

Chapter 4

Responding to law and order emergencies

4.1 In the previous chapter, the committee suggested that an efficient and well-resourced policing organisation is crucial for national stability and longer-term development. Moreover, that law enforcement agencies need to be supported by a robust law and justice sector. In this chapter, the committee considers instances when breakdowns in law and have been so severe that states have requested outside assistance to help restore peace. The chapter begins by examining how the Pacific community has come together to address such challenges before considering Australian initiatives to assist in response to regional crises. Thereafter, the committee examines the proposal for establishing a standing regional police force. The chapter does not address emergency responses to natural disasters as these are dealt with in detail in Chapter 8.

4.2 There have been numerous instances when Pacific island states have required outside assistance to manage recent breakdowns in law and order. The AFP provided an overview of major security and political events to which Australia has been requested to respond:

1980–1989	Vanuatu—Santo rebellion and major political instability
1987	Fiji—military coup
1988–1997	Bougainville—secessionist movement and violent conflict
1998–2003	Solomon Islands—conflict between ethnic groups
2000	Fiji—civilian coup
2000	Solomon Islands—coup
2006	Solomon Islands—election riots
2006	Tonga—pro-democracy movement march and subsequent riots
2008	Nauru—police station burnt down

4.3 The AFP submission added that Australia's experience 'suggests a trend towards increasing instability across the Pacific'.¹

Rapid breakdown in law and order

4.4 A number of witnesses expressed concern about the pace with which countries of the Pacific have, on occasion, descended into a state of lawlessness. The Department of Defence noted that the rapid deterioration of law and order has challenged the ability of law enforcement agencies to maintain peace:

1 *Submission 62*, p. 8.

Recent history, such as ethnic conflicts in Tonga and Solomon Islands and the coup in Fiji, has shown how quickly small Pacific Island countries can be plunged into instability, with serious consequences for their security...²

4.5 The AFP identified several instances where law enforcement agencies and governments across the region have struggled to maintain control:

Within all Pacific island countries there are 'trigger points' that can quickly destabilise communities and lead to potentially disastrous outcomes through rioting and property damage. Recent examples include the 2006 riots in Solomon Islands and Tonga. Nauru and Vanuatu have had smaller scale situations whereby local groups have taken action that challenged the ability of law enforcement agencies and governments to maintain control, even if for a short period of time.³

4.6 Recalling the 2006 riots in Nuku'alofa, which resulted in 60 per cent of the central business area of the town being burnt down, Australia's High Commissioner to Tonga, Mr Bruce Hunt, explained how the Tongan police force was quickly overwhelmed by looters and rioters:

Crime and disorder in Tonga is low—it is not a real issue, with the exception of the riot. On the day of the riot, unfortunately, the looters and the rioters were just too many and overwhelmed the police. The police could not control the riot and the riot spread...immediately after the riot or in the course of the afternoon of the riot the Australian government was asked to deploy the ADF and the AFP to Tonga, and they arrived two days later...⁴

4.7 This took place in a society where, as the High Commissioner suggested, crime and disorder are low.

4.8 This evidence builds on the findings contained in Chapter 2 that various social tensions and root causes of conflict interact to quickly destabilise Pacific communities. It also builds on evidence outlined in Chapter 3 that Pacific law enforcement agencies are limited in their ability to respond to property damage, rioting and violence and that this provides an environment in which small scale social disturbance may develop into large scale breakdowns in law and order.

Regional efforts to manage crises

4.9 DFAT suggested that the region had been successful in coming together to address regional security challenges:

The Pacific community has come together in times of crisis to address regional security problems, with considerable success. The regional peace monitoring operations in Bougainville and Solomon Islands, RAMSI,

2 *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2008, p. 86.

3 *Submission 62*, p. 6.

4 *Committee Hansard*, 25 September 2008, pp. 3, 11.

succeeded in restoring stability and law and order without the need for international peace-keepers.⁵

4.10 A range of regional security agreements have been reached: the Honiara Declaration on Law Enforcement Cooperation (1992), the Aitutaki Declaration on Regional Security Cooperation (1997) and the Nasonini Declaration (2002). The declaration which has most successfully provided the Pacific Islands Forum with a role to play in addressing breakdowns in law and order is the Biketawa Declaration (2000). There are several key features of the Biketawa security framework that make it significant: its commitment to upholding democratic processes and good governance; its recognition of indigenous rights and cultural values; and its method for addressing crises in the region. The Biketawa Declaration has been invoked twice since its promulgation: in Solomon Islands (RAMSI, since 2003) and in the Pacific Regional Assistance to Nauru (PRAN, since 2004).⁶

4.11 The Forum has identified RAMSI, which was mandated by the Biketawa Declaration, as an example of how the region can work collaboratively to improve regional security. In June 2009, the Secretary General, Mr Tuiloma Neroni Slade, praised RAMSI as an 'outstanding achievement' and a 'unique regional partnership'.⁷ This position was endorsed in evidence provided to the committee by the Forum Secretariat:

...responding to some of the region's most deeply confronting challenges, the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands, RAMSI, has been a true success story. This unique regional partnership, including contributions since mid-2003 from all forum members, has proved a very positive experience for the region, underscoring the clear benefits of adopting collective approaches to addressing security dilemmas. In the Solomon Islands the situation is very encouraging. We are looking forward

5 *Committee Hansard*, 21 November 2008, p. 3.

6 For the full text of the Biketawa Declaration see: http://www.forumsec.org/_resources/article/files/Biketawa%20Declaration.pdf (accessed 16 February 2007). The committee has previously recognised the importance of the Biketawa Declaration in its report into Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations, Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations*, August 2008, pp. 74–76. With respect of PRAN, funding and technical assistance for key high-level law enforcement and justice positions was made available. This has assisted Nauru develop a National Sustainable Development Strategy, *Committee Hansard*, 19 June 2009, p. 6. Election observer missions have also been undertaken under the Biketawa framework in: Bougainville (2005), Solomon Islands and Fiji (2006), Republic of Marshall Islands (2007) and Nauru (2008), Pacific Islands Forum Security Program, <http://www.forumsec.org.fj/pages.cfm/security/> (accessed 4 September 2009).

7 Secretary General Tuiloma Neroni Slade, Pre-Forum Session of the Forum Officials Committee, <http://www.forumsec.org.fj/pages.cfm/newsroom/press-statements/2009/ramsii-commended-success-as-regional-initiative.html> (accessed 1 September 2009).

to a greater relationship between RAMSI, the Solomon Islands and the rest of the forum island countries.⁸

4.12 Prior to the Biketawa Declaration, there had been the deployment of regional forces. For example, the coalition to assist in Bougainville in 1994 when the South Pacific Peacekeeping Force (SPPKF)—including New Zealand, Australia, Tonga, Fiji and Vanuatu—brokered a peace agreement between the PNG Government and the Bougainville Revolutionary Army.⁹ This force was followed by the Peace Monitoring Group (PMG) and the establishment of a UN office (UNPOB) to facilitate the peace process. The PMG was a multi-national force from Australia, New Zealand, Vanuatu and Fiji. Of the total force of 300, about 260 were Australian, 240 being military personnel. It was charged with monitoring the truce and later with weapons disposal. The decision was taken to deploy this force without arms; as a degree of trust emerged, the force was reduced from 300 to 75.¹⁰

Fiji

4.13 As noted in Chapter 2, Fiji has experienced a series of political and military coups (1987, 2000 and 2006) and a constitutional crisis (1977). Following the 2006 military coup, the constitution was abrogated, the independence of the judiciary compromised and free speech curtailed with critics of the government being detained, questioned and in some cases deported. These events remain of serious concern to the committee which believes it is essential that Fiji re-establish the rule of law, rebuild its democratic institutions and maintain freedom of speech.¹¹

4.14 The 2006 coup has also had significant repercussions for region stability. Fiji is critical to the Pacific architecture, it is the home to a number of regional organisations and serves as a centre for a variety of regional activities. The fallout from the coup therefore extends well beyond Fiji, having profound consequences for the region.

4.15 The Australia Government has condemned the military's removal of Fiji's elected government and the more recent abrogation of Fiji's Constitution. Ministerial-level contact with the interim government has ceased, the Defence Cooperation

8 *Committee Hansard*, 19 June 2009, p. 7.

9 See Peter Londey, *Other People's Wars: A History of Australian Peacekeeping*, Allen & Unwin, Crow's Nest, 2004, pp. 216–218.

10 See James Cotton, 'Peacebuilding in the Pacific: the Australian Military Experience', *Journal of Peace, Conflict and Development*, Issue 14, July 2009, pp. 7–8.

11 The fallout from the coup, combined with the international economic downturn and the effect of natural disasters, has had serious ramifications for the Fijian economy. The Lowy Institute for International Policy suggested: '[Fiji] is suffering from a triple whammy of an ongoing lack of business confidence following the 2006 coup, devastating floods in January this year and the impact of the global recession on its tourism sector and demand for its exports. Fiji has a population of over 850,000, and it is said that about 35 per cent of this population now lives in poverty', *Committee Hansard*, 24 March 2009, p. 4.

Program with Fiji has been suspended and Australia has imposed travel restrictions on members of the interim government and their families. However, contact between officials has continued to take place.¹² AusAID has shifted its assistance to programs that focus on 'supporting social development and social protection measures around the people of Fiji rather than activities which are more closely aligned with government'. On the other hand the Centre for Democratic Institutions has sought to maintain its support of 'those institutions of democracy that do exist in Fiji'.¹³

4.16 The international community has joined Australia in its condemnation of the interim government. Fiji was suspended from the Pacific Islands Forum in May 2009 and was suspended from the Commonwealth in September 2009. These suspensions follow calls from the United Nations Security Council for a prompt return to constitutional democracy in Fiji. To date, the efforts of the Australian Government and the international community have gained little traction with the interim government continuing to prove very difficult to deal with.

RAMSI

4.17 On 25 June 2003, when announcing the Australian-led mission to Solomon Islands to Parliament, Prime Minister John Howard explained that Australia's commitment to RAMSI represented 'a very significant change in regional policy'.¹⁴ Prompted by a prospect of 'state failure', the RAMSI deployment signalled a more proactive approach to the region and the point at which Australia's development assistance assumed a strong nation-building and security dimension.

4.18 Australia's official development assistance contribution to RAMSI, from the mission's commencement in 2003 until 2008, comprised expenditure by AusAID, the Australian Federal Police (AFP), the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) and the Australian Customs Service (Customs).

12 See DFAT, 'Republic of the Fiji Islands Country Brief', http://www.dfat.gov.au/GEO/fiji/fiji_brief.html (accessed 24 November 2009).

13 Dr Jane Lake, *Committee Hansard*, 19 June 2009, p. 44; Professor Ben Reilly, *Committee Hansard*, 19 June 2009, p. 32.

14 Prime Minister John Howard, Question without notice: Solomon Islands, *House Hansard*, 25 June 2003, p. 17483.

Table 4.1: Australia's Official Development Assistance contribution to RAMSI¹⁵

	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
AusAID	52,812,788	64,893,007	69,359,079	69,787,020	67,631,583
AFP	46,727,250	75,264,000	108,772,351	125,489,405	119,125,585
DFAT	5,472,000	4,500,000	422,869	839,304	755,128
Customs	0	0	0	337,094	984,516
Total	105,012,038	144,657,007	178,554,299	196,452,823	188,496,812

4.19 In its report into Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations, the committee suggested that while Australia had been required to assist manage breakdowns in law and order on a number of occasions in the Pacific, it had also been important for Australia to work in conjunction with its neighbours. It noted that the regional character of RAMSI had contributed greatly to its success. The mission allowed Australia to limit its 'footprint' in the region while simultaneously helping to build capacity through encouraging indigenous and regional solutions to law and order challenges. This experience demonstrated the importance and advantages of Australia joining in partnership with other states for any future assistance mission. When the committee took evidence for its inquiry into Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations, Dr Bob Breen, ANU, suggested:

In the past 15 years, after receiving short-notice invitations, Australians have intervened eight times with regional neighbours to help other neighbours to keep or enforce peace. What have we learned? Policy: Australia is and will continue to be the lead peacekeeper and peace enforcer in the South Pacific. We should encourage regional self-help. We should always include neighbourhood partners in our good neighbour operations. Peacekeeping operations are tools for emergency response and stabilisation as well as good offices for peace processes, but intervening forces should not become garrisons. Good [officers] should be patient but not permanent.¹⁶

4.20 During that inquiry, the committee noted that the AFP had implemented a number of initiatives that would provide the building blocks for future cooperative relations with likely peacekeeping partners, particularly from the region. It cited secondments and exchange and training programs designed to build relationships with Pacific counterparts. The committee supported this active engagement in AFP visitor and exchange programs and other activities that assisted in developing the capacity of

15 AusAID, answer to questions taken on notice 4, *Additional Estimates 2009*. The total figure for 2008–09 is around \$185 million, AusAID, *Annual Report 2008–09*, p. 47. The Solomon Islands dependence on RAMSI mirrors the country's broader reliance on aid. Official Development Assistance as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product in Solomon Islands was 63 per cent in 2007. This compares with five per cent for PNG. It was only exceeded by Nauru and Niue, AusAID, 'Tracking development and governance in the Pacific', August 2009, p. 41.

16 *Committee Hansard*, 5 September 2007, p. 43.

countries in the region and that also lay the foundations for the successful integration of any future peacekeeping operation.¹⁷

4.21 Another important message from RAMSI is that it is easier to restore law and order and provide a temporary security response to civil conflict, in the short term, than to confront the systemic social and economic problems or root causes of disputes. This reinforces the findings in chapters 2 and 3 of this report about improving levels of human security, addressing the root causes of conflict and building the capacity of police organisations to deal with social disturbance, riots, property damage and violence. The committee recalls pertinent comments made by Dr Bob Breen, cited in Chapter 2:

Sustained higher level intervention is futile unless there is enduring and effective improvement at the community level. Secure and confident communities are the foundations for democratic governance and economic progress. Communities cannot be built or rebuilt unless there is a shared sense of security and optimism.¹⁸

4.22 A third lesson learned from the experience of RAMSI (along with the Australian-led peace enforcement mission in Timor-Leste and the Bali bombings of October 2002) was the need for Australia to provide a coordinated multi-agency, military, policing and civilian response to crises in the region. This need was outlined in the committee's report into peacekeeping and has been acknowledged in the recently-published Defence White Paper, *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030*. Since 2008, the government has been committed to building an integrated response capability through the establishment of the Asia Pacific Civil–Military Centre for Excellence. The Centre for Excellence is designed to better coordinate Australia's response to development, stabilisation, security or peacebuilding initiatives.

4.23 Finally, Australia's experiences in Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands demonstrated the need for the AFP to develop a capability to respond to serious breakdowns in law and order. The committee noted in its report on peacekeeping that the government was lifting the IDG's capability by establishing a 150-strong Operational Response Group (ORG). This initiative was to allow the IDG to have a group in 'a constant state of readiness for emergency responses to law and order issues and stabilisation operations'. At that time, the AFP informed the committee that the ORG had 'highly-skilled capability in crowd control and riot management with rapid deployment capability, as well as...the infrastructure to support our offshore missions'. The AFP and the ORG were of the view that they had learnt a great deal and were then at the 'cutting edge' with training initiatives.¹⁹

17 Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations*, August 2008, paragraphs 18.37–18.41.

18 *Submission 52*, 'Australia and the South Pacific: Rising to the challenge', p. 52.

19 Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations*, August 2008, paragraphs 10.13–10.16.



An AFP member and police officer from Papua New Guinea working alongside police in Solomon Islands (image courtesy AFP).

The Australian Defence Force's role

4.24 The ADF has also had a significant role in helping to restore law and order, when asked by Pacific island countries for such assistance. The Defence White Paper, *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030* states:

After ensuring the defence of Australia from direct attack, the second priority task for the ADF is to contribute to stability and security in the South Pacific and East Timor. This involves conducting military operations, in coalition with others as required, including in relation to protecting our nationals, providing disaster relief and humanitarian assistance, and on occasion by way of stabilisation interventions as occurred in East Timor in 1999 and 2006, and in Solomon Islands in 2003.

Australia will continue to have particular responsibilities to assist our neighbours in dealing with humanitarian and disaster relief needs, and to support their stability and security. Given our size and resources, Australia will be expected to take a leadership role within the South Pacific if these states are overwhelmed by a natural or man-made crisis.²⁰

4.25 Again, Defence's contribution was discussed in detail in the committee's report on peacekeeping such as joint training activities in Australia and overseas,

20 Australian Government, Department of Defence, *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030*, p. 54.

including multilateral exercises in the South Pacific. At that time, the ADF indicated that it intended its preparation for peacekeeping operations to take a 'more prominent place' in its training programs.²¹ The committee endorsed, and continues to support, this development.

Asia Pacific Civil–Military Centre for Excellence

4.26 As noted above, the Asia Pacific Civil–Military Centre of Excellence, which was opened on 27 November 2008, is a recent major initiative. Managed by the Department of Defence, the centre seeks to improve the effectiveness of Australian civilian and military collaboration to prevent, mitigate and respond to crises in the Asia–Pacific region. It is intended to meet the need, identified in the Defence White Paper, for integration between defence and civilian agencies.²²

4.27 Identifying the Centre for Excellence as a whole-of-government initiative, Air Commodore Anthony Jones informed the committee that the centre supports Australian government departments and agencies and the United Nations and works with a range of bilateral, regional and international partners and non-government organisations. He suggested that the current responsibilities and priorities for the centre include: developing a conceptual framework for civil–military collaboration in conflict and disaster management overseas; work which aims to support a cohesive and coordinated approach across government to disaster and conflict assessment, preparedness, response and evaluation activities; carrying out research, capturing lessons learned, developing doctrine and facilitating civil–military training programs; developing cooperative relationships with key Australian, regional and international organisations.²³

4.28 The centre's principal areas of focus are conflict prevention, disaster management, humanitarian assistance and reconstruction; governance and the rule of law; peace and stabilisation operations. The centre's budget for the 2008–09 fiscal year was \$2.2 million, and the annual budget for 2009–10 and 2010–11 is estimated at \$4.6 million.²⁴

4.29 Since its establishment, the centre has received a range of visits from partner governments in the region, including delegations from PNG and Tonga. It is currently assessing a number of relevant training programs which would include participants from the Pacific. The centre was also represented at the 'Security Sector Governance

21 Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations*, August 2008, paragraph 9.42.

22 Australian Government, Department of Defence, *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030*, pages 54, 23. Another important role for the Centre of Excellence is to enhance Defence interoperability and coordination with the Australian Federal Police.

23 *Committee Hansard*, 19 June 2009, p. 17. This is also outlined in the Centre's Strategic Plan 2009–2011 http://www.civmilcoe.gov.au/uploads/files/Strategic_Plan_2009_V2.pdf (accessed 27 October 2009).

24 *Committee Hansard*, 19 June 2009, p. 17.

in the Pacific Region' conference in Tonga in April 2009. Air Commodore Jones explained that the centre is scoping potential research activities that explore 'the synergies between Australia's defence, policing and international development cooperation programs in the region; and also, the approaches to relevant capacity building programs in the Pacific'. The centre is currently working with relevant government agencies on civil and military training modules and with the University of Sydney on developing a pilot course.²⁵

4.30 The centre's organisational structure provides for approximately 20 personnel, including staff from the Department of Defence (five civilian staff, a military affairs adviser and four ADF reservists), while DFAT, AusAID, the AFP and the Attorney-General's Department each provide two secondees.²⁶ On 30 September 2009, the Minister for Defence, Senator John Faulkner, announced that Dr Jim Rolfe, currently a principal adviser in New Zealand's Ministry of Defence, will take up the position of the deputy director from November 2009.²⁷ The committee continues its discussion of the Centre of Excellence in Chapter 8 when it examines disaster relief capacity.

Building regional policing capacity

4.31 Ms Jenny Hayward-Jones and Mr Fergus Hanson, from the Lowy Institute for International Policy, suggested that the success of RAMSI in re-establishing law and order in Solomon Islands 'demonstrated the validity of a multi-country approach to policing in the Pacific':

The RAMSI Participating Police Force model could be adapted to create a standing regional police and para-military force that could be deployed to respond to individual security challenges or provide support to national police forces in times of need. Members of the force could be given access to training facilities in Australia and New Zealand. While the maintenance of a standing police/para-military force would be costly for Australia and New Zealand, it should be seen as an investment in the future stability of the region.²⁸

4.32 This is not the first time that the possibility of a regional police force has been advanced. At the Pacific Islands Forum in 2003, then Prime Minister John Howard proposed the formation of a rapid reaction standing regional police force for the Pacific. Leaders at the 2003 meeting agreed in principle to support the Pacific Regional Policing Initiative (PRPI). Given the history of breakdowns in law and order within Pacific island states, it was agreed that there was good reason for establishing a

25 *Committee Hansard*, 19 June 2009, pp. 18, 19.

26 *Committee Hansard*, 19 June 2009, p. 17.

27 John Faulkner, Minister for Defence, and Dr Wayne Mapp, New Zealand Minister for Defence, 'Australian and New Zealand Defence Ministers Meet in Sydney to Discuss Joint ANZAC Capabilities', Media release, 032/2009, 30 September 2009, www.minister.defence.gov.au/2009/ACFE30.doc (accessed 27 October 2009).

28 *Submission 14*, p. 8.

readily deployable region police force and that a 'pooling of scarce regional resources [would] strengthen national capabilities'.²⁹ In February 2004, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer announced the implementation of the PRPI, over five years, with funding of \$17 million which included a contribution of NZ\$2.5 million from the New Zealand Government.³⁰ The initiative was supported by the Pacific Plan.³¹ The PRPI extended to all Forum island countries and had six core components: strategic policing, executive development, technical skills, training capacity, forensic technical skills, and program management.³²

4.33 It would appear that the original intention of the PRPI to form a rapid reaction standing regional police force was replaced by an initiative focusing on training and building national capacity. This is reinforced by statements in the AusAID Regional Aid Strategy 2004–2009:

In an effort to build the capacity of national police forces on a regional basis, Australia and New Zealand are undertaking a Pacific Regional Policing Initiative (PRPI)...The PRPI will focus on improving basic policing and technical skills such as forensics. An important component of the PRPI will be the development of an ethos of police professionalism through a regional Executive Development Program...the new Pacific Regional Policing Initiative is providing a comprehensive 'critical mass' approach to police training across the region and a flexible mechanism to provide targeted support to national police agencies.³³

4.34 The PRPI ceased with effect on 31 December 2008. In January 2009, the PRPI was replaced by the PPDP and continues to place an emphasis on building policing capacity in the region (see paragraph 3.20).

4.35 While there are obvious benefits in police officers from the region engaging in joint training, education and development, the committee understands that one of the major obstacles to establishing a standing police force is the capacity of Pacific Island countries to contribute. In Volume I, the committee found that ill-equipped, poorly resourced and under-trained bureaucracies throughout the region struggle to deliver

29 Thirty-fourth Pacific Islands Forum, *Forum Communiqué*, Item 55, p. 9, <http://www.forumsec.org/resources/article/files/2003%20Communique.pdf> (accessed 18 February 2008); The Pacific Plan: For Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration, p. 7, http://www.forumsec.org/UserFiles/File/Pacific_Plan_Nov_2007_version.pdf (accessed 13 July 2009).

30 Alexander Downer, 'Strengthening the Pacific's Crime Fighting Capabilities', Media release 17 February 2004, http://www.ausaid.gov.au/media/release.cfm?BC=Media&Id=2925_2989_8265_171_3189 (accessed 31 August 2009).

31 In 2005, the Forum noted 'the progress of the Pacific Regional Policing Initiative', Thirty-sixth Pacific Islands Forum, *Forum Communiqué*, Item 14, p. 3, <http://www.forumsec.org/fj/resources/article/files/2005%20Forum%20Communique,%20Madang%20-%20Final%2016%20Nov%202005.pdf> (accessed 23 February 2008).

32 Pacific Regional Policing Initiative, <http://www.pacific-rpi.com/> (accessed 14 October 2009).

33 AusAID, *Regional Aid Strategy 2004–2009*, pp. 17, 20.

essential services. When it comes to policing and the justice system, the committee identified the same capacity constraints.

4.36 Thus, the committee fully supports the numerous Australian programs designed to tackle these fundamental weaknesses. It also endorses the approach taken by the AFP in engaging Pacific islander police in their training programs. The committee believes that the work being undertaken by the AFP lays the foundations for future cooperative relationships: that in a very practical way the AFP is helping to build a network among police throughout region and preparing them to work together should the need arise for a regional police force.

4.37 The Australian-led RAMSI mission to Solomon Island, which had a solid legal foundation, demonstrates the value in joint action by regional police. It was mandated by the Pacific Islands Forum and the Biketawa Declaration; it had, and continues to have, a regional character, and was formed in a response to a request from the Solomon Islands Prime Minister Sir Allan Kemakeza. It was also supported by complementary legal instruments, notably the *International Assistance Act 2003*, legislation which authorises the presence of external personnel and is reapplied annually. The deployment was and continues to be recognised by the United Nations.³⁴

Committee view

4.38 The committee has previously acknowledged the benefits of police officers from the region engaging in joint training, education and pre-development exercises.³⁵ Further, in the previous chapter, the committee acknowledged the excellent work done by the AFP in this regard and noted how the IDG has been used to provide joint education, training and support to police officers from the Pacific prior to development to RAMSI.

4.39 Here, the committee reiterates just how important this initiative has been. It has improved interoperability between forces, built the capacity of officers from the Pacific, and made significant contributions to relationship-building between policing organisations of the region. The committee is mindful that this interoperability, along with the goodwill, trust and mutual understanding that has been created, be harnessed and developed into the future.

34 For a fuller explanation of the legal basis for the RAMSI deployment see Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations*, August 2008, pp. 74–76.

35 See, for example, the committee's report into *Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations*, August 2008, Chapter 18, Effective partnerships, paragraph 18.39.

Recommendation 2

4.40 The committee recommends that the joint training, education and pre-development exercises that are currently used to prepare officers for RAMSI become permanently incorporated into the AFP's Pacific Police Development Program.

