Dear Colleagues,
Welcome to the June - July 2006 issue of CDI.News from the Centre for Democratic Institutions (CDI), Australia. This issue focuses on political party and parliamentary reforms in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and elsewhere in the Pacific.

CDI was established in 1998 by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Hon Alexander Downer, to assist in the development and strengthening of democratic institutions in developing countries. CDI’s work combines technical assistance and capacity building programs, networking, and interpersonal and knowledge exchange, including the dissemination of CDI’s original research on democracy and its institutions. Our focus countries comprise Indonesia and Timor-Leste in South East Asia and Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu in Melanesia.

CDI’s central goal is to support these regional focus countries in strengthening their Political Parties & Parliamentary Governance. Accordingly, CDI works to:

- Improve the operation and understanding of parliamentary machinery by members of parliament and parliamentary staff in focus countries
- Strengthen political parties in focus countries through improving the knowledge and skills of members and officials of political parties
- Extend networks in the region between Australian political party officials, parliamentarians and parliamentary staff and their counterparts from focus countries

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

CDI.News will keep you informed periodically of our activities and events, and you can access this information and more at any time by visiting our website @ www.cdi.anu.edu.au

Benjamin Reilly
CDI Director

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Deputy Director Vacancy at CDI

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Recent Activities

Political Party Development in Papua New Guinea

CDI held a series of events in Port Moresby in late April aimed at strengthening political parties in Papua New Guinea.

On 27 April, the PNG Political Party Development Seminar was held in Parliament House, Post Moresby. Attended by PNG ministers, senior officials and political party leaders, the seminar brought together Australian and PNG experts on issues of political party registration, financing and internal organisation. A feature of this event was the participation of the two major Australian political parties, Liberal and Labor, with their PNG counterparts to exchange insights on how stronger political parties can be forged in a fluid political environment such as Papua New Guinea’s.

Presentations from CDI Director Ben Reilly and AusAID PNG head Margaret Thomas examined the importance of political parties to democratic governance, focussing on how stronger political parties can play an integral role in the development process. Norm Kelly of the ANU introduced CDI’s forthcoming intensive course on Political Party Development. Dr Orevu Sepoe, a commissioner in the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates Commission, discussed the workings of the Organic Law on Political Parties and Candidates (O'LIPPAC) and the nature of the PNG party system. Bruce Edwards from the Liberal Party of Australia and Nick Martin from the Australian Labor Party looked at issues of party organisation, structure and policy development, highlighting the insights that the long Australian experience of stable two-party competition may have for developing democracies such as PNG.

The open discussion focussed on how PNG political leaders and party officials could seek to strengthen their party systems, featuring strong contributions from PNG parliamentarians, party leaders and senior officials.

The following day, Dr Reilly and Mr Kelly joined Prof John Nongurr to discuss the issues of party development in PNG in a public seminar attended by over 100 political leaders, government officials, academics and students held in conjunction with ANU’s Asia Pacific School of Economic and Governance annual Papua New Guinea Update. Subjects covered included the operation of PNG’s new party laws, future plans for CDI’s Political Party Development course, and the relevance of overseas models of party administration for a developing country such as PNG.

Separate discussions were also held with senior politicians and officials working on issues of party strengthening, including former Prime Minister Sir Mekere Morauta, the Hon. Jamie Maxton-Graham MP, PNG Deputy Registrar of Political Parties John Bishop, and a range of PNG party secretaries and politicians. These discussions focused on the subject of political linkages, with the Australian Liberal and Labor party representatives both seeking to forge deeper ties with political parties in PNG.

Solomon Islands MP Induction Program

Concluding on June 2, CDI has been involved in a major, week-long MP induction program for the newly-elected Solomon Islands parliament in Honiara. Details of this project have just been posted on our website, follow this link to the relevant page:
New CDI Consultative Council Chair Announced

On 26 May, the Minister for Foreign Affairs announced the appointment of Mr Tony Eggleton as the new Chair of CDI’s Consultative Council.

Mr Eggleton is currently Chair of non-government organisation, CARE Australia, and a Board member of CARE International. He is also a member of Australia’s Aid Advisory Council, former Chair of the Asia-Pacific Democratic Union and former Federal Director of the Liberal Party. Mr Eggleton’s nomination follows the appointment of the former Chair, Bruce Billson MP, as Minister for Veteran’s Affairs.

The Minister’s full press release and all details on CDI’s Consultative Council can be accessed via this link:

CDI & the United Nations Democracy Fund

The United Nations Democracy Fund (UNDEF) was established in July 2005 as a United Nations General Trust Fund, with Australia joining France, Germany, India, Qatar and the United States as primary contributors. Its purpose is to support democratization throughout the world, and to finance projects that build and strengthen democratic institutions, promote human rights, and ensure the participation of all groups in democratic processes.

CDI has applied to the Fund to finance workshops and training seminars for the in-country training phase of our joint project with International IDEA and the United Nations University on “Political Party Development in Conflict-Prone Societies”. This project examines whether broad-based political parties can be sustained and encouraged by external regulation of the formation, composition, funding and other institutional rules governing political parties. Drawing on some remarkable recent experiments in Asia-Pacific countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea aimed at influencing party system development, it examines the potential application of such approaches to conflictual societies in other states and regions.

Major New External Funding for CDI Research: Democratization, Institutional Reform and Ethnic Politics in the Asia-Pacific

In the largest injection of external funding ever received by CDI, the Australian Research Council has awarded CDI Director Benjamin Reilly a $115,000 grant (over 3 years) to investigate democratization and political reform in the Asia-Pacific.

The Discovery grant provides fieldwork and associated costs for a three-year research program of policy-relevant research investigating how the new democracies of the Asia-Pacific region have reformed their political systems to in order to strengthen democratic governance.

As well as producing ground-breaking new research, this project is likely to produce important practical material for CDI in the area of institutional design and institutional reform in the Institute’s priority program areas of parliamentary governance and political party development.

Director’s DAC Speech

On 18 May CDI Director Benjamin Reilly gave a speech to the OECD Development Aid Committee’s Heads of Information conference, an annual gathering of the public communications experts from the world’s major development aid organisations. Organised by AusAID with the cooperation of NZ Aid, the three-day conference focussed on issues of corruption, governance and aid effectiveness. Dr Reilly spoke of the challenges of ‘Failed States and Political Governance’, looking particularly at the challenges of state strengthening in the South Pacific, and outlined CDI’s role in strengthening political parties and parliaments in the Asia-Pacific region.

CDI & The Aid White Paper

With an emphasis on leadership in the service of strengthening political governance, CDI’s success in promoting the engagement of Australian parliamentarians and political parties in Australia with their counterparts in our region is noted in the recently-launched White Paper on Australia’s Overseas Aid Program. You can access the full White Paper via our website:

CDI Home Page
CDI Policy Paper Series on Political Governance

CDI has launched a new Policy Paper Series focussing on pressing issues of political governance in the Asia-Pacific. The series will publish original papers specially commissioned by CDI which investigate important challenges for political governance in the Asia-Pacific.

The papers, which will be aimed specifically at policymakers, seek to forge research-to-policy links and provide new insights on subjects of particular concern to CDI.

Policy Papers will be published both in hard-copy and electronically on the CDI website, and launched at a special seminar with a presentation by the author. CDI expects to publish four papers in this series over the next year.

The first paper, which looks at the operation of Indonesia’s Regional Representative Assembly/Council - Dewan Perwakilan Daerah (DPD) - is available electronically on our website, and was launched at a seminar by the author Stephen Sherlock on 5 June at the ANU. You can access this paper and a report on the seminar through the link below.

Other papers in the series will examine issues such as:
- The Impact of Party Gender Quotas upon Female Representation in Indonesia
- The effect of Electoral Development (“Slush”) Funds upon Political Governance in Papua New Guinea
- From Civil Society to Parliament: Civil Society and Multi-party Democracy in the Pacific Islands

CDI Policy Paper Series on Political Governance

Forthcoming

Anwar Ibrahim confirmed for CDI 2006 Annual Address

CDI can now confirm that Mr Anwar Ibrahim, former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, will deliver the 2006 CDI Annual Address on Thursday July 20 July at 4pm in the Great Hall, Parliament House, Canberra. Mr Ibrahim will speak on the subject of “Islam and Democracy”. All are welcome to attend, check our website for further details:

CDI's Political Party Development Course

This new course offered by CDI will be run at the ANU in Canberra, 9 - 20 October 2006.

The Political Party Development course (PPD) will cover the nuts and bolts of party politics from the inside. Topics to be addressed include running effective campaigns; public opinion and polling; successful electoral strategies; media relations; policy development; membership recruitment; issue management; and political party funding.

The course is aimed at those engaged in the actual business of politics, political advising and political campaigns - political advisers, campaign workers, party activists, and politicians themselves - in the new democracies of the Asia-Pacific region.

Specific subjects covered will include:
- Political parties and party systems
- Party constitutions
- Ethical and legal issues
- Party politics from the inside
- Pre-selections and internal party democracy
- Public opinion and focus group polling
- Policy development and agenda setting
- The role of the media
- Strategic approaches to elections and electoral systems
- Parliamentary party politics
- Dealing with the bureaucracy
- Campaign finance, funding and disclosure

www.cdi.anu.edu.au
Political Reform in Papua New Guinea: Testing the Evidence


In this article, Dr Reilly argues that political reforms are already having a marked positive impact upon governance in PNG:

Over the past few years Papua New Guinea has implemented a series of major political reforms in the electoral, political party and parliamentary arenas. In what constitutes an extremely ambitious attempt to change the way Papua New Guinea’s political system works, the broad aim of this process of political engineering is to strengthen political parties, promote more broadly supported candidates and increase political stability. These three goals find their institutional expression in several different pieces of legislation introduced in 2001 and 2002, most notably the Organic Law on National and Local-Level Government Elections (OLNLLGE) and the Organic Law on Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates (OLIPPAC).

Some observers have already derided these reforms as failures ... In this paper, I argue that if judged specifically against measurable performance indicators, rather than the elevated expectations of cultural change advanced by some of these critics, Papua New Guinea’s electoral, party and parliamentary reforms have in fact already had a discernable positive impact upon political outcomes.

Click on this link for access to this article:

Designing Democracy along the Pacific Rim

Our second featured item this issue is an article by CDI Associate Roland Rich entitled ‘Designing Democracy along the Pacific Rim’, published in Democracy at Large, Vol 2, No 1, 2006.

In this article the author argues that third-wave Asian democracies are leading their first-wave predecessors in democratic innovation, tinkering with electoral and governance systems until they fit local needs.

Click on this link for access to this article:

Assessing Political Reform in Indonesia

The third featured item is a paper by Professor Andrew MacIntyre entitled ‘Assessing Political Reform in Indonesia’, from the APEC Economies Newsletter Vol. 9, No. 5, May 2006.

Click on this link for access to this article: