

# STATE, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND MELANESIA: THE NORTH NEW GEORGIA SUSTAINABLE SOCIAL FORESTRY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

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## Abstract

This paper is about globalisation, the state, and community development and social change in Melanesia. The paper draws on the concept of “the Melanesian way” and also explores the role and influence of the Christian churches, *kastom*, and nongovernment organisations (NGOs) in Melanesian society. It takes the experiences of the Solomon Islands as its focus and a case study is made of the North New Georgia Sustainable Social Forestry and Rural Development Project – a re-forestation program established on the island of New Georgia in the late 1990s. Through this case study the emergence of a locally-derived and locally-based approach to resource development is examined.

## Development and social change in the South Pacific

Ideas and concepts on the theory of development and social change as it relates to contemporary Solomon Islands can be drawn from a rich mix of literature that includes thinking on development theory and the developing world, the unique circumstances of the Pacific and Melanesia, and the particular political and economic complexion of the Solomons itself. When considered in concert, these different points of reference create a sense of a political and economic community that is part of a globalising system and that is also embedded in sub-nationally determined movements for development and social change. The state is understood to be located between these unfolding possibilities, and challenges to traditional state function in this context characterise much of the development conundrum.

Current thinking on development is greatly pre-occupied with the ascendancy of globalisation within the world system. As Hoogvelt (1997) comments, "The nature, extent and significance of globalisation is at the heart of debates about the contemporary world economy and the predicament within it of what we used to call the Third World." McMichael (1996, 148) describes this as an era of "postdevelopmentalism". At this time, the project in which states pursue nationally-managed economic growth is in demise in the wake of structural adjustment policies and their long-term implications. As McMichael (1996, 150) goes on to state, "Although the globalisation project replaces the development project, "development" has not lost its currency. Its frame of reference has simply shifted". Development remains a key organising principle in political economy but its deployment is dispersing across all levels and sectors in the world system. It is no longer the singular domain of the state.

Issues of nation and state in the developing world are relatively longstanding and broad-ranging.

These issues are best understood in a world historic context and are typically linked to colonisation, decolonisation, post-colonialism, and the shortfalls of the "development project" (McMichael 1996). In this context, Pacific states are largely and exceptionally young, finding their independence only during the last 30 years.<sup>1</sup> With this youth comes what Otto and Thomas (1997, 1) describe as especially "tenuous and inchoate" national cultures. In the specific case of Melanesia, scholars have argued that this circumstance circumscribes a weak state existing in conjunction with a strong society (Migdal 1988). The development process and associated modernist projects for national unity, stable public policy and economic growth appear greatly vexed in the modern state thus described. At the same time, broader society including the Christian churches and *kastom* (traditional ways, systems, and institutions) are consistent and longstanding forces for community development and social change.

At first blush, the role of Christianity and *kastom* in Melanesian society might be described as "the Melanesian way". This contested notion is however often employed in highly rhetorical and politicised fashions and Douglas argues that its meaning can only be fully appreciated when the ongoing influence of the colonial legacy on Melanesian political life and also the capacity of Melanesian communities to address their needs through locally (rather than nationally) based arrangements is considered (2000b, 3). In the first instance, the arbitrariness of national boundaries left by colonial administrations and their lack of relationship with Melanesian understandings of "nation" has more to do with "weak state – strong society" than what might be disparagingly described as a divisive brand of nationalism that is "shallow, inauthentic or merely ethnic" (Douglas 2000b, 3). To extend this point a little further, researchers have pointed to the virtual non-existence of a national consciousness among some local communities in Melanesia (Clark 1997). Based on this, some scholars have even come to question seriously the need or viability of the state for the many Melanesian communities possessing political and economic integrity and a capacity to engage directly with the world economy (Douglas 2000b, 3; Otto and Thomas 1997; Thomas 1997). Such discussion may not point to the imminent demise of the state, but the essential point remains: the state in Melanesian life is widely accepted as ambiguous.

This ambiguity is brought into sharper relief when the strength of broader society and especially the centrality of an indigenously expressed Christian faith and Church in Melanesian life are understood. Trompf argues that in Melanesian society:

... religious organisations (whether national or regional) are enmeshed in political activities concerning economic development and foreign aid. There is also overlap in spheres of authority – secular and religious – as when political leaders are also men of the cloth. In Melanesian nations, where education had been almost exclusively in the hands of missionaries until after the Second World War, most national leaders owe their education to the Churches, and the indirect influence of the Churches on national politics is quite patent ( 1991, 2)

Likewise, Douglas (2000b, 6) states that for Melanesians, religion is "an intimate lived experience and a strategy mobilised pragmatically to achieve private and public ends". In formal political life, the constitution of every Melanesian state except Fiji contains direct reference to the Christian faith (Douglas 2000b, 5).

Along with Christianity, tradition or *kastom* is a key source of identity and meaning in Melanesian societies. Foster (1995, 1) argues that Melanesian elites "have generated a steady discourse of custom and tradition that seeks to ground national distinctiveness in definitions of indigenous ancestral ways". Along with Christianity, *kastom* is directly referred to in Melanesian political life through the relevant constitutions. As Lawson (1997) and Otto (1997) argue, the power of *kastom* as a constituent of the "Melanesian way" is its situation as an oppositional concept to "the west". But as Otto (1997) notes, tradition often encompasses diverse and contradictory notions and Douglas (2000b, 5) for one, is not convinced that *kastom* can afford cohesion: she points instead to the "divisive potential" of this "ambivalent symbol for national unity and identity".

The current role of NGOs in development in Melanesian societies is similar to that in many developing nations. Where the frame of reference for development has in recent years shifted throughout the developing world, McMichael (1996, 150), argues that this is:

especially at the initiative of proliferating nongovernmental organisations (NGOs) that increasingly fill the vacuum as states withdraw, or lose, their capacity to assist subnational groups and causes. Thousands of community and regional development projects continue at the local level, attempting to improve conditions at these levels or stabilise communities affected one way or another by the restructuring of their states.

Indeed, Schoeffel (1997, 3) finds that some NGOs active in Melanesia "have come to believe that bypassing government is actually a virtue in itself because of the predatory characteristics of the state". NGOs active in these ways in Melanesia are especially prolific in the issue areas of environment – as linked to the activities of the logging industry – and gender – relating to women's particular development needs and interests.<sup>2</sup>

The discussion of development and social change in Melanesia is meaningless without reference to Christianity, *kastom*, and increasingly the activities of NGOs. These constituents do not however represent an alternative to the state in so far as it is manifested in Melanesian life. Otto and Thomas through Linnekin claims for example that Pacific intellectuals and historians: "are hesitant to develop the anticolonial potential of particularist discourses as this may also threaten the concept of nation, which is the converging referent of different genres of historical narratives today. Although the nation may be seen as a colonial artifact, it is difficult to imagine a viable political alternative for Pacific Island societies" (1997, 12).

Given the persistence of the state, scholars have pointed to its essential utility in the Pacific. Larmour (1998) explores the real capacity of Pacific states to supply "good governance" – government able to develop the nation while limiting the corruption of that process – where there is demonstrated strength in civic association. Similarly, Schoeffel (1997) argues convincingly for the fundamental role of and necessity for state involvement in development in the Pacific. According to Schoeffel, community development projects are typically undertaken by NGOs in response to state failure in the provision of basic infrastructure and services. Paradoxically, however, such projects frequently falter because long-term commitment to and management of project aims cannot be shored up in the absence of state participation. Based on this evidence, Schoeffel (1997, 8) concludes:

Community capacity is vulnerable to all manner of undermining influences, the capacity of the churches is highly variable, and NGOs wax and wane on the basis of their funding and leadership. This means that there is no alternative, if the current problems of rural development in Melanesia are to be addressed, to building the capacity of local government [as an administrative level of formal "state" governance] to ensure accountability.

Tisdell (pers.com., St. Lucia, 18 September 2001) voices related concerns in arguing that an over-dependence on the non-government sector and concurrent de-emphasis on government involvement in development activities can create dispirited and unsustainably-serviced communities.

Development in the Solomon Islands is well described by ideas and concepts of social change that place the nation-state in a somewhat uncomfortable position between local and global forces. In this context, the nation state of the Solomon Islands is under considerable strain where it seeks to meet the challenges of contemporary statecraft. Given this, Christianity, *kastom*, and NGOs –are essential tools of exploration and analysis. Where employed, they may point to alternative paths to development. With this in mind, the paper now turns to discuss the broader situation in the Solomon Islands by way of preparation for an examination of the North New Georgia case study.

## The Solomon Islands

The story of the modern nation-state of the Solomon Islands begins with Pacific geography, colonialism, and the relatively recent construction of a new nation and state. Where contemporary Solomons' political and economic life is indelibly marked by these factors, tremendous challenges to security, stability and growth are in evidence.

The Solomon Islands of today consists of six major islands – New Georgia, Choiseul, Isabel, Guadalcanal, Malaita and Makira – along with a collection of more than 900 medium and small islands, islets and widely dispersed atolls (Kabutaulaka 1998, 7).<sup>3</sup> Mostly volcanic in origin, these many islands are largely characterised by a rugged system of razorback ridges that rises abruptly from narrow coastal plains and reaches 1000-2000 metres in height. The climatic regime of this equatorial archipelago is marked by the southwest Pacific trade winds (blowing from the southeast from March until November, then reversing from December to April, which also brings the wet season). This regime ensures an average rainfall ranging between 2500 and 5000 millimetres and the likelihood of one or two cyclones per year. In this setting, variables including topography, soil type, rainfall, location and vegetative cover result in a great range of microsystems throughout the island chain. The Solomons occupies an area of over 777,000 square kilometres, 96% of which is sea (Bennett 1987, 1-4).

Prior to and during early contact (1568-1896) with European explorers, traders and whalers, and as is the case for many modern developing nation-states, the Solomons archipelago did not exist as a unified political community (Kabutaulaka 1998, 33). Instead, island life was organised around island and especially hamlet-based communities and incorporated intercommunity kinship ties (Bennett 1987, ch.1). These traditional patterns of existence were well suited to early barter and trade arrangements between islanders and Europeans, given that for many years colonial powers did not seek to establish more formal, binding and colonising ties.<sup>4</sup> European interest in the Solomons was, however, consolidated in 1896. At this time the British established a loose and somewhat unwilling control over the Solomons in declaring the archipelago a protectorate.<sup>5</sup> This declaration was made in conjunction with a need to shore-up this main supply of Melanesian labour for British plantations in Fiji and Queensland and to assuage anxieties within the Australian colonies regarding security vis-à-vis other European powers active in the region (Bennett 1987, ch.5); (Kabutaulaka 1998, 10).<sup>6</sup>

The British endeavour of turning the Solomon Islands and its people fully to the task of a protectorate was "slow and piecemeal" (Bennett 1987, 104). It was greatly augmented (though through no deliberate contrivance) by the unifying and pacifying activities of Christian missions – the influence of which into the present day can not be overemphasised (Bennett 1987, 104).<sup>7</sup> Land alienation was central to the colonising process because self-sufficiency for the protectorate necessitated the economic presence and activities of European planters.<sup>8</sup> As with Christianity, this has also had far reaching consequences. Finally, labour was essential, although not so easily obtained with demand quickly outstripping supply.<sup>9</sup> The plantation nevertheless came to pervade the lives of Solomon Islanders to independence and beyond (Bennett 1987, 167).

The Great Depression, World War II, and the post-war years brought Solomon Islanders a domestic merchant class, hence local cash economy, and growing disillusionment with the colonial experience, hence increased political consciousness (Kabutaulaka 1998, 15). Despite such progress in the evolution of an indigenous and modern political economy, independence from Britain did not come until 1978.<sup>10</sup> In its worst moments the associated process of colonial disengagement was marked by weak planning for economic development; central government paternalism; and a frequent firming up of local political sentiment and will on key issues behind contending linguistic, regional and ethnic lines (Kabutaulaka 1998, 16). Based on these factors, Bennett (1987, 343) comments that, "With independence, the time of real nation building had only just begun."

A narrow resource base, remoteness and isolation, a limited domestic market, and ecological and

economic vulnerability have mitigated strongly against development in postcolonial Solomon Islands (Tisdell 2001b; World Bank 2000, 3). Economic progress is today harnessed almost exclusively to the exploitation of timber resources, fisheries, and most recently the development of gold reserves.<sup>11</sup> Palm oil and kernel, copra and cocoa are also significant cash crops.<sup>12</sup> This heavy reliance on natural resources and natural systems raises serious concerns regarding economic diversification and ecological management and sustainability. The experience to date indicates that the Solomons' economy is vulnerable to shocks in the world commodity markets – this was especially so during the Asian economic crisis in the late 1990s (Lilo 2000, 1). Further, long-term viability of natural assets in the Solomons, particularly tropical forests, is under considerable threat, as will be discussed below (Anon 1996; Collee 1995; Danagro Advisory Company 1996; Mealy 1999; Narasia and Magick 1999).

Beyond strategic economic limitations, the Solomon Islands has experienced long-term and entrenched problems in the public sector. These have included difficulties with mismanagement, arbitrary decision-making, lack of transparency and accountability and aid dependency, amongst others (Larmour 1997, 1998, 2000; Tisdell 2001b). This situation brought about severe problems in the mid 1990s during which time macro-economic imbalances and structural weaknesses precipitated a fiscal crisis, despite a favourable fiscal environment with a boom in the forestry sector during that same period (Asian Development Bank 2000b; Bosworth 1999). During this period there was a fall in real aid per capita, rising government debt and an inability of government to meet its debt obligations (Tisdell 2000, 4). On this, Lilo (2000, 1) is unequivocal in stating that "Severe fiscal imbalance was triggered by a consistently high budget deficit owing largely to poor policies and gross mismanagement."<sup>13</sup> Corrective measures were brought about in 1997 with the election of the reform-oriented Ulufa'alu government.<sup>14</sup> Tisdell (2001b) argues that despite improvements linked to associated structural adjustment reforms, these reforms also contributed significantly to a period of instability leading up to the coup of 2000. The trajectory of these reforms has been completely disrupted by the coup and its consequent fallout, as will be discussed below (Lilo 2000).

These problems of market and state are nowhere more in evidence than in the core economic sector of forestry. Forest resource development has been unsustainable throughout the Solomons for the last 20 years. Problems have included inadequate monitoring, weak regulatory arrangements and the corruption of regulatory institutions and arrangements through patronage, bribery and other means. This has resulted in serious economic loss, severe environmental despoliation and adverse social impact. At the same time, as Montgomery pointedly comments: "There is no other country in the world as dependent on log exports as the Solomon Islands, and more critically, there is no fallback position. Once the forests are gone there is no alternative" (1995, 75).

Forestry in the Solomon Islands underwent considerable expansion in the early 1980s in conjunction with an expanding world market and shrinking supply from established Southeast Asian sources. At this time, multinational companies with Asian links approached customary land owners offering terms that appeared generally attractive for economic recompense and development and specifically so where compared with those offered by more established colonial era companies (Bennett 2000, 225). By the mid-1990s, these new arrangements ensured that about 80% of logging was occurring on customary land (Dauvergne 1998, 107).<sup>15</sup> This situation has created a range of difficulties for resource and environmental management.<sup>16</sup> Disputes over land and boundaries are now common throughout the Solomons, especially in areas where large-scale resource development is taking place (Kabutaulaka 1998, 31). Problems in this area directly contributed to the build up of tensions and consequent coup of 2000, as discussed below.

As Bennett (2000), Dauvergne (1998), Montgomery (1995) and others establish, the Solomons government has been poorly equipped for the task of resource development and management.<sup>17</sup> In a weak institutional environment, log production in the Solomon Islands increased from 380,000 cubic metres in

1991 to over 800,000 cubic metres in 1995-96 (Dauvergne 1998, 106). At 1996 rates, commercial forest resources were anticipated to reach depletion within thirteen years. Some analysts foresaw depletion occurring within as little as eight years (Montgomery 1995, 75). During the same 1991-1997 period, around SI\$31 million in economic surplus was forgone because of log export duty remission and exemptions while SI\$481 million was lost through the under-invoicing of log exports (Martin 2000, 5). As Bennett (2000, 366) comments:

The government has failed to maximise the market value of logs because of its tardiness since 1980 with funding the timber and tax control capacities of the Forestry Division and the Ministry of Finance; millions of dollars of potential revenue have sailed out to sea in undeclared shipments, as mislabelled species or via the mechanisms of transfer-pricing.

Along with these economic problems, the environmental and social impacts of unsustainable and poorly managed logging are also far reaching. Silvicultural practice has been poor. Soils, watersheds and sacred sites have been mismanaged. Re-forestation and rehabilitation have been infrequently and inadequately undertaken. Wide ranging social conflicts have also emerged (Bennett 2000, ch.13). The momentum of these events has however been greatly reduced by the East Asian financial crisis of 1997, reform to the forestry sector introduced by the Ulufa'alu government, and thereafter the coup in 2000 (Dauvergne 1998).<sup>18</sup>

In this context of a weak public sector, poor economic management and unsustainable resource development, human development in the Solomons is also sobering in its apparently limited progress. Indeed, worsening education and health indicators suggest that "de-development" is occurring (Tisdell 2001b, 2). With a population of 442,000 the Solomons measures amongst the lowest in the Pacific region on the Human Development Index and maintains a world ranking of 147, placing it in parity with Guinea, Burundi, Senegal and Bangladesh (World Bank 2000, 13-14).<sup>19</sup> Almost 70% of Solomon Islands adults are illiterate (World Bank 2000, 15). There are insufficient resources for universal primary/basic education and also for the extension of years of this level of education (Tisdell 2001b, 18). Secondary and tertiary education are extremely limited (Tisdell 2001b, 18). Health indicators remain amongst the worst in the Pacific region with endemic malaria and a variety of infectious and parasitic diseases affecting large though reducing numbers. There is however an increasing incidence of non-communicable modern life-style diseases including heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Infant mortality is relatively high at 38 per 1000 births (Tisdell 2000, 18). One in five persons does not have access to health services (Tisdell 2000, 18).

The rate of population growth in the Solomons at over 3.5% is amongst the highest in the world (Tisdell 2001b, 13). Around 36% of people do not have access to safe drinking water (World Bank 2000, 15). Distributive problems are considerable with 1% of households in the capital, Honiara, taking 50% of total earnings (World Bank 2000, 14). Youth unemployment is also high (well over 10%) (World Bank 2000, 14) and 47% of the population is aged between 0-14 years (Kabutaulaka 1998, 16). Around 75% of the population is under 30 years of age (Liloqula and Pollard 2000).

Given these extensive difficulties throughout the nation-state, internal security has in recent years presented Solomons' governments with considerable challenges. This has been linked in the first instance to armed conflict in neighbouring Bougainville, the impact of which has spilled across the border.<sup>20</sup> It has also been associated with what has been described as "ethnic tension". These tensions have been focused on Guadalcanal and particularly in the capital, Honiara. They are linked to deeply held grievances relating to land tenure that have been exacerbated by mass migrations onto Guadalcanal from other islands, especially Malaita. These migrations have in turn resulted in increasing social pressures and economic competition (Asian Development Bank 2000a, 2); (Liloqula and Pollard 2000); (Naitoro 2000); (Tuhanuku 2000, iii).<sup>21</sup> Where successive governments failed to address these tensions, a coup, spearheaded by Malaitan-aligned forces, resulted on 5 June 2000.<sup>22</sup> In accordance with the demands of

coup leaders, the incumbent prime minister resigned and a difficult period of negotiation for a new administration, a peace agreement, and an apparent political resolution followed.<sup>23</sup>

The political, social and economic disruption brought about by this coup has been considerable. The process of macro-economic reform commenced by the ousted administration has been brought to an end. Episodes of violence remain uncontrolled and many people have fled the capital for the outer provinces.<sup>24</sup> Most significant enterprises have scaled down if not halted operations, levels of foreign investment have fallen dramatically, and the delivery of aid has been interrupted.<sup>25</sup> The costs of rebuilding are estimated to be considerable and will require long-term investments.<sup>26</sup>

In the face of many economic, social and political difficulties and related state inadequacy, broader Solomon Islands society is proving to be especially resilient and important in the creation and maintenance of alternative pathways to development action. Christian churches are perhaps the most influential institution in Solomon Islands life with 95% of the population belonging to a church. Followings of the United Church (Methodist), Seventh Day Adventist Church, South Seas Evangelical Church, the Catholic Church, and the Anglican Church are spread throughout the archipelago (Weir 2000, 49). At times this diversity has resulted in considerable interdenominational rivalry but in recent years such tensions have been put largely (though not conclusively) to rest through the activities of the umbrella organisation, Solomon Islands Christian Association (Dinnen pers.com. 13 December 2001; Weir 2000, 49).<sup>27</sup> Douglas argues that the Christian churches have "been the major avenue for modernity for 150 years in some areas" of Solomon Islands (Douglas, pers.com, Canberra, 12 December 2001). Given negative impacts on traditional beliefs and practices, the churches have thus pioneered the provision of education, health and other community projects and services – for example, community-based timber-harvesting arrangements. The churches are also influential in shaping perceptions and understandings of development, thereby establishing themselves as major stakeholders in the development process (Kabutaulaka 1998, 46).<sup>28</sup> For Kabutaulaka (1998, 48) "the church has become so powerful that development agencies and the state cannot afford to ignore this institution as an important vehicle for implementing development programmes".

NGOs provide a second alternative avenue for the pursuit of development (Roughan 1997). Bennett suggests that: "Excluding the churches, the strongest empowering force in the rural Solomons is the NGOs. As with the churches, NGOs are a diverse group and competition and friction frequently arise among various parties (Dinnen pers.com. 13 December 2001). This is to some extent managed through the umbrella organisation Development Services Exchange (Australian Council for Overseas Aid 2000, 35-36). Unlike most of their Northern counterparts, NGOs in the Solomons often link human rights and development with environmental issues" (2000, 269). This is especially apparent in issue areas concerned with logging where Bennett (2000, 274) finds considerable political lobbying, agitation and even subversion to be in evidence. Likewise, women's groups (church-based and non-aligned) are gaining increasingly prominent profiles in Solomon Islands "civil society" (recently so-called by Solomon Islanders (Douglas, pers.com, Canberra, 12 December 2001)). The activities of these groups are frequently linked to conflict resolution and peace-brokering in the face of periodic civil unrest (Douglas 2000a, 12); (Douglas 2000c). Women's groups are also involved in health, education and employment-generation activities (Australian Council for Overseas Aid 2000, 7). According to the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (2000, 7), "Many women's groups have positive proposals for such ventures and the capacity to harness the energies of their communities." Given the strength of activity of NGOs in the Solomon Islands, it can be argued that as with the Christian churches at the turn of the previous century, Solomon Islanders are now in the process of selecting those aspects of NGOs best suited to Melanesian life in the twenty first century (Bennett 2000, 274).

*Kastom* is another vital, robust and uniquely complex resource in contemporary Solomon's development.<sup>29</sup> For Douglas, indigenous values in Melanesia are "usually flexible and open to new things

and ideas” (pers.com, Canberra, 12 December 2001). Kabutaulaka (1998, 18) comments that "cultural traditions and introduced ways of life continuously interact and impact on one another. Social transformation and the making and implementation of development policies are influenced greatly by both ways of life." Traditional styles of leadership and forms of power relations must co-exist with a Westminster parliamentary system. Customary land title must sit along side large-scale state efforts to mobilise resources.

As the many difficulties now facing Solomon Islands and the events of the 2000 coup and its aftermath indicate, the archipelago has come under considerable and increasing strain in recent years. In this, the nation-state has offered inconsistent and incomplete political and economic stability and security. At the same time, the Christian Churches, *kastom*, and NGOs afford long established alternative pathways to community development and social change. This will now be considered within the context of the North New Georgia case study.

## **The North New Georgia Sustainable Social Forestry and Rural Development Project**

### *Context and Foundations*

The Western Province of the Solomon Islands within which the island of New Georgia lies has long been recognised for a sense of distinctiveness and a spirit of autonomy vis-a-vis the Solomon Islands (Moore, pers.com., St. Lucia, 30 May, 2001; Otter, pers.com. St. Lucia, 2 May, 2001).<sup>30</sup> This distinctiveness has occasionally spilled over into secessionist rhetoric.<sup>31</sup> It has also placed the Western Province in a position of some relative economic advantage.<sup>32</sup> With particular reference to forest resources, Western Province has historically contained 75% of Solomon Islands' "finest forests" (Bennett 2000, 135). By the mid 1990s, 30% of loggable timber in this region had been extracted (Bennett 2000, 280). At this time, this amounted to 76% of the country's total round log export revenue (Bennett 2000, 280). As with the rest of the Solomons, such rates of extraction rapidly exceeded sustainable levels and the environmental and social impacts of poor logging practice – typically clear-fell (Dart pers.com., St. Lucia, 2 May 2001)– were painfully evident (Bennett 2000, 282).<sup>33</sup>

Commercial scale logging began in earnest in North New Georgia in the 1970s. This was undertaken by UK-based Lever Pacific Timbers – operating elsewhere in the Solomons since 1901 (Bennett 1987, 128). In the 1970s, Lever's was central to the economy of Western Province with 40% of the workforce employed by the company. Furthermore, 17% of the nation's foreign exchange earnings flowed from Lever's activities (Bennett 1987, 218). Lever's particular efforts in New Georgia were, however, fraught with difficulty. Negotiations begun in the 1960s with the Solomon Islands government over an option to work the area were repeatedly disrupted through to the mid-1980s. This disruption turned on disagreements among customary landowners who disputed issues of leadership and representation as linked to questions of land tenure and timber rights. There were also concerns about Lever's debatable record in social and environmental impact management on Kolumbangara (Bennett 2000, 218). These tensions spilled over into judicial and legislative arenas and despite due process remained unresolved.<sup>34</sup> Matters came to a head in the early 1980s when Levers refused to enter into direct negotiation with aggrieved landholders (Bennett 2000, 220). With frustrations for key players high, fertile ground existed for new players to enter the ring. When the Asian logging competitor Golden Spring International demonstrated an apparently greater understanding of local leadership and social relationships, change was immanent.<sup>35</sup>

For New Georgians, this culmination of events ensured that local people were for the first time in 40 years in control of the allocation of forest resources (Bennett 2000, 225). Indeed, it appears likely that local resistance to and disruption of due process vis-a-vis logging at every level were aimed at loosening the grip of central government and Levers on North New Georgian affairs. Unfortunately, these

disruptions mitigated strongly against any potential investment in re-afforestation – even from aid agencies (Bennett 2000, 246). At the same time, Golden Springs International was proving to have limited concern for sustainable logging practices. Thus, although logging continued, the task of re-afforestation lay idle to the mid 1990s. Therein lay the early groundwork for the North New Georgia Sustainable Social Forestry and Rural Development Project.

Early interest in some concrete form of re-afforestation and sustainable forestry for North New Georgia arose out of this set of conditions. It was spearheaded by a loose network of individuals and groups linked to the community consultation activities of Golden Spring International (Dart, pers.com., St. Lucia, 2 May 2001).<sup>36</sup> In this context, key actors included the Rev. Ikani Rove, the Christian Fellowship Church (CFC), Greg Young and Grant Doran. The Rev. Ikani Rove was an influential and charismatic leader in the CFC and spokesperson for the local community. For the duration of project activity, Rove maintained a key visionary and leadership role and all key decision making flowed from and/or was finalised (in the specific case of technical advice, for example) by him (Young pers.com., St. Lucia, 6 September 2001). The CFC had for many years argued broadly for intergenerational equity and sustainability in New Georgia vis-à-vis logging.<sup>37</sup> Greg Young had worked for some time in mineral exploration in North New Georgia and was consequently well known and "accepted" by local community leaders. Grant Doran, an accountant, was introduced to community leaders by Greg Young (Young pers.com., St. Lucia, 6 September 2001). Discussions among these individuals allowed for an exploration of Rev. Ikani Rove's vision for sustainable forestry in New Georgia. This emerging vision was centred on twin concerns for medium to long-term income generation and the creation of local employment opportunities for local youth. It was based upon the perception of the need for direct technical assistance transfer in order to resolve specific scientific and technical re-afforestation problems (Davie and Dart 2000).

The area encompassed by the envisioned project covered around 40,000 ha. This area fell within the customary land areas of Ngrassi, Dukerana and Lunga wherein logging was completed, commenced, and not yet commenced, respectively. Dukerana and Lunga lay within the northern catchments of the Morovo Lagoon. Land use therein would affect this multiple use area (Davie and Dart 2000, 13).<sup>38</sup> With this vision for inter-generational equity emerging, the CFC provided seed funding of \$AU100,000 in support of an initial community request for a commercial-scale tree nursery (Davie and Dart 2000, 13). . Grant Doran and Greg Young established technical support through Dr Peter Dart from the University of Queensland (Dart, pers.com., St. Lucia, 2 May 2001). Project activities commenced officially in October 1999.

### *Project Activities*

Specific project activities involved the establishment of a commercial-scale tree nursery. The design and operation of this nursery was based in part on the experiences of the neighbouring Kolumbangara plantations.<sup>39</sup> Basic principles included a capacity to operate in a straightforward manner while allowing for a reasonable level of expansion and sophistication (Dart, pers.com., St. Lucia, 2 May 2001).<sup>40</sup> With modest and sound beginnings, this infrastructure was designed to expand to a capacity of one million trees per year. This equated into approximately 1000ha of planting per year (Dart, pers.com., St. Lucia, 2 May 2001). With an emphasis on industrial plantation timbers and production, trial species included gmelina, eucalypts and acacias.<sup>41</sup> Native species were not placed under consideration at this early stage (Dart, pers.com., St. Lucia, 2 May 2001). Closed seed lot material was initially sought from Kolumbangara plantations. Germplasm material was developed from this. Thereafter, rammet garden trees were established and maintained. Cuttings were taken from these trees and these were vegetatively propagated in the nursery.<sup>42</sup>

In the post 2000 coup environment, the field project remained in place. Indeed, it was located

well beyond physical proximity to areas of instability within the Solomons. Australian-based technical advisers were however unable to visit the site as a result of security concerns in Honiara or establish any communications with locals – there were no communications technologies in or near the relevant community. Despite this disruption, the project attracted the attention and praise of Solomon Islands provincial political leaders working towards reconstruction in the coup's aftermath. Commenting through the auspices of the UNDP, these leaders were promoting new models for rural development throughout Western Province as exemplified by the activities of the North New Georgia project (Pestelos 2001).<sup>43</sup>

### *Institutional Matters*

The second area of project activity in North New Georgia related to institutional matters. This was spearheaded by Greg Young and Grant Doran and resulted in the foundation of the Rural Development Trust Board (RDTB). The RDTB was established in order to implement and undertake the long-term management of this aspect of the project. The RDTB's first task was to manage the specific relationship growing between the local community and its partners in development. As was stated by the RDTB: "institutional parties and rural communities required an entity with which they could deal as a neutral body independent from internal and external influences" (Rural Development Trust Board 1999, 2). In this sense, Young (pers.com., St. Lucia, 6 September 2001) described the RDTB as a "bridging instrument" able to include the appropriate qualities of both the developing and developed world. The key concerns of the RDTB were thus transparency, indigenous representation, and inclusiveness (Young pers.com., St. Lucia, 6 September 2001).

Transparency was ensured through the RDTB's institutional arrangements wherein the Trust was a charitable trust established under Solomon Island law. It was also a Unit Trust of the Pacific Development Fund (PDF), a not-for-profit Australian company established by RDTB members to act as trustee (Davie, Dart, and Young 2000); (Rural Development Trust Board 1999, 2). This arrangement ensured that the RDTB was subject to auditing and scrutiny by Australian-based and internationally-recognised financial and legal firms, KPMG Chartered Accountants and Deacons, Graham and James Lawyers.

Indigenous and developing world representation was assumed and assured from the outset where the RDTB arose out of a consultative process involving North New Georgia community leaders, Solomon Island politicians and public servants along with Australian scientific and other advisers (Davie, Dart, and Young 2000, 8). To date, an unofficial 2/3 "Melanesian" majority has been maintained over board membership (Young pers.com., St. Lucia, 6 September 2001). Both the RDTB and the PDF had strong links with the Solomon Islands Government and were endorsed by the then Solomon Islands prime minister, Ulufa'alu.

The assurance of inclusiveness was of some concern in the establishment of the RDTB. Here inclusiveness refers to the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders with regards to a given RDTB issue area (Young pers.com., St. Lucia, 6 September 2001). Potential stakeholders included: the North New Georgia community, provincial and national Solomon Islands governments, rural development, social and environmental advocacy NGOs, logging companies, mining companies, intergovernmental organisations, the University of Queensland, and the Queensland State Government. Thus, as one of its key guiding principles the RDTB stated: "We seek to involve a broad range of philosophical positions in our decision making mechanisms by inviting participation from diverse fields and activity. This involves public, private, civil society participants from the local, national, regional and international levels" (Rural Development Trust Board 1999, 1).

The mission statement of the RDTB was as follows: "Our Mission is to facilitate the sustainable development of natural resources in rural areas through a quest for sustainable human development that holds the peace and spiritual wellbeing of the family and wider community as the most valuable

resources of all" (Rural Development Trust Board 1999, 1). The RDTB aimed to be organisationally self-sustaining (including operational costs) (Rural Development Trust Board 1999, 1). Founders and members took considerable pride in the comparatively unique principles, scope and structure of the Trust where the more typical business of development in Melanesia was concerned (Young pers.com., St. Lucia, 6 September 2001)

With the RDTB in place, project partners sought to extend the scope and reach of this new NGO's financial and management mechanisms. Dialogue was undertaken with members of parliament in the Solomon Islands with a view to establishing through parliament a unique arrangement vis-à-vis the RDTB and intergovernmental agencies. This arrangement would support agreements made between the RDTB and funding organisations (ADB, World Bank, AusAID, etc.) without the direct involvement of the Solomon Islands government (Dart, pers.com., St. Lucia, 28 June 2001). Although initial responses to this proposal were favourable, the events surrounding the coup disrupted any further progress on this matter.

Under these auspices of the institutional support of the thus configured RDTB, the North New Georgia Sustainable Social Forestry and Rural Development Project's objectives were considered to be as follows:

On the customary land areas identified as Ngrassi, Dukerna and Lunga, to formulate a model of rural community development which will optimise the land and financial resources made available by the on-going logging of primary forest in the project area, while assisting in the control of ensuing environmental damage (Davie and Dart 2000, 5).

With the aid of technical advice, Ikani Rove's vision for sustainable forestry thus expanded into a broad and ambitious programme for rural community development. Therein, key project components included: infrastructure, land resource evaluation and planning, forestry, and agriculture land use options (Davie and Dart 2000, 5-10).

With institutional arrangements in place and project concepts under development, project partners expanded in January 2000 to include the University of Queensland, the Queensland Government, and the Solomons Island Government.<sup>44</sup> As discussions among these partners and the RDTB gained momentum during mid-2000, these discussions [???what?] were also of considerable moment: on 5 July 2000, as interested parties in Brisbane moved to consolidate their commitment to the project, the Malaita Eagle Force wrested control of Honiara from the democratically-elected government of Prime Minister Ulufa'alu. Thereafter, all institutional developments within Australia came to an immediate halt with no further developments occurring, pending the Solomon Islands' general election in late 2001. This disruption was a direct consequence of continuing uncertainty within the assistance community based on concerns held for stability and security in the broader Solomons.

## Discussion

The North New Georgia re-forestation project sits amidst a turning point in Melanesian history that is marked by globalisation, troubled states, and a raft of complex political and economic difficulties. In this context, the story of the project is an interesting one, the broad themes of which can be explored through the concept of the Melanesian way, and also the role and influence of Christian churches, *kastom*, and NGOs in Melanesian society. This story points to political and economic development activity taking place outside more typical state-based channels for such action. It indicates that where states are weak, broader society can be strong and can in consequence marshal action and resources towards community development.

The North New Georgia project is noteworthy in the first instance because the relevant local community initiated it. The project's activities were also established on community-derived seed funding. From the outset, the local community participated in and owned (including financially) the re-

afforestation scheme. As is quite usual in Melanesia, a Christian church – the CFC – lay at the heart of these matters. The CFC is an independent indigenous church, and this heightens the impression of indigenous agency and ownership. With the presence and contribution of the CFC also came leadership in local forms in the person of the Rev. Ikani Rove, the community's spiritual leader. Institutional arrangements established through the NGO, the RDTB, ensured transparency and accountability. These arrangements also allowed for a unique positioning of the project with regard to government. This brought about a relationship that supported external relations between local and extra-national project stakeholders in *the absence of* (though with the support of) Solomon Islands government participation. The project's substantive achievements demonstrated that work in the field initiated by the local community and assisted through external technical advice was viable as were the unique institutional arrangements designed to support this. To date, instability and uncertainty associated with the 2000 coup has ensured that the next phase of project activity remains largely in abeyance. Given this, an ongoing commitment to the project has continued and awaits the resolution of the Solomon Islands' political problems.

For the Solomon Islands, the North New Georgia project is significant to the extent that it points to possibilities for new community-based approaches to the development and management of forest resources – the nation's core economic sector. These approaches are potentially more compatible with customary land ownership than their antecedents. This is a significant matter where it is remembered that more than 80% of forestry activity occurs on customary land and that unresolved conflicts vis-à-vis customary land are central to political tensions throughout the Solomons. The North New Georgia project also offers new approaches for sustainable resource development. With large tracts of the North New Georgia region (indeed, much of the Solomons) already clear-felled and the task of re-afforestation long eluding concerned parties, this is an important development. Where forests and their resources are central to local community life and also a solitary avenue to the cash economy, the importance of sustainability can not be over-emphasised. The implications for local ecology and biodiversity in the long-term absence of re-afforestation are obvious: as is the denial of human potential where such a situation persists. Finally, the North New Georgia project offers important alternative arrangements for the management of matters linked to transparency and accountability. This has been a longstanding problem in the forestry sector and also in the disbursement of development assistance finance throughout the Solomons. In structuring community development activities transparently and accountably, problems of mismanagement are minimised while opportunities for participation in mainstream economic life are maximised.

In the final analysis, much of the observable achievement attributable to the North New Georgia project remains in the realm of potential. The establishment and operation of a tree nursery is an important practical development but the broader technical and institutional dimensions of the project are largely untested where the next phase of activities are held in abeyance. And despite very deliberate efforts to construct the project outside the ambit of national politics, the project and hence its contributions to community development have been greatly disrupted by the 2000 coup and its fallout. Where these distracting broader events have had a large impact on the project and its activities, ways in which the re-afforestation scheme will sit with and feed into local (and also provincial, national and international) power relations have not been adequately unravelled. Associated matters are likely to include: disputes within and between customary land owner groups; complexifying linkages into local political ambitions and political structures; contentions concerned with distribution, equity and inclusiveness; and managing appropriate association with formal and informal community, state, donor, technician, NGO, and corporate practice and institutions.

## Conclusion

The paper returns now to its key theoretical interests: an exploration of the roles of state and society in Melanesian life and an exposition of the place of globalisation in the region. As the North New Georgia case study demonstrates, where the state is inadequately undertaking the task of development, other areas in society are able to move some way towards filling the gap. This in itself is not unusual and has been widely observed and frequently advocated throughout the developing world. What is unusual in the case of North New Georgia is the demonstration of ways in which the organisation of globally-orientated economic potential may soon be effectively located at the community level for the purposes of community development and largely without state involvement.

The North New Georgia case study thus described points to new dimensions emerging in the exercise of what might be described as the Melanesian way – a concept in itself that remains in many ways an undefined rhetorical slogan. Putting this contested slogan to one side, it is clear that the nation-state of the Solomon Islands is indisputably weak and local church, *kastom*, and NGO activity and organisation have longstanding importance in the pursuit of community development and social change. With this has also come a new outlook towards the global and away from the national. The case study considered in this paper provides interesting insights into Melanesian political and economic life and new ways in which it may soon extend from local communities through to international and perhaps globalising processes and structures. In this, it is of course too early in the project's life – especially given its disruption – for definitive statements regarding substantive activities, institutions and their outcomes. At the very least however, the project points to the purposeful pursuit of new arrangements for development by a sub-nationally located community and the capacity of the international development assistance community to accommodate this.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See Firth (2000b, 2000b) and Fry (2000) for an outline of ways in which globalisation is affecting life in the South Pacific.

<sup>2</sup> Douglas (2000a, 2000c), Liloqula and Pollard (2000) write on the activities of women's NGOs in Melanesia.

<sup>3</sup> Of the total number of 922 islands, only 347 are currently inhabited (Kabutaulaka 1998, 7).

<sup>4</sup> Such relations introduced western goods, particularly iron tools, into the Solomons for the first time. Food, water, crafts and, most importantly, labour and sexual favours were exchanged for these highly prized goods (Bennett 1987, chs. 1-4).

<sup>5</sup> According to Bennett (1987, 103), the British Treasury did not wish to finance a new dependency at this time. The British took on the Solomons on the proviso that the colony pay for its own administration.

<sup>6</sup> During this period Germany annexed New Guinea and North Solomons (Kabutaulaka 1998, 10).

<sup>7</sup> Bennett (1987, 104) finds that it was "slow, because of the nature of Solomon Island societies and the limited resources of the government; piecemeal, because the government aimed to make the Europeans and their property secure rather than the Islanders and their land".

<sup>8</sup> The British presence brought about considerable disruption to traditional power relations and in consequence to traditional systems of land ownership. Bennett (1987, 115-116) argues that the British presence closed virtually all traditional means to acquiring and maintaining power. In the new colonial order, power could be expressed only through participation in the emerging capitalist system: hence, in obtaining and redistributing wealth via the sale of labour, products, and land.

<sup>9</sup> Maltreatment including routine physical violence were the order of the day on most plantations (Bennett 1987, 154-155).

<sup>10</sup> Although Britain was ultimately eager to divest itself of its colonial possession, the British maintained for many years that Solomon Islands did not possess the institutional capacity for independence (Bennett 1987, ch. 14).

<sup>11</sup> In 1996, timber accounted for 50% of export earnings (Kabutaulaka 1998, 7).

<sup>12</sup> Palm oil and kernel made up 12.6 of export earnings in 1996. Significant oil palm and cocoa plantations are located on Guadalcanal. Large scale commercial agriculture is limited by physical and natural systems – although problems here have as much to do with unresolved questions of land ownership (Kabutaulaka 1998, 7-8).

<sup>13</sup> Lilo (2000, 1-2) outlines major problem areas in detail. These include: poor financial recording and control; unaudited accounts back to 1984 in 1998; failure to recognise the severity of expenditure over-

run; poor debt management; weak regulation (tax) of logging and manufacturing sectors; poor management of revenue-generating departments in public sector; poor use of Central Bank facilities; and poor performance of state-owned enterprises.

<sup>14</sup> Larmour (2000) provides an interesting outline of accountability reforms.

<sup>15</sup> The great hope for Melanesians that came with these new companies was the provision of roads, bridges, schools, and clinics.

<sup>16</sup> See Kabutaulaka (1998, 30-31) for an outline of traditional land tenure arrangements and associated problems.

<sup>17</sup> See Bennett (2000, 1) for a detailed account of the history of forestry in Solomon Islands (1800-1997) with particular reference to: "the natural environment of the past, particularly the forest environment; the interaction between the human productive technology and that environment; and human perceptions and beliefs about forest use over time." In this, Bennett argues that inconsistencies and conflicts between central and provincial jurisdictions have allowed persistent problems to emerge. Dauvergne (1998, 107) argues that serious flaws existed for many years in the structure and content of forest legislation and policies designed to capture timber rents. Montgomery (1995, 76) finds that governments are unable to enforce policy and manage the inter-related tasks of resource development and environmental management. Montgomery also finds that management units are under-resourced and under-staffed with deficits in adequate training.

<sup>18</sup> Downturns in demand for timber in major Asian markets have naturally resulted in a slowing of production with some foreign companies suspending operations (Dauvergne 1998) p.106.

<sup>19</sup> Adult literacy is 30.3%, population growth is 3.3%, and life expectancy is 64 years (World Bank 2000, 13).

<sup>20</sup> Bougainville is in close geographic proximity to the Western Solomons and there are strong kinship ties between the respective populations. The leader of resistance in Bougainville was also for some time officially based in Honiara (Sore 2000, 4).

<sup>21</sup> Tuhanuku (2000, iii) argues that tension surrounds the large-scale and long-term migration of Malaitans (in particular, although migrants from all provinces are involved) as labourers to Guadalcanal and their consequent gaining of access to the traditional lands of the Guadalcanal people through formal, informal, legal and sometimes illegal means. Concerns emerged regarding the adequate administration of transient, migrating and sometimes squatting populations around the capital and particularly where law and order and rentals were concerned. In this connection, Naitoro (2000) argues that the Guadalcanal people have suffered more impositions than most in the processes of colonisation and decolonisation due to their land possessing higher agricultural and rental values. Liloqula and Pollard (2000, 3) argue that legitimate concerns about the management of transmigration were compounded by some seeking to settle old grievances or simply seek finance. Related tensions increased at the end of 1998 when a group of young armed men known as the Guadalcanal Revolution Army (GRA) (now the Isatabu Freedom

Movement [IFM]) started the forced repatriation of settlers, especially Malaitans. The GRA/IFM also demanded compensation from the government for wrongs allegedly committed by Malaitans. In response to these tensions, the government began official repatriation of Malaitans. For their part, the Malaitans sought compensation. When the government appeared slow in acknowledging these demands a militant response in the guise of the Malaitan Eagle Force emerged.

<sup>22</sup> Events at this time were brought to a head when it became clear that internal security forces held greater loyalty for their island origins – Malaitan or Guadalcanal – than their employer, the government (Tuhanuku 2000, iii).

<sup>23</sup> Prime minister Ulufa'alu bowed to the demands of rebel spokesperson Andrew Nori and tendered his resignation amidst great controversy on 13 June 2000 (Sore 2000; Tuhanuku 2000, iii). Nori's positioning in these events has been described as political opportunism (Moore, pers.com., 30 May 2001; Otter, pers.com., 2 May 2001).

<sup>24</sup> It is estimated that more than 30,000 people have fled Honiara (Asian Development Bank 2000a, 1).

<sup>25</sup> Liloqula and Pollard (2000) suggest that the economy had collapsed within a week of the coup. Tensions have led to the closure of operations at Gold Ridge Mining Ltd, Solomon Islands Plantations Ltd, Solbrew Company Ltd and Solomon Tobacco Ltd. The public sector has also been severely cut back (Sore 2000). Around 8000 people (or 20% of the formal sector workforce) have been placed in unpaid indefinite leave (Asian Development Bank 2000a, 1-3). Most expatriates were evacuated, cutting short the activities of joint ventures and volunteer operations (Sore 2000). The delivery of assistance finance was impossible (Asian Development Bank 2000b). As a result, the economy contracted by around 14%, exports declined by 29% and imports declined by 15% (Asian Development Bank 2000b).

<sup>26</sup> There has been \$US30-35 million worth of damage done to infrastructure including water supply and sanitation, roads, bridges, public offices, etc. In the short term, the Solomons government does not have funds to commence the process of rebuilding (Asian Development Bank 2000a, 1-3).

<sup>27</sup> The exception here would be in the case of the particular tensions experienced between Malaita and Guadalcanal (Dinnen pers.com. 13 December 2001).

<sup>28</sup> Kabutaulaka (1998, 46) comments that the Christian denominations have portrayed development in terms of Westernisation and industrialisation, hence a Christianised progression.

<sup>29</sup> See Kabutaulaka (1998, 17-33) for a detailed account of *kastom*, kinship groups, clans, *wantoks* and big-man politics. Sporting clubs, professional associations, women's organisations, media and unions are other important constituents in civil society.

<sup>30</sup> According to Bennett (1987, 327), the strong sense of identity and apartness held by those of the Western Province is based on: "Their blackness, their Roviana lingua franca, their Christian religious affiliations, their beautiful and influential women, and their pride in being smallholder producers rather than migrant labourers".

<sup>31</sup> Independence brought some gestures at secession with it as did the 2000 coup (Bennett 1987, 328).

<sup>32</sup> Those of the west have long been involved in diverse commercial opportunities. They have enjoyed greater social cohesion as a direct result of the presence of Christian missionaries who championed many of the secular interests of their followers. For this reason, they have also enjoyed higher educational outcomes (Bennett 1987, 241-242).

<sup>33</sup> With this in turn came a wave of local resistance to the presence and activities of logging concessionaires, as will now be discussed (Bennett 2000, 284-288).

<sup>34</sup> During this period parliament introduced legislation that separated timber rights from land tenure. This legislation failed (Bennett 1987, 224).

<sup>35</sup> Golden Springs Ltd was incorporated in the United States with its principle, Kang Wibosono, based in Indonesia. The corporation replaced Levers Pacific Timbers in the late 1980s on North New Georgia. Where Golden Springs Ltd demonstrated a greater understanding of local leadership and social relationships (and, ultimately a similar approach to environmental management) this new contender won out. (Bennett 2000, 247-8). With events stacked against Levers, the company was forced to withdraw from New Georgia in 1986 (Bennett 2000, 245-8).

<sup>36</sup> From the outset, personal relationship and leadership supplied through key individuals have been a central element in the progress of the North New Georgia project.

<sup>37</sup> The CFC is an indigenous church and was established in New Georgia more than 50 years ago. It has a large following throughout the Solomons and particularly in North New Georgia. The church is strongly involved in community development and pastoral care. In this connection, the CFC has been involved in land allocation decisions and has brokered related collective agreements (Dart 2000).

<sup>38</sup> See Baird (2001) and Mealey (1999) for environmental problems in the Morovo lagoon area resulting from clear fell logging.

<sup>39</sup> The British company Levers Pacific Timbers had managed timber operations on Kolumbagara throughout the twentieth century.

<sup>40</sup> An automatic watering system supplied by a local creek was, for example, essential.

<sup>41</sup> *Gmelina arborea*, *Eucalyptus deglupta* and *Eucalyptus teretioruis*, *Acacia margium*.

<sup>42</sup> This procedure requires rooting material, hormones, and a misting system (Dart 2001a).

<sup>43</sup> Warren Paia, chairperson of the western province economic task force, praised the North New Georgia project for its unique approach to a community initiative linked to mainstream economic life. He also commented that projects such as that in North New Georgia where local communities engage in projects on their own rather than waiting for government assistance is especially significant (Pestelos 2001).

<sup>44</sup> In the case of the University of Queensland, the School of Land and Food Science in the Faculty of Natural Resources, Agriculture and Veterinary Science spearheaded the project while all other

Departments (Arts; Biological and Chemical Sciences; Business, Economics and Law; Engineering, Physical Sciences and Architecture; Health Sciences; Institute for Continuing and TESOL Education; and Social and Behavioural Science) expressed interest in contributing to the partnership. Where the Queensland Government was concerned, the Department of Natural Resources, the Queensland Forestry Research Institute, and the Department of Primary Industries were involved.

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