffered less from conflict. But tensions remain between the Vanuatu Mobile Force, which was at one point linked to the kidnapping of the President in 1996, and the Vanuatu Police Force.

The situation in Fiji, which has suffered three coups since 1987, has also been exacerbated by access to small arms.

In 2000, the gang led by George Speight, which took Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry and most of the elected government hostage, had stolen Uzi and Galil assault weapons from state armouries²².

In these circumstances, the political impact of access to guns is clear.

But the spread of guns is also a grave threat to the operation of democratic institutions, as evidenced in Papua New Guinea during the 2002 elections when up to 50 people are estimated to have been killed.

There are concerns that the growing accumulation of weapons, particularly in the Highlands provinces, will lead to worse violence during national elections next year.

Supply of small arms and military weapons

There are estimated to be 120,000 legal guns in civilian hands in the Pacific region (excluding Australia and New Zealand). This compares to 19,000 state owned guns. There are no official figures on illegal weapons but it is estimated that there are at least as many illegal weapons as legal weapons in circulation.

Most small arms and light weapons in the Pacific appear to have been sourced internally. They are either homemade guns or weapons that are stolen or leaked from armouries. This was certainly the case in the Solomon Islands and continues to be a concern in Papua New Guinea. According to Alpers, of the 7664 M16 and SLR assault rifles delivered to Papua New Guinea Defence Forces since 1971, only 26 per cent remain in stock. Similar numbers are reported to be missing from police armouries.²³

One police commander in the Southern Highlands recently estimated that there were about 10,000 guns in and around the Tari area.²⁴

While tighter security is now in place at defence armouries and some police armouries, there is still a need to prevent leakage from police and prison armouries, which are considered less secure.²⁵

The issue of illegal trade in weapons is complex. While there are examples of attempted large arms shipments, notably in Fiji in 1988, in general a large transnational trade in illicit weapons has been downplayed.²⁶

But there are concerns about some illicit trafficking into Papua New Guinea from South East Asia via the Papuan border and logging vessels.²⁷

Claims of *large* flows of arms through a 'guns-for-drugs' trade in the Torres Strait have largely been refuted by the Australian Federal Police and the Papua New Guinea Royal Constabulary.²⁸

Little in-depth research has been done in this area and the fact that proposed joint customs border patrols between the two countries are not yet operational exacerbates the threat.

The concern is that increasing demand for weapons could precipitate greater trafficking of small arms in the region, particularly via Pacific states with weak firearms legislation and law enforcement.²⁹

In a recent submission to a Senate inquiry on aid to the Pacific, the AFP highlighted this threat: "One of the great concerns about organised criminal groups and terrorist organisations is that they tend to target weak and vulnerable nations struggling with poor governance structures and social, political and/or economic instability".³⁰

University of Queensland law lecturer Andreas Schloenhardt also recently pointed to the need for action: "There is a matter of urgency looking at some of the patterns of organised crime in the region".³¹

Indeed, this month (October 2006) six foreign nationals were charged in Guam with a plot to smuggle arms from the US via Guam to Sri Lanka. It was alleged they had attempted to buy US\$900,000 worth of black-market military weaponry including Stinger surface to air missiles for Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam).³²

International and regional efforts to control small arms

It is only in the past decade that the international community has begun to seriously assess the impact of the global availability of small arms.

Until the mid-1990s, the international disarmament agenda was almost exclusively focused on large conventional weapons systems and weapons of mass destruction.³³

By this time small arms and light weapons originally designed for use by military forces on both sides of the Iron Curtain, were seemingly ubiquitous in conflicts across the developing world.

Enormous numbers of assault rifles, grenade launchers, mortars and other infantry arms were found to be in the hands of those taking up arms against the state and in intra-state or ethnic conflicts.

In 2001, a United Nations Conference was convened in New York as an opportunity for the international community to address the emerging security issue of illicit small arms and light weapons.

The resultant Programme of Action³⁴, and other contemporaneous control instruments such as the Firearms Protocol³⁵ and fledgling Arms Trade Treaty³⁶ have driven small arms control higher up the international agenda than ever before.

This year, the first UN conference to review progress on the Programme of Action was generally considered a missed opportunity.

The collapse of the conference has led to concerns of a dangerous hiatus, stalling progress on prevention measures.

Given Australia's key role as a peacekeeper in the region, Australia should be at the forefront of progress at such a conference.

But while a supporter of the development of a legally binding Arms Control Treaty, Australia was conspicuous by its lack of initiative at this year's review conference.

This is disappointing given instability in the Pacific region is regarded as Australia's immediate foreign policy challenge.

The failure to achieve outcomes at this year's conference adds importance to the need for regional policy initiatives.

Regional security and small arms initiatives

Regional security issues can currently be dealt with under the *Biketawa Declaration*.³⁷

Under this declaration, members of the Pacific Islands Forum recognised the importance of cooperation among member states when dealing with threats to the security of a member state or states.³⁸

"Forum Leaders recognised the need in time of crisis or in response to members' request for assistance, for action to be taken on the basis of all members of the Forum being part of the Pacific Islands extended family," the declaration states.³⁹

Coordinated regional efforts have been made to control small arms through the Pacific Islands Forum Regional Security Committee which has developed measures for a common regional approach to weapons control, covering the import, manufacture, possession, and use of firearms, ammunition and explosives.⁴⁰

In 1998, the South Pacific Chiefs of Police Conference drafted a common approach to weapons control in the region known as the *Honiara Initiative*, which covers the marking of firearms, strengthening of import and export controls, licensing agreements, record-keeping and information exchange.

In March 2000, the *Nadi Framework* was adopted to encourage the harmonisation of gun laws.

Under the *Nadi Framework* the Pacific Islands Forum has developed model gun control legislation which each country can adopt in their jurisdictions.

The Weapons Control Bill was tabled at the Pacific Islands Forum leaders meeting in 2003 with a recommendation to all members that countries use it as the basis for new legislation.⁴¹

Policy Options

The spread of small arms in the Pacific is symptomatic of poor economic growth and deteriorating law and order.

Therefore, any policy options need to be accompanied by long term economic development and security, the lack of which helps fuel demand for guns.

However, the nature of small arms and the disproportionate impact of even a small number of weapons on communities make it imperative that other avenues aimed at preventing their proliferation are also explored.

Tackling the issue of small arms in the Pacific requires efforts to address three core issues - supply, demand and security.

Reducing supply may be addressed through a serious push for improved regional legislation to deter arms traffickers.

However, it is even more vital in a region such as the Pacific, where weapons are largely sourced internally, to encourage efforts at a local level aimed at curbing the growing demand for guns.

Addressing demand will require long term solutions through community-led disarmament, improved economic development and services.

Initiatives aimed at reducing demand need to be supported by greater security through improved law and order.

1. Australia to lead a push for harmonisation of firearms legislation at the Pacific Islands Forum but particularly export/import controls and penalties.

- Expansion of Australian technical assistance for Pacific countries to introduce model firearms laws under the Nadi Framework.



Uniform Legislation:

To date, most governmental and non-governmental effort has been put into tightening arms transfers and identifying where the points of diversion into the illicit market occur.

The United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons specifically recommends regional cooperation as a way to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms. If this trade is to be stopped, there must be both local cooperation and the harmonisation of laws.

One of the stumbling blocks to improved small arms control in the Pacific is the fact that micro-states have limited resources. To assist in drafting legislation, Australia could provide further technical assistance for legislative drafting.

Fiji is the only state in the region to move towards implementing the model weapons controls agreed within the Nadi Framework. The Fijian Arms and Ammunition Act, introduced in 2003, includes controls over: manufacture,

possession, use and carriage, dealership, import, transit and export of small arms and light weapons.

More incentives are needed to persuade other Pacific nations to adopt the proposed legislation.

Uniform laws across the Pacific should act as a deterrent to small arms traffickers who can take advantage of weak legislation.⁴²

Given this serious risk and the fact that model legislation has already been developed through the Pacific Islands Forum, harmonised laws should be accelerated as a matter of priority.

Penalties:

The experience in the Solomon Islands shows strengthening anti-gun legislation and severe penalties can act as strong deterrents.⁴³

At the end of 2003 fines for firearms activity were increased from SB\$1000 to SB \$25,000 and prison terms were increased from two years to 10 years.⁴⁴

The new penalties were reported widely and are considered to have “strongly contributed to the success of the disarmament process”.⁴⁵

The support of RAMSI in achieving this outcome was also important.

Recording, registration and marking:

Many states do not record firearm-related data, making it difficult to track weapons.

Of 20 Pacific countries surveyed by the Small Arms Survey only a few have computerised registers of civilian small arms.⁴⁶

Most Pacific states do not require guns be marked.⁴⁷

Import/export controls:

The Small Arms Survey has found that many Pacific states have only rudimentary import and export controls.⁴⁸

Penalties for illegal importation, where they exist, vary substantially.⁴⁹

This has been highlighted as a key area for harmonisation to help prevent trafficking.

Ammunition:

Ammunition is an important area of focus because guns are of limited use without it. For example, the reason that there is little use in Pacific countries of the AK47 is because of difficulties in getting ammunition.⁵⁰

Given that ammunition cannot be locally manufactured like homemade guns, there is also greater scope to reduce its access through imports.

In PNG, Alpers has highlighted the following options for reducing ammunition :

- Encouraging and reinforcing limits on ammunition imports
- Closely investigating all transfers of military-calibre ammunition
- Upgrading controls at airport choke points, and freight and baggage inspection
- Increasing scrutiny of cargo on chartered planes and helicopters
- Increasing accountability for ammunition issued to police, defence and corrections personnel, security firms, arms dealers and private gun owners.

“At least for now curbing the flow of ammunition could prove the single most promising intervention to reduce gun death and injury in PNG.”⁵¹



Armoury security:

Despite improvements made to defence and police armouries, security problems persist and there are still reports of guns being leaked or stolen.⁵²

There should be an expansion of Australian support for armoury security. Options for strengthening security could include random snap inspections and the establishment of permanent security guards, where justified.

A fixed standard for security locks could be established.

2. Priority be given to the prompt resolution of negotiations over a revised package for the Enhanced Cooperation Program.

One of the key issues behind the demand for guns, particularly in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, is the security situation.

Ongoing problems in the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary and increasing crime and lawlessness have led people to arm themselves for self-protection.

The experience of the Solomon Islands has shown that people are more willing to give up their guns when security is improved.

Deployments of Australian police in several Pacific countries have assisted in improving security.

In this context, it is vital that the Australian Government do everything in its power to support Papua New Guinea with policing.

Under the original Enhanced Cooperation Program between Australia and Papua New Guinea in 2004, 210 operational police and 68 advisers/officials in various areas were to be sent to Papua New Guinea.

Under the agreement, Australian operational police were to be granted adequate protection from criminal charges being brought against them.

It should be noted that members of the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary are now operating under similar protections under the RAMSI.

A Supreme Court ruling on the constitutional status of the ECP agreement led to the withdrawal of operational police.

There are currently only 41 Australian Government officials working in an advisory capacity under the ECP program. Another 10 police advisers are foreshadowed.

There is an ongoing debate about the merits of in-line officers versus advisers. Under the ECP, in-line officers were considered to more effective in transferring skills to local police. Whether that is the case or not, the importance of their physical presence on the streets was tangible, although it was not without its problems.

Local police endure very poor pay, housing, conditions and resources. There is too often distrust between the community and police which is damaging to effective policing.

Despite political rhetoric from both countries, it is clear both Australians and Papua New Guineans want the ECP revived to assist Papua New Guinea for future security and development.

As one senior police officer from the Gordons police station in the National Capital District put it: "People want them to come back. The bottom line is that they restore our confidence in honesty." ⁵³

The Labor Party believes that, provided that there is both goodwill and political will on both sides, it is *possible* to redraft the ECP without a constitutional amendment whilst meeting the need for adequate protection of Australian police officers.

To address the political impasse, a group of eminent persons from both countries including independent legal experts should be established to review and redraft the ECP.

It is important to note that the following provisions exist under the Papua New Guinea constitution:

- The deployment of 'special or reserve forces', separate to the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary. (Section 199)
- National legislation can be used to restrict certain rights and freedoms under Papua New Guinea law in the public interest. (Section 38)

A legal review of the ECP Act should assess the possibility of national legislation under which the Papua New Guinea Police Commissioner and the Public Prosecutor sign an agreement allowing the immediate repatriation of Australian police officers where disputes occur.

A redrafting of the joint steering committee proposed to assess allegations against Australian officers should also be considered.

Other issues an eminent persons group should consider include:

- A. Whether it is appropriate for high powered automatic and semi-automatic weapons to be in the possession of regular police and whether such weapons should only be legally imported by the Papua New Guinea Defence Force.***

While concerns exist about the prevalence of high-powered weapons among raskol gangs, there are still police in Papua New Guinea who believe that regular police should not be armed except in exceptional circumstances.⁵⁴ In Fiji, police are unarmed and the Police Commissioner has resisted calls to arm the police, arguing that it prompts a chain reaction for criminals and causes an escalation in violent crime.⁵⁵

B. A proper induction program to ensure the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary understand the role of the Australian Police in assisting and not replacing or leading PNG officers.

Under the initial program, many local police were under the misapprehension that Australian officers were sent to “take over” rather than assist police and found difficulties adjusting to working with Australian police.⁵⁶

C. The establishment of a dedicated Australian funded and run community police program providing partners to local community police officers across the country and sufficient radio communications and vehicles.

Many senior police in Pacific countries believe that community policing is the way forward for improved law and order in Pacific countries. There is a strong need for better engagement with the community, particularly in Papua New Guinea, where there have been reports of police brutality. However, greater resources and technical assistance are needed, particularly in countries like Papua New Guinea with isolated, rural villages.⁵⁷

An AusAID funded community policing program recently introduced in Fiji under the Law and Justice Sector Program should be rolled out across the Pacific.

D. A senior executive training exchange program for Australian and Papua New Guinea police officers.

With a revised ECP, a formal exchange program of senior police officers between Australia and Papua New Guinea should be established to help increase understanding of policing issues in both countries.

Negotiations should be undertaken about the possible deployment of a regional policing unit to Papua New Guinea in the lead-up to next year’s elections. Australia should actively support such negotiations.

Under such a policing unit, Australian officers could backfill some Pacific Islander positions in their home countries, freeing them to serve with the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary.

The unit could assist Papua New Guinea police under the current state of emergency in the Southern Highlands for which some 800 police have been deployed.

For the most part, the presence of police in the Southern Highlands has been welcomed by locals and already there are fears being expressed about what will happen when the state of emergency ends.

The state of emergency has been extended several times and senior police have called on the Papua New Guinea Government to fund the deployment beyond the elections in June next year although there are concerns that the government does not have the resources to fund a longer term deployment.⁵⁸

To provide additional resources for police stationed in the Southern Highlands, Australia should support a regional policing unit for deployment to Papua New Guinea led by another Pacific island country.

Australia could provide Australian officers to backfill some Pacific Islander positions thus freeing Pacific Island officers to take up medium-term positions in Papua New Guinea.

For example, the Fijian Government has a budget for 120 police for operations outside Fiji.⁵⁹

The United Nations rates Fiji Police as among the best in the world. More than 900 Fijian police have served in overseas peacekeeping missions, many of whom have retired but could be available for recall.⁶⁰

It should be stressed this regional unit would not be operating in a peacekeeping capacity but to provide additional resources leading up to the national elections.

One concern about RAMSI has been that the deployment has been dominated by Australians and there have not been sufficient Pacific Islanders represented. Clearly, there are cultural and regional benefits to be gained from a more representative deployment, even if this means that Australians backfill positions in Pacific Island countries to allow Pacific Islanders to participate.

A regional policing unit would only provide a short term solution to law and order in the Southern Highlands.

To address long term needs, the Australian government should support the recruitment of more local police, particularly in conflict areas such as the Southern Highlands, where up to 400 new recruits are needed.⁶¹

- As part of this recruitment drive new barracks, vehicles and equipment should be supplied and other incentives should be considered to attract high quality police to the region from other areas to support the on-the-job training of new recruits.
- 3. An internal review of the Australian Federal Police's International Deployment Group in light of the planned expansion in numbers and lessons learned from the deployment of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands.**

Overseas peacekeeping roles undertaken by the AFP are underpinned by the key objectives of improved law enforcement and public order, the reconstitution, monitoring and mentoring of local police and the reform of the judicial, penal and legal systems.⁶²

The Labor Party has provided bi-partisan support to the unprecedented police deployments in the Pacific region. The Australian Federal Police and state police, where applicable, deserve praise for their efforts in challenging and complex environments.

However, these deployments are not without issue and AFP Commissioner Mick Keelty has acknowledged the importance of such deployments being subject to continued review.

In a recent speech (October 2006), Commissioner Keelty noted that *if* some criticisms of RAMSI were true, including an inability to prioritise multiple tasks and inadequate planning, then the AFP “needs to redouble its efforts to ensure that the systems, the processes and, more importantly the doctrine, underpinning future operations by the IDG are adequate.”⁶³

He also acknowledged the importance of appropriate cultural training - a preliminary finding of a three-year study into the effectiveness of the IDG by ANU and Flinders University.

“We have to ensure that we send the right people with the right skills to do the job. We also need to ensure that, where appropriate, we are influencing decision making to work towards making a discernable difference in the countries in which we operate and that we do get it right.”⁶⁴

In light of this, a review of IDG deployments could consider the following:

- A majority of recruits, where possible, to be comprised of mature officers with direct experience of the region
- Extensive in-country cultural immersion and language training of new officers by current/retired officers with previous policing experience in the region
- performance measures
- country specific strategies

4. A pilot AusAID funded weapons for development program strengthening existing community led disarmament initiatives in high priority areas.

This program would require careful evaluation through:

- The advice of external advisers with significant, ongoing experience in the field, especially in the case of the Southern Highlands and;
- An audit of local non-government organisations and individuals to advance small-scale service delivery of development options which would include but not be limited to; funding of local teachers, doctors, infrastructure for clinics, technical and logistical assistance for non-government organisations with a proven track record, the provision of a fund for accredited emergency airline operators to fly emergency cases and roving magistrates in and out of remote areas.

Weapons in exchange for development

Weapons-free villages, where weapons are banned, and programs to encourage weapons to be exchanged for development have been trialled with success in several parts of the world.

In 1999 the South African Government legislated to ban guns in schools and public places to support communities which had initiated their own gun-free zones. Anybody taking guns into these areas faces heavy prison sentences.⁶⁵

A similar project to declare villages weapons free was undertaken in the Solomon Islands. The campaign, run by the National Peace Council, supports villages which want to ban guns. Some 406 villages in Guadalcanal and 604 in Malaita have been certified as guns-free villages.⁶⁶

The villages declare themselves weapons free, erect signs banning guns and hold ceremonies to mark the occasion.

The NPC monitors weapons in these villages and communities have been rewarded with donated sporting equipment for their young people.

An assessment of the Weapons Free Village campaign found it has several important innovations. These include incentives for returning weapons being collective rather than individual, as occurs with amnesties, which generally provide cash and are seen as relatively ineffective. Importantly, the campaign raised the social cost of weapons which impacts on demand and assisted in the rebuilding of communities.

It also met the need for disarmament to be both physical and psychological, or as has been described “getting rid of not only the guns in people’s hands, but also the guns in their heads”.⁶⁷

However, the research concluded that other measures to promote security were needed to support the model to ensure its impact on disarmament.⁶⁸

There are also similar successful initiatives in Papua New Guinea which could be expanded with donor support after careful evaluation and when structured

to suit local conditions, especially given the guns culture is far more entrenched and the stakes are much higher.

Tari Community-Based Health Care Project

In some villages in the Southern Highlands clan leaders have secured agreements to stop tribal fighting. ⁶⁹

Weapons were collected and destroyed in eight villages. Some 500 villagers across the area have been trained as health care volunteers and policing volunteers. Assistance to establish small scale agriculture, animal husbandry and other income generating projects have meant the community is now self-reliant through coffee, chicken, rabbit and fish. ⁷⁰

Kamberup Community School.

This school in the Highlands, which now teaches 460 students, was built with volunteer labour to stop young people from becoming involved with “guns, marijuana and fighting”. ⁷¹

Kup Women for Peace

Tribal fighting in the Simbu province in the Highlands escalated in 1999 resulting in many deaths, whole villages being razed, women raped, and children and the elderly attacked.

Women from four rival tribal groups in the area decided they could no longer tolerate the violence and formed the Kup Women for Peace.

The women spent several years trying to convince the men to stop fighting and their actions included brave interventions on the battlefield. They donned uniforms, walked into the middle of the fighting using a loudhailer to call for peace and handed out gifts as compensation. Since the initiative, the group reports that not one shot has been fired in the area. ⁷²

Rigo Weapons for Development in exchange for Weapons for Destruction program

A weapons for development program established in Rigo District by the Papua New Guinea Minister for Community Development Lady Carol Kidu has also been successful.

Young men involved in regular hold-ups in the area approached the Minister for support in exchange for giving up their weapons.

Under a memorandum of understanding, they handed over their guns in exchange for seeds to grow vegetables, ducklings and training workshops to help them establish independent livelihoods.

Lady Kidu is keen for funding to support further programs in other areas.

“I would love someone to fund it. They (the young men) have really turned their lives around and continue to move forward.”

Donor support

Carefully targeted services provided by AusAID under a Weapons for Development fund could encourage the spread of existing community interventions which help stigmatise the presence of weapons.

Many villagers in remote communities simply want basic services established such as health and education. They have also clearly stated to police that they will give up their weapons if they get such services.⁷³

Communities that have successfully obtained weapons surrender could apply for a needed service be it a doctor, clinic, teacher or school.

Such support would need to be carefully managed. For example, simply pouring money into such communities would “ruin their success”.⁷⁴

To ensure small scale delivery of such incentives is viable, an external adviser specialising in armed violence should be retained and an audit of local non government organisations carried out.

A trust fund should be established for accredited airlines to support emergency airlifts and roving magistrates. The non-profit Mission Aviation Fellowship provides vital air services across the world and, particularly Papua New Guinea, which is heavily dependent on small aircraft.

Another organisation in need of AusAID support is the Churches Medical Council, which represents all the churches in Papua New Guinea and manages more than \$K54 million in health services.⁷⁵

6. The establishment/support of programs aimed at developing skills and job opportunities for young men.

Unemployment and boredom are factors behind the attraction of guns, which are increasingly rented out or used in robberies as a means of livelihood.

Alternative activities for young men that have turned to violence and criminal activities to eke out a living must be culturally appropriate.

In Goroka, in the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea, Father Philip Gibbs of the Melanesian Institute is developing such programs aimed at young men.

Viva Rio, an Non Government Organisation working in the violent poverty-ridden favellas of Brazil has had great success at taking teenagers and young men off the streets where they eke out a living peddling drugs and wielding guns, and offering them sports training instead, particularly boxing. The young men then have a means of dealing with aggression and perceptions of masculinity appropriately, develop a habit of sport as personal achievement, and some have taken themselves out of the favellas into careers as sportsmen, benefiting themselves and becoming mentors for others.⁷⁶

Sport is an important way of fostering people-to-people links which are urgently needed to bolster the relationship between Australia and the Pacific.

Australia needs to put much greater effort into developing sporting links.

For example, support is being sought for the development of rugby league in Papua New Guinea.

One of the biggest challenges in the Pacific is the lack of sufficient economic growth, which is failing to meet the employment needs of a growing youth bulge.

At the same time there are issues of labour supply in Australia, in the horticulture and tourism industries.

The World Bank conducted research this year into the viability of a pilot labour mobility scheme allowing Pacific Islanders to work temporarily in Australia to meet labour issues in horticulture. The research provides a compelling case in support of such a scheme.

The report showed that remittances from such employment would go back to family members to build their home country's economy reducing the reliance on foreign aid.⁷⁷

The Labor Party would consider trialling such a scheme in a fair industrial relations environment.

7. Funding for further research in the areas of illicit trafficking, cross-border trade, the relationship between licit and illicit trade and ammunition supplies.

Past attempts by governments, international non-government agencies and donors to address armed violence have been incomplete due to a lack of inadequate and unreliable data.

Without reliable data on the registration of legal guns and the interception of illegal weapons, it is more difficult for policy makers to address effective prevention.

Until recent times, there has been a dearth of research into non-state armed groups, small arms availability and misuse in the Pacific countries.

Several excellent reports have been produced by the Small Arms Survey at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva, Switzerland.

Given the significance of the regional security implications for Australia, more funding for researchers, particularly in the areas of illicit trafficking, cross-border trade, the relationship between licit and illicit trade and ammunition supplies, would assist in informing Australia's and the region's response.⁷⁸

There is a pressing need to provide more funds for research and evaluation programs to properly inform and assess policy interventions.

Conclusion

As recent armed conflicts in the Pacific region show, the impact of even a small number of high powered military weapons cannot be underestimated.

Guns are also increasingly being used in tribal warfare and criminal and domestic violence.

In the case of the Solomon Islands, weapons contributed to the collapse of government while in Papua New Guinea they are contributing to the destabilisation of a whole of province requiring the emergency intervention of the national Government.

The presence of guns has significant impacts across communities particularly on the health and basic services of those communities.

To ensure that existing aid monies contributing to the health and services of these communities are effectively delivered, there is an urgent need for assistance to provide security and development incentives to encourage communities to give up arms.

Donors have a responsibility to do all that they can to help resource Pacific efforts to reduce the spread of small arms and light weapons.

Your Feedback

We welcome your feedback on the ideas to be presented in this Pacific policy discussion paper.

Please write to:

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