Welcome to CDI.NEWS from the Centre for Democratic Institutions, Australia.

CDI is Australia’s foremost democracy promotion and training institution, working in the area of good governance (particularly parliaments, judiciaries, civil society and media) with a geographic focus on Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific.

CDI’s mission:
- To harness Australian and international best practice in support of developing countries' needs for democratic governance

CDI aims to provide:
- high quality training programs in key democratic institutions and processes
- in-country technical assistance
- applied research

CDI’s core budget is provided by AusAID, Australia’s Agency for International Development.

CDI.NEWS will keep you informed periodically of activities and upcoming events at CDI.

This edition:

1. THIRD PACIFIC PARLIAMENTARY RETREAT 2001
The Third CDI Pacific Parliamentary Retreat was held in Brisbane from 3-7 December 2001 involving 15 elected representatives nominated by their parliaments’ Speakers. The participants were from Fiji, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea and Samoa. The focus of this year's Retreat was 'Accountability' and CDI was privileged to have as a partner organisation the Key Centre for Ethics, Law, Justice and Governance of Griffith University. The Retreat focused on the wide-ranging and innovative accountability regime put in place in Queensland following the disturbing findings of the Fitzgerald Inquiry a decade ago.

View the report and pictures
Parliament of Fiji
Parliament of New Caledonia
Government of Samoa
Queensland Parliament
KCELJG at Griffith University

2. PNG PUBLIC AFFAIRS REPORTING WORKSHOP
Journalists from across Papua New Guinea attended a week-long workshop in Port Moresby in November aimed at developing skills in reporting public affairs in PNG and bringing a more sustained and professional approach to the task of reporting government. The workshop, which was run jointly by CDI and the Centre for International Journalism (CIJ) at the University of Queensland, sought to help the Media Council of PNG achieve its goal of lifting the standards of journalism in PNG.
3. PACIFIC JOURNALISTS TRAINING PROGRAM
A group of 13 journalists from the southwest Pacific and East Timor sharpened their skills in reporting on government and the economy in a three-week program in Brisbane run jointly by CDI the Centre for International Journalism (CIJ) at the University of Queensland.

The program, similar to the one run in 2000, was organized around the planned Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). After taking part in a seven-day workshop at the Centre for Independent Journalism at the University of Queensland (UQ), the journalists reported on various CHOGM related events and continued with other activities including, planning and creating a new website.

4. VANUATU DEMOCRACY LEARNING CIRCLES WORKSHOP
In October as part of CDI’s Pacific program, a democracy learning circles workshop was held outside Port Vila for Vanuatu NGO leaders. The workshop and project aim to contribute to the development of an effective and active civil society in Vanuatu. The workshop, run in conjunction with the Asia South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE) and the Vanuatu Rural Development & Training Centres Association (VRD TCA), used the Learning Circles methodology and an adult education ‘train the trainers’ approach to refine the materials which will be used in the rest of the program.

5. SCOPING CONFERENCE FOR THE PLANNED RESEARCH PROJECT ON DEMOCRATISATION IN EAST & SOUTHEAST ASIA
Together with the Political Science Program of RSSS at the Australian National University and the Centre for Comparative Constitutional Law of the University of Melbourne, CDI will bid in 2002 for a Discovery research grant from the Australian Research Council for a 3 year project. The Scoping Conference in February is designed to assist CDI and partners to give shape to the proposed research project by identifying its key questions. See the website for more details.

6. INDONESIAN MEDIA AND DEMOCRATISATION PROJECT
In early February 2002 CDI will run a training program for key professionals from Indonesia’s national public broadcaster (TVRI). The program and list of selected participants covers a broad range of skills and issues relevant to running an independent and effective public broadcaster. Participants will also attend a conference. The program is a collaboration between CDI, Murdoch University, Curtin University and the ABC. See the draft program on the CDI website.

7. VIETNAMESE JUDICIAL TRAINING
Following a very successful exchange last year between the Judicial Training School of the Supreme People’s Court of Vietnam and the Federal Court of Australia, CDI has organized the
first leg of this year’s program - a similar visit by a delegation headed by the Deputy Chief Justice of the Supreme People’s Court of Vietnam to study Australia’s court system. The delegation will observe proceedings with the Federal Court of Australia, the Family Court of Australia, the ACT Supreme Court and the ACT Magistrates Court. The delegation will also call on the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Judicial Commission of New South Wales.

8. KING PRAJADHIPOK’S INSTITUTE SPONSORED VISIT TO AUSTRALIA
CDI will address a high-level Thai delegation including parliamentarians, senior officials and business leaders visiting Australia to discuss issues surrounding the theme "Politics and Governance in Democratic Systems for Executives". The visit is sponsored by King Prajadhipok's Institute in Thailand. The visit will take place from 29 January - 1 February, 2002.

All suggestions and comments are welcome.
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