REPORT ON STAFF TRAINING ATTACHMENT
AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND PARLIAMENT

HANSARD

INTRODUCTION

I was most privileged to have been selected from the Parliamentary Services (Hansard) for a two weeks attachment with the New Zealand House of Representatives (Hansard), the Australian Parliament (Hansard), Australia and the ACT Legislative Assembly (Hansard) in Canberra.

NEW ZEALAND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

My trip to the New Zealand (House of Representatives) was funded by the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

My attachment in New Zealand took place on the 13th to 19th May 2007. A comprehensive study tour of the New Zealand House of Representative was prepared by Ms Fay Patterson, Senior Parliamentary Officer.

FEDERAL PARLIAMENT & A C T LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

My trip to the Australian House of Representatives was from the 28th May to the 1st June 2007 and was funded by the Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI). I was also accompanied by our Personal Assistant to the Speaker, Ms Michaelyne Sabin, also responsible for setting up the Parliamentary Services Library. As a requirement we are obliged to write a report to the CDI on the attachment covering skills gained and other related issues on future attachment programs.

Our study tour to the two different Parliaments in Australia (Federal and A C T Legislative) in Canberra was organized by Mr Quinton Clements, Deputy Director - CDI.
**Purpose**

The purpose of this trip was to gain as much as possible, some basic knowledge on how best to set up our Hansard and Library in the Autonomous Bougainville Government and also exposure to the modern technologies used in New Zealand and Australian Parliaments.

Hansard is new to the Autonomous Bougainville Government. Given the limited resources, funding and capacity building in our establishment, it has also given us the opportunity to see how these three different Parliaments operate.

**Observation**

Three different Hansard were visited, New Zealand House of Representative, Australian Parliament, A C T Legislative Assembly in Canberra. From observation, the three Hansard basically follow the same procedure in the way they operate.

I was most privileged to have the opportunity to actually attend and observe how the three different Hansard operate during their Sittings (Question time and presentation of the Budget in New Zealand, and also Question time in Australia/ACT Legislative Assembly) whilst I was on these attachments.

Speeches are transcribed directly from digital recordings of the debate, with staff present in the Chamber beyond the Table of the House to monitor the debate by recording the sequence of Speakers and any interjections. A transcript of the report is submitted to each staff member for correction, usually within two or three hours of the speech being made. The Hansard Report is a report in direct speech of all speeches made in the House, sub-edited to omit repetitions and redundancies. Members are tied to what they have said in the House and may make only minor or grammatical alterations to the report.

Interjections are reported only if the member speaking replies to them or remarks on them during the course of his or her speech.

Hansard is published by the order of the House. An uncorrected transcript of each day’s oral question period is made available on the Office of the Clerk’s website approximately two hours after the end of the question time.

A corrected daily Hansard is available in print to members approximately one week after the debate takes place and the daily reports are combined into publications with a pink cover known as the Hansard “pinks” containing one week’s reports. These are put for sale in the bookshops. There is no copyright in Hansard.

Copies of the Hansard pink are made available free to each members. These pinks are bound into volumes and the volumes are numbered consequently, beginning with the number one, and usually cited by the year, volume and page number.

Minutes of proceedings are taken by the Clerk for inclusion in the House Journals.
I also had the privilege to observe how the Questions are processed in the New Zealand Parliament. Questions may be either for oral answer in the House itself or for written answer, in which case the reply to the question is not delivered in the House but is published electronically.

Notices of questions for written answer may be given in by a time set as 10.30am on any working day during a session of Parliament. Questions for written answer may only be lodged in electronic form and must be signed by way of affixing an electronic signature by the member.

When lodged with the Clerk, all questions are checked for compliance with the Standing Orders. If a question is not in order as lodged, it is returned to the member concerned or it may be accepted subject to amendment or authentication of a statement or quotation contained in it.

Written questions are distributed electronically to the Ministers to whom they are addressed shortly after they have been accepted and are then published electronically on the same day they are received.

**BROADCASTING OF PROCEEDINGS**

**Radio**
All proceedings are broadcast by the Radio Stations. In the case of New Zealand, continuous sound broadcasts of the proceedings are made by Radion New Zealand Limited on its network. A condition under which the broadcast is made is agreed between Radio New Zealand Limited and the Clerk. Payments are met by the Office of the Clerk for providing that service.

All proceedings are also broadcast on Radio by the Australian Parliament and the A C T Legislative Assembly.

**Television**
In New Zealand, the proceedings at the Opening of the Parliament were first televised in 1962 and are now regularly broadcast on television. Television cameras are often admitted to the Chamber on Special occasions, such as the delivery of the Budget etc.

New Zealand is still in the process of acquiring its own television for live coverage of all the proceedings of the Parliament.

Unlike the Australian Parliament, it has a huge television network that televises all the proceedings of the Parliament live.

The A C T Legislative Assembly also has a television network that televises its proceedings but on a small scale.
In House/ Electronic Data Base
All in all, everything is done electronically. All proceedings are stored electronically in their in-house database and is made available to Hansard Staff (Reporters and Editors). Each staff can access the Hansard within their in-house data base during transcription. In this way, service delivery to the members of the Parliament is very effective. ABG is way behind in terms of information technology and resources; we can use whatever resources is available to us.

It is also important that we set up a network, our own database for easy access to information within the Parliamentary Services.

Training
In all the three Hansard visited, I have noticed that there are specialists in all sections of the Parliament.

Comments
The basic knowledge gained from this trip could be used to set up the foundation of our Hansard and Library.

The CPA and CDI has made it possible for us to acquire some knowledge on how best we can set the foundation for Hansard and the Library. Such courses/training provided by CDI is of paramount importance to newly established governments such as the ABG. It is important that the basic knowledge acquired is implemented correctly with the limited resources available for the benefit of our Parliament.

Training of Parliamentary staff in various positions in the service is very important. This is one of the very important issues which struck my attention whilst on this attachment. CDI, as one of its aims is to improve parliamentary governance and can provide such assistance in training of staff members in this regard. It has at the same time, made me realize the importance of training for its staff (IT) to properly manage the operations of Hansard and the Library.

Hansard and Library are linked together in providing information, research and reference services as required by the members of the Parliament, officers and staff of the Parliamentary Services and other staff employed within the building.

The two sponsors have made it possible for us to see the importance of setting up a good foundation (Hansard & Library) for the Autonomous Bougainville Government to fully serve our members of the Parliament.

Recommendation
Based on the above observations, the following recommendations are considered:-
The Autonomous Bougainville Government (Parliamentary Services) allocates adequate funding in its budget estimates for year 2008 to cater for Hansard and the Library Services (for procurement & training purposes).

Training of its staff is of paramount importance. It is highly recommended that staff be given training, be it IT or in other related areas.

Parliamentary Services make it a priority to engage IT personnel to set up its In-house Data base within the Parliamentary Services.

There is so much information that we can be accessed from other Parliaments such as New Zealand and Australia if we are connected to Internet. This can only come about if we are connect to a server and is the cheapest mode of communication.

The Autonomous Bougainville Government through the Parliamentary Services engages Radio Bougainville to broadcast on air - live all the proceedings of the House of Representatives during its Sitting. This is so that the rural population is in tune with the Governments day to day operation for their benefit and the Region as a whole.

Mrs Loretta Masiria
Hansard Secretary