

## SUMMARY

# Project Transition Lessons from the Experiences of Australian Law and Justice Assistance to Solomon Islands

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This research examines Australian experiences of project transition in relation to law and justice assistance to Solomon Islands. It addresses how transition management efforts have affected project success as well as the criteria for judging that success in view of law and justice assistance in a post-conflict society.

Between 2003 and 2014, the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) was deployed as a regional collective program for international aid directed at the restoration of social order and peace building in Solomon Islands archipelago. After concluding this project, the Australian Government commenced a new bilateral aid program in 2014 as a successor to the former program. The new Solomon Islands Justice Program (SIJP) is a four year aid program which comprehensively covers the strengthening of the nation's justice sector. Additionally, the design of SIJP was based on an analysis of the project outcomes of RAMSI in order to secure a seamless transition between the two projects. However, the transition from RAMSI to SIJP has brought significant changes to the structure and focus of overall law and justice assistance as well as Canberra's approach to its commitment to Honiara. In examining the case of Australian law and justice assistance to Solomon Islands, this article focuses mainly on the project time-frame between 2013-2014 during which the main transition from RAMSI to SIJP and dialogue among various stakeholders occurred and aims to draw lessons from these transition management efforts in terms of their effects upon project coherence and consistency throughout the implementation process.

The main source of potential risks in this transition was how donors understood and reflected local conditions in project design. In the case of the transition between RAMSI and SIJP, there was a measure of uncertainty in 2013, and many issues relating to this period of uncertainty persist. Regardless, it seems to have achieved a successful and almost seamless transition from RAMSI to the new bilateral project. Drawing on the lessons learned from this Australian case study, this article suggests that both 'flexibility' and an 'awareness of transition' are important for securing the success of long-term projects during transitional periods and implementation.