Notes for introductory remarks by

The Hon Bruce Billson MP

Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Trade

At the

2005 Centre for Democratic Institutions Annual Address

Parliament House, Canberra, 16 February 2005
Thank you Roland (Roland Rich, MC and Director of CDI)

Welcome to the Honourable Donald Kalpokas, Former Prime Minister of Vanuatu

Excellencies, my parliamentary colleagues, ladies and gentlemen.

I am very pleased to join you today to introduce the 2005 CDI Annual Address.

As many of you may be aware, CDI was established by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Downer, in 1998.

Last year, the Minister refined CDI’s work to focus on political parties and parliamentary processes.

The geographic scope was to concentrate on priority countries for the aid program: Indonesia, East Timor and Melanesia – Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Fiji and Vanuatu.

CDI’s work will complement many of the broader good governance activities already being undertaken through bilateral and regional programs.

We are all well aware of the need for good governance in our region.
Nearly two years ago, the Pacific Islands Forum leaders issued *The Auckland Declaration* which agreed on key aims for the region including economic growth, sustainable development, good governance and improved security.

The Australian Government sees good governance as fundamental to the development efforts of our Pacific Island partners.

This week officials from both the Department of Foreign Affairs and AusAID are consulting with Government of Vanuatu on a new joint aid strategy.

Central to this strategy is the commitment to transparency, democracy, accountability, independence – key elements of good governance.

We all know the importance of supporters for different causes; the need to have strong democracies to ensure the enacting of fair laws and delivery of services in our communities.

The Honourable Donald Kalpokas has been one such supporter of democracy and good governance in Vanuatu.

He brings a long history of engagement with political parties and the parliamentary processes, having been one of the founders of the Vanua’aku Pati in the early 1970s and an elected Member of Parliament for nearly two and a half decades.
I am sure his address today will be thought provoking and entertaining.

Will you join me in welcoming the Honourable Donald Kalpokas to deliver the 2005 CDI Annual Address.