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DISCUSSION PAPER

Discussion  
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## EVALUATING INTERNATIONAL ACTION AGAINST CORRUPTION IN THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

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International organizations like the World Bank and the OECD, and aid donors like Australia, are increasingly concerned about corruption in developing countries. They may require action against corruption as a condition of membership, or as a condition for funding. The international interest in preventing corruption has been stimulated and guided by the influential non-governmental organisation (NGO), Transparency International (TI). It was founded in 1993 by disaffected international civil servants, frustrated at the World Bank's tolerance of corruption in aid projects, and angry at the way Western governments tolerated their own companies' bribery of foreign officials (Larmour 2006).

It is now over a decade since these new international interventions against corruption began. Nobody commends corruption, but a small critical literature on the anti-corruption movement is emerging, particularly from Eastern Europe where scholars have found externally-sponsored anti-corruption campaigns encouraging a populist style of politics that could undermine the legitimacy of newly established democracies (Kotkin and Sajo 2002, Tisne and Smilov 2004). Bryane Michael has assessed anti-corruption campaigns in Africa, finding

a standard model that paid little attention to variable local conditions (2004a, 2004b, 2004c).

As these examples suggest, anti-corruption campaigns can be evaluated against different, potentially conflicting, criteria. The standard criteria in the study of public administration have been the several 'e's: economy; efficiency; effectiveness and equity. The first looks at costs, and asks if the policy was implemented cheaply or without waste. It is a traditional concern of public accounts committees and taxpayers' associations. The second - typically the concern of economists - looks at the relationship between inputs and outputs. It asks if the most was achieved from the resources committed to a project (so-called technical or 'X' efficiency) or if the resources might have been better used elsewhere (so called allocative or social efficiency). For example, the police may conduct a technically efficient campaign against corruption, but could their time have been more usefully spent dealing with other kinds of crime? These allocative questions are often asked in budget negotiations.

The third, effectiveness, will be the main focus of this paper. It looks at the impact or effects of a policy, and asks if it achieved what

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it set out to do. Did it, for example, actually reduce corruption? The fourth criterion looks at the justice or fairness of policy, either in its processes or outcomes. For example, did the anti-corruption campaign trample on human rights to achieve its goals (a matter of process)? Did the campaign only punish the 'little fish' leaving the 'big fish' unharmed (a matter of outcomes)? Campaigns for 'good governance' introduce additional criteria for policy evaluation, such as transparency and accountability.

Any anti-corruption campaign is, of course, hard to assess. There are disagreements on what exactly counts as corruption (discussed further below) and popular perceptions may underestimate or overestimate the amount that takes place. The phenomenon itself often takes place in secret, between more or less willing partners, who have no interest in revealing that it has taken place. Increased levels of prosecution may reflect a more effective judicial system, rather than changes in the underlying rate of corruption (Sampford et al 2006). It is hard to disentangle the effects of the anti-corruption campaign from other changes taking place anyway. It all takes time. Similar difficulties bedevil evaluation of campaigns against other kinds of crime, shameful activity, and public policy more generally.

International campaigns are doubly hard to assess. They are campaigns to persuade other governments to campaign against corruption. Each step may need a separate evaluation. For example, donors may successfully persuade the government of country X to adopt an anti-corruption policy, but that policy goes on to fail.

Here we focus on effectiveness, which is of practical interest to the banks and donors who sponsor anti-corruption campaigns. They want to know if anti-corruption initiatives are working, and donors are paying increasing attention to aid effectiveness.<sup>1</sup>

The paper introduces the region, and the particular Australian interest in it. Then it considers how corruption is defined in the region, and by donors. It then identifies international dimensions of corruption, and international initiatives against it. Then it looks at evidence available on the effectiveness of such initiatives. Finally it briefly considers the relevance of other evaluation criteria.

## THE PACIFIC ISLANDS

The small island states of the Pacific are particularly dependent upon the international system. Many are what Jackson (1990) characterised harshly as 'quasi states,' sustained by international recognition of their governments, and foreign aid, rather than domestic capacity and taxation. So - like it or not - they are more open to international pressure than larger or more self-sufficient countries. Island governments club together in regional organisations like the Pacific Islands Forum (henceforth 'The Forum'). They also form sub-regional groupings in larger organisations like the Asian Development Bank, the Commonwealth, or the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific grouping in relation to the EU. During the 1990s these international organisations became conduits for policies of 'good governance,' including public sector reform, accountability and anti-corruption (Larmour 2005).

The Pacific Islands also constitute regions of influence for relatively powerful neighbours. Australia - also a member of the Forum - has decided to become actively and directly involved in the government of what it sees as the potentially 'failing' states of Solomon Islands, Nauru and Papua New Guinea (PNG) (Dinnen 2004). Nauru and PNG had been colonies of Australia until they became independent in the 1970s (whereas Britain ruled Solomon Islands until 1978 and has shown little interest in it since). The Australian Prime Minister explained:

The South Pacific has the enduring problems of poverty, bad governance and corruption, and what we're trying to do is do something about both. It's in our interests strategically, historically and sentimentally. If we just throw up our arms and go away, you'll end up with these places being taken over by interests that are very hostile to Australia. It's also walking away from our moral responsibility. We are far and away the most powerful and influential country in the whole area, and nobody else will do the job if we don't (*The Daily Telegraph* 31 December 2006).

It is possible to compare the 14 states listed in Table 1 as each of these have been

subject to detailed independent surveys of what Transparency International calls their ‘national integrity systems’: the institutions in place to control corruption, and their performance in practice. I will examine the international dimensions of corruption uncovered in these surveys, and the international action being taken against it. The latter includes public sector reform promoted by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank; an ADB-OECD anti-corruption initiative; a leadership code promoted by the Pacific Islands Forum; the creation of local chapters of Transparency International; and a crackdown on offshore financial centres by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an offshoot of the OECD. Recently Australia has provided soldiers, policemen and other government officials to ‘strengthen’ institutions in Solomon Islands, PNG and Nauru. The paper then draws some conclusions about the effectiveness of these international campaigns, and considers other ways in which they might be evaluated.

Corruption is famously difficult to define, and these difficulties are likely to be great in international campaigns that juxtapose different legal systems and different popular understandings. For example, a recent survey in Solomon Islands found 62% of the rural population, and 46% of the urban population believed the government was corrupt, though focus groups found ‘no universal agreement on what constituted corruption (and some tendency to challenge the conventional Western view of it)’ (RAMSI 2006: 2). So first I look briefly at how ‘corruption’ is often understood within the region, and by international organisations.

## DOMESTIC UNDERSTANDINGS OF CORRUPTION

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Most Pacific Island countries’ penal codes prohibit bribery of officials, and most public service regulations prohibit conflicts of interest. Papua New Guinea (PNG), Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu also have constitutionally mandated codes of practice applying to all politicians and senior officials - so called ‘Leadership Codes’. Tuvalu introduced a leadership code in 2006, and Fiji’s 1998 constitution promises one. Accusations and counter-accusations of ‘corruption’ are also part of the normal language of politics in the region, as loose coalitions of

ideologically indistinct politicians rotate office, and its spoils, with one another.

Each country’s legal system is inherited from colonial rule or copied from models circulating internationally. Laws are often criticised as being out of step with indigenous traditions and popular opinion. Politicians sometimes defend as ‘traditional’ or ‘customary’ behaviour that outsiders might regard as corrupt. Thus a PNG Prime Minister, criticised for paying money to an MP to cross the floor in parliament, replied ‘corruption is part of our culture’ (Larmour 1997). Ethical commitments to family and kin may contradict official duties. Traditional gifts and payments to chiefs and pastors may be hard to distinguish from bribes made to secure advantage. Elections often involve substantial public payments by candidates to local leaders, and directly to voters.

Popular opinion often seems to cast the net of corruption widely to include the personal misbehaviour of elites, and signs of wealth such as four wheel drives, and overseas travel. Perceptions of corruption are often biased against trading minorities like the Indians or Chinese who provide the backbone of a local private sector in most of the region. As Krastev (2002) found in post-communist Balkans, new, visible and unwelcome inequalities of income are often more easily explained as the result of corruption, rather than luck, effort, the market or the merit principle. Foreign aid and bribery are conceptually similar (Morgenthau 1962) and the relatively high salaries of foreign aid workers and payments to consultants are often spoken about as a form of corruption.

## INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF CORRUPTION

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International governmental organisations tend to take a more economic view of corruption. The World Bank adopted TI’s definition, ‘the use of public office for private gain’ (while TI has since moved on to a more expansive definition ‘the use of entrusted power for private gain’). While this definition focuses on the acts of individuals, rather than the character of a whole system of government, international organisations have generally shied away from campaigns against particular corrupt individuals. They are not like Interpol, coordinating international action against

particular villains. Nor do they want to act like an international court of appeal against local acts of corruption. TI decided to avoid chasing individuals out of prudence. Its local members would be subject to litigation or violent retaliation. Intergovernmental organisations prefer prevention to investigation, and approach the harsh word 'corruption' through the softer language of 'governance' and 'accountability'.

### INTERNATIONAL SURVEYS OF CORRUPTION

Of the 14 countries I am comparing, only PNG and Fiji have featured in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). The CPI is a poll of polls, based on existing surveys, when available, of each country by local and foreign businessmen, academics and journalists. It treats corruption as an attribute of countries rather than individuals. In 2006 PNG scored 4 on a scale of 1-10 (where 10 is 'highly clean' and 0 is 'highly corrupt'). TI thus ranked PNG at 130th of the 163 countries surveyed in that year, tied with Burundi, Cambodia, the Congo, Kyrgyzstan and Venezuela (Transparency International 2006). Fiji wasn't ranked in 2006, but a year earlier got the same score as PNG (4/10). So both PNG and Fiji have below average reputations for corruption, but no worse than many developing countries, which tend to cluster at the low end of the rankings.

TI has also subjected the same 14 countries to more detailed qualitative assessments of their 'national integrity systems' (NIS). A local consulting firm surveyed Fiji (Olaks Consulting Services 2001). PNG was surveyed by two PNG academics (Mellam and Alois 2003), and the remaining 12 small island states were surveyed in a project Manu Barcham and I coordinated from The Australian National University. We commissioned foreign and local academics or retired officials to carry out the surveys, and compared the results (Larmour and Barcham 2006). These NIS surveys provide the basis for the accounts of international corruption below.

### INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF CORRUPTION

The median population for the 14 island states is about 100,000 (Table 1). In very small

countries, without natural resources, there is often little to sell overseas but the symbols and tokens of sovereignty, like stamps, work permits, passports, international telephone access codes and internet domain names. Back in the 1970s the Philatelic Bureau – selling exotic stamps – was looted by the government to fund campaign expenses in Cook Islands (Crocombe 1974). There have been scandals over the sale of passports to foreigners in Tonga, Kiribati and Samoa. Tonga leases out its right to put a communications satellite in orbit. Tuvalu has tried to lease out the right to use its catchy internet domain name suffix '.tv' (Ta'afaki 2004). Several countries use their sovereignty to run offshore banking regimes congenial to companies and individuals wanting to avoid tax in their home countries.

Local opportunities for profitable investment are small in most of Polynesia and Micronesia. Phosphate revenues in Kiribati are placed in a portfolio of shares offshore, whereas in Nauru ministers have invested directly in offshore hotels and an airline. They have often been the victims of scams, or at least poor advice. In each of these three cases – passports, tax avoidance, and overseas investment – it was often not clear if ministers involved were benefiting personally, or acting recklessly on behalf of the national treasury.

Often the most valuable thing a small country has to sell is its vote in international forums, such as the International Whaling Commission or the United Nations. Japan has cultivated island governments and their officials to support its positions on whaling. Governments switch sides between support for China and Taiwan. Currently six Pacific Island states recognise Taiwan rather than China, and they amount to one quarter of the dwindling number of states to do so (Dobell 2007: 9). The Chinese Premier toured the region in 2006, promising preferential loans, trade access, training opportunities and debt forgiveness to the seven states with which it currently has diplomatic relations (Peoples Daily Online April 6 2006). The Premier offered trade as well as aid, and did not nag island leaders about 'good governance'. Fiji's 2006 coup leader, regretting the sanctions applied by Australia and New Zealand, threatened to turn to China for support instead.

Taiwanese government funding has contributed to corruption in the Solomon Islands.



In 2001 the Taiwanese government loaned the Solomon Islands government \$US25 million to pay compensation to victims of the recent ethnic conflict. Its rapid and chaotic distribution led to claims of unfairness and extortion, and accusations that particular ministers had improperly benefited. Taiwan is accused of financially supporting candidates in the 2006 general election, and the subsequent election of the Prime Minister (Dobell 2007: 11). Later in the year the Taiwanese ambassador in Solomon Islands was cheerfully announcing that he would be paying \$400,000 Solomon Islands dollars (\$ US49, 000) in 'Rural Community Development Funds' annually to every MP to spend as they wished in their constituencies (Maesulia 2006).

The three largest countries in the region, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Fiji, face the opposite risk, a variety of what economists call a 'resource curse'. Log exports have been a major source of corruption in each of these countries. Politicians often act as intermediaries between local landowners and the foreign, mainly Malaysian and Indonesian, loggers. A timber project seems to offer traditional landowners in isolated areas access to cash, jobs and services that are otherwise only available in the capital cities, or abroad. The larger-scale mining industry in PNG is more centralised, and any corruption that might take place more hidden, or of the 'policy' kind, where interested politicians and officials get the law changed in their favour. Mining revenues may later be misappropriated in other more visible ways.

The region – except Fiji and Nauru – depends heavily on foreign aid (Table 1). The multilateral banks rely on the recipient governments' accountability structures. Smaller amounts at the discretion of ambassadors or mobilised for emergency relief, are often used or seen as forms political patronage. In Solomon Islands, for example, the first Prime Minister resigned over claims that French hurricane relief funds were disproportionately channeled to his own village. Funding under the first Compact of Free Association that the US signed with its former colonies became so plagued with problems of accountability and suspicions of corruption that the revised Compact contains provision for a special audit office based in Hawai'i.

## INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES TO PREVENT CORRUPTION

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### 1. CONDITIONALITY BY THE ADB AND THE WORLD BANK

Fiscal crises in the mid 1990s led six<sup>2</sup> Pacific Island countries to seek loans from the Asian Development Bank. The Bank used the opportunity to nudge them towards 'public sector reform'. Loan conditions typically included asset sales, downsizing, the introduction of Value Added Tax, and output budgeting. Existing heads of department were removed; their jobs put on contract, and advertised outside the civil service. Corruption was not targeted as such, but new consultation and accountability mechanisms were to be introduced, such as national summits with the private sector and NGOs. In Cook Islands, for example, private sector accountants were brought on to a new committee to oversee government public expenditure.

Corruption in the forest industry was targeted more directly and explicitly in the World Bank's loan negotiations with PNG. In the late 1990s the Bank began to work closely with international environmental NGOs (and at the same time became friendlier towards TI). It pushed to make reform of the logging industry a condition of loans proposed for PNG. Negotiations broke down, amid accusations from PNG that the World Bank was interfering with domestic policy. A change of government bought both sides back to the table in 2000. The PNG government seemed to agree to new loan conditions including a moratorium on new forestry agreements and a case by case review of the legality of existing ones (Filer 2004).

### 2. SIGNING UP TO THE ADB-OECD ANTI-CORRUPTION INITIATIVE

The ADB also joined with the OECD to invite governments in the wider Asia-Pacific region to sign up to an 'action plan' against corruption. The Plan's cross-sectoral approach reflected the participation of governments, organizations representing the private sector and selected NGOs (including TI) who attended a conference held in Tokyo in 2001. Having agreed to the plan, governments were to propose three specific projects for review by a steering committee (and subsequent funding by

donors). So far six<sup>3</sup> Pacific Island governments have signed up to the initiative, along with another 19 Asian countries. Several have proposed projects, such as (in PNG's case) training programs for investigators, support for an inter-agency coordinating committee, and a public education campaign (<http://www1.oecd.org/daf/asiacom/AP/PNG.htm>).

### 3. PEER REVIEW BY THE FORUM

Early in the 2000s Australia began using the Forum to press island states to improve their systems of governance, attempting first to persuade its members to adopt a 'leadership code' (a legally binding set of standards of behaviour that would apply to politicians and senior officials). The Forum has also been promoting 'peer review' of countries' success in implementing 'eight principles of accountability' for which they have jointly affirmed support. These do not deal directly with corruption, though their adoption might make it less likely, or easier to detect. Several of the principles rely on power of a democratically elected legislature to oversee the executive and the bureaucracy, through approving expenditure in an annual budget, approving loans entered into by ministers, and considering reports of auditors general and ombudsmen. They do not address corruption in parliaments themselves, an issue identified as problematic in most of the NIS studies. The Forum's Financial and Economic ministers have signed up to these principles, and are meant to report to each other on progress in adopting them.

### 4. FRANCHISING NGOS

TI's founders soon realised that its campaign against international corruption would not attract popular support unless they also dealt with corruption within countries. So they began to franchise their name to local anti-corruption campaigns. TI's structure leaves local groups – called 'chapters' – to fund and fend for themselves, simply franchising its name to any local group that adopts its standards and policies, and sometimes helping with seed money. A PNG group was set up after a political crisis that followed the government's botched attempt to hire foreign mercenaries to subdue a provincial rebellion (Larmour 2003). Smaller groups have coalesced in Fiji, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, and TI's Australian chapter has taken a particular interest in their tutelage – including

(to declare an authorial interest) coordinating and funding the 12 country survey of National Integrity Systems referred to above.

### 5. CLEANING UP OFFSHORE FINANCIAL CENTRES

In 1989, the Group of Seven rich countries set up a Financial Action Task Force (FATF) attempting to persuade the governments that sponsor Offshore Financial Centres (OFCs) to regulate them more closely. The OECD was originally concerned with loss of tax revenues, but has shifted its emphasis to money laundering defined as 'the process of converting cash, or other property, which is derived from criminal activity, so as to give it the appearance of having been obtained from a legitimate source' (Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering Secretariat 2003).

The FATF first tried to get governments to adopt what it called its 'Forty Recommendations,' which included obligations to criminalise the laundering of the proceeds of serious crimes, to require financial institutions to be able to identify their clients, and to report suspicious transactions. Governments were to introduce systems to control financial institutions, and to enter into agreements allowing international cooperation. The Task Force published annual lists of 'non-cooperative' countries, starting in 2000.

The US sharply increased its own pressure on the OFCs, as part of its counter-terrorist activity after September 11 2001. Section 312 of the Patriot Act required US banks to exercise 'due diligence' towards risks of money laundering in 'correspondent accounts' that foreign banks might hold with them (US Department of Treasury 2005). A further eight, then nine, recommendations were added to FATF's original forty, to deal with the implications of the Patriot Act.

Among South Pacific countries, Cook Islands, Marshall Islands, Niue and Nauru appeared on the first FATF list. Countermeasures included warning non-financial businesses dealing with listed countries that the transaction might run the risk of money laundering. In December 2001, FATF members agreed to apply additional countermeasures to Nauru for its failure to abolish 400 shell banks, which had no physical presence in the country.

## 6. AUSTRALIAN-LED ACTION AGAINST "STATE FAILURE"

Elements of the Solomon Islands police led a coup d'état in 2000 and forced the Prime Minister to resign. Though a civilian government stayed in place, and a general election was later held, government officials, particularly those in the finance department, continued to be intimidated by thugs and gangs linked to political leaders. Solomon Islands leaders made several requests for Australian intervention which were rejected by the Australian Foreign Minister on the grounds that 'foreigners do not have answers for the deep-seated problems afflicting Solomon Islands' (quoted in Fullilove 2006: 6).

Australian policy then shifted, for several reasons. The success of Australia's intervention in East Timor in 1999 and its alliance with the US in its 'war on terror' seemed to embolden the Prime Minister, John Howard. These international events happened against a steady loss of Australian official faith in more traditional approaches to aid and development in the region. Economic growth since the countries became independent had been slow to negative, particularly if measured in per capita terms (Table 1). The International Financial Institutions, and bilateral donors like Australia, increasingly believed that bad governance – particularly corruption - was the reason for low levels of growth, and that good governance should be addressed in aid programs. Pacific Island governments (demonised as 'elites') came to be seen as part of the problem as much as part of the solution.

In July 2003 Australia sent over 2,000 troops, police and other officials in a 'Regional Assistance Mission' to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) to restore law and order and stabilise government finances. The mission was framed as a Forum initiative, and included small contingents of police and soldiers from other countries in the region. The intervention was invited by the Solomon Islands government, and regulated by a special act of the Solomon Islands Parliament.

PNG is the largest country in the region, with an estimated population of over 7 million (Table 1). It is the largest recipient of Australian aid, and Australia is the largest donor to PNG. The latter's low rate of economic growth and its law-and-order problems continue to cause despair and impatience in Canberra, and PNG's

leaders are regularly offended when their country appears in Australian lists of potentially 'failing' states. In 2003 Australia devised an 'Enhanced Cooperation Programme' which would put several hundred Australian police on patrol in PNG, and Australian officials in line positions in departments concerned with finance and criminal justice, including the prosecution of corrupt officials and politicians.

Nauru – at the opposite extreme of scale, with a population of only 10,000 - used to have one of the highest per capita incomes of the island states, as a consequence of phosphate mining. Corruption and mismanagement of its offshore investment portfolio and regional airline have led to Nauru's near bankruptcy. A new source of sovereignty-based revenue became available in 2002 when Australia started to pay the Nauru government to act as host to an offshore detention centre for illegal immigrants to Australia. They could be held without the protections of Australian law while Australian officials assessed their applications for asylum. A similar deal was done with PNG over a camp on Manus Island.

## EFFECTIVENESS

### 1. CONDITIONALITY BY THE ADB AND THE WORLD BANK

The ADB sponsored Public Sector Reforms in the 1990s aimed to improve financial accountability, and budget control, which would thereby reduce opportunities for corruption. The NIS studies were not tasked to assess the effects of these reforms on corruption, and do not provide much incidental evidence. However the Samoa report quotes a newspaper publisher saying that corruption had decreased since the 1990s, but goes out of its way to say it found 'no links' between the government's anti-corruption efforts and donor pressure (So'o et al 2004: 27).

ADB officials were later critical of the Bank's reform activities in the late 1990s. They found the reforms complex, alien and unsustainable. Training programs had been ineffective, and there had been too much use of consultants (Mellor and Jabes 2004: 56). The 'rush to downsize' governments had incidentally weakened the enforcement of rules

designed to prevent corruption in procurement (ibid: 34).

To-ing and fro-ing continued between the PNG government and the World Bank over the terms of the moratorium on new logging agreements, and the review of hundreds of existing agreements. Extensions to some permits were issued, others threatened with rescission (Filer 2004). The World Bank suspended its loan. In 2004 a new permit was issued to the largest foreign company involved, Rimbunan Hijau. The company had become increasingly vocal on behalf of logging, through the local newspaper it conveniently owned, and by commissioning its own consultancy report to counter the welter of documentation produced by the World Bank and the conservation movement (ITS Global, 2006). In 2005 the government and the World Bank jointly announced the cancellation of the project to finance forestry reform (ibid).

## 2. SIGNING UP TO THE ADB-OECD ANTI CORRUPTION INITIATIVE

The Secretariat of the ADB-OECD initiative reviewed its progress in 2005/6. But the report is made in aggregate rather than country-by-country, so it is hard to tell how much applies to the six Pacific Island members and how much to the other 19 countries (ADB-OECD 2006). None of the Pacific members were cited as examples of the more comprehensive and holistic approach that the review saw emerging in the Asia-Pacific region (ibid: 12).

## 3. PEER REVIEW BY THE FORUM

A 'stocktake' of the Forum's accountability process found agreements made at the Forum were not being well communicated and implemented back home (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, 2002). Another stocktake two years later found some changes, mainly to legislation, but only among the seven countries which replied to the questionnaire. The main constraints were lack of political will, technical capacity and human resources (ibid: 2004). Island ministers rejected the lengthy draft leadership code proposed by Australian consultants, and instead adopted a shorter set of 'principles of good leadership'. However Tuvalu went on to pass its own leadership code legislation in 2006, which was based on the Forum model (Ta'afaki 2004: 10). The Forum reported that Nauru, Kiribati and Marshall islands were preparing similar legislation (Somare 2005).

## 4. FRANCHISING NGOS

Five years after its inception, TI (PNG) conducted a review of its own effectiveness. Its chairman found some success in the development of school curricula and awareness raising. But he reported less success with attempts to promote Integrity Pledges among election candidates, and Integrity Pacts amongst companies bidding for tenders. TI's campaign to establish an ICAC had fallen on deaf ears in parliament (Siaguru 2001).

## 5. CLEANING UP OFCS

The threat of commercial isolation has brought about legal changes in OFCs. Nauru held out longest but by 2006 it had legislated sufficiently for the FATF to remove it from its blacklist.

## 6. AUSTRALIAN-LED ACTION AGAINST "STATE FAILURE"

RAMSI quickly restored law and order in Solomon Islands in 2003 and has turned its attention to supporting institutions involved with finance, accountability, and criminal justice. According to RAMSI's website 3,600 guns were given up. Six thousand, three hundred people have been arrested – roughly 1 adult in 50.<sup>4</sup> One hundred and sixty Solomon Islands policemen now face corruption and other serious charges brought under local legislation. Six former ministers have been charged with corruption. Government finances have been stabilized, with economic growth running at 5% per annum (after a fall of 25% through the conflict). Audit reports are once again being presented to parliament (Wasuka 2006).<sup>5</sup>

However, relations between the Solomons and Australian governments soured after a riot following the election of a new Prime Minister in April 2006 (Moore 2006). There were sharp public disagreements about a proposed commission of enquiry into the riot, about the appointment of a new attorney general, and about the rearming of the Solomon Islands police. Early in 2007 Foreign Minister Downer published an 'open letter' in a Solomons newspaper defending RAMSI's achievements and warning of a 'deliberate push to undermine' it. Prime Minister Sogavare responded saying Australia was trying to run a 'parallel government' in Solomon Islands (AAP 7 February 9 2007).



Meanwhile, the ECP was implemented in PNG in late 2004, after a year of negotiations over the immunities from local legislation that its Australian officials might enjoy. One hundred Australian police were briefly on patrol in the capital and Bougainville, and 45 Australian officials in position in PNG government departments. The ECP programme was halted in May 2005 after PNG's Supreme Court found that immunities against prosecution promised to Australian officials were unconstitutional, but the non-police officials have remained in 'advisory' rather than 'line' positions.

## CONCLUSIONS ABOUT EFFECTIVENESS

In five of these six cases international organizations tried to persuade island governments to change their policies, by different means, with varying degrees of success. At least two steps were involved, and each might succeed or fail. First, the international organization had to persuade the island government to adopt the new policy. Second, the island government had to implement it. It might fail the second step for all sorts of reasons, such as lack of political commitment, resistance among those affected, under-resourcing or because it was a bad idea in the first place. Reforms often seemed to stick half way – the government agreed, maybe even a law was passed, but nothing happened on the ground.

Among these five cases, the ADB's public sector reforms were adopted and partly implemented (though the Bank now feels they were not such a good idea in the first place). The World Bank's proposals for forestry reform in PNG, by contrast, never got to the stage of being adopted, let alone implemented.

The ADB-OECD and Forum initiatives were focused on the adoption of presumably correct policies, rather than their effectiveness once implemented. The Forum's later stocktake pointed to the gap between what ministers agreed to at conferences, and what happened when they went home. Tuvalu actually passed a law, but it is too soon to tell if a leadership code will in fact have any impact on corruption.

TI tries to influence governments directly, but its awareness and education campaigns are

more indirect and bottom-up. They are meant to get around the reluctance or incapacity of governments to adopt and implement anti-corruption policies. They hope that a more educated and aware population will put pressure on the government to reform. The bottom-up approach is also forced to confront the difficulty, discussed at the start of this paper, that popular conceptions of what counts as 'corruption' may differ from conceptions held by foreigners, the law, or the local elite. The people may be complicit beneficiaries of some forms of corruption, such as vote buying. However, it may be more effective than direct approaches, but over a longer term.

The FATF has it comparatively easy. It targets the international dimensions of corruption through international measures. Legal changes are probably sufficient, as it is the peculiarities of local legislation that provide the niche in which OFCs prosper. Without local enabling legislation, they should simply wither on the vine.

RAMSI is different from these two-step forms of international intervention. It implements anti-corruption policies directly, in country, in parallel with the Solomon Islands government. RAMSI and Solomon Islands officials often work side by side, rather than the former merely advising the latter. And the laws RAMSI implements are already in place, rather than transferred. RAMSI's job was to get them working again, though it has subsequently gone on to consider how they might be reformed.

RAMSI has been highly effective in the short term. Yet its goals have shifted since its inception, and it has given itself a long time to achieve them. Its website tells us in 2007 that its goal is to make a 'peaceful, well-governed and prosperous Solomon Islands'. It is a work-in-progress but is vulnerable to 'mission creep,' taking on new tasks while the old ones falter. Evaluation may easily become a circular process of adjusting goals to current activities. In some ways effectiveness is the least of its problems.

## OTHER CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

This paper has focused for practical reasons on effectiveness but, as we saw at the start, there are many other criteria to evaluate policy against. Earlier we introduced the standard

criteria of economy, efficiency, and equity. To take one example among these, Michael Fullilove has argued that Australia's dominant role makes RAMSI more efficient than typical UN interventions, with their problems of coordination (2006: 12-13, 2007: 1). He also suggests two other important criteria: popularity and sustainability (2006: 10). RAMSI's popularity with ordinary Solomon Islanders was attested to by an independent review by an Eminent Persons Group appointed by the Forum (Pacific Islands Forum 2005). Yet it may be, as suggested above from the evidence of RAMSI's own survey, that popular opinion understands 'corruption' differently from RAMSI, and so may judge its performance differently too. Fullilove worries about its sustainability, and RAMSI's own research finds that 65% of the

population thought that violence would return if RAMSI left (RAMSI 2006: 2).

Recent public disagreements between the Australian and Solomon Islands governments show how vulnerable RAMSI is to loss of political support in Canberra and Honiara. Table 2 tries to summarise these multiple criteria for evaluation in terms of the questions they ask. There is little doubt that RAMSI has been effective in achieving its goals in the short term. Filling in the other scores is a matter for future discussion and research.

**Table 1**  
**Pacific Islands Population, GNP Growth and Aid**

	Population (2004, estimated)	GNP per capita \$US Purchasing Power Parity (2000)	Average annual growth of GNP per capita 1970- 2000	Average annual aid per capita since 1970 (\$US)	Aid as % of GDP
<i>Papua New Guinea</i>	7,236,000	2180	0.3	104	7
<i>Fiji</i>	891,100	4480	2.7	65	2
<i>Solomon Islands</i>	589,700	1710	-0.4	110	20
<i>Vanuatu</i>	289,400	2960	-0.3	217	14
<i>Somoa</i>	182,700	5050	0.8	213	14
<i>Kiribati</i>	166,100	950	-1.2	217	33
<i>Federated States of Micronesia</i>	112,700	2000	na	178	50
<i>Tonga</i>	98,300	1660	2.6	233	15
<i>Marshall Islands</i>	55,400	1600	na	232	61
<i>Palau</i>	20,700	9000	na	933	27
<i>Cook Islands</i>	14,000	5000	na	646	na
<i>Nauru</i>	10,100	5000	na	51	na
<i>Tuvalu</i>	9,600	1100	-1.4	647	na
<i>Niue</i>	1,600	3800	na	3558	na

Sources: Secretariat of the Pacific Community, 2005; Chand, 2003

**Table 2**  
**Potential Criteria for Evaluating RAMSI**

<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Score</b>	<b>Questions to Consider</b>
Economy		Was RAMSI designed to be as cheap as possible? Was it wasteful or profligate in its use of staff and money?
Efficiency (technical)		Was maximum benefit derived from the resources committed to RAMSI? Could the same have been achieved for less?
Efficiency (allocative)		Could the staff, money and political attention devoted to RAMSI have been better spent on other kinds of aid to Solomon Islands, or in other countries? Or on other Australian government activities?
Effectiveness	High in short term	What outcomes were specified? How were they measured? Over what periods? Were they achieved? Is Solomon Islands now 'peaceful, well-governed and prosperous' and is Australia more secure? Were there any unintended outcomes, positive or negative?
Equity (process)		Was force used consistently with international and domestic law? Were regional arrangements respected? Were the rights of those accused respected? Was there bias against one side or the other in the ethnic conflict? Were people humiliated and abused? How did women children and minorities fare? How far did RAMSI respect the sovereignty of Solomon Islands government?
Equity (outcomes)		Were the big fish eventually caught? Were all corrupt officials in fact prosecuted? Were resources in Solomon Islands distributed more fairly after RAMSI, or were new inequalities introduced? How far did RAMSI achieve the 'good' in good governance?
Popularity		How popular has RAMSI been in Solomon Islands and Australia? Which aspects have been more or less popular? Have there been differences between regions, and between elite and public opinion? How has it been treated in local and Australian media, and in third countries? How successful has it been in communicating its aims and achievements, and in responding to complaints.
Sustainability		What are the chances of the changes introduced by RAMSI surviving its leaving? What forces and tendencies in Solomon Islands politics will tend to undermine or sustain it? What trends in the demography, economy and society of Solomon Islands will tend to sustain or undermine its effects?

## AUTHOR NOTE

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## ENDNOTES

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- 2 Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. See Larmour 2005 (pp. 87-106).
- 3 Cook Islands, Fiji, Palau, PNG, Samoa and Vanuatu.
- 4 The population between 15-64 amounts to 53% of the total (<http://www.spc.int/popadvocacy/COUNTRY%20PROFILE-5.SVP.htm>).
- 5 One of these reporting that an Australian government corporation, Air Services Australia, had been involved in the corruption that RAMSI was sent to clean up. The corporation had held the contract to manage Solomon Islands airspace, and had collected revenue from international airlines on behalf of Solomon Islands. Apparently \$2.2 million of this revenue had been diverted 'to third parties, at the direction of senior Solomon Islands officials' (Air Services Australia 2006).

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