Report on

Pacific Parliamentary Retreat

Hosted by the

Centre for Democratic Institutions

Centre for the Contemporary Pacific

of the

Australian National University

Canberra

4-8 December 2000
The theme of this year's Retreat was The Fragility of Westminster Democracy in the Pacific. Fourteen parliamentarians from 5 countries and territories participated in this year's Retreat. They came from Fiji, New Caledonia, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. A list of participants is below. The PNG participants were unable to attend because of a budget session in Waigani this week.

The program for the Retreat (below) comprised a mix of workshop discussions as well as observation of parliamentary sessions and discussions with leading Australian parliamentarians including the Hon Neil Andrew, Speaker of the House, the Hon Margaret Reid, President of the Senate and the Hon Alexander Downer, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

There were five separate seminar sessions in the course of the Retreat, each opened by a presenter from the ANU and then followed by three presentations from participants after which a general discussion ensued. The participants from New Caledonia were provided with 'whispering interpretation' from two interpreters and Roland Rich translated their interventions into English.

Monday 4 December - Opening Ceremony and 'Representing the People'

Some 30 people attended the opening ceremony. Mrs Agnes Shea welcomed participants on behalf of the Ngunnawal people. Professor John Richards, Deputy Vice Chancellor, gave the address of welcome from the ANU (below). Professor Brij Lal welcomed participants to the Retreat (below) and Senator Kay Patterson gave the Opening Address (below). Mrs Akanisi Koroitamana responded on behalf of the participants.

The seminar that afternoon was on the theme of Representing the People and Roland Rich made the opening presentation. He argued that Representative Democracy has at its heart the concept of representation. Representation is assured by an open electoral process that is free and fair. Once elected, the Parliamentarian is seen as a representative. But the reality is that a Parliamentarian is required to represent many different groups and interests.

In his presentation he identified ten different influences on a Parliamentarian. Not all Parliamentarians will have all influences affect them at all times, but at some time they can expect to be under each of these ten influences.

1. The individual; the parliamentarian is an individual with his/ her own moral and intellectual forces, his/ her own conscience and beliefs. Ultimately, the Parliamentarian must follow his/ her own conscience in taking difficult decisions. It is from this that the Westminster expression 'conscience vote' comes from, when the political party allows the Parliamentarian to decide for him/ herself.

2. The family; the family is an essential support base for a parliamentarian to which a very significant duty is owed. The duty is a personal one and the parliamentarian
must know the extent of that personal duty and also the limits of what can be done from the official perspective.

3. The interest group; parliamentarians must have a base of support from which to run. That base might be a cause-oriented group (NGO), an economic/trade union group, an ethnic or geographic group. One should not forget one's supporters but one must also balance the duty and loyalty owed to the support base with the wider duties of a parliamentarian.

4. The political party; strong democracies have strong political parties and the strength of a party can often be measured in the discipline it can impose on its members. What are the limits of this discipline? How can parliamentarians determine the boundaries beyond which the Party whip's instructions should not go? Many Pacific countries have experienced problems with maintaining strong party structures, leading to Parliamentarians switching allegiances. This has been seen as a major problem in government stability.

5. The constituents; once elected, a parliamentarian represents all the electorate including those who did not vote for him/her. Does this pose an ethical dilemma? Will supporters expect special favours? Parliamentarians should not ask constituents whether or not they voted for him/her. They are constituents requiring the parliamentarian's services regardless.

6. The parliamentary committee; a parliamentarian builds expertise in certain areas often associated with membership of parliamentary committees. These areas of expertise open up a broader range of contacts and interest groups and lead to specialised knowledge on matters of national importance. Here then may be a new set of interest groups relying on the support and judgement of the parliamentarian.

7. The Parliament; there needs to be a certain loyalty to parliament as an institution. This comes out most clearly in the deference shown to the Speaker and his rulings. But it raises broader issues of ethics as a public officer and support for the institution of parliamentary democracy. Parliamentarians should see themselves as others see them - as role models.

8. The national interest; a parliamentarian should also think beyond parochial politics or support bases as there will be issues on which the national interest must come first, even before local interests and even beyond personal support bases. These can often pose the most difficult dilemmas.

9. The international community; we live in a global village and there are strong links with regional countries and a broad link with the entire international community. On global issues such as environment, health, international criminal law, there may be a broader interest at play on which the parliamentarian must give careful consideration.
10. The spiritual master; to whom we all owe a higher duty. People in the Pacific are religious and bring their beliefs into all aspects of life. But this should not be confused with the role of the church hierarchy. This duty is best achieved through the individual's conscience and beliefs and so the range of duties and loyalties has come full circle.

The ten loyalties may often be in complete harmony and thus no difficult issues arise. However, in the course of a parliamentary career it is likely that issues raising conflicting interests will arise and a parliamentarian will have to take a decision as to which loyalty to honour and which loyalty cannot be honoured.

The three presenters commented on different aspects of these issues. There was a tendency in the Pacific to blur the lines between professional and personal obligations and this caused particular problems for parliamentarians. Public expectations were high and often unrealistic and it was difficult for a parliamentarian to meet these. It was important to accept that once elected, a parliamentarian represented all the people. After all, the parliamentary salary was paid for from taxes paid by all the people. The need to think globally and act locally was particular acute in the Pacific where it was easy to be cut off from international issues. It was important to keep one's attention also on the issue of poverty, as this was the top priority of ordinary people.

The settler communities in the Pacific should play a full role in political life according to one of the presenters. They belonged to the region and thought in the Pacific way and identified themselves more with the Pacific than with the metropole. There was no room for a mea culpa mentality for events that occurred one hundred years ago. It was important to keep focused on tomorrow rather than on yesterday.

The discussion looked at ways in which politicians made promises to the electorate by way of a manifesto but then usually forgot about it once in government. The recent coalition government of Fiji had tried to stick to the manifesto. In the Solomons, the normal way of forging government after the elections was to engage in horse trading for positions in government but this rarely included discussion of policies. In Samoa, there had been no need for a coalition in recent times and so the campaign promises had more weight. In Vanuatu, the situation tended to follow a division of the spoils among the victorious parties after an election and this meant that policy remained in the hands of unelected public servants.

The detail of the election promises was also discussed. The key to victory was often to find a catchy slogan to capture the public's imagination rather than to produce detailed policy statements. The issue of poverty was overriding but it was also becoming clear that correcting public sector mismanagement was a critical step in overcoming it.

There was also a discussion on the separation of church and state. The role of the church as an important participant in civil society was agreed by all.
Tuesday 5 December - ‘Does Governance Matter?’ and Question Time

Professor Ron Duncan introduced the topic of 'Does Governance Matter to Development?', recently analyzed in a World Bank study by Kaufman et al (http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2000/06/kauf.htm) by looking at a definition of governance;

Broadly: “The traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised”

Of which there are 3 Dimensions

1. The process by which governments are selected, held accountable, monitored, and replaced

2. The capacity of governments to manage resources efficiently, and formulate, implement, and enforce sound policies and regulations

3. The respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions

He then looked at six indicators of governance;

(a) “Voice” and Accountability - political process, civil liberties, political rights

(b) Political instability and violence - likelihood of overthrow of government, volatile coalitions

(c) Government effectiveness - quality of public service provision, quality of bureaucracy, independence of public service, “credibility” of government policies

(d) Regulatory burden - price controls, red tape

(e) Rule of law - incidence of crime, impartiality of the judiciary, enforceability of contracts

(f) Graft - perceptions of corruption (“petty” vs “grand”)

Professor Duncan then examined a number of the issues involved in making these sorts of studies and some of the methodology in assembling the data. The conclusion reached by the study was that there was a strong, positive causal relationship between governance components and economic development indicators. One standard deviation increase in any of governance component indicators leads to 2½
to 4-fold increase in per capita GDP (or decline in infant mortality) or 15-25% increase in adult literacy.

Another conclusion was that governance reform needed to lead to a market economy and that some centrally planned economies had only transformed themselves into license economies where cronies enjoyed the benefits of association with the leaders.

The three commentators raised various issues in response. The critical need to uphold the rule of law was emphasised, even when this did not meet one's personal aspirations. Without rule of law there could be no effective governance. Fiji was now trying to return to the rule of law and there was no reason why this would not be of benefit to the country.

Vanuatu had come to the conclusion that governance was a key consideration in development. In the past, political appointments were seen as one of the spoils of office and consequently there had not been a civil service based on merit. The Ombudsman had criticized this on many occasions. Merit would now be the key principle and a Constitutional Reform Committee would be appointed to look at a number of issues including the role of custom law.

Samoa was trying to move towards greater transparency and accountability in decision making. Education and health remained the government's top priorities and the parliament would play a more active role in scrutiny of the annual reports of government departments and corporations.

The discussion first dealt with the issue of resources for governance. The argument was developed that the sophisticated institutions of government were expensive to run especially if overlapping oversight bodies were established. South Pacific countries did not have the budget base to undertake this role and donors had to step in and help, even with recurrent expenditure. Professor Duncan agreed that OECD countries collected up to 40% of GDP while developing countries collected less than 20%. But within the public expenditure budget in OECD countries, only about one third was spent on institutions and the balance on welfare in one form or another. Developing countries spent very little on welfare and therefore were in a position to meet the cost of essential institutions if they did not spend money on propping up government businesses.

The discussion turned to use of customary laws and institutions as a means to lessen the load on the formal institutions of government. Chiefly mediation of local disputes might be a useful step but a disappointed party could always then take the matter to court. A nother problem with turning to custom to resolve institutional issues was that in Melanesia and indeed throughout the Pacific it was male dominated.

Corruption was the next issue with one participant saying how the government tried to influence MPs by appointing them as heads of Government Corporations. This job
needed to be given to a person who was qualified. The comment was also made that once in politics, business people surround you and offer you money to run campaigns. The only solution to this was to have public funding of political parties according to another participant. There was discussion on what constituted a bribe and what was a customary gift. The latter was usually given ceremoniously in public and was of relatively modest value.

The final issue discussed was land compensation. Experience had shown that one-off payments to landowners did not solve the broader societal issues, nor did they resolve perceived inter-generational inequities. Compensation funds had to be invested for the benefit of the community as a whole. Professor Duncan introduced the notion of a bundle of rights in relation to land to accommodate different land uses. There needed to be a deeper investigation of the various needs associated with the land and discussion to find ways of accommodating these needs.

In the afternoon, the group observed Question Time as guests of the Speaker of the House of Representatives. While they had been forewarned about the rowdiness of the session, some were still shocked at the level of interjection. One of the Opposition members was expelled from the session. Some noted the great value of being able to ask any question about any aspect of government as all portfolios were represented. Others thought it was a good idea to have shadow portfolio spokespersons as a good way of maintaining accountability on the Minister by having someone able to match this expertise.

Wednesday 6 December - Political Parties, Question Time in the Senate and meetings with the Foreign Minister, the Speaker and the President of the Senate

Professor Brij Lal opened the session with a discussion of the period of hand over from colonial rule. Some islands developed independence movements such as Samoa, Vanuatu and New Caledonia but most accepted the decolonisation process and accepted both the territorial boundaries and the institutions handed over upon independence. Also, many of the basic concepts such as the secular nature of government, the independence of the bureaucracy and civilian control of the army were accepted. Also agreed was the essential need for political parties.

Looking at Fiji, political parties first split along ethnic lines. A fragmentation of the indigenous electorate de-stabilised this system. The 1997 Constitution was designed to lead if not to multi-ethnic political parties then at least to coalition of various ethnic parties in government. The problem of maintaining this coalition proved to be the Achilles heel of the new government.

Another problem was the lack of accountability to the electorate in relation to campaign promises. Parties won votes on a certain platform but in the manoeuvres to form government, compromises were made without any reference to that party’s supporters.
Some chiefs consider the political parties to be the problem with politics in Fiji but it is too late to go back to simply a chiefly system. There is also an important gender issue to resolve which would not be possible under traditional structures.

The discussion continued to focus on the Fijian system under the 1997 Constitution. The point was made that the system was working and that different groups were getting together to resolve issues. The coalition parties had campaigned on the basis of a manifesto and in government were determined to deliver on their promises. But in the end some with political and financial interests had a greater stake in stopping the system from working.

There is a problem with the functioning of political parties. Many were financed by an individual and that person had dictatorial control over the party. Opposition from within often led to someone being disciplined and splitting away from the party.

In Vanuatu, politics has become a dirty word. It was not always so. Political parties had initially followed a linguistic and religious divide, English speaking Protestants in the Vanuaku Party and French speaking Catholics in the WMP. 20 years later, this grip is loosening and is being increasingly seen as a colonial hangover. Vanuatu political parties have had a long history of fragmentation. Dissenters cannot comfortably be accommodated and if they are disciplined they might split away and form their own political party. Perhaps there should be laws governing the operation of political parties providing for more transparency, requiring a minimum membership and more formality in terms of a constitution and the appointment of officers of the party.

In the Solomon Islands, political parties were weak and people acknowledged that parliamentarians were usually elected on their own personal strengths rather than for reason of party affiliation. Most people still thought in tribal terms and this limited the ability to campaign on issues. Politicians could switch party allegiance at will leading to instability in government. Parliamentarians had great difficulty getting re-elected thus limiting the experience of parliamentarians.

A discussion followed on funding for political parties including the possibility of government funding though it was expected that this would be unpopular in the electorate. Voters still expected to be feted on election day with transport and food and this was a cost that the individual candidate had to meet personally.

There followed a discussion on the attractions of compulsory voting as a means to take the pressure off candidates to ‘get the vote out’. Fiji had passed a compulsory voting law but it remained unimplemented. There was interest in compulsory voting in Vanuatu also.
Samoa had developed a stronger party system but the point was made that the strength of the system depended on the strength of the Opposition. There had been a split in the 1980s and a solid Opposition party had formed which had done its homework and was now in office.

In New Caledonia, the FLNKS had been formed by 5 political parties and a trade union. It remained a broad front organisation and it was sometimes difficult to maintain the support of all the elements within the group. In the late 1980s a decision had to be taken whether to continue the independence struggle by militant means or whether to accept the political process and seek electoral office. The FLNKS had adopted the latter course but this had meant losing one of the political parties in its ranks.

The final discussion of the morning concerned gender issues. UNIFEM in Fiji had assisted women to organise themselves and this led to a number of women running for office. In Vanuatu there had been consideration given to forming a women's party but in the end it was seen as best for women to join mainstream political parties. In New Caledonia, French law would apply to the next municipal elections. That meant that half the names on the party list must be women. The political leadership of New Caledonia had initially protested the imposition of this policy on the territory but after a large demonstration by women in Noumea, the rule has now been accepted. In the Loyalty Islands it was proving very difficult to find good and willing women candidates among the Melanesian community. Before they could accept, they had to seek the permission of the family chief, the clan chief and the grand chief.

In the afternoon the group observed Question Time in the Senate as guests of Senate President Margaret Reid. One participant noted that whereas the major parties were constantly playing at partisan politics, the Democrats had asked very searching questions on substantive issues (one question was on detention while awaiting extradition and another on debt forgiveness for Zambia).

The participants met Foreign Minister the Hon Alexander Downer who spoke in his capacity as a fellow parliamentarian. He noted the key importance of following rules of parliamentary conduct whether written or conventional and that Australian practice built on British practice with some borrowing of institutional design from the United States system. As an example he said that there was no binding requirement to hold Question Time but both sides of politics accepted it as an essential tool for accountability. Every Minister took Question Time very seriously and prepared for it by studying matters brought to his or her attention by officials.

Australia was proud of its democratic traditions and was the 6th oldest continuously functioning democracy in the world and South Australia was the second jurisdiction after New Zealand to give women the vote. There was no alternative to democracy and this could be seen in the absence of legitimacy of the Speight group in Fiji. Democracy should not be seen as the transfer of a western institution to other
countries. People were 95% the same everywhere and were only 5% different. All countries needed a system that allowed for contestation of policy ideas, limits on the use of power, accountability for government spending and transparency of government decisions. Only democracy had shown itself capable of meeting these needs.

The participants then met with the Hon Neil Andrew, Speaker, and Senator Margaret Reid, Senate President, and held a lively exchange on the means of maintaining discipline in the houses of parliament during Question Time. There was also discussion on the role of Presiding Officers in the management of the Parliament. Ms Kelly Hoare, Member for Charlton, who had previously met some of the participants, joined this meeting.

Thursday 7 December - Dealing with Extra-Constitutional Forces

Dr Sinclair Dinnen led discussion with a commentary on the importance of Constitutionalism as the founding legal document of a nation and often as a statement of its identity. It was of critical importance but could have difficulty being upheld in times of conflict. There has always been conflict on Earth but in recent years the nature of conflict has tended to change from state to state conflict and to emerge as ethnic conflicts within states.

In these internal conflicts there were often two fault lines. The most obvious dividing line was usually ethnic but below the surface there was often an issue of the distribution of resources. There was little point focusing on the surface conflict if the underlying reason for it remained neglected. So these conflicts were often complex and resistant to quick solutions, there was a phenomenon of the durable disorder emerging in some areas of the Pacific. Sometimes in the short term, there was no alternative other than to manage these conflicts rather than resolve them.

Dr Dinnen concluded that in all conflict situations the astute observer would ask who was profiting from the continuation of the conflict. Sometimes it was businessmen and often it was young men with guns who would lose their status in peacetime.

The discussion began with a look at a society, Samoa, which had avoided violent upheaval. The institutions of government were respected and there was a strong effort to make them work. The severe punishment of banishment would meet any violent rebel. Samoan society did not have the ethnic division of some other countries. Occasionally there was inter-village conflict, sometimes stimulated by membership of different Christian faiths but Samoan culture was accepted by all and violent political conflict was thus avoided.

The Solomon Islands, on the other hand, had seen recent conflict and had suffered for it. The 5 June coup was a process begun by disgruntled politicians with the connivance of parts of the police and armed forces. The subsequent vote in
parliament to oust the government was won through a process of intimidation and threats. Democracy was therefore under siege in the Solomons.

The commentator argued that Australia had helped to a certain extent but there was much more to be done and an injustice to be righted. There should be a code of conduct requiring politicians to stick to the constitution and this should be backed by measures such as a ban on international travel. If the international community preaches the need for democracy then it must be under an obligation to help protect that democracy.

The next comment concerned New Caledonia, which had teetered on the verge of a general insurrection but had returned to a path of dialogue and accommodation. In the mid-1980s, New Caledonia had seen road blocks, violence and death. But the Matignon Accords of 1988 had brought the situation back to the political process and the FLNKS had decided to accept that process and stand for office democratically. The Noumea Accords of 1998 established a process of increasing self-government within New Caledonia and its three sectors leading in 15-20 years to a referendum on independence. There were many issues to be tackled such as disparities in wealth, land claims and the role of customary law but peace and stability had been assured by the Noumea Accords and France was acting as a guarantor of those Accords.

There was a dissenting voice from another participant from New Caledonia criticising the Noumea Accords. The referendum process was skewed to allow for independence as it could be repeated twice if the 'correct' result was not achieved. Voting eligibility was also skewed as people arriving after 1988 would have no right to vote even though by 2014 they might have been living in New Caledonia for 25 years.

The discussion began with a reference to Samual Huntington's 'Clash of Civilizations' and the deceptive ease of simply looking at ethnic conflict in the region as part of the clash of civilizations. The reality was that behind the ethnic conflict there was usually a resource or land use conflict and that if the economic issue were resolved then the ethnic harmony issue would also resolve itself. That was why development was so important. And as we had seen in Professor Duncan's presentation, governance matters to development.

The discussion turned to the role of the international community in defending democracy. Should there be a standing South Pacific force for this work? Should the big countries in the region assume the responsibility for guaranteeing the protection of democratically elected governments. The example of the PNG force supported by Australia to maintain the territorial integrity of Vanuatu after the Santo secession in the late 1970s was examined. The current peace monitors in Solomons and Bougainville were cited as examples even though their role was limited. On the other hand, there were clearly limits on what foreign intervention could accomplish.
Friday 8 December - Is Westminster Appropriate in the Pacific?

The final morning was in effect a summary session led by Dr Peter Larmour and Dr Sharon Bessell and based on a paper by Dr Larmour reviewing the transition to Westminster democracy in the Pacific.

Discussions about Westminster in the Pacific take place in a context of ideas about imported institutions and donors promoting a particular view of good governance. While the focus here is on Westminster, the same issues would arise if it were a model exported from Paris or Washington under discussion. Samoa provides an example of breaking with exported ideas and finding a compromise between local and external ideas. The idea that democracy, and the Westminster system of governance, is a foreign flower in the Pacific remains strong, and has re-emerged recently with challenges to democracy in Fiji and Solomon Islands.

Dr Larmour’s paper then draws on policy transfer as a framework for analysis. That framework raises a series of questions:

**When** did the transfer of ideas take place?

**How** did the transfer occur. Was it forced, imposed, or voluntary. Within Europe there is a great deal of policy transfer, which is voluntary. There is a sense that during decolonisation in the Pacific, ideas were pushed onto people. This sense continues today as a result of loan conditionality.

**Who** was responsible for transferring ideas/policies? In Samoa for example, Constitutional advisers were from New Zealand.

**What** is being transferred and how are laws received? There are two views here: (1) law is highly mobile and moves quickly and easily; (2) laws should reflect the history and culture of a place and its peoples. There is a question of adaptation here, and how laws change as they are transferred.

Dr Larmour then commented on these questions in relation to the Pacific:

**When**: Decolonisation is generally seen as the period of transfer, but this was not the only period of transfer. Tonga was the first country of the region to adopt a Westminster-style Constitution, and this was in 1875.

**How**: There are examples of successful imposition of ideas – the Constitutions of Germany and Japan in the wake of World War Two are examples. In the Pacific the adoption of Westminster systems was a condition of decolonisation and of subsequent aid. There was some degree of imposition.

**Who**: Missionaries were important in the Pacific. Issues of compromise between international and domestic pressures are now apparent in Fiji. This reveals the two faces of the nation state: one inward looking seeking to satisfy domestic demands and one outward looking seeking to satisfy international pressures.

**What**: Are laws reflections of the personality of a country or are they essentially technical instruments to be borrowed if they are effective? Imposition/transfer is not just from the West to the Pacific, but also sidewards. For example, PNG looked to
Tanzania on how to deal with issues of corruption; Fiji looked to South Africa on issues of race.

In the Solomon Islands during the late colonial period, there was some effort to have a Governing Council. This system would have operated without an opposition and would have sat both in private and in public. There was some sense that this was more suited to the Solomon Islands. The pressure for Westminster-based institutions came from Members of Parliament in the Solomon Islands who wanted the international respectability that a recognised system of government was seen to offer.

The first commentator discussed the situation in the Solomon Islands. Prior to British Administration, people were vulnerable to commercial interests of traders. Land and resources were vital issues. The establishments of plantations in Queensland and Fiji gave rise to the practice of ‘blackbirding’. This gave Britain a reason to establish the Solomon Islands as a protectorate in the period 1883–88. This status remained until the 1970s.

Initially the British High Commissioner responsible for administering the Solomon Islands was based in Fiji. In the post World War Two period, the High Commissioner was resident in the Solomon Islands. The Solomon Islands was arranged into administrative districts. The promotion of the idea of independence came from an educated elite. The idea of a Governing Council, discussed by Dr Larmour, was discussed and people began to search for the form of government they wanted to adopt.

A Westminster System was advanced as the best model, but it was discussed within the elite and not taken to the people and thus was not well understood by all. In 1978 the Solomon Islands became an independent state based on majority rule. The provisions necessary for democracy were included in the Constitution.

The Solomon Islands Constitution provides for a first-past-the-post electoral system. Democracy is equated with majority rule and is based on the principle that those in parliament have the mandate of the people. But if there are more than two candidates in first-past-the-post system, the losing candidates combined often poll more than the winning candidate. How can the winning candidate be said to have the mandate of the majority? The first-past-the-post system does not seem to be compatible with democracy. The time has come for the Solomon Islands to reconsider the first-past-the-post system and only then can politicians be said to have the mandate of the people.

Another commentator discussed the situation in New Caledonia. At present there are dangers threatening democracy in the Pacific, and there is a need to continue to fight for democracy. There is a need to consult with people and sensitise them to the problems, and it is especially important to speak to young people. The problems of drugs, alcohol and corruption lead to rebellion among some. Even in parts of New Caledonia that have kept the traditional values, there are problems and
disillusionment among young people. There is a virus in the traditional house, but the vaccine has not been found. In the past in both New Caledonia and France school curricula included lessons on moral issues. These lessons no longer exist. If you want to stop delinquency there is a need to go to the root of the problem. Parents and teachers need to fight against delinquency.

The discussion first concentrated on the issue of having the people accept Westminster concepts. There was a problem with young people and the drift to the urban areas by rural people. The key to this problem was education. In Samoa many people had scholarships to study in New Zealand at the time of independence. When there are enough people who understand the system then there will be greater popular support for democracy and the possibility of developing home-grown institutions will be strengthened.

There was also a discussion of electoral systems that best reflected the wishes of the people and also led to stable government. The concept of voting was relatively new to the Pacific which previously had systems based on hereditary chiefs or Melanesian big man concepts. A blend had to be found. Samoa may be an example but limiting the right to stand for Parliament may not be accepted elsewhere. The issue of popular support democratically expressed will come to a head in New Caledonia when the 2014 referendum is held. The current situation is widely accepted because it has brought peace and stability. But will the people accept the eventual referendum result?

The discussion turned again to the role of the international community to defend democracy. One area that needed review was the flow of small arms to the trouble spots in the Pacific. These arms had fuelled conflicts and thought had to be given to controlling their importation into the region.

Evaluation

The feedback from the participants was very positive with all agreeing that the Retreat allowed them to think over large issues in a way that was not possible in the hurly burly of everyday political life. They asked that the Retreat be held annually and that consideration be given to holding it at times in a Pacific country.
Monday 4 December
10.30 am Opening Ceremony
Master of Ceremonies: Roland Rich, Director, CDI
Welcome from Ngunnawal People: Agnes Shea
Welcome to the ANU: Professor John Richards, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, ANU,
Opening Address: Senator Kay Patterson, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Foreign Affairs
Welcome to the Retreat: Professor Brij Lal, Director, CCP
Response on behalf of participants: Ms Akanisi Koroitamana
12.00 Welcome lunch
2.00 – 5.00 pm Representing the People – Mr Roland Rich (Presenter)
Discussants: Ms Akanisi Koroitamana, Mr Patauave Etuale; Mr Guy George
6.00 – 8.00 pm Cocktail reception, Michigan Room, Rydges Lakeside

Tuesday 5 December
9.00 – 12.00 Does Governance Matter? – Professor Ron Duncan (Presenter)
Discussants: The Hon. Leo B. Smith, The Hon. Mr Iarris Naunun, Mr Ulu Vaomalo Ulu Kini MP
1.30 pm Coach travel from Rydges to Parliament House
2.00 – 3.00 pm Observe Question Time in House of Representatives

Wednesday 6 December
9.00 – 12.00 Political Parties – Professor Brij Lal (Presenter)
Discussants: Mr Krishna Datt, The Hon. Mr Joe Natuman, The Hon. Daniel Kwanairara
1.30 pm Coach travel from Rydges to Parliament House
2.00 – 3.00 pm Observe Question Time in the Senate
3.15 – 4.15 pm Tour of Parliament House
4.15 pm Meeting with Mr Downer
5.00 pm Meeting with Presiding Officers

Thursday 7 December
9.00 – 12.00 Dealing with Extra Constitutional forces – Dr Sinclair Dinnen (Presenter)
Discussants: Mr Leilua Punivalu MP, The Hon. Alfred Sasako, Mr Germain Padome
2.30 – 5.30 pm Visit National Aquarium
7.30 pm Coach transfer to Novotel, Northbourne Ave, Canberra City
8.00 pm Farewell dinner - Novotel (together with members of the CDI Consultative Group)

Friday 8 December
9.00 – 12.00 How Appropriate is Westminster in the Pacific? – Dr Peter Larmour (Presenter), Dr Sharon Bessell (Rapporteur)
Discussants: The Hon. Job Tausinga, Mr Robert Paouta Naxué
Afternoon  Free
PARTICIPANTS LIST

FIJI
Ms Akanisi KOROITAMANA
Former Member of Parliament
Hon. Leo B. SMITH
Former Member of Parliament
Mr Krishna DATT
Former Member of Parliament

VANUATU
The Hon. Mr Iarris NAUNUN
Member of Parliament
The Hon. Mr Joe NATUMAN
Member of Parliament

SAMOA
Mr LEILUA Punivalu MP
Member of Parliament
Mr PATAUAVE Etuale MP
Member of Parliament
Mr ULU Vaomalo Ulu Kini MP
Member of Parliament

SOLOMON ISLANDS
The Hon. Job TAUSINGA
MP for North New Georgia
The Hon. Alfred SASAKO
MP for East Kwaio
The Hon. Daniel KWANAIRARA
MP for North Malaita

NEW CALEDONIA
Mr Guy GEORGE
Member of Parliament
Mr Robert Paouta NAXUE
Member of Parliament
Mr Germain PADOME
Member of Parliament