

EMERGING PACIFIC LEADERS' DIALOGUE (EPLD)

2006

SPEECH TO BRISBANE OPENING

28 JUNE 2006

RFE (DICK) WARBURTON AO

SIR WILLIAM DEANE - CONFERENCE CHAIR, THE HON TOM BARTON, DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, CSC ALUMNI, EPLD PARTICIPANTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE INDEED THIS MORNING TO EXTEND TO YOU ALL A MOST WARM WELCOME TO THIS, THE INAUGURAL, EMERGING PACIFIC LEADERS' DIALOGUE CONFERENCE.

AS SOME OF YOU MAY WELL BE AWARE, THIS IS THE FIRST REGIONAL COMMONWEALTH STUDY CONFERENCE EVENT THAT HAS BEEN CONDUCTED IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD.

ITS BEGINNINGS CAN BE TRACED BACK TO THE EARLY DAYS OF THE NINTH COMMONWEALTH STUDY CONFERENCE JOINTLY STAGED BY AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND IN OCTOBER 2003.

AT THIS CONFERENCE, INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN SIR WILLIAM, SOME OF THE 2003 PARTICIPANTS AND ORGANISERS LED TO THE PROPOSITION THAT "WOUDN'T IT BE GOOD" TO STAGE A CSC STYLE EVENT FOR POTENTIAL

LEADERS IN THIS REGION OF THE WORLD WITH A SUBSTANTIVE FOCUS ON PACIFIC NATIONS.

AFTER A NUMBER OF PROPOSALS AND A WORKING PARTY REVIEW CHAIRED BY MS RILKA MACAINSH (CSC2003), THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF COMMONWEALTH STUDY CONFERENCES (AUSTRALIA) INC WHICH I CHAIR, FINALLY AGREED IN MARCH 2005 TO STAGE A PACIFIC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE IN MID-2006.

THIS CONFERENCE WAS NAMED THE EMERGING PACIFIC LEADERS' DIALOGUE (EPLD) AND A STEERING COMMITTEE WAS FORMED UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF MS CAROLYN BLOCH - A LONG STANDING MEMBER OF THE CSC AUSTRALIA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND HERSELF A GROUP LEADER FOR THE SIXTH COMMONWEALTH STUDY CONFERENCE STAGED ACROSS AUSTRALIA AND INDIA IN 1986.

AS THE HON TOM BARTON HAS ALREADY MENTIONED, HE ALSO WAS A GROUP LEADER/PARTICIPANT ON THIS 1986 CONFERENCE AND, TO YOU TOM, WE EXTEND PARTICULAR THANKS AND THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT FOR THE GENEROUS SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE YOU AND YOUR DEPARTMENT HAS PROVIDED TO THE PLANNING AND ORGANISATION OF THE EPLD 2006.

THIS WONDERFUL PARLIAMENT HOUSE VENUE FOR THE CONFERENCE OPENING HERE IN BRISBANE IS A CLEAR EXAMPLE OF THE GREAT SUPPORT WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT.

IMPORTANTLY, THERE ARE A COUPLE OF OTHER SIGNIFICANT PLAYERS IN ORGANISING THE EPLD WHO, LIKE TOM BARTON, WERE ALSO MEMBERS OF THE 1986 COMMONWEALTH STUDY CONFERENCE.

THESE INCLUDE, THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF CSC (AUSTRALIA), MR BRIAN PICKETT (ALREADY KNOWN TO MANY OF YOU), MS JOAN SPILLER, CHAIR OF THE EPLD MEMBERSHIP SELECTION COMMITTEE AND MR ROBERT GOH CHAIR OF THE SOLOMON ISLANDS EPLD ORGANISING COMMITTEE. TO BRIAN, JOAN AND ROBERT WE EXTEND OUR PARTICULAR THANKS.

THERE ARE MANY OTHER ALUMNI MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE EPLD.

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO MENTION ALL OF THESE PEOPLE AT THIS TIME, HOWEVER I AM SURE YOU WILL ALL BE VERY INTERESTED TO KNOW THAT BEHIND THE SCENES THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF COMMITTEES WITH SOMETHING LIKE 150 VOLUNTEERS UNDERTAKING VARIOUS ROLES TO ASSIST IN THE STAGING OF THIS IMPORTANT EVENT.

THESE SUPPORTING COMMITTEES INCLUDE STUDY TOUR PLANNING, MEMBERSHIP SELECTION, FUNDRAISING, CONFERENCE PROGRAM & SPEAKERS.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE WORK OF THE PROGRAM COMMITTEE CHAIRED BY PROF. DI YERBURY.

IMPORTANTLY, THERE AT LEAST HALF OF THESE VOLUNTEERS ARE ALUMNI – FORMER PARTICIPANTS OF COMMONWEALTH STUDY CONFERENCES.

OUR SINCERE THANKS AND APPRECIATION IS ALSO EXTENDED TO THIS ARMY OF VOLUNTEERS.

MS CAROLYN BLOCH AS CHAIR OF A 20 PERSON EPLD STEERING COMMITTEE WITH WIDE REPRESENTATION ACROSS THE NATIONS OF THE PACIFIC REGION IS ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED AND CONGRATULATED ON THE OUTSTANDING JOB SHE HAS DONE IN OVERSIGHTING, WITH HER COMMITTEE MEMBERS, THE EXTENSIVE PLANNING ASPECTS OF THIS COMPLEX AND CHALLENGING LEADERSHIP EVENT.

IT IS ALSO APPROPRIATE TODAY TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE TERRIFIC SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM MILES MIDDLEMASS AND HIS KIWI TEAM FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN PLANNING THE SUBSTANTIAL NEW ZEALAND COMPONENTS OF THE EPLD. IN A SIMILAR MANNER TO OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH NEW ZEALAND IN 2003, WE HAVE REALLY APPRECIATED WORKING WITH YOU AGAIN MILES ON THIS REGIONAL CSC INITIATIVE.

ORGANISING COMMITTEES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED IN ALL EPLD STUDY TOUR DESTINATION COUNTRIES AND MY THANKS AND

APPRECIATION IS ALSO EXTENDED TO ALL THE CHAIRS OF THESE COMMITTEES AND THEIR COMMITTEE MEMBERS – PARTICULARLY IN THE LARGER PACIFIC NATIONS - ROBERT IGARA, PNG AND DARYL TARTE, FIJI.

THE EFFORTS OF THE HARD WORKING EPLD SECRETARIAT IS ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED AND PARTICULAR THANKS ARE EXTENDED TO RICK MOLONEY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MERIDITH OSBORNE AND CLIFF GOUGH EPLD ASSISTANT DIRECTORS.

THESE THANK YOU'S WOULD BE INCOMPLETE IF WE DID NOT ALSO THANK THE QUEENSLAND EPLD ORGANISING COMMITTEE UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF MR ROBIN GRUNDON (CSC2003) AND MOST ABLY SUPPORTED BY REBECCA BIAZOS, JUDY LLOYD, JOHN ANDERSON AND THEIR RESPECTIVE TEAMS.

TO OUR EXTENSIVE LIST OF EPLD SPONSORS RECORDED IN THE CONFERENCE PROGRAM AND ACKNOWLEDGED ON THE WEB SITE, WE ALSO EXTEND OUR MOST SINCERE THANKS.

A NUMBER OF PRINCIPAL SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS PLUS 50 OTHER SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS ARE SPECIFICALLY LISTED IN THE EPLD PROGRAM. THERE IS ALSO AN A4 PAGE OF THE LOGOS OF OUR PRINCIPAL SPONSORS IN YOUR STUDY TOURS FOLDER.

HOWEVER IN ADDITION, THERE ARE PROBABLY TWICE THIS NUMBER OF SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS ACROSS THE 10 PACIFIC STUDY TOUR LOCATIONS THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED

INVALUABLE SUPPORT TO THE STAGING OF THE ALL IMPORTANT STUDY TOUR SEGMENT OF THE EPLD.

TO ALL SPONSORS AND SUPPORTERS, WE EXTEND OUR MOST GRATEFUL THANKS AND APPRECIATION AS, WITHOUT THEIR SUPPORT AND INVESTMENT, THE EPLD 2006 WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE.

FINALLY AND MOST IMPORTANTLY TO THE EPLD PARTICIPANTS.

TO YOU, I EXTEND OUR WARMEST CONGRATULATIONS FOR HAVING BEEN SELECTED TO BECOME AN EPLD PARTICIPANT.

SOME 2,000 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS ENQUIRIES AND ALMOST 600 FORMAL APPLICATIONS WERE RECEIVED OVER THE DECEMBER 2005 TO THE MARCH 2006 PERIOD. 120 OR SO CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS, DRAWN FROM THE 20 MEMBER AND OBSERVER STATES OF THE PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM WERE THEN SELECTED FOR THIS IMPORTANT REGIONAL EVENT. THIS PLACES EACH OF YOU IN A VERY SPECIAL CATEGORY OF PEOPLE.

YOU ARE ALL EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE WILLINGLY AND OPENLY TO THE SUCCESS OF THE EPLD.

YOU ARE ALSO EXPECTED TO EXPLORE THE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED TO YOU WITH GREAT ENTHUSIASM.

AND, AS THE PROGRAM UNFOLDS, WE WANT YOU TO THINK ABOUT HOW YOU MIGHT PLAY A FUTURE ROLE IN KEEPING THE EPLD FLAME ALIVE. IN DOING SO YOU THUS WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE CONTINUATION OF THESE EPLD INITIATIVES FOR OTHER EMERGING LEADERS ACROSS THE PACIFIC WHO WILL FOLLOW EACH OF YOU.

THERE WILL BE MORE ON THIS IMPORTANT MATTER IN AUCKLAND.

I LOOK FORWARD TO DISCUSSING WITH YOU ALL THE HIGHLIGHTS OF YOUR GREAT FORTHCOMING JOURNEY WHEN YOU ARRIVE IN AUCKLAND NEW ZEALAND IN 11 DAYS OR SO.

GOOD LUCK, SHARE YOUR LEARNING EXPERIENCE OPENLY, WILLINGLY AND WITH SENSITIVITY AND, ABOVE ALL, TRAVEL SAFELY.

THANK YOU.