1. INTRODUCTION

The Parliamentary Services of the Autonomous Bougainville Government nominated Mrs Loretta Masiria (Hansard Officer) and Ms Michaelyne Sabin (Library) to attend a week’s training attachment to the ACT Legislative Assembly and Australian Parliament’s House of Representatives in Canberra. The sponsorship was made by the Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI) and as such we are obliged to report to the CDI on the training attachments and other related issues including the achievements.

The training attachments took place in the week beginning Sunday, 27th May 2007 and ended on 31st May 2007. A comprehensive study tour of the Parliamentary Library and Hansard Service of two different parliaments (ACT Legislative Assembly/Federal Parliament of Australia) was arranged by Quinton Clements, Deputy Director of CDI.

This short brief here is written specifically on what was achieved and acquired in the area on Library.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this study tour was to try to gain as much training as we can in order that we can set up a Parliamentary Library in our newly formed government and also expand on Hansard Services in the House of Representatives.

These two areas being new in the ABG Parliamentary Services and with limited staffing, required capacity building in developing us and giving us the exposure to best practice abroad and as such the Canberra Parliaments.

3. PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARY

Two (2) different Parliamentary Libraries were visited. The Australian Parliament House of Representative Library was quite big as it caters for the 150 Members of the HOR and their staff whereas the ACT Legislative Assembly Parliamentary Library was a small one which was also shared with the Government (public servants). Despite the sizes of these libraries, they both had the sole purpose of serving the Members of their respective
parliaments in providing high quality information, analysis and advice to carry out their parliamentary and representational roles professionally.

**Services of a Parliamentary Library**

A Parliamentary Library is the reference point for all Parliaments in spite of its size. Its primary aim is to provide accurate, timely, relevant, impartial and confidential information to its clients. These clients are mainly Members of the Parliament, staff acting on behalf of the Members, Parliamentary Standing or Select Committees as well the Parliamentary Staff. Limited access may be given to others such as academics, etc.

The Parliamentary Library itself is made up of two branches, the Research Branch and the Information Access Branch. The Research Branch has specialists in sections such as Economics, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Law and Bills, Politics and Public Administration, Science, Technology, Environment and Resources, Social Policy and Statistics & Mapping whilst the Information Access which assists clients through Collection Management (acquisitions, cataloguing, serials); Publishing (internet, intranet, catalogue, databases, electronic media monitoring); Database Services (selection, compilation, maintenance and indexing for information databases).

**Basic Information Technology Equipment**

In order for a Parliament Library to efficiently provide services for its clients, it needs the following equipment: computer, relevant software, fax, scanner and photocopying machines, with adequate supply of library materials including paper, filing cupboards, files, stamps and record books, etc.

**Electronic Data/Information**

On observation at the two different Parliamentary Libraries in Canberra, I noticed that everything was done electronically. These libraries being connected to the internet accessed free information and resources relevant to their parliament and their libraries. These information are captured and stored by the library electronically in its own in-house database and are made available to staff and clients to use when needed in future. In this way, they also save a lot of space in their libraries instead of keeping hard copy versions.

**Suitable Model for ABG**

The ABG Parliamentary Services in setting up its Parliamentary may consider a smaller scale like the ACT Legislative Assembly Library. Though ABG Parliamentary Library is way behind in terms of information technology and resources, it can start on a basic set of core files. These files can be established based on local political, economic, social issues and areas of interests which are relevant to Bougainville and kept in the Library. More local information can be gained from the Government Ministries, Departments, NGOs and National Papers (press clippings) within Bougainville

4. **COMMENTS**

Through this trip, the Centre for Democratic Institutions made it possible for us to really acquire some basic knowledge on how we could lay down a foundation for a Parliamentary Library for Bougainville. This training attachment has made me see the importance of
having a Parliamentary Library to serve our Members of Parliament. It also plays a significant role in the law making process of our Autonomous Bougainville Region. Had it been more than a week, we will learn a lot from our Australian counterparts. Though they are more advance in terms of modern technology, this must not degrade the ABG hence its parliamentary staff to further enhance their knowledge and skills in such areas. Furthermore, a lot more of this training being facilitated by CDI will boost the parliamentary staff and be compatible to international standard.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to acknowledge the Centre for Democratic Institutions for facilitating this staff training attachment specifically Mr Quinton Clements, Deputy Director (CDI), Dr Benjamin Reilly, Mr Luke Hambly and Vicki Veness.

I would also like to thank our Speaker, Hon. Nick Peniai and the Clerk of Parliament, Mr Robert Tapi (ABG) for consultations between ABG and CDI on training programmes for Parliamentary Services staff. This training attachment though only a week was motivational.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the above and seeing the importance of a Parliamentary Library, I now make the following recommendations: -

- That the Parliamentary Services allocate adequate funding when formulating its budget estimates for 2008 to meet the needs of a new Parliamentary Library;
- That parliamentary staff pursue relevant library training and funding for such be included in the 2008 budget estimates for Parliamentary Services;
- That CDI continue to facilitate future training in such specialised areas in order to enhance parliamentary staff knowledge and skills;
- That ABG Parliamentary Services give the support that the Library needs to realise and achieve its objectives.

MICHAELYNE SABIN
Personal Assistant to the Speaker

8th June 2007