TRAVEL REPORT
PAPUA NEW GUINEA
17th January 2005 to 25th January 2005
Kate Reynolds MLC
Objectives of the travel:

1. To gain an understanding of:
   - traditional law and culture of various provinces in PNG
   - the purpose and nature of Australian funded aid programmes operating in PNG
   - the challenges facing law enforcers in PNG
   - the challenges facing health workers in PNG
   - to compare and contrast law and culture issues and challenges between PNG and remote Aboriginal communities in SA.

2. To meet with elected or appointed decision makers in 5 provinces and the National Capital District.

3. To meet with national and ex-patriot paid workers from various government and non-govt agencies in 5 provinces and National Capital District.

4. Time permitting - to visit indigenous cultural tourism ventures.

I offer my sincere thanks to Don Barrett, Tom Baker and Brian and Pauline Leahy for their assistance, hospitality and time.

This report does not do justice to the insight we gained as a result of their warmth, experience, understanding and generosity and I am indebted to them all.

I look forward to hosting the Leahy family when they visit Adelaide later this year.
Overview (information supplied by Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade)

The mainland of Papua New Guinea together with its six hundred other islands (463,000 square kilometres) has a population of approximately 5.7 million. Most of the people are Melanesian, but some are Micronesian or Polynesian. There are over seven hundred language groups, reflecting the diverse origins of the people. English, Tok Pisin (Pidgin), and Motu (the lingua franca of the Papuan region) are the official languages.

The spectrum of Papua New Guinean society now ranges from traditional village-based life dependent on subsistence and small cash-crop agriculture, to modern urban life in the main cities of Port Moresby (capital), Lae, Madang, Wewak, Goroka, Mt Hagen, and Rabaul. Some 85 per cent of the population directly derive their livelihood from farming, and 15 per cent of the population live in urban areas. It is estimated that the population is growing at a rate of approximately 2.7 per cent per annum.

Papua New Guinea is a constitutional monarchy. The Head of State is HM Queen Elizabeth II, represented in Papua New Guinea by a Governor-General. The Governor-General is elected directly by Members of the National Parliament and performs mainly ceremonial functions. Sir Paulias Matane was sworn in as PNG's eighth Governor-General on 29 June 2004.

Papua New Guinea has three levels of government - national, provincial and local. The National Parliament is a 109-member unicameral legislature elected for five year terms by universal suffrage. The Prime Minister is appointed and dismissed by the Governor-General on the proposal of Parliament. The Cabinet - or National Executive Council - is appointed by the Governor-General on the recommendation of the Prime Minister.

Members of Parliament are elected from 19 provinces and the national capital district of Port Moresby. Parliament is made up of 89 single-member electorates and 20 regional electorates. The regional electorates coincide with PNG's provinces and the national capital district; members from these electorates also serve as the provincial Governors. Each province is responsible for its own provincial assembly and administration.

PNG politics is highly competitive and fluid. Up to, and including, the June 2002 general election, members of parliament were elected on a first-past-the-post basis and they frequently won with less than 15 per cent of the vote. Historically, there has been a high turn-over of parliamentarians at general elections. In 2002, for example, around 80 per cent of sitting members lost their seats.

PNG has a dual economy, comprising a formal, corporate-based economy and a large informal economy where subsistence farming accounts for the bulk of economic activity. The formal sector provides a rather narrow employment base, consisting of workers engaged in mineral production, a relatively small manufacturing sector, public sector employees and service industries including finance, construction, transportation and utilities. The bulk of the population is engaged in the informal
sector. Migration to major city centres in the past decade has contributed to urban unemployment and social problems. Papua New Guinea's social indicators, in general, are well below those of lower middle income countries (particularly in rural areas).

Geographic proximity and historical links have given Papua New Guinea a special place in Australia's foreign relations. Nearly 30 years after Papua New Guinea's independence, Australia's relationship with the country is one of its most complex and wide-ranging. Australia has an overriding interest in Papua New Guinea's sustainable development and stability. The presence of approximately 8,000 Australians in PNG is also of significant interest to the Australian Government.
Monday 17\textsuperscript{th} January 2005

Flew to Brisbane, transferred to Air Nuigini to Port Moresby, transferred to Mount Hagen in Western Highlands Province.

The flight from Brisbane to Port Moresby was uneventful, but the descent into Port Moresby was beautiful. The weather was, for an Australian born traveller, inclement, and the dense clouds and heavy rain made it difficult until we had descended quite low. The plane circled Port Moresby and our first view of the mountains (the Owen Stanley Ranges) was spectacular.

We had been advised to take our watches off when we arrived in Port Moresby, so I did. I had been given the same advice the first time I travelled to the Anangu Piritjantjara Lands, and partly out of respect, and partly to diminish my own expectations of events occurring ‘on schedule’ – I did. Given that most of my days are filled with appointments, deadlines and timelines, it was wonderfully liberating, so the watch came off and ‘PNG time’ (in good time) was operational until we flew back to Brisbane.

We had been warned to expect ‘semi-organised chaos’ during the transfer from the international airport to the domestic terminal, and we were not disappointed. The staff were quite officious, and customer service is not a recognised concept. The sight of Australian Federal Police, complete with very visible weaponry, was probably meant to be reassuring, but just seemed quite threatening, despite their smiles of recognition at an Australian accent.

Ex-patriot (PNG born people are ‘nationals’, almost everyone else is an ‘expat’, visitor, or tourist) seasoned travellers through PNG airports politely but firmly talked their way to the front of queues moving at snails pace, well aware that departure times were not reliable, and that planes frequently departed when someone decided it looked full enough, regardless of what the passenger lists might say. (We also heard stories about seats being ‘sold’ an hour before departure if the price offered was high enough, even when the flight was officially booked out with prepaid seats.)

Walking from one terminal to the other we saw for the first time people chewing betal nut, and spitting the bright red ‘juice’ into plastic Coke bottles. Chewing betal nut (along with lime juice and another substance) gives a mild narcotic effect and is common throughout PNG. More men than women chew betal nut, which is bought at roadside stalls, and the mess (red liquid and the sticky black residue) is nowadays considered unsightly. In Australia we have areas designated as non smoking, in PNG there are areas where spitting is against the law. The locals get around the rules by spitting into the Coke bottles and then putting the bottle in the bin. It is not a pretty sight (but I came to appreciate the talent of some spitters who could, while walking at a brisk pace, accurately, and neatly, spray a quarter of a cupful of ‘juice’ at a small target 4 metres away).

Jackson International Airport at Port Moresby (like all the regional airports too) carries large billboards which are part of the AusAid funded AIDS/HIV awareness programmes. Often the major signs will be in English (the official language for
education, business and government) and Melanesian Pidgin (although there are more than 800 tribes and languages).

The incidence of HIV/AIDS in Papua New Guinea is increasing at an alarming rate (thought to be around 20% each year) and is highest amongst women aged 15-35, who are, economically, the most productive age group.

The culture of violence against women is shocking. During our visit we heard many stories of physical violence, and sexual assault, most of which occurs within families (or at the hands of sorcerers in some of the most traditional tribes).

Most of the violence is perpetrated by men, but violence by women against women is not uncommon, usually as the result of some sort of territorial dispute. The stories of dispossession, of land, culture and kinship mirrored the stories of Indigenous Australians, as did the stories of damage and destruction from the increasing consumption of alcohol and drugs.

Because there are no roads from Port Moresby to the major regional centres, Port Moresby is a busy airport, and seats on planes are purchased at a premium for Nationals. The routes are across mountainous ranges that make anything we have in Australia look like large hills (Mt Kosciusko is 2228m above sea level, Mount Hagen is 1.5 kms higher at 3750m) so transporting people and goods is a logistical challenge,
particularly in the wet season when planes are frequently turned back because a safe passage through the mountains can’t be found.

Flying into Mt Hagen in the Western Highlands Province was an experience. The cloud cover was dense and we circled three of four times before the pass through ‘The Gap’ could be found. But it gave us a good opportunity to enjoy the ‘big picture’ view of the fertile valleys and the carefully tended, very neat village gardens, and the cloud covered mountains below – and above.

The pilots have to make incredibly steep descents and ascents in PNG – not like the long slow approaches made by aircraft flying in Australia. It literally feels like you will slide to the front or back of the plane (often a Fokker Friendship) as it takes off from the ground to the clouds at what seems like a 45 degree angle.

Like most regional airports, Mt Hagen Provincial Airport is small, spartan and in need of maintenance and upgrading. The runway has recently been extended and widened to allow flights direct from Australia – it has been declared an international port of entry because of the lucrative mining activities in the region but the international flights had not commenced when we visited.

We were met at the airport by our guide and host in Mt Hagen, Don Barrett, who was in the final days of a two year placement with ACIL (International Development Consultants and Advisors) as an Advisor to the Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary, Phase 3 Development Project.

The time difference between Adelaide and Papua New Guinea is minimal (an hour most times of the year) and we had been travelling since very early in the morning and it was now late afternoon, but the sights and sounds of a new country beckoned. Don drove us to the township of Mount Hagen, approximately 20kms from the airport, and we soaked up the colours – the people in their bright shirts and skirts (many of which are second hand and imported by traders from Australia), the vegetables and fruits for sale, the roadside flower gardens, the umbrellas (which everyone carries for much of the year); the sight of dense tropical vegetation; the hazards of travel – the vehicles are what Australian governments would classify as wrecks and ban from our roads (but they are of a similar standard to those in many remote Aboriginal communities); and we marvelled at the skill of the many hundreds of people sharing the badly potholed main road with trucks, buses and 4WD’s.
Very few people or families own vehicles in PNG. Most people either walk, or travel in PMVs – Public Motor Vehicles owned by private operators or sponsored by car yards. They are easily identified by their blue registration plates. All the PMVs we saw were in dreadful condition – many had cracked windscreen and appeared to be held together with bush string and tape. Few have any form of cover and most of the occupants sit on the floor of the tray or are crowded inside. On occasion we saw passengers travelling on the roof. They travel on set routes around and between the townships, on poorly maintained roads which make an already uncomfortable journey excruciating for the elderly and infirm, and downright dangerous for almost everyone.

The two major tribes, or clan groups, in Mt Hagen are the Moge and the Jika. The population of Mt Hagen area is thought to be approximately 30,000 and the annual rainfall is 3m.

Accommodation in townships for visitors and tourists is usually limited to one or two hotels, which would be classified in Australia as 2 or 3 star, but which offer usually excellent, personalised service. In Mt Hagen we were given the opportunity to experience the ex-pat lifestyle so we stayed with Don in his apartment – a block of units where most residents are ex-pat employees of Aid programmes. Like all government buildings and all hotels, the units are surrounded by high fences and the only access is through gates with 24/7 security guards (who have occasionally fallen asleep as their post!).

After a drive around the township, which is the commercial centre and meeting place for the province, we were taken to The Hagen Club – the meeting, drinking and eating place for ex-pats and some nationals.

The Hagen Club is a non-profit community club which provides much needed social and professional support for expats (as well as regular, cheap, quality meals for those who live alone and don’t want to cook for themselves). Discussion and debate about aid programmes, government actions and family ‘back home’ occurs until late in the night.

We were made to feel very welcome, and appreciated the opportunity to meet and talk with so many Australians who have given much of their lives to Papua New Guinea, sometimes at the expense of their marriage and relationships with their families.

Perhaps not surprisingly, most of the people we met over the next few days expressed surprise that a South Australian member of parliament would bother visiting Papua New Guinea to see for herself how Australian Aid funds and ‘Aussie expertise’ were being utilised. The more common experience was that MP’s and senior bureaucrats arrived, criticised and left, demanding more and more from the workers on the ground without offering to secure the necessary resources. The dominant view amongst the ex-pats, and many Nationals, was that when Australian Prime Minister Menzies had his “fit of pique” and declared Papua New Guinea to be independent in 1975, that Australia had in fact, abandoned the country and that we are still not prepared to acknowledge that Menzies’ action was tragically premature.
Tuesday 18th January

Travelled through West Highlands Province, escorted by Advisor to Royal Papua
New Guinea Constabulary, Phase 3 Development Project.

Unfortunately our planned visit with Pius Wingti, the former Prime Minister, and now
Governor of West Highlands Province was not possible because he was out of the
country.

We were able to visit and tour the local Police Station and Barracks. The facilities are
so substandard, the buildings would, if they were in Australia, have been condemned.
(Although, as we noted, they are of similar standard to those in many remote
Aboriginal communities in South Australia.)

The equipment and resources available to the police would be laughable, if crime and
violence wasn’t rife. The Police Station (which services a region of 30,000 people
living in remote, difficult to access villages) is literally rat infested and is in very poor
repair. We saw some of the work that had been done recently to upgrade the ‘lock up’
but even so, the police station in Mt Hagen provided irrefutable evidence that
government funds do not reach the services they are intended for.

There is not even a fax machine, and the only photocopier belongs to the Advisors
Programme. The phone is often out of order, and the radio is frequently unattended.
Consumables cannot be replenished and the workers are often forced to go for months
without wages. The police vehicles have shattered windscreens (either from being hit
by stones from the roads, or thrown in attacks, and we saw one with a bullet hole).
We were told they had been in this condition for months because there were no funds
to replace the glass. On a regular basis the vehicles are not able to leave the
compound because there are no funds to purchase fuel. The police officers (there are
three classes – the Regulars who are employed by the government, the Auxilliary who
are employed by the Provincial government, and the Reserves who work part time and
are paid from the local constabulary’s funds – if they have any), wear hand-me-down
uniforms from the Australian Federal Police – and it shows.

The (tiny) houses in the police barracks are unpainted asbestos cement sheeting.
Again, the only place I have seen buildings in similar condition is on the Pitjatjantjara
Lands where it appears that metropolitan based bureaucrats turn a blind eye to the
health hazards associated with deteriorating asbestos based building materials.
But the families in PNG take enormous pride in their barrack villages. Each has its own vegetable and flower garden and they are kept spotlessly clean inside.

And the police obviously appreciate the assistance, advice and mentoring offered by the Advisors. Everywhere we went Don was greeted with genuine warmth, and the sworn and unsworn police personnel were keen to talk about how they were using the methods, systems, tools and teaching materials Don had developed during his two years posting in Mt Hagen.

The value of having skilled and committed ‘experts’ working literally alongside the local, largely unskilled and untrained workforce, for substantial periods of time to teach and embed improved ways of planning and delivering services and accounting for expenditure was measurable.

I couldn’t help but compare this to the experiences of Makinti Minutjukur, the Municipal Services Officer in Pukatja in the remote north of South Australia, who has been pleading with the State Government for two years for on-site skills development and training so she can do her job to the standard expected by the government. Instead, her pleas and those of the community council have been largely ignored, the State and Commonwealth governments have continued to undermine programmes and criticise and the community has lost faith in (successive) government’s promises of practical assistance.

Recommendation:

That the State Government support the implementation of Advisor programmes on the Pitjatjantjara Lands, modelled on those operated by international aid programmes such as ACIL and SAGRI.

We also drove through one of the two markets in Mt Hagen – the Newland Market is the place where poorer quality (and therefore cheaper) goods are sold and bought.
We visited the Highlander Motel, managed by ex-pat Colin Burdett (brother of the Mayor of Karoonda in SA’s south east!). The hotel has 60 rooms and operates at 70% occupancy but is almost entirely dependent on custom from the European Union and AusAid funded conferences and workshops. ‘Tourists’ – people visiting for the primary purpose of relaxation and recreation, are rare.

We heard stories from Colin about how difficult it is, because of cultural differences, to implement the type of management systems we take for granted here in Australia. For example, the concept of stock control is difficult for Nationals to grasp – they are used to purchasing only what they can themselves carry on foot, and the practice of ordering before an item has run out, or purchasing in bulk, is not well understood.

The Mt Hagen region produces some of the finest coffee in the world, which is served in plungers at tables in the gardens of hotels. The experience is very relaxing, the food is, we were told, always excellent, and so the frustrations of hotel operators is understandable when they know they have a terrific tourism experience on offer in a spectacular landscape, but the country’s sometimes corrupt government, poor physical infrastructure and lack of tourism industry planning and development means that tourism trade is rare.

(Ironically though, in an impoverished country of 5.5 million people, with enormous geographic challenges, there are two daily newspapers – unlike South Australia!)
During our visit to PNG we heard so many stories of corruption and theft that I now fully understand the need for what many of the ex-pat aid programme workers call ‘deflectors’ – people (preferably not Nationals) who can deflect attempts to steal money (for personal, family or tribal gain).

Colin told us how he at the start of each year he now expects money and goods to be stolen by staff who have been in the hotel’s employ for many years and have never before stolen anything. Like other expats he told us of the hardship experienced by families whose children have reached school age and are now faced with hefty annual school fees which range from K100 for a primary school student to K1200 for a secondary school student, the equivalent which we were told is the equivalent of 2-3 years of the average wage in Papua New Guinea.

During periods of intense tribal fighting the schools close down – in the Western Province it was announced that some schools, which had closed in January, would stayed closed all year. I suspect thought that the closures were more likely to be due to the fact that the operating funds had been misappropriated somewhere along the way…

There are three types of schools – those run by the provincial government, International Schools (where wealthier families and expats send their children) and Catholic Schools.

![Mount Hagen Secondary School](https://example.com/mount-hagen-secondary-school.jpg)

*Mount Hagen Secondary School*
*(all schools are painted green and police stations are painted blue)*

(The average annual wage for a chef in a five star hotel is K30,000 or A$15,000. A waiter or labourer might earn A$1000 a year and the average annual wage for a detective in the police force is K12,000 or A$6,000.)

As a consequence, fewer students are completing even primary school because their families cannot afford the fees.

We visited one of the two banks in Mt Hagen. Security is very tight – guards and dogs are stationed at the entrances which are also controlled by one way airlocked
doors and the staff work behind metal screens. Somedays there is a queue of up to 50 people waiting.

We travelled up 5kms of very rough road to the Hotel Poroman which offers accommodation in cottages with thatched roofs and woven grass walls. The hotel overlooks Mt Hagen and provides a secluded and peaceful experience for the few travellers who know about it!

Along the roadsides in and around Mt Hagen there is a profusion of colourful flowers – dahlias, salvias, cosmos, sunflowers, lilies, gladioli, impatiens, hibiscus, chinese lanterns and lupins are all plentiful.

As a result of the food hygiene programmes, we were pleased to see on occasion women carrying eskies on their heads. I found the idea of transporting 10-30kgs of goods on my head or in string bags for 10kms absolutely daunting but in PNG this is the norm. Women literally bear the bulk of domestic work which includes carrying food, children and produce large distances on a daily basis, and in some areas through very steep terrain, in the tropical heat.

We visited the Community Policing Office and met with some of the officers Don had trained and mentored during his 2 year posting. We were given samples of the posters that have been developed and distributed to communities during the project on the topics of family violence, road safety and safe sex. (These are available from my office.) During our visit Don was visibly pleased to hear that one of the community police officers was at that moment in a remote village conducting a community education programme using the training kit they had developed together. (All training tools are printed on large corflutes because the electricity supply is so unreliable.)

As we drove back to Mt Hagen I commented on the large number of red plastic bags in use and were told that this was a new and disturbing trend. Previously all goods were carried in the string bags, known in the Highlands as billums (traditionally made from locally made bush string). Nowadays however plastic bags are provided at
supermarkets and all of Papua New Guinea is now facing the same littering and waste management issues we having recently been addressing in South Australia.

Recommendation – that the South Australian Government offer to share with the Papua New Guinea Provincial Governments the strategies it has used to successfully reduce the use of plastic bags.

That evening we again visited the Mt Hagen Club for dinner and discussion with local residents and ex-pat advisors. We were fortunate enough to be invited to the home of nationals Brian and Pauline Leahy who own and operate Korgua Coffee Plantation. They also buy village coffee and export this and their own product to the European market.

On display in their home (which like most of the wealthier homes has high fences and 24/7 security guards) is a magnificent collection of artefacts and local art works, including very impressive water colour and oil paintings.

Brian was educated in PNG and Australia, and has travelled the world before returning to settle in PNG. He and Pauline made us feel very welcome and provided valuable insights about government, business, social and environmental issues, as well as acting as our cultural guides.

We willingly agreed to change our plans (which were, of necessity, very flexible) so that we could spend more time with them over the next couple of days.

Wednesday 19th January 2005

Travelled through Eastern Highlands Province, escorted by Advisor to Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary, Phase 3 Development Project.

At 7am we set out to travel the 170kms to Garoka township.

The road was reasonable for the first 40kms, then deteriorated very rapidly after that.

The Australian Government has invested significant amounts of its AusAid funds to road programmes, but the lack of expertise and challenges of building roads in areas subject to frequent small earthquakes make sustained improvement difficult.
The photograph above shows work to rebuild a section of road that had recently literally fallen away following earth tremors and heavy rain.

We passed commercial tea plantations and a few small rice plantations and travelled through, hundreds of small villages along or near the main road.

Most village homes are low walled round huts made from woven bush grass matting (available for sale on the roadside for K5 per roll.) Some of the huts are built without chimneys and the smoke from cooking fires drifts up through the thatching and gives the unnerving appearance that the hut itself is smouldering.

The road took us along the borders of Chimbu Province. Chimbu and Esater Highlands Provinces are ‘dry’ but allow alcohol to be consumed in licenced premises, which we were told is a reasonably successful strategy to discourage problem drinking.

The vehicles in PNG are very poorly maintained despite the fact that roadworthy checks are carried out every 6 months at a cost of K27.5 (A$14), but it is common to bribe the officials so that the inspection is passed, irrespective of the condition of the vehicle.

We stopped for coffee at the Mt Wilhelm Tourist Lodge, nearly half way between Mt Hagen and Garoka. The summit of Mt Wilhelm is 4509 metres above sea level. Those people who have the time and stamina to climb Mt Wilhelm will be greeted by awesome glacial and alpine landscapes and stunning views from the roof of the world's most mountainous island.

The lodge is owned and operated by Mrs Kalogi whose father Sir Ignatious Kalogi was the Governor General of the province. Like most hotels, most of the lodge’s business comes from conferences.

We were given a ‘guided tour’ of the mural which dominates the entrance by a local national, Michael, at the cost of K10.
The Lodge had almost completed an ambitious development programme which included new conference facilities and additional accommodation to meet the growing conference trade.

Along the way we passed goats, dogs and pigs asleep on the side (and sometimes in the middle) of the road. Occasionally we saw Brahmen cattle tended by small boys. Villagers fish in the streams for trout and village gardens are carefully tended. Often the gardens are on steep slopes forcing the villagers to literally gain a firm foothold, and weed or harvest reaching above their heads.

Many of the villages have small roadside Beer Clubs which open whenever a customer arrives, and close when they leave. The clubs are easily identified by the large green and yellow SP Beer (Southern Pacific) signs.

For K2 we bought a small wreath made from bougenvillia petals from a group of small children standing on the roadside (on a rather precarious bend!). This income makes a significant contribution to the villages’ income.

The villages we passed were very neat and tidy - as the ex-pats in the Mt Hagen Club had told us to expect. They explained that Eastern Province has for many years had the highest presence of ex-pats who contribute leadership and management skills to measurably benefit the whole region.
As we approached the villages near Asaro, famous for its Mud Men, we saw women and men in ceremonial dress returning home after attending a traditional burial (coffins are available for purchase at roadside stalls).

Garoka is the commercial centre of the Eastern Highlands and has a population of approximately 25,000. The altitude is 1600m and the climate is similar equivalent to our late Spring but lasts all year round.

We arrived in Garoka at lunchtime, after only one short stop – which means it took us nearly five hours to travel 170kms. We stopped at the Bird of Paradise Hotel for lunch, then went on a tour of Garoka township.

Don had been involved in training local police in mediation skills, and we were fortunate enough to witness a mediation meeting in the main parklands. The photograph below shows the police and clan spokespeople in the centre of the mediation circle. Usually only the most serious issues are taken to mediation meetings, because it is these crimes or conflicts (murder, rape, theft) which are most likely to otherwise lead to outbreaks of tribal violence. Usually the purpose of the mediation meeting (which might take days) is to negotiate compensation payments to the aggrieved party (the tribe, not the individual). Negotiating a peaceful settlement represented by the payment of compensation (which is paid in pigs or other goods, not necessarily in Kena) is one way that the police contribute to the maintenance of order, rather than focussing on the prosecution of offenders through the courts.

Given that the cultural customs and attitudes to law and justice (including procedures for dealing with family and clan disputes) are very different, one has to admire the Australian officers who are willing to confront and mediate sensitive situations, and then with barely time to draw breath, move on to the next challenge…
Garoka is famous for its Annual Garoka Show, first held in the 1950s and now held every September. 40,000 warriors from different tribes and clans gather for 3-4 days and dance to the beat of Kundu drums. The Show has become a major tourist attraction and brings significant wealth to the local tribes.

The trip to Garoka highlighted for me the significant difference between indigenous communities in Australia and Papua New Guinea.

In Australia over the last 200 years Aboriginal people have become a minority group as a consequence have been dislocated, disposed and disenfranchised. The result is that they have lost their land, their culture and their law. By every social and economic (and some would say cultural) measure, indigenous people in Australia are disadvantaged.

By contrast, indigenous people in Papua New Guinea are in the majority, and their law and culture remains strong. Yes, there is an increasing level of violence and abuse as values systems change, and as people move to the larger towns to find employment and leave the supervision of their families and elders, and as alcohol and drug use becomes more widespread and diseases such as HIV/AIDS increase, but traditional culture is still strong, and attempts are being made to ensure that social and economic change in Papua New Guinea is managed in a way that preserves the traditions which will help to build strong and safe communities.

Other traditions, those which allow wholesale breaching of human rights, such as the custom of bride price payments, are being challenged. Bride price is paid by men to
the family of the woman they want to marry, and some men believe they have literally bought their wife and that they are therefore entitled to treat their wives (some men have more than one wife) in whatever way they see fit.

Traditionally the bride price was an exchange of gifts (often highly valued pigs and shells) which occurred as part of the wedding ceremony, but in recent years it has become a cash transaction.

Some of the most obvious differences between Australia and PNG lie in the health and wealth of communities. Most villages in PNG can successfully feed themselves and have well-functioning leadership structures. Life expectancy is relatively high and housing is basic but overcrowding is rare because every family has access to bush materials and the skills to build new huts as required (as we saw).

In Australia the picture is very different. On the issue of housing alone, on the Pitjantjara Lands, overcrowding is the norm – new homes can only be constructed by the Aboriginal Housing Authority (at three times the cost of building in urban Adelaide) and 15 people in one asbestos cement sheet house is typical. This year less than a handful of new homes will be built for Anangu. It is little wonder that there are so many problems with hygiene, domestic violence, family conflict…

Aboriginal people, in comparison to the dominant white culture, live for 20 years less, often in crowded, substandard housing, have less education and fewer opportunities to work. Children and adults suffer malnutrition and the consequent disease, and have reduced access to health care. Leadership is fragile and traditional law is undermined and overridden by whitefella law.

Hundreds of millions of dollars are spent by Australian governments on Aboriginal communities, but very little of this money makes a real difference to their prospects. The systematic undermining of respect for the rights of our own indigenous people has caused such a breakdown of culture and law it was impossible to argue that a first world country like Australia is in any way superior to a developing democracy like Papua New Guinea. In addition, the stop start nature of Federal and State government relations with Aboriginal communities in Australia, and the ‘out of sight out of mind’ attitude (made easy by the vast distances between the seats of power and the most struggling communities), explains the fatigue currently being experienced by our Aboriginal elders and community leaders.
After visiting the largest of the tourism markets, we visited the Eastern Highlands Cultural Centre in Kainantu, south of Garoka. The Cultural Centre teaches ceramic skills to local people and sells pots to visitors to the area. Like most successful ventures in PNG its establishment was a jointly funded project.

We then travelled further south along the main road to the hand dug Yonki Hydro Electric Scheme (build by the PNG National Government in the early 1970s) and to Kassim Pass (2kms above sea level) which overlooks the Markham Valley.

The photographs above don’t do justice to either the Hydro Project or the pass. Both are truly spectacular, and offer the sort of panoramic view that would be given prime position in tourism promotions in Australia.

Markham Valley produces palm oil and sugar cane and thousands of cattle graze in the fertile valley. Another long half day’s drive would have taken us to the coastal region and the township of Lae which offers some of the best scuba diving experiences in the world.

Australia has much to offer Papua New Guinea in the way of support for developing its fledgling, and struggling, tourism industry. The infrastructure challenges (roads,
quality accommodation, and promotion) are enormous, and the high incidence of violent crime is often cited as a major deterrent.

But the panoramic views, the adventure tourism potential and the cultural experiences available to visitors, all on our doorstep, are extraordinary, and could make a significant contribution to the economy of the country.

We stayed overnight at Garoka in the hotel owned by Governor Mal Smith (who was overseas at the time).

**Thursday 20th January 2005**

The next morning we met with Naomi Yupee who manages the Eastern Highlands Family Voice Programme (across 8 districts with 6 staff and 150 volunteers who have been trained in counselling skills).

The programme is primarily funded by Save the Children Fund in Australian and New Zealand and offers family support programmes, community education about the protection of children, parenting programmes, human rights education and domestic violence programmes and referrals.

They work closely with the police, churches and non-government organisations and have developed a series of community education tools. Recently Family Voice has also started working with women in prison and piloted a successful literacy programme which has now been taken up by the university.

UNICEF had visited the office the previous day and Family Voice is hoping to have its funding increased to address the increasing incidence of sexual abuse of children. They have also contributed information to a report about women and violence in Papua New Guinea which will be published by Amnesty International later this year.

Their programmes are literally taken to the streets and their interventions emphasise the responsibility of individuals to speak up and act differently.

Naomi is a gently but firmly spoken woman who successfully motivates others to be as passionate and energetic as she is about protecting the rights of vulnerable people.
She has close connections with community development workers and human rights activists across the South Pacific and we have maintained email contact since my visit. I have also sent packages of material generated in South Australia (about Sexual Health, Child Protection and Volunteer Management) and have provided web addresses for various other resources.

Sadly, demand for Family Voice’s services continues to increase – partly because of increasing community awareness and partly because of the increasing incidence of violence and abuse as a result of increased alcohol and drug consumption and separation from family and clan.

Any additional funding Family Voice can attract will be used to put workers ‘on the streets and in the villages’ because this has been shown to have the greatest impact. Interestingly, Aboriginal communities here in South Australia have been calling for the same strategy – qualified and experienced men and women living and working in communities alongside indigenous workers – but Australian governments maintain their reluctance and instead produce booklet after brochure after website based on the assumption that access to information will always mean changed behaviours!

We visited the J. K McCarthy Museum which is named after a legendary Patrol Officer. The Museum has an amazing display of artefacts, weaponry, handicrafts and historical photographs and is second only to the National Museum in Port Moresby in its portrayal of early contact between the Highlander people and Europeans.

The sign outside the Ladies at the Museum.
These Auxiliary Police Officers had just finished their shift doing random vehicle inspections on the road between villages, and were grateful of the offer of a lift in the back of the ute to their station 30kms away (particularly given that the police department frequently runs over budget and cannot afford to pay them!). If we had not happened along, their options were to either hail a PMV (Public Motor Vehicle), and pay the fare from their own pocket, or walk. Note the large bunch of bananas!

On the return trip one of the most unexpected sights was a truck that had been driven into a river so that it could be washed.

The photograph shows a typical village hut.

We stopped to buy a bunch of sweetfruit (K2) and I was interested to note the bunch of keys hung around the neck of the village woman – security is always a major issue even in remote villages like this one.

That evening’s television news (EMTV) featured a story about a protest which had occurred earlier in the day. Public servants are provided with housing by the National Housing Corporation but had staged a protest because their village, which is 6 miles out of Port Moresby, had been without electricity for 4 years and without piped water for over a year.

We spent the evening at the Mt Hagen Club discussing current affairs and the advisory programmes with Nationals and ex-pats.
We visited Brian Leahy at his coffee warehouse (Angko Coffee) in Mt Hagen. Brian’s father was one of the first European men to arrive in PNG (in the 1930s, at the age of 19) to mine gold.

We then travelled with Brian to the family’s coffee plantation in the Nebular Valley (40 minutes south of Mt Hagen).

All land is still owned by the local tribes, and the family has a 99 year lease on the property. The original plantation, established by the Leahy family, was developed prior to any other Australians settling or formal administration in the area. Brian told us that his father was asked by the local people to establish the homestead on what had been traditional tribal fighting land to provide a ‘buffer zone’.

Like many of the National’s born into wealthier families, Brian was educated in Australia, and travelled the world for some years before returning to PNG to assist his brother George during the gold rush of the late 1980’s. (George is now one of the largest gold buyers in PNG and regularly visits South Australia to maintain long standing friendships made during his own world adventures.)

**Comparison between PNG Coffee Growing Industry and SA Grape Growing Industry (submitted by Mike Reynolds)**

At the Leahy family’s coffee plantation we observed both cultivation and harvesting of coffee. Nebula Valley to coffee may be compared to areas such as Barossa, Clare, Eden Valley or Coonawarra to wine grapes. Conditions in the valley produce high grade coffee with older trees dropping in yield but producing good quality product. Generally PNG coffee is held in high regard but production levels are lower than some other world market locations. Soils are fertile and low mechanical and chemical intervention is required. Water is abundant so irrigation is not required. Traditionally minimal agricultural techniques have been applied with a fairly ad hoc approach to site selection, weed control, cultivation etc. Small plantings owned by individuals or families (village coffee), rather than large plantations, is the norm. For a substantial part of the coffee harvested a comparison can be drawn with early grape production in areas such as the Barossa where many small growers took their fruit to the wineries, except that much of the coffee is semi processed to ‘parchment’ stage in the village before taking it is taken to the buyer or mill.

This particular plantation employs nearly 50 Nationals all year round which increases to 90-100 during the peak harvest season. They have 80 acres of coffee trees and produce on average 50t of coffee beans each year.

The plantation manager was experimenting with different management techniques such as hillside planting to improve drainage and differing row spacings to improve yield and ease of harvesting. The aim is to increase production while retaining or improving quality of the beans.
Coffee ripening and harvesting in any given location covers a much longer time period than grape harvesting and berries on any given tree do not all ripen together - making mechanical harvesting a much less viable option than grapes or olives etc.

(Later that afternoon we toured one of the eight mills in the Mt Hagen area to see the bean processing. Coffee is a major export product for the region and this mill, which dates back to the 1960’s processes 5000t of beans each year.

Our tour epitomised the contrasts experienced throughout PNG. We found quite a good system of quality control with engineering systems in place to separate out first quality beans from the poorer, less saleable product and we saw how the operators recycle husk of the coffee bean to fire the drying furnaces.

This recycling process not only reduces waste but is also a means of reducing production costs in an industry suffering from by massive rises in energy costs over the last few years [300% in the last 18 months alone]. However working conditions and the layout of the mill would make any Australian OH&S representative cringe. It must be said though, that this particular mill was undertaking a program of upgrading and improvement.

The buyer/mill operator told us that in PNG a village grower receives 80% of the price of the processed beans (K70 at that time) in contrast to Kenya where growers receive around 20%. (Since our visit we have only bought coffee beans grown in PNG and we now distribute Fair Trade Coffee promotional materials whenever we can.)

While taste and quality of coffee does vary between locations there appears to be very little marketing of the coffee ‘by region’ at this stage so there is a similarity to the marketing of some Australian wine overseas as ‘South East Australian’ (which means the consumer has no real idea which region the wine is from). We can expect that this will change in future as a ‘boutique approach’ is developed for some markets.

We discussed with the plantation owner and manager the viability of grape growing in the area and while water availability, soil fertility and temperature/sunlight were seen as suitable, humidity and resultant disease control would pose a significant problem. Lack of a long cooler ripening period would also make it unlikely that high quality grapes for wine production could be produced. Potential for marketing of locally produced wine did not appear high. Many of the Highland Provinces prohibit the sale of alcohol for take away consumption, limiting the market to hotels and clubs. While coastal regions do not have the same prohibitions, transport and infrastructure problems would be significant. Production costs would be difficult to recuperate in an economy where there is little disposable income.
It appears that the demand for table grapes in the local marketplace would make any large/medium scale production questionable and export potential is doubtful but there is a possibility that a local market for table grapes could be developed.

Walking through the coffee trees…

Above - coffee beans at the Leahy family plantation spread on plastic for drying – the plastic is also used to protect the beans from the frequent showers.

Right – young trees are protected from wind and sun by shelters made from native grasses – harvested and erected ‘on the spot’ (and cheaper and more environmentally friendly than the plastic vine guards we use in Australia).

Visitors can see coffee being grown, harvested, washed and dried, and a tour of a coffee mill can also be arranged. The plantation workers live in on site huts which have beautifully tended village gardens (pineapples are a favourite).
By this stage my ability to read Pidgin was improving…

Anyone is welcome to bring coffee beans here.
We like clean, dry coffee.
Don’t mix wet coffee with good dry coffee.

At the coffee mills in Mt Hagen, villagers bring in village grown (not plantation grown) parchment (dry beans) for testing and weighing. If the beans are of good quality, the village will receive K70 per kg.

After processing, the beans (both plantation grown and village grown) will be exported to Australia and Europe.
The Leahy family also offer attractive and comfortable bed and breakfast style accommodation at the original homestead on the plantation. This is in the early stages of development but has already proven successful. Visitors are able to enjoy a relaxed, fully catered for retreat type experience or can use the homestead as the base for touring and strenuous bush walking or cave exploration (escorted by local guides) and cultural experiences.

We were asked to sign the Visitors Book which dates back to the early 1920’s and is a ‘Who’s Who’ of visitors to the region.

As we noted with Hotel Poroman in Mt Hagen and other accommodation venues, poor marketing is a major barrier to increasing patronage.

I discussed at length with the Leahy family and other operators we met the strategies being developed by local, regional and state tourism bodies in South Australia. Having had 2 years experience with the Mt Pleasant Business and Tourism Association, 3 years experience as a board member of Adelaide Hills Tourism and experience with running training programmes for other tourism bodies I was able to give a first hand account of how these strategies and marketing plans had been developed.

The major barriers to the development of tourism opportunities in PNG are the lack of organised and coordinated support from the provincial and national governments combined with a general cultural reluctance for business operators to work together.

I have sent web addresses and other information to the Leahy family and they will be visiting Adelaide later this year. I have agreed to arrange opportunities for them to meet with members of local and regional tourism and business development organisations so that can see for themselves the value of marketing the unique experiences defined regions can offer, rather than trying, and failing, to attract visitors to PNG and hoping they will somehow find out about what is on offer once they arrive.

Recommendation – that SA Tourism Commission offer to sponsor visits to South Australia by representatives from fledgling tourism organisations in PNG so that they can learn about and modify for their use the tourism marketing plans and strategies used by regional South Australia.
Recommendation – that the Protocol Unit of Department of Premier and Cabinet and Parliament House source and make available for purchase by Members of Parliament an improved range of reasonably priced, high quality products of SA which can be used as gifts – the range on offer was limited and of low quality and we struggled to find anything in the selection I had taken which was of much interest!

Recommendation – that the South Australian Government urge the Federal Government play a greater role in assisting the Government of PNG to protect its local timbers from exploitation by Malaysian interests – we saw entire valleys that had been ravaged – or as the local say “raped and pillaged” and we heard that just weeks before a Malaysian owned ship had left PNG carrying K300,000,000 (A$150,000,000) worth of unmilled timber, and worse, that very little of this sum would reach the local communities.

Later that afternoon we accompanied Don Barrett to a farewell meal organised by the police team he had been training and mentoring for the last 2 years. The turnout, speeches and gifts again highlighted to us how much the local people valued the work of the ex-pat Advisors.

Don Barrett and some of the officers at one of the many farewell parties organised in his honour.

We also met with Bernadine Danomira whose family operate the Haus Poroman in Mt Hagen. Bernadette was particularly interested to hear about the tourism accreditation standards developed by industry bodies in South Australia. She had completed a number of workshops organised by the provincial government and supported by the Adelaide Institute of TAFE to gain qualification in Workplace Training and Assessment so that employees of the local hotels could be supported to undertake formal training. Unfortunately the programme had not been repeated because there was (in my view totally unjustified!) dissatisfaction by the provincial government with the way the TAFE has conducted the graduation ceremony, and there had been no follow up so Bernadine and the other graduated had few success stories to share. I have forwarded information about the SA standards to Bernadine.
Late that day we flew to Port Moresby and were met at the airport by Tom Baker who was close to finishing a 5 year posting in Port Moresby coordinating ACIL projects with the local police. Tom and his wife Joy joined us for dinner and shared some of their experiences of policing in remote Northern Territory communities and internationally.

**Saturday 22nd January 2005**

Tom took us on a brief tour of Port Moresby before we flew to Medang on the East coast.

Port Moresby has expanded rapidly in recent years (we have been told that someone who had visited 20 years ago would recognise very little nowdays).

Parliament House is closed to all visitors, which means that a citizen of PNG cannot, as we do in Australia, sit in the gallery and watch their elected representatives at work. So much for democracy! The Museum had been closed some months previously because it had expended its total budget (so we were grateful we have been able to visit the J. M. McCarthy Musuem). As we drove past the Golf Course Tom
told us that the security guards until recently used bows and arrows so that the (frequent) sound of gunfire didn’t distract the players.

Once again our attention was drawn to the contrasts in PNG. The photograph below shows a million dollar view – equivalent to the best our Australian cities can offer, but the presence of razor wire around every one of the homes (this was almost next door the Australian High Commissioner) detracts somewhat from the spectacular scenery.

Just around the hill we saw where the Hanuabada live – the traditional landowners of the area live, literally on the water. There is no power or running water or any system to manage sewerage, which empties straight from the houses into the bay. Swimming, even if we found somewhere that offered protection from robbery, no longer seemed such a good idea!

[This is the area where the Social Welfare and Development Minister, Dame Carol Kidu lives. Dame Kidu has recently been proposed by womens’ groups to fill the position of Deputy Prime Minister (which has been vacant for more than 12 months).

“She is the right candidate, bikos, em i save long bel na tingting bilong ol mama (she knows the thoughts and worries of mothers),” according to Maria Kipie, a participant in a recent women’s forum.]
Nearby Ela Beach was a segregated area. It is now the home to apartment blocks owned by Mission Housing built into the hillside overlooking the bay, and until the previous week when a delegation of Japanese conducted a major clean up, 100,000 plastic bags washed up and down the nearby coastline.

We drove through Six Mile Settlement (which is reputed to be one of the most violent areas in Port Moresby, partly because sorcery is still routinely practiced) and through the area where the public servants had staged their televised protest about the lack of power and water just days before.

Mid morning we flew to Medang, a very pretty township on the East coast with a successful tourist ventures centred around diving experiences on the coral reefs for both amateurs and professionals and game fishing. Hundreds of literally sparkling islands can be seen from the front lawns of the hotel. PNG’s largest tour operator is located in Medang and offers day and week cruises along the Sepik River and around the Trobriand Islands in Milne Bay. The nature of sea travel means that the operators can better protect visitors from the hold ups that are frequent in the road based townships of the highlands. Small village markets (including one at the hotel where the craftspeople and their children live, literally, under the tables where they display their wares) allow visitors to purchase artefacts and goods direct from the makers themselves.

We bought some baskets made by the local men, shell necklaces and ceremonial masks. We also bought a well used traditional kundu.

Medang is a very safe village for visitor’s to walk around (at least in daylight hours), and we were amused to see this sign in the supermarket car park:

![Sign reading Tok Save](image_url)

Referring to betal juice,

*If you spit in the TokSave public carpark, security will take you and charge you.*

*Later that afternoon I described Australia’s red circle No Smoking symbol to the Hotel’s Housekeeper, who thought it was a great concept!*

That evening we sat outside our room and listened to the sound of kundu drums drifting across the water from one of the small islands in the bay. As a tourism experience, it doesn’t get better, but one is left with a great sense of frustration that there is not more assistance given to these communities to market their unique attractions to their Australian neighbours, especially those who want a restful but fulfilling cultural experience in our so-called ‘global village’.

Unfortunately though I had picked up a bug and was feeling very unwell which cut short our time at the village market and conversation with other visitors and staff over dinner.
We also had difficulty phoning back to Australia to check on our children, and were eventually told by hotel staff that “they had lost the satellite again”. Apparently the satellite which services the telecommunications company is regularly ‘misplaced’!

The local water taxi rank…

**Sunday 23rd January 2005**

The following morning I met with Pat Field who is an expat Provincial Programme Advisor to the Department of Health (formerly in Mt Hagen, now in Medang). Pat’s role is to assist the development of improved governance structures for regional health services and to improve service delivery.

The key issues she identified are similar to those faced by our indigenous communities – a lower level of health service, fewer training opportunities for workers, the increasing incidence of HIV/AIDS, and a general lack of funding for improvement, all in the context of poor indicators of health and wellbeing in comparison to wealthier nations.

In particular, a key part of Pat’s role is to ensure that the health services “get their fair share of the budget”, which doesn’t just mean competing with education, or business, or transport… as she highlighted, it means ensuring that the funds allocated by the regional and national governments to the health services actually arrive in their bank accounts, and are actually spent on health services!

One of the strategies she has successfully developed in other regions is the concept of champions for the cause – which involved establishing an independent body, usually comprised on business operators (and therefore usually men) who can scrutinise the activities and expenditure of the health service in an attempt to minimise fraud and corruption.

Like the other Advisors I had spoken to, Pat gave her strong endorsement to the sustained mentoring model developed by the Aid programmes. The continuing benefits for patients, nurses and doctors and managers of improved practices in every facet of health provision (from teaching hand washing and sterilisation techniques to report writing and budget management) were a direct result of the hands on approach that experienced advisors, placed for sufficiently long periods of time and given sufficient authority to intervene when necessary.
But she also expressed concern that the new models being proposed (which meant that all costs associated with the Advisory programmes other than the Advisor’s salary and vehicle expenses would be provided to a National Services Centre) would diminish the effectiveness of the Advisory role. In Pat’s experience (and the experience of other Advisors we spoke with) the agencies they were placed with often ran out of, (or were never provided with) funds for essential consumables such as telephones, electricity and fuel.

Pat and I also spoke about the particular challenges she had faced as a woman. Appropriately placing, supporting and safeguarding advisors in PNG is challenging at the best of times, and Pat had experienced considerable reluctance on the part of the Health Services Support Programme (jointly funded by the Australian and PNG governments) to allow her to be placed in remote communities.

That afternoon we (reluctantly) flew back to Port Moresby and returned to the Holiday Inn Hotel where we were once again met by Tom and Joy Baker.

Tom and Joy took us to the Royal Papua Yacht Club on the Fairfax Harbour to join a group of other advisors for dinner. The Yacht Club is the most popular gathering place for ex-pats and boasts world class dining and sailing facilities.

I asked to visit the Pokies Room – about ten electronic gaming machines are located in a small room off the main dining room and six were being used when we were there but interestingly, they all operate with no sound at all – no gimmicky or discordant music or other sound – and our hosts tell me that because of this poker machines are not a popular gambling choice in PNG. Perhaps the SA Government should take another look at the suggestions our machines be silenced.

Over dinner I was asked to follow up with the SA Minister for Families and Communities about when SA would address its discriminatory adoption laws. A number of the Australian advisors in PNG have taken overseas postings and have subsequently adopted children from overseas. It was explained to me that SA is the only state to apply age restrictions adoption applicants and that this posed a significant problem for defence personnel who had delayed starting a family and wanted to settle in SA and adopt children (or, in the case of one family I met, adopt a second child). (I am pleased to report that this has since been addressed and SA’s laws are now consistent with the rest of the country.)

**Monday 24th January 2005**

Returned to Adelaide.
In summary:

The key message we took away from our visit was that the State Government has much to learn from the structure of the Advisory programmes funded by AusAid.

The close and mutually respectful working relationships developed by the ex-pat Advisors and Nationals results in greater transparency and accountability, and measurable and sustainable improvements for individual employees, organisations and communities, and should be used as a model for improving services and governance in our remote South Australian Aboriginal communities. The Advisors were recognised by Nationals (including the ‘Big Men’ – those with either tribal authority or assumed authority) has ‘honest brokers’ or ‘deflectors’ of attempted corruption. Remote Aboriginal communities have been the subject of many accusations about incompetency or corruption in recent years, despite their pleas for assistance. I note that Professor Lowitja O’Donaghue and Reverend Tim Costello, Advisors to the State Government recommended the placement of an ‘honest broker’ in the Anangu Pitjantjatjara Lands in their most recent report to the State Government. I note also that this recommendation has not been acted on.

In relation to the actual AusAid programmes, there were common issues raised by all the Advisors we spoke with (in both formal and informal discussion).

The time lag currently being experienced in relation to extension of policing programmes will result in a loss of faith in the Australian Government by communities, and will mean that much of the recent work will have to be duplicated (at significant cost to Australian taxpayers) when the next programme finally starts. The loss of the community policing programmes will be particularly detrimental. The critical lack of forward planning and the subsequent loss of continuity across all programmes is of particular concern. (For example, recommendations about the policing programmes were made in 2004 and the projects concluded in February 2005, but planning for 2006 and beyond will not commence until mid 2005!) The other comment we heard far too frequently was that recommendations made to AusAid by Advisors in PNG, ie the people ‘in the know, on the ground’, were routinely ignored.

(I note that the Australian Research Council has recently funded a three year study of the performance of Australian police in recent offshore roles, including PNG, with a focus on how Australian police have engaged with the local police and local communities. This may result in some useful lessons for onshore policing in remote and indigenous communities.)

Sadly, the other key message is that Papua New Guinea is increasingly suffering from the effects of globalisation, the increasing use of drugs and alcohol and subsequent social breakdown and that the increasing incidence of preventable diseases such as HIV/AIDS is creating a significant burden on health services.

Unfortunately the visits we had planned with members of parliament did not eventuate but I am indebted to Don Barrett, Tom Baker and the other advisors for their assistance, hospitality and insight into the workings of the Advisory Programmes and life in Papua New Guinea.
Recommendations

The State Government support the implementation of Advisor programmes on the Pitjatjantjara Lands, modelled on those operated by international aid programmes such as ACIL and SAGRI.

That members of the Aboriginal Lands Task Force (situated in Department of Premier and Cabinet) meet with Don Barrett and other Advisors (who have now returned to South Australia) to learn more about the aims, structure and daily workings of the programmes they coordinated in Papua New Guinea.

The South Australian Government urge the Federal Government to take greater note of the recommendations made by Advisors (when they are on placement and after they return to Australia).

The South Australian Government offer to share with the Papua New Guinea Provincial Governments the strategies it has used to successfully reduce the use of plastic bags.

SA Tourism Commission offer to sponsor visits to South Australia by representatives from fledgling tourism organisations in Papua New Guinea.

The South Australian Government give serious consideration to silencing poker machines in all venues except the Casino.

The South Australian Government urge the Federal Government play a greater role in assisting the Government of Papua New Guinea to protect its local timbers from exploitation by Malaysian interests.

The Protocol Unit of Department of Premier and Cabinet and South Australian Parliament’s Joint Parliamentary Services Committee source and make available an improved range of reasonably priced, high quality products of SA which can be purchased as gifts by Members of Parliament travelling overseas.

Kate Reynolds
Member of the Legislative Council
Updated Report submitted July 2005