



***Governance at the Local Level:  
Melanesians Responding to Governance Issues***

Thursday 6 and Friday 7 November, 2008 at the Australian National University, Canberra. There is no registration fee, but as places are limited you are asked to register your intention to attend. Please email: [jean.hardy@anu.edu.au](mailto:jean.hardy@anu.edu.au)

The countries of Melanesia have gone through significant social changes both during the colonial period and since independence. The ***Governance at the Local Level*** workshop addresses the ways in which traditional forms of governance have changed according to locality during this period. By drawing on the experience and knowledge of those with long-term familiarity with Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, we hope to gain greater insight into the changes that have occurred over time, and in particular how local governance, decision-making and leadership structures have responded to these changes and with what outcomes. Paper givers will address some of the following questions:

- What forms of indigenous institutionalised or traditional leadership exist in communities and how do these relate to introduced forms of local level governance, such as councils, appointed leaders and village courts? How do local level structures interact with the government or other service providers, such as donor agencies, NGOs, and the Churches? What role does religion play, if any, in local leadership, decision-making and governance structures? Do the churches actively pursue or address “good governance” agendas beyond the local community? What kinds of interactions, if any, take place between the village and the higher level institutions, the LLG and district level government? How, if at all, do those working in other parts of the country relate to the governance structures in their natal villages? What do local people think of the state? What effect

- does this have on their dealings with the government and its various agencies?
- How are disputes and conflicts within communities addressed? What is the role of traditional conflict resolution methods in the contemporary situation? How do traditional mechanisms relate to introduced methods? Are there any community policing and local initiatives to address law and order problems and conflicts within communities? How do these relate to traditional methods? Have the police ever intervened in the village? In what circumstances did this take place and what was the result?

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