

2003-2017

Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI)



A joint report by the Solomon
Islands Government and RAMSI
on the 14-year intervention.

June 2017



Disclaimer

The authors of this report have done their best to capture, in broad strokes, the breadth and depth of the RAMSI intervention. It is, however, an almost impossible task and we will have missed some important contributions, examples, nuances and contradictory views that only those that were part of this amazing enterprise can explain fully.

Front cover image: Reflecting the mood of the nation, this banner was displayed during a peace rally in Honiara on 22 August 2003. Solomon Islands had been given a fresh start through its embrace of RAMSI and the declaration of a guns-free Solomon Islands. (Photographer: Brian Hartigan, Australian Federal Police).

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Foreword



Dame Meg Taylor
Secretary-General
Pacific Islands Forum

"RAMSI is a milestone not only for the Solomon Islands but for the Forum as a whole, for the success of RAMSI is an achievement of both the Solomon Islands and the Forum members."

The Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) is a perfect example of the benefits of regionalism, embodying more than a decade of partnership and cooperation amongst the members of the Pacific Islands Forum in the true Pacific spirit of *helpem fren*. A defining element of RAMSI is its Pacific regional character, having been mobilised under the Pacific Islands Forum's *Biketawa Declaration* (2000) and comprising the Forum's membership. Indeed, a key strength of RAMSI is that all Pacific Islands Forum countries contributed toward the mission. RAMSI has been, without a doubt, a true regional exercise in solidarity and a shining example of Pacific diplomacy and cooperation. At the same time, it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the widespread support for RAMSI in the Solomon Islands, which was essential for the successful operation of the mission.

The success of any armed intervention, particularly in a civilian landscape, relies heavily on the conduct of its personnel. And I think it suitable to say that the Pacific as a region has every reason to be proud of the quality and conduct of our men and women who served in RAMSI. The fact that law and order was restored with no casualties, within weeks of the intervention, is testament of the professionalism and the humanity of the people serving in that initial deployment of RAMSI. I am pleased to note that the same competence and dedication to duty was demonstrated by successive personnel in RAMSI since. I therefore take this opportunity to thank all the men and women who have served under RAMSI over the years, and whose service personified and honoured the commitment made to the Solomon Islands by all Forum countries under the *Biketawa Declaration*.

The two broad elements of RAMSI, the security component and the civilian component, worked together toward RAMSI's objective of stabilising Solomon Islands and rebuilding the essential machinery of government, in order to promote longer term economic recovery. It is heartening therefore to see that within the lifespan of RAMSI the mission has restored and helped maintain law and order, and worked with the Solomon Islands Government to rebuild key machineries and institutions of government.

I applaud in particular the early achievements of RAMSI, which enabled the successive reforms and programmes. The swift and peaceful restoration of law and order; recovery and destruction of the bulk of illegal weapons; surrender of militants; and the arrest and prosecution of human rights offenders, are important accomplishments in the history of RAMSI. These achievements not only restored stability but also contributed toward restoring a sense of peace amongst Solomon Islanders who after more than five years of internal unrest and armed conflict welcomed an end to the violence. I note that RAMSI's early accomplishments were closely followed by significant reforms under the three pillars of economic reform, law and justice, and machinery of government, resulting in the gradual shift in focus from its security component to the civilian component.

It is worth noting that the civilian and development reforms, and other gains in rebuilding the key machinery of government, enabled the Solomon Islands Government to successfully host several large and important events in the last few years. These include the two-week long Pacific Arts Festival in 2012, the visit by the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge in 2012, the visit by United States Secretary of State John Kerry in 2014, the Melanesian Spearhead Group Summit in 2015, and the conduct of national elections in 2006, 2010 and 2014.

The benefits accrued at the regional level through the capacity development of police personnel from Forum member countries serving in RAMSI are also worth highlighting. It is timely to revisit and echo the sentiments of the 2014 meeting of the Enhanced Consultative Mechanism on RAMSI, which noted that the achievements and challenges of RAMSI had practical applications for the rest of the Pacific and that it was important to ensure lessons learned were replicated in the region and beyond.

Although it was the embodiment of Pacific solidarity and cooperation, it is important to remember that RAMSI also required considerable resourcing. I take this opportunity to thank Australia for providing the bulk of the resources for RAMSI, both financial and personnel. I also commend New Zealand for its own contributions of personnel and finances. Without the support of Australia, and New Zealand, RAMSI would not have been possible. Just as importantly I thank all members of the Pacific Islands Forum for contributing to RAMSI through the deployment of personnel. For the smaller countries, I know this often resulted in stretching already limited resources, yet I am pleased to note that did not stop countries from contributing.

I also acknowledge the leadership and oversight of RAMSI over the years. At the operational level the RAMSI Special Coordinators were instrumental in ensuring the smooth and effective running of the mission. Recognition must also be given to the Forum Ministerial Meeting on RAMSI, the officials' level Enhanced Consultative Mechanism on RAMSI, and the RAMSI Triumvirate comprising the Solomon Islands Permanent Secretary for RAMSI, the RAMSI Special Coordinator, and the Forum's Representative to the Solomon

Islands. These different arrangements worked together to provide strategic and policy oversight for RAMSI, as well as facilitated collaborative discussions to address any issues that arose.

Finally I take this opportunity to acknowledge the Solomon Islands for hosting RAMSI for the last fourteen years. Hosting a large foreign mission for an extended period is not without challenges, and I commend and thank you for your hospitality and continued support of RAMSI over the years. RAMSI's success is due in no small part to the people and Government of Solomon Islands.

Message from Prime Minister



The Honourable Manasseh Sogavare
Prime Minister
Solomon Islands

"Without you, RAMSI, we would not be enjoying the tranquillity that we hold dear today. Thank you for your support to our beloved Solomon Islands."

In July 2003, Solomon Islands invited Australia to lead the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) to rescue our nation from five years of lawlessness. It was a truly dark time in our nation's history. The gun, not government, ruled.

Through our prayers, the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders, under the auspices of the Biketawa Declaration, approved the deployment of Australia-led police and military personnel to Solomon Islands to restore law and order.

Today this regional initiative has produced significant results for Solomon Islands and, importantly, was an unprecedented example of Pacific diplomacy during our time of crisis.

Through RAMSI, the country was able to stabilise its finances, strengthen the justice sector, reform and strengthen the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force and help the machinery of government to work again. Not only that, RAMSI also worked together with the Government to address the cross-cutting issues of gender and family violence, community outreach and youth issues.

Let me on behalf of the Government and people of Solomon Islands thank the 15 participating countries for their invaluable support to the work of RAMSI in Solomon Islands. In particular, I would like to thank the Governments of Australia and New Zealand for their leadership of RAMSI. We are truly proud of you.

I must also thank the leaders of Solomon Islands, in governments, the private sector and the community at large, for the support rendered to RAMSI over the 14 years of its mission. We were united in our course for peace and justice. We were united for the development of our country and we will remain forever united as Solomon Islanders as we continue to build our beloved nation.

As RAMSI is a regional initiative, let me also thank the Pacific Islands Forum for its oversight role. You have always been there for us to help find common grounds in our partnership with RAMSI. This is a true reflection of your commitment to this endeavour.

Today, our future is bright. Solomon Islanders enjoy peace and stability in our communities. Businesses are thriving and the life we enjoy today was almost unimaginable 14 years ago. Thank you RAMSI.

The legacy of RAMSI has been that it laid the foundations for long-term stability, security and prosperity, and provided the time and space for Solomon Islands to recover the lost ground, address our societal challenges and regain control.

As we farewell RAMSI, the Government and my fellow Solomon Islanders renew our commitment to creating a better future for our children and the nation. Lasting peace requires effort and we will pursue it endlessly.

So, again, on behalf of all Solomon Islanders, I thank deeply the 15 Pacific Islands Forum members for their investment in the future of this country.

I also convey our heartfelt gratitude to the thousands of men and women – the police, military, diplomats and civilian advisers – that formed part of the RAMSI mission for leaving their families to resurrect the *Happy Isles*. A special heartfelt gratitude is conveyed for the sacrifices of the six men and women that lost their lives while serving as part of the RAMSI mission. Solomon Islands truly salute you as great Ambassadors of Peace.

Without you, RAMSI, we would not be enjoying the tranquillity that we hold dear today. Thank you for your support to our beloved Solomon Islands.

God bless RAMSI and God Bless Solomon Islands.

Tagio tumas

Message from Special Coordinator



Mr Quinton Devlin
Special Coordinator
Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands

"RAMSI's motto of Helpem Fren both reflected and guided the Mission."

RAMSI's departure is a vote of confidence in Solomon Islands. It highlights the Pacific region's belief that our friend and neighbour is ready to write its own future.

I suspect that few of the thousands of men and women that came to watch RAMSI arrive at Henderson Airport on 24 July 2003 could have envisaged the enormous progress that would be made over the next 14 years.

Indeed, younger Solomon Islanders can be excused for not understanding how dire the situation was at that time. Many only know the peace and stability that RAMSI returned to the nation.

But no Solomon Islander should forget the reasons why 15 nations were asked to intervene to end the violence and then help recover the lost ground and create the conditions for Solomon Islanders to resume control of their country, lives and futures. Past mistakes must never be repeated.

RAMSI is proud of its contribution to creating a safer Solomon Islands and helping governments to better serve their people and deliver greater prosperity. RAMSI's motto of *Helpem Fren* both reflected and guided the Mission, and we remember our six colleagues that lost their lives in this pursuit.

But RAMSI did not re-set this country alone. We worked with thousands of hard-working Solomon Islanders committed to rebuilding their country, often in challenging situations. We pay tribute to these men and women, who were too often the unsung heroes of Solomon Islands' resurrection.

RAMSI police, military, diplomats and development advisers of 15 RAMSI contributing nations have been blessed with strong partnerships, friendships and hospitality across the nation.

We thank all those that have supported RAMSI – in big and small ways.

Tagio tumas.

Executive Summary

Between 2003 and 2017, the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) – a 15-nation stabilisation and state-building intervention led and largely financed by Australia – rescued Solomon Islands from lawlessness and reversed the country's descent towards economic collapse and state failure.

Operation Helpem Fren ('help a friend' in Solomon Islands Pijin) put an end to a grim humanitarian situation, helped rebuild the nation, and created the conditions for Solomon Islanders to resume control of their country, lives and future.

Without the RAMSI intervention, the death toll, human rights atrocities and devastation would have continued.

RAMSI was overwhelmingly a success story and a shining example of how fellow nations can work together to end violence and resurrect a nation in trouble.

Today, RAMSI has completed its mission. Law and order has been restored. The country's finances and economy have been stabilised. The nation's institutions have been re-set and strengthened.

Citizens feel safe; businesses are creating jobs; government and parliament are operating in accordance with the rules; and schools, hospitals and other public services are being delivered across the archipelago.

The need for a 15-nation Participating Police Force is over. It is time to close the chapter on the 'Tensions' and normalise regional support to Solomon Islands.

In 14 short years, Solomon Islands has made tremendous strides towards becoming a stable, modern and self-reliant nation. It has out-performed most post-conflict nations in terms of the speed with which it has recovered the lost ground and developed strong foundations to address its development challenges.

Naturally, RAMSI cannot take all the credit. This venture has always been a partnership between the 15 contributing countries and the governments, parliaments and people of Solomon Islands. None of the enormous gains over the last 14 years would have been possible or sustainable without the tireless efforts of hard-working Solomon Islanders committed to rebuilding their nation.

After a decade of support, RAMSI bequeathed a stable economy and much stronger democratic and government systems. The progress made by

Solomon Islands permitted RAMSI's military component to leave and RAMSI's civilian assistance to the courts, prisons, parliament, electoral system and public service to be divested to bilateral development partners in 2013.

Four years later, in 2017, following the limited rearmament of the police, RAMSI transferred the final elements of responsibility for policing and national security to a well-trained police force that was already supporting other police forces in the region.

After falling so far, the RSIPF is performing strongly, with an appropriately strong focus on crime prevention, community policing, discipline and ethical leadership team. It is the best-trained and equipped police service in the region and is able to protect the nation's communities, borders and waters independently. The RSIPF will also be able to handle the security challenges likely to face Solomon Islands, which enjoys a very low crime rate by global standards and is one of the safest countries in the world in terms of gun crime.

RAMSI's departure represents the final page in the first chapter of the nation's recovery and reconstruction from the dark years of the Tensions.

It reflects the confidence of RAMSI, the Solomon Islands Government and the Pacific region in the nation's stability, security and law enforcement agencies. It also underlines that Solomon Islands is open for business, investment and tourism.

Looking ahead, more work needs to be done. Although RAMSI is ending, RAMSI contributing nations will continue to support Solomon Islands as it deals with challenges that are similar to those faced across the Pacific.

In this context, the Solomon Islands Government has recommitted to delivering new sources of growth, meaningful reconciliation between Solomon Islanders, long-term national development, and political, legal, social and economic reforms that support nation building.

Solomon Islands is now in control and responsible for its future.

Why RAMSI?

The genesis, reasons and events that led to the RAMSI intervention, its shape, duration and tasks are complex and the focus of considerable academic work and assessments.

Historical context

Although ‘discovered’ by Spanish explorers in 1568, the story of modern day Solomon Islands begins with the interruption of millennia of subsistence-living and wary co-existence between over seventy language (*wantok*) groups by Western explorers, whalers, traders, Christian missionaries and recruiters of indentured labour (‘blackbirders’) in the 19th century. The two defining influences, however, were the impact and legacies of British colonialism (1893-1978) and the savage fighting between Japan and the United States during the Second World War.

When Independence came in 1978, the clamour for self-rule was not loud. Rather, keen to shed its Pacific responsibilities, Britain initiated and bequeathed a Westminster system to govern a nation of fragmented semi-autonomous groups that had almost no sense of shared identity. Three-time Solomon Islands Prime Minister Solomon Mamaloni famously portrayed the state as a “nation conceived but never born”.

State-building proved challenging; nation-building even harder – not least because both concepts jarred against Melanesian concepts of patronage, reciprocity and obligation.

Textbox: Geography and ethnography

Solomon Islands is the third largest archipelago in the South Pacific, comprised of almost 1,000 islands, nine provinces, a capital territory, and six major island groups extending 1,600 kilometres southeast from the Autonomous Region of Bougainville in Papua New Guinea towards Vanuatu.

The country has a diverse cultural mix, with over 70 languages and an array of clans, and tribal affiliations bonded by obligations to the same language (*wantok*) group. Melanesians compose over 90 per cent of the population, which numbers approximately 600,000 today.

Tensions

Twenty short years after Independence, Solomon Islands descended into chaos. For five dark years between 1998 and 2003, the newly-minted nation was devastated by ethnic tensions and armed thuggery.

The conflict killed over 200 people and displaced at least 18,000 Malaitans and thousands more on the island of Guadalcanal. The human rights situation was grim, with reports of abductions, torture, murder, rape, looting and arson attracting the attention of the international community.

The Tensions, as they are commonly called, began towards the end of 1998 with the eviction of Malaitan settlers from Western Guadalcanal by disenfranchised villagers. The first raid on a police station for weapons also occurred in late 1998.

The campaign of intimidation and aggression by the Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM), which was also known as the Guadalcanal Revolutionary Army (GRA), led to the establishment of the Malaita Eagle Force (MEF) to protect Malaitan communities, especially in Honiara, and exact revenge.

Peace accords before and after the emergence of the MEF did not hold, including agreements brokered by the Commonwealth and those held on Australian and New Zealand naval ships.

In June 2000, the conflict entered a new phase. The MEF, with the support of ethnically-aligned (*wantok*) police officers, stole high-powered weapons from the police armoury in Honiara and forced Prime Minister Bartholomew Ulufa'alu to resign. Many foreigners left at this point.

The MEF's new firepower forced Guale commanders to the negotiation table, prompted the introduction of Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) elements and quasi-militant groups in the northwest of Solomon Islands with a view to protecting the people of Western and Choiseul Provinces, and led to a weak ceasefire and the Townsville Peace Agreement in October 2000.

The Townsville Peace Agreement traded the surrender of weapons and the dismantling of the MEF and IFM/GRA for an amnesty, rehabilitation activities and domestic and international monitoring teams. The Agreement was accepted by both sides. It was rejected, however, by founding Guale commander Harold Keke, who formed the Guadalcanal Liberation Front (GLF) and continued the intimidation.

The security situation became even more volatile. Disbanded militants of all persuasions resorted to infighting, armed clashes and criminality with limited consideration of the ethnicity of the victims. They demanded money from the Government. Guale and Malaitan militants were also deputised as Special Constables and joined the police in violent 'joint operations' that terrorised allegedly sympathetic communities in pursuit of Harold Keke and the GLF.

By 2003, the national government was near collapse. Police officers had taken sides and were no longer able to maintain law and order, and the

courts and many state services such as schools and health centres were hardly functioning.

“They were breaking into the police armouries of Auki, the police headquarters [in Honiara], Yandina and Tulaghi. Arming of an unlawful society? Yes! House arrest of the Prime Minister? Yes! Six pays in arrears for public servants. There were no services to the provinces, and three provinces wanted to break-away at that time. The Police Force was highly compromised. The Prison Service was highly compromised; there was even a breakout at the prison - doors were broken down and every prisoner ran away. Closures of companies. No debt servicing. Basic services like health and education were virtually non-existent. Institutions were highly compromised. Public service morale was very low.”

— Former Prime Minister (2001-06) Sir Allan Kemakeza to the National Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee, 15 September 2008.

“Solomon Islands was in dire straits in 2003. ... Deeply caught up in corruption, the state was held ransom by violent ethnically-defined militias who had become more powerful than the police, from whom they were often indistinguishable. Extravagant compensation payments were made from a government that seemed solely to benefit its leaders and those who could influence them. The public service payroll, vastly inflated by ghost employees, had ceased to function. Intoxicated police refused to surrender weapons. The economy had crashed.”

— Prime Minister Hon. Dr Derek Sikua MP, Presentation to Foreign Relations Committee, 18 September 2008.

Underlying causes

The sentiments, demands and drivers of the conflict were long held and already evident at the time of Independence.

Sometimes distilled down simplistically to a reaction to mass immigration and a perceived dominance and disrespect of the people of Malaita Province, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and a range of studies point to a basket of underlying causes that marginalised and created ‘ethnic discontent’ among many Guadalcanal people.

These factors included the Solomon Islands’ colonial heritage, land issues, illegal settlements, uneven development, mismanagement by successive national governments, economic crises, weakened traditional authority structures and anaemic law enforcement mechanisms.

Regional concern

Regional countries were naturally concerned about the situation unravelling in Solomon Islands during the Tensions period.

A Commonwealth Special Envoy, Major-General Sitiveni Rabuka from Fiji, helped broker short-lived peace agreements in 1999 and Australia financed the deployments of a Commonwealth Multinational Police Peace Monitoring Group in October 1999 (focus on weapons surrender) and a Commonwealth Police Assistance Group in February 2000 (focus on law and order). Both were comprised of police officers from Fiji and Vanuatu.

Following requests from Solomon Islands in 2000 for further assistance, Australia and New Zealand helped facilitate peace talks, ahead of the Townsville Peace Agreement in October 2000, which led to the immediate deployment of the five-nation International Peace Monitoring Team (IPMT) for 20 months from October 2000. The IPMT was led by Australia and included personnel from New Zealand and police from Tonga, Cook Islands and Vanuatu. It supervised the collection of 2,000 surrendered weapons.

Growing lawlessness, however, forced the IPMT to leave without witnessing a decisive break-through, and with Australia and New Zealand looking for new ways to more directly address the evolving situation.

Solomon Islands made two requests to the United Nations in September 2002 for international assistance.

Australia's decision

In June 2003, following a request for further assistance from the Kemakeza Government, Australia agreed to lead and finance a large stabilisation and state-building intervention.

Canberra's decision was made against the backdrop of the shortcomings of the IPMT, Australia's successful leadership of regional interventions in Bougainville and East Timor, Al Qaeda's 9/11 terrorist attacks, Jemaah Islamiyah's targeting of Australians in Bali, and the Iraq invasion. It was a time when there was optimism about the efficacy of foreign interventions.

Conscious of being perceived as being neo-colonial, Australia insisted on a formal invitation from Solomon Islands, the endorsement of the Pacific Islands Forum and a mission composed from the region.

In addition to altruistic and humanitarian reasons, Australia was motivated by the fear of a 'failing state' on its doorstep and inimical external forces, including transnational criminals, filling the void. This was why Australia's offer was a joint package of stabilisation and state-building.

On 4 July 2003, the Solomon Islands Governor-General, on instructions from Cabinet, wrote to the Australian Prime Minister requesting assistance formally. The Solomon Islands Parliament endorsed Australia's offer of assistance on 11 July and enacted the necessary domestic legislation on 17 July. The RAMSI Treaty was signed on 23 July by representatives of initially six member states and the first security elements were deployed on the following day: 24 July 2003, seven weeks after the request.

RAMSI's arrival marked the end of the conflict in Solomon Islands and the beginning of one of the greatest experiments in regional cooperation.



Operation Helpem Fren

RAMSI was also referred to as Operation Helpem Fren. ‘*Helpem Fren*’ means ‘helping a friend’ in Solomon Island Pijin. It has been a motto that has both reflected and served RAMSI well.

Regional partnership

RAMSI was mobilised and enjoyed regional endorsement and legitimacy under the Pacific Island Forum’s *Biketawa Declaration* – an agreement in 2000 that the Forum take action in time of crisis or in response to a member’s request. This was the first time that the *Biketawa Declaration* had been evoked and its application was untested.

Conceived in this manner, RAMSI was defined as a partnership between Solomon Islands and the then 15 Pacific Islands Forum member states.

Mandate

RAMSI’s mandate was agreed between the Solomon Islands Government and the Forum countries. It sought to address the challenges that faced Solomon Islands, including civil unrest and lawlessness, economic decline and stagnation, and a dramatic decline in government standards.

The mandate was outlined in the *Framework for Strengthened Assistance to Solomon Islands: Proposed Scope and Requirements*, which was endorsed by the Solomon Islands Cabinet and Parliament. It comprised the following tasks:

- restore civil order in Honiara and throughout the rest of the country, including confiscating illegal weapons, investigating and prosecuting new criminal offences, strengthening the courts and prison system and protecting key government ministries;
- stabilise government finances, including securing revenue collection and controlling expenditure, strengthening financial administrative safeguards and obtaining donor and international financial institutions’ support;
- promote longer-term economic recovery and revive business confidence, including implementing economic reform, dealing with corruption and improving debt management; and
- rebuild the machinery of government, including the functioning of the National Parliament, the Cabinet, the public service and the electoral process.

The initial focus was on security and economic recovery, with RAMSI personnel embedded in key line positions to quickly affect change, restore law and order and stabilise government finances. The longer-term focus was the slower and much more complex task of reconstructing the three arms of the nation-state – the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary.

Never before had Australia decided to step in to help a neighbour rebuild itself so completely. Never before had the countries of the Pacific Islands Forum stepped in on such a large scale to help a neighbour in need.

From the outset, RAMSI was not tasked to address national reconciliation or nation-building. Nor was RAMSI asked to support health, education, land reform or community-level development. Regional support for such activities was to be left to the donor community with the view that RAMSI would provide Solomon Islands governments the time, space, institutional strength and budgetary health to address these challenges itself.

The assessment was – and remained throughout RAMSI's 14-year tenure – that only Solomon Islanders armed with the necessary cultural sensitivities, not outsiders, could resolve the complex and deep-seated issues that led to the Tensions. Long lasting outcomes, it was argued, were only possible if there was local ownership of the change and reform. This view was expressed many times in the Forum context by Solomon Islands and other Pacific nations, and RAMSI encouraged leaders of Solomon Islanders to take the lead on dealing with these issues.

Mission creep?

Over the years, RAMSI has been accused occasionally of 'mission creep' and encroaching on Solomon Islands sovereignty. Often at the same time, RAMSI has also been criticised for not doing enough to find new pathways for economic growth, tackle poverty and corruption, address the underlying causes of the Tensions such as land reform, and capture the 'big fish' responsible for corruption and the Tensions. In 2010, the newly-elected Sikua Government asked RAMSI to focus on rural development.

"The intervention was the springboard for the process of rebuilding the nation and enabling us to get back on our feet. It was not without critics, some of whom accused the then leaders of offering the nation up to be 're-colonised' by a foreign power, Australia. But time and history are always the best judge and have proven those critics wrong."

— Chief Justice Sir Albert Palmer, *Rebuilding a Nation*, 2010

The debate about the scope and limits of RAMSI's mandate was largely the result of differing views about the level of ambition that should be assigned to RAMSI's mandate and, in some quarters, unrealistically high expectations that RAMSI would and could fix all of Solomon Islands' challenges. The 2005 Review of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Eminent Persons Group also

concluded that some of the critics of RAMSI belonged to a group 'who feel that their individual vested interests are threatened by RAMSI's presence'.

In the end, political resistance to early financial and governance reforms advocated by RAMSI and the subsequent deterioration in relations in 2006-2007 meant that RAMSI worked hard during the final decade of its mission to fulfil its original mandate and align its contribution and ambition levels to the priorities and plans of the government of the day.

A cooperative partnership

Mobilising RAMSI under the *Biketawa Declaration* as a 'cooperative partnership' meant that RAMSI's presence was at the discretion of Solomon Islands, final policy decisions always rested with Solomon Islands ministers, and new legislation rested with the Solomon Islands Parliament.

RAMSI was not an executive or transitional authority. By applying the *Biketawa Declaration*, the region also acknowledged that there was a legitimate and functioning government in Honiara in 2003.

RAMSI's contributions were accordingly calibrated with the pace and direction of the government and parliament of the day. This meant that RAMSI's support was impacted on occasions by political changes or political fragility, especially if proposed reforms required political debate and action.

Still, in true Pacific style, major decisions were generally taken together, after discussion. Over the years, the alignment of RAMSI's work with the priorities of the government of the day has been aided by a range of formal mechanisms, including a Joint Consultative Committee, Joint Performance Oversight Group, and a Board of Management.

RAMSI officials enjoyed strong working relationships with many highly professional Solomon Islands public servants and police officers that maintained their integrity and commitment to their country through the difficult years. Many of these men and women are still in government or public life today and their important role in rebuilding their country should never be forgotten.

In-line assistance and capacity development

Integrating RAMSI personnel, with the same powers as their Solomon Island counterparts or predecessors within the existing law and order and governance structures, was important for both early results and longer-term structural reform. Capacity substitution at the officials-level was particular vital where the indigenous skills and personnel were absent or lacking.

"RAMSI significantly improved the performance of the key ministries where it deployed, but mostly as a result of the activities of inward-placement of in-line personnel and advisors."

- The RAMSI Decade: A Review of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands 2003-2013, Jon Fraenkel, Joni Madraiwiwi and Henry Okole, 14 July 2014.

“A lesson from RAMSI is that [in-line] powers were crucial in achieving the fast turn-around in law and order and public finances.”

- Nick Warner, RAMSI Special Coordinator, 23 March 2004.

Notwithstanding the primacy of Solomon Islands Ministers and the National Parliament, the injection of in-line personnel and civilian advisers led to concerns in some quarters after the initial stabilisation phase of a ‘shadow government’, an emerging ‘parallel state’ and incursions on sovereignty.

Although unfounded, these concerns were understandable in the context of the resource imbalance and relative bureaucratic strengths. The gratitude of some Solomon Islands ministers and officials was also worn thin by the pay and equipment differentials, as well as the quarantining of RAMSI advisers from Solomon Islands human resource management processes, incidences of perceived heavy-handedness in both the security and development sectors, and cultural gaffes committed by RAMSI staff. Political resistance to some of RAMSI’s proposed governance and financial reforms was also a factor. Some of these concerns led the Sikua Government to review the RAMSI-enabling legislation.

These views were arguably a predictable phenomenon. Described by one commentator as ‘aid trauma’, concerns about control, approaches, reach, speed and duration are a common feature of long-term and external interventions by a conspicuous and better resourced benefactor.

“If we are perceived as being critical of RAMSI, it does not mean we are un-appreciative. We do so because we want to improve the operation of this regional initiative.”

- Parliamentary Foreign Relations Committee, Report on the Receipt, Administration and Management of RAMSI, December 2004.

“If we don’t make the attempt [to combat corruption], we will be letting down the vast majority of Solomon Islanders who want to take advantage of the opportunity that RAMSI presents for Solomon Islanders themselves to rebuild their country.”

- Special Coordinator James Batley, ‘The Role of RAMSI in Solomon Islands: Rebuilding the State, Supporting Peace’.

Transiting RAMSI staff from inline roles to technical advisers was a high priority for all parties. In the early years, however, many government agencies and offices had only a relatively small pool of experienced officers and they struggled to recruit and then retain RAMSI-trained staff. The

situation was also exacerbated by other systemic human resource challenges and limited budgets. In the justice sector, for example, up to 70 per cent of senior legal positions were vacant at certain points in time.

In some areas, RAMSI officers battled with the tension between achieving results and building indigenous capacity and organisational independence. When the balance was wrong, the transition was slowed. RAMSI also helped implement sophisticated systems that impacted on the handing over of responsibility to Solomon Islanders.

Structure

To help Solomon Islands recover and re-build, RAMSI's structure and programs were organised into three 'pillars' that reflected its mandate:

- Law and Justice;
- Economic Governance; and
- Machinery of Government.

RAMSI was led by a Special Coordinator, an Australian diplomat, who was supported by a Deputy Special Coordinator from New Zealand and an Assistant Special Coordinator from Fiji.

The other RAMSI 'principals' were the Commander of the Participating Police Force (PPF), and, for the first decade, the Commander of the military Combined Task Force (CTF) and the Development Coordinator of the civilian assistance programs. The PPF Commander was also appointed by the Solomon Islands Government as a Deputy Commissioner of the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force.

Under the RAMSI Treaty, the PPF Commander and CTF Commander had day-to-day operational control of their forces but were obliged to consult with the Special Coordinator. National police and military contingents were under the direct command of the RAMSI commanders.

The Special Coordinator was responsible for RAMSI's overall coordination and strategic direction. RAMSI's security efforts were led by the Participating Police Force, backed for the first ten years by the military Combined Task Force. Civilian development advisers and in-line personnel supported the running and strengthening of the justice, economic governance and 'machinery of government' elements of RAMSI's work.

With a large degree of success, RAMSI pursued an integrated approach to its three programs/pillars and three groups (police, military, civilian advisers). Fused by a six-week joint planning exercise in Canberra prior to deployment, the leadership team held initially twice-daily coordination meetings, had a single reporting system, and spoke with one voice to the

government and people of Solomon Islands. This cooperative approach continued for the duration of the mission.

“RAMSI is an example of ‘good practice’ in a whole-of-government approach.

— Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
(OECD) 2005 *Security System Reform and Governance*, Paris.

Legal framework

The RAMSI Treaty¹ was an agreement between the Solomon Islands Government and the other 15 members of the Pacific Islands Forum that permitted ‘Assisting Countries’ to deploy a ‘Visiting Contingent of police forces, armed forces and other personnel’ to Solomon Islands.

The Visiting Contingent was mandated to: assist in the provision of security and safety to persons and property; maintain supplies and services essential to the life of the Solomon Islands community; prevent and suppress violence, intimidation and crime; support and develop Solomon Islands institutions; and generally to assist in the maintenance of law and order in Solomon Islands (Article 2).

The Facilitation of International Assistance Act 2003 (FIA Act), which was passed by the Solomon Islands Parliament on 17 July 2003, gave effect to the RAMSI Treaty in Solomon Islands’ domestic law. The Act provided powers, privileges and immunities that were standard for international assistance missions, as well as a mechanism for parliamentary oversight and the outlawing of weapons.

The Governor-General of the Solomon Islands issued a notice on 23 July 2003 under the FIA Act to authorise the RAMSI mission. When Parliament sat, the notice was tabled annually to give parliamentarians the opportunity to debate and review the work of RAMSI at least once a year and, if desired, request RAMSI withdraw within three months.

Regional nature

One of RAMSI’s core strengths and a major contributing factor to its success has been that it was a regional mission with regional endorsement and regional oversight.

Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) member states authorised, contributed to and monitored the mission. Indeed, when relations between Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI soured in 2006-07 the natural and widely-accepted

¹ Agreement between Solomon Islands, Australia New Zealand, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Tonga concerning the operations and status of the police and armed forces and other personnel deployed to Solomon Islands to assist the restoration of law and order and security.

solution was to increase the role of Forum ministers and the PIF Secretariat in finding a way forward.

Personnel from Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu were deployed to Solomon Islands from the first day. Niue was the 15th and last Forum nation to contribute. In 2006, it sent two officers, which represented one-eighth of its entire 16-person police force. All 15 nations contributed police officers until the final day.

RAMSI was greatly enriched by the diversity of cultures and experiences of its contributing nations. Its regional composition meant RAMSI better understood and was better able to work with the people and cultures of Solomon Islands. The Pacific Islander platoons and police contingents, for example, enjoyed an immediate rapport with communities and Solomon Islands Government partners.

“A few weeks ago I visited a village south of Auki, on Malaita, to talk to the villagers about the work of RAMSI. We had with us a young ni-Vanuatu police officer, Glen Mahina. Glen spoke Solomon Islands pidgin perfectly and had been given responsibility by the RAMSI Police Inspector in Auki police station to improve community relations through regular village awareness meetings. Glen was able not only to communicate effectively to the villagers in pidgin but was able to reach them on another level by explaining our messages in terms that were relevant to the grass roots. He drew on analogies and symbolism that I would not have thought to use but which came naturally to him, and which resonated with the community.”

— Special Coordinator Nick Warner, Presentation to the Pacific Islands Forum Regional Security Committee Meeting in Nadi, Fiji, 17 June 2004

The presence of Pacific Islanders also provided a good ‘yardstick’ against which Solomon Islanders could measure themselves.

And while, by virtue of Australia’s leadership role and its financing of around 95 per cent of the Mission, Australian models of law enforcement, governance and aid tended to be the starting point for suggested reforms, the partnership with Solomon Islands and input from other contributing nations ensured RAMSI pursued Pacific-style solutions for Pacific-style challenges.

Pacific Islander countries were well-represented in the policing and military arms of RAMSI, with Australia meeting many of the costs of the deployments of the Pacific Islands nations and New Zealand.

The development arm of RAMSI, however, was comprised predominantly of Australians. RAMSI tried to improve the regional composition by contracting Pacific Islanders (e.g. in the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and Public Solicitor), urging contributing nations to send civilian advisers, facilitating mentoring support from Fijian and other regional statesmen, and supporting twinning arrangements with regional agencies and institutions.

The 2007 Pacific Islands Forum Task Force concluded that, despite RAMSI's best efforts, the unwillingness of Pacific governments to release their staff for prolonged periods on leave without pay was the main constraint. New Zealand kept its development assistance mostly outside the rubric of RAMSI.

Of note, the role of the Assistant Special Coordinator, which was filled by two Fijians (including during Fiji's suspension from the Forum), played a critical role in advising the mostly Australian leadership team and helping RAMSI to navigate cultural sensitivities in Solomon Islands. The Assistant Special Coordinator, for example, was instrumental in responding to a shooting death and a vehicular fatality resulting from the actions of RAMSI officers.

The collective contributions and investments in Solomon Islands by Forum members are a source of pride in the Pacific region. They also created bonds and networks that didn't exist previously between governments and security forces and the cross-pollination of skills and expertise has benefited the Pacific region more broadly.



	Police	Military	Advisers	Diplomats
Australia	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cook Islands	✓			
Fiji	✓	✓		✓
Kiribati	✓			
Marshall Islands	✓			
Federated States of Micronesia	✓			
Nauru	✓			
New Zealand	✓	✓	✓	✓
Niue	✓			
Palau	✓			
Papua New Guinea	✓	✓		
Samoa	✓	✓		
Tonga	✓			
Tuvalu	✓			
Vanuatu	✓			

Pacific Islands Forum oversight

Conceived under the *Biketawa Declaration*, RAMSI was a regional operation that reported to Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) members. In the early years, RAMSI was accountable through regular reporting to Forum Leaders and Foreign Ministers and consideration of the Mission by Leaders at the Forum itself. Monthly reports by RAMSI were also distributed to member states through the PIF Secretariat.

In 2005, a Forum-commissioned Eminent Persons Group reviewed RAMSI. In 2006, Forum Leaders created the Enhanced Consultative Mechanism (ECM) on RAMSI as an interim measure until a second Forum Review had considered six concerns raised by the Solomon Islands Government. The ECM was a senior officials-level group designed to help rebuild confidence between the Government and RAMSI.

The second Forum Review, which was finalised in 2007, led to further regionalisation of the governance of RAMSI. This included:

- a Forum Ministerial Standing Committee (FMSC) involving the Foreign Ministers of the past, current and future Forum Chairs, Solomon Islands and Australia, which met seven times to review RAMSI's work;

- a working-level 'Triumvirate' in Honiara involving the RAMSI Special Coordinator, the Solomon Islands Government Special Envoy to RAMSI and the Forum Representative to Solomon Island, which met most months until the end of the mission to facilitate communication;
- retaining the Enhanced Consultative Mechanism to support the FMSC and mediate any issues that could not be resolved at the Triumvirate level; and
- PIF Secretary-General endorsement of future appointments of the RAMSI Special Coordinator on behalf of Forum members.

Following the transition in 2013 to a solely policing assistance mission, the annual SIG-RAMSI Activity Report to the ECM became the main reporting mechanism to Forum officials, Ministers and Leaders.

During this period, PIF members looked increasingly to Solomon Islands for confirmation that it was prepared for RAMSI's exit and that it was addressing the underlying causes of the Tensions.

In September 2016, ahead of RAMSI's exit, PIF Leaders agreed that the significant progress made by Solomon Islands since 2003 permitted the conclusion of RAMSI's policing assistance mission in June 2017. Leaders applauded RAMSI as a regional success story.

Investment

RAMSI was one of the largest and most successful multilateral security and stabilisation operations in the Pacific region since World War Two.

Led and largely financed by Australia, RAMSI was a significant investment of police, military, civilian advisers and diplomats from 15 neighbouring countries to help a neighbouring country in need. While difficult to calculate, the total cost of the mission approached AUD 3 billion. Australia's contribution was \$2.8 billion,

At their peaks, RAMSI included around 1,800 military (2003), 375 police (2005) and 185 civilian development advisers (2007), coordinated by a much smaller Office of the Special Coordinator.

RAMSI personnel worked in every province in Solomon Islands.

As Solomon Islands' institutions grew stronger, RAMSI reduced its footprint. In 2013, the military Combined Task Force exited and responsibility for civilian development assistance from the region shifted to bilateral and multilateral donors.

During its final four years in Solomon Islands (2013-17), RAMSI was solely a policing mission – the Participating Police Force continued to re-build the

Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) and maintained an armed Specialist Response Group that could be deployed if the RSIPF needed operational assistance.

Phases

Although most Solomon Islands governments and RAMSI resisted 'mission creep', RAMSI's approach, messaging and partnership with the Solomon Islands Government naturally evolved as the Mission and the Government itself evolved.

The adaptability of RAMSI to the local context – both as regards the style and substance of what the mission entailed – has been one of its greatest strengths.

- The RAMSI Decade: A Review of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands 2003-2013, Jon Fraenkel, Joni Madraiwiwi and Henry Okole, 14 July 2014.

RAMSI's evolution was along the spectrum from stabilisation to capacity building to withdrawal. It can be divided into the following broad phases:

1. Intervention and stabilisation (2003-2004) – Law and order was restored immediately and government finances were stabilised: nearly all weapons were collected and destroyed; militant leaders were arrested; public servants were paid so hospitals, schools and other public services were re-started; the courts, judiciary, police and the Ministry of Finance and Treasury were re-set and begun to be strengthened.
2. Institutional strengthening (2004-2005) – RAMSI's priorities were re-establishing the rule of law, restoring integrity to the management of government finances, prison reform, and progressing Tensions-related trials in partnership with key institutions. Much of this was driven by RAMSI personnel in line positions. In 2005, RAMSI began to focus on strengthening the machinery of government.
3. Capacity development amid political unease (2006-2008) – In 2006, RAMSI focussed on skills transfer to lock in the gains. Separately, RAMSI officers were targeted during, and criticised for their response to, two days of riots in Chinatown in April 2006 following the appointment of Prime Minister Synder Rini. The second Sogavare Government, which was installed a week later, resisted RAMSI's financial reform pushes and relations deteriorated with RAMSI and the Australian Government. Despite diplomatic expulsions and exchanges of words between Honiara and Canberra, RAMSI continued to command broad popular support and there was no consensus in Cabinet or Parliament to end or amend the Mission. Political support for RAMSI's capacity building programs began to grow again following the election of the Sikua Government. The 2007 *Medium Term Strategy* plotted the way forward.

4. Re-energised partnership towards 'Transition' (2009-2013) – To strengthen the cooperative partnership and capacity development efforts, the *2009-13 Partnership Framework* articulated and monitored shared objectives, targets and timeframes for RAMSI's work across the three pillars, with a cross-cutting focus on capacity development, gender equity and anti-corruption. The targets were set to aid a conditions-based drawdown of RAMSI and the transition of support to bilateral development partners for RAMSI's justice, economic governance and machinery of government programs. Responsibility for policing in Honiara was passed to the RSIPF in 2011.
5. Police development and Drawdown (2013-2017) – RAMSI became a solely policing assistance mission in mid-2013. Its military component left and responsibility for RAMSI's civilian development programs shifted to bilateral development partners. RAMSI's Participating Police Force withdrew from 13 of its then 15 provincial bases and the RSIPF assumed responsibility for policing across the entire nation. RAMSI focused on building the capacity and professionalism of the police further, including through the rearmament of two specialist units with lethal weapons, and increasing public confidence in the police. RAMSI simultaneously reduced its footprint and resourcing in line with improvements in the RSIPF, while maintaining its armed elements, in accordance with *2013-2017 PPF Drawdown Strategy*. RAMSI also supported a second gun collection and destruction program to remove the remaining weapons in the community.

Formal reviews

RAMSI has been reviewed many times and from a multitude of perspectives.

It is considered overwhelming as a success, particularly in terms of restoring law and order and stabilising the country's finances in the early years. Commentators also generally conclude that the much tougher, incremental and longer-term task of state reconstruction and strengthening governance and law and justice systems was also done well.

"International and domestic observers often view RAMSI as one of the most successful state-building interventions"

— Shahar Ameiri, 'Taking stock of RAMSI, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, www.aspistrategist.org, 27 November 2012.

"RAMSI is a shining example of Pacific diplomacy and cooperation"

— Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers, August 2016.

Naturally, with the advantage of hindsight, there are lessons to be learnt and missed opportunities to be acknowledged. We should not shy away from

these critiques as RAMSI is undoubtedly a potential model for future regional assistance missions in the Pacific and beyond.

Five formal reviews were commissioned over the 14 years:

- In 2004, the bipartisan Solomon Islands Intervention Task Force concluded RAMSI's first year performance had been very effective in helping rebuild the nation, with a restoration of law and order and improvements in the functioning of key government agencies, notably the courts and judiciary, the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force and the Ministry of Finance and Treasury. The Task Force also highlighted the great appreciation and support that many Solomon Islanders had expressed for the RAMSI intervention.
- In 2005, an Eminent Persons Group, commissioned by the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), agreed there had been a return to law and order in Solomon Islands, the financial situation had stabilised, and there were signs of economic recovery. It judged Pacific representation in both the policing and civilian components should be strengthened where possible, and reconciliation efforts had lost some momentum. The Group observed that the "hard part lies ahead" and Solomon Islands must lead the rebuilding process.
- In 2007, a Pacific Islands Forum Review determined RAMSI had strong and widespread support throughout Solomon Islands and recommended greater regionalisation of the governance of RAMSI to address 'inadequacies in the dialogue mechanism', including through the formation of a Forum Ministerial Standing Committee and a working-level Triumvirate mechanism that involved the Honiara-based Forum Secretariat representative.
- The 2009 Foreign Relations Committee's 'Inquiry into the Facilitation of International Assistance Notice 2003 and RAMSI intervention' praised RAMSI for the significant achievements under each of its three pillars and found: RAMSI's legal framework continued to serve RAMSI and the Solomon Islands well; the greater involvement of the PIF in governance issues had addressed the Solomon Islands Government's concerns about sovereignty and insufficient coordination; rebuilding the police was a significant and long-term challenge; and, the Government must address the root causes of the ethnic tension.
- In 2014, an independent report commissioned by the Solomon Islands Government of RAMSI's first decade, assessed RAMSI was successful in achieving its objectives if defined in a minimalist fashion, Solomon Islands political leaders had qualified enthusiasm for RAMSI, early characterisations of RAMSI had encouraged mission creep, and a sense of dependency and demoralisation hindered a greater focus on capacity-building and sustainability under the 2009-13 Partnership Framework. RAMSI contested a number of the key judgements.

RAMSI also had its own performance assessment mechanisms, including independent Annual Performance Reports (2005-2011) and joint SIG-RAMSI reports to the PIF's Enhanced Consultative Mechanism (ECM) on RAMSI, which were shared annually with Forum officials, ministers and Leaders.

These reviews and assessments have informed this end-of-mission report.

Popular support

Arguably, one of RAMSI's great achievements was maintaining a broad level of popular and community support throughout the life of the mission.

According to the Peoples' Survey (2006-2013), public support for RAMSI has consistently been around 85 per cent. This unwavering support reflects the powerful partnership between RAMSI and the people of Solomon Islands and depth of gratitude for rescuing the nation.

The vast majority (88 per cent) of respondents said that RAMSI's biggest achievement was bringing peace to Solomon Islands or restoring law and order. Another important thing that the surveys demonstrated was that improvements in levels of trust and confidence in local institutions after prolonged violence cannot be achieved in a few years or while a large foreign police force was still present.

The People's Survey was an independent annual survey commissioned by RAMSI that provided a unique insight into the opinions of Solomon Islanders on a wide range of issues, including business and employment, law and order, public accountability and access to services. The survey was used to establish benchmarks, set targets and support monitoring and reporting in a wide range of areas, including law and order, household economy and delivery of services, as well as provide important statistics on areas such as health and education that were not directly related to RAMSI's work. The People's Survey also fostered a greater acceptance in the Solomon Islands Government of performance measurement and public criticism.

Finding an exit strategy

From early on, RAMSI and the Australian Government assured Solomon Islanders that the Mission was a long-term but not unlimited commitment.

The early messaging was that RAMSI was putting in place programs that would be implemented over five to ten years. RAMSI underlined that there were no 'quick-fixes' but, equally, that RAMSI would not stay forever and it could not solve all problems.

The first calls for an exit strategy were made by the second Sogavare Government in 2006. In response, Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders supported the 2007 PIF Review Taskforce recommendation that RAMSI's drawdown should not involve an arbitrary exit deadline, but rather a series

of jointly agreed indicative and conditions-based timelines. These conditions and timelines were agreed and articulated in the 2009 SIG-RAMSI *Partnership Framework* and were reviewed in 2012 and 2013, including at the PIF-supported 'Dovetail Dialogues'.

The declaration of a 'free and fair' national general election in 2010 permitted RAMSI to enter a more intensive drawdown phase, known as 'Transition'. The Transition Plan led to the end of the military and civilian development components of the RAMSI mission in 2013, and the handing over of frontline policing responsibility to the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force between 2011 (Honiara and some provinces) and 2013. The focus of the Government and RAMSI also turned towards sustaining gains.

In addition to agreeing to the Transition, the Solomon Islands Cabinet endorsed the *2013-2017 Participating Police Force Drawdown Strategy*. It approved the continued decrease in the PPF's security and resourcing footprint, particularly following the 2014 general election, with a view to hand back complete control to the RSIPF by June 2017.

In practise, both the 2013 Transition and the 2017 end-date were shaped by a host of factors including: the achievement of key elements of the *Partnership Framework* and *PPF Drawdown Strategy*; the preparedness of SIG agencies; the vastly improved security situation; the Australian Government's appetite to continue to fund the Mission; Australia's four-year funding cycles; a desire first expressed publicly by New Zealand's Foreign Minister in early 2010 to 'normalise' development assistance; concerns about creating limiting and unhelpful dependencies on RAMSI; and the momentum created by the Philip Government's calls in 2010 for a five-year exit strategy and the endorsement in November 2010 by the Philip Cabinet of a 'RAMSI Transition'.

Ahead of the Transition and conclusion, RAMSI engaged in significant community engagement programs to ensure Solomon Islanders understood the reasons why RAMSI was drawing down and RAMSI's confidence in the Solomon Islands Government. This was particularly important ahead of the final withdrawal. SIG and RAMSI worked very closely together to build trust and confidence in the RSIPF, address apprehension in some quarters, and reassure the people of Solomon Islands that the Government was prepared and RAMSI contributing nations would continue to support Solomon Islands bilaterally after RAMSI left.

RAMSI left on a high note. Community support remained high until the end and, with the strong support and collaboration of the third Sogavare Government, RAMSI helped ensure the police and Government were in the best possible position as possible to resume responsibility for policing and national security.

The Sogavare Government expressed its heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to RAMSI, its contributing nation and the Pacific Islands Forum during farewell celebrations in June 2017.

Sacrifice and tragedies

RAMSI's police, military and civilian personnel made enormous personal sacrifices to be away from family and friends to help reconstruct Solomon Islands. While serving RAMSI and representing their countries, a number were injured and, tragically, six RAMSI personnel lost their lives.

A memorial recognising the service of these men and women with the following inscriptions is located at the Police Park in Rove, West Honiara:

- Adam Dunning (20.2.1978 – 22.12.2004), Protective Service Officer 14037, Australian Federal Police – About 0310h on 22 December, Adam Dunning was shot and killed whilst on patrol along East Kola Ridge Road in the area of Green Valley/Zion, Honiara, Solomon Islands. Adam died serving Australia and the people of Solomon Islands.
- 5803722 Private Jamie Michael Clark (22.12.1983 – 10.3.2005) – PTE Jamie Clark, 3 RAR, died in tragic circumstances after falling down a mine shaft in the vicinity of grid reference 57L XK 606960 8953350 in the province of Guadalcanal on 10 March 2005. Jamie died serving Australia and the people of Solomon Islands.
- Antonio (Tony) Luciano Scriva (2.11.1980 – 22.4.2007), RAMSI Adviser, Solomon Islands Office of the Auditor General – Tony Scriva died tragically on 22 April 2007 in Honiara after a sudden illness. He worked with dedication and enthusiasm to improve government accountability and to assist the people of Solomon Islands.
- Chief Inspector Amos Solip (30.11.1954 – 27.4.2009), PPF Adviser, Contingent Commander, Vanuatu Contingent of the Participating Police Force – Chief Inspector Amos Solip died tragically and unexpectedly in his sleep on Monday 27.4.2009 whilst performing duties at the Isuna Police Post, South Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands. Amos died serving Vanuatu and the people of Solomon Islands.
- Constable Sisiliah Puleheloto (8.9.1986 – 5.8.2009), PPF Adviser, Niue Police Contingent – Constable Sisiliah (Sisi) Puleheloto died tragically while travelling in Tonga on leave from RAMSI when the Tongan Ferry, Princess Ashika, sank on the night of Wednesday 5 August 2009. Sisi died serving Niue and the people of Solomon Islands.
- Ronald Edwin Lewis (22.11.1977 – 2.12.2010), Protective Service Officer 18629, Australian Federal Police – Protective Service Officer Ronald (Ronnie) Edwin Lewis died tragically by an accidental

drowning in Honiara on Thursday 2 December 2010. Ronnie died serving Australia and the people of Solomon Islands.

RAMSI personnel also regrettably played a role in the deaths of two Solomon Islanders:

- Harry Lolonga – SIG and RAMSI reconciled with the family and village of Harry Lolonga, who died on 12 August 2010 when a joint police and military patrol came under sustained attack by a large crowd of rock-throwing villagers on the outskirts of Honiara and, in response, Tongan soldiers serving with RAMSI discharged several shots. In accordance with Solomon Islands *kastom*, RAMSI provided building materials for a house to Mr Lolonga's father and pledged funds for the education of Mr Lolonga's children.
- Hilda Ilabae – The Solomon Islands High Court sentenced a Samoan RAMSI officer to imprisonment for reckless driving causing the death of Hilda Ilabae while off-duty on 13 June 2008. The prison term was served in Samoa.

RAMSI, the Solomon Islands Government and Forum nations recognise and remember all the men and women that lost their lives during the RAMSI intervention.

We also remember the dedication and commitment to rebuilding Solomon Islands of the former Pacific Islands Forum Secretary-General Greg Urwin and former RAMSI Special Coordinator Graeme Wilson, who passed away before having the opportunity to see RAMSI's conclusion.



Law and Justice

One of RAMSI's greatest legacies has been its contribution to the law and justice sector.

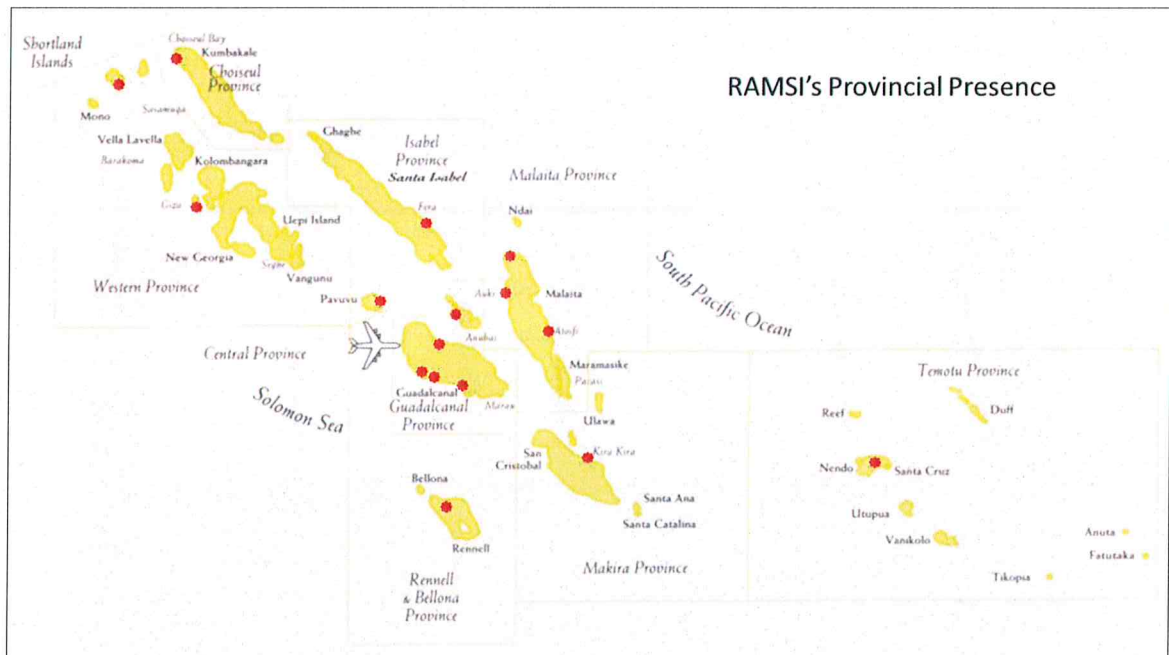
Restoration of law and order

RAMSI's initial objective of restoring law and order was achieved remarkably quickly. Militia rule was replaced almost immediately with the rule of law.

The show of force by the military Combined Task Force (CTF) and Participating Police Force (PPF), including early capability demonstrations at the main sporting stadium in Honiara and the immediate focus on disarming the militants, built an environment of compliance and engendered a fear of arrest.

Militants fled or tried to melt into the community. Stolen items were returned anonymously to their original owners.

RAMSI also quickly established itself in 17 provincial locations – mostly police stations – across the nation, including in the main hotspots. The RSIPF was an important partner, but it was depleted, demoralised and discredited. There were also many criminals, militants and ill-disciplined officers in its ranks during the early years.



After the initial military surge, RAMSI chartered two sea-going vessels, three helicopters and a Twin Otter plane to support police operations, conduct maritime patrols, re-supply police posts and provide aero-medical evacuation support.

Textbox: RAMSI's Arrival

Shortly after dawn on 24 July 2003, police, soldiers and civilians from Australia, Fiji, Cook Silands, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, PNG, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu began to touch down at Honiara's Henderson International Airport.

Their arrival had been made safe by Australian soldiers who had come ashore at Red Beach, the location of the American amphibious landings east of Honiara during the Guadalcanal campaign of the Second World War, to secure the airfield and establish a base camp at the former Guadalcanal Beach Resort.

Quickly amassing over two thousand personnel, these forces landed in Solomon Islands determined to assist a neighbour in need.

Special Coordinator Nick Warner declared on the first day:

"We are calling our involvement here Operation *Helpem Fren*, because that is what we are here to do. We are here as friends, to work in partnership with you, to restore promise to your country, to restore hopes for a better life to you and your children."

Firearms amnesties

In the first week of Operation Helpem Fren, the Government and RAMSI announced a nationwide firearms amnesty that would run for three weeks in August 2003. All guns were to be handed in, without exception. This included all police weapons and licensed firearms.

More than 3,700 guns, including approximately 700 high-powered military-style weapons, were collected. The destruction of weapons was a very public affair. Many of the weapons were cut up and burnt in front of onlooking crowds, including those that who had just surrendered them. Some are buried in concrete under a cairn in the Police Park in Rove, Honiara.

The collection of such a large number of weapons gave the country a massive confidence boost. For the first year, there were no reports of militants or anyone else brandishing weapons and intimidating people.

Of course, not all weapons were handed in. There were reports at the time that militants had buried caches of weapons.

In total, there have been less than 20 confirmed security incidents involving firearms over the 14 years of RAMSI. Solomon Islands now enjoys one of the lowest gun violence record in the world.

In a fitting book-end to RAMSI's support to the nation, one of its final acts was to provide planning, logistical and communications support for the Government's second and final amnesty between 22 May and 9 June 2017. This time, the former Tensions militants partnered with the Government to encourage the public to surrender the relatively few remaining weapons in the community. The amnesty netted a total of 18 firearms, including two high-powered rifles likely to have been stolen from the Rove armoury in 2000, and more than 2,800 rounds of ammunition.

Harold Keke and the Guadalcanal Liberation Front

The peaceful surrender of the erratic Weathercoast militant leader, Harold Keke, three weeks after RAMSI's arrival was a critical development. It ended the reign of terror of the Guadalcanal Liberation Front (GLF). It also ended the excuses for holding on to weapons, especially on Guadalcanal where many had lived in fear of his raids.

After three meetings in quick succession in the heart of GLF territory with RAMSI Special Coordinator Nick Warner, PPF Commander Ben McDevitt, a government envoy and a provincial peace coordinator, Keke and his three top commanders surrendered to RAMSI.

They were persuaded to end the conflict, pursue their grievances through legal processes, and to tell their side of the story in court. Guaranteeing their safety, RAMSI flew Keke and his lieutenants to a secure location in Honiara where they were charged with a series of murders, including the deaths of seven Melanesian (Anglican) Brothers that were taken hostage and killed just before RAMSI's arrival.

Keke's arrest, court appearances and imprisonment helped win public confidence in the law and order situation and in RAMSI. Coming so early in the deployment, it was also a useful means of defusing suggestions that RAMSI was an anti-Malaitan operation, targeting the ethnic group responsible for the 2000 coup.

Textbox: Combined Task Force

RAMSI's military component – the Combined Task Force (CTF) - was far bigger than RAMSI hoped it was ever going to need and certainly much larger than the Participating Police Force, which it was there to support.

The Australian Government's decision to send a large military contingent proved to be an important factor in persuading the militia groups to surrender their weapons and deterring further criminality. Indeed, the military component loomed large in the consciousness of Solomon Islanders, even after it left, but the Combined Task Force never acted independently of the Participating Police Force.

Drawing down relatively quickly, the CTF primarily provided protection and security duties, logistics and transport support, and a platoon-strength Quick Reaction Force.

The CTF settled on a company structure: a headquarters elements plus three platoons – one was always from Australia, another alternated between Australia and New Zealand, and a third alternated between PNG and Tonga. Although the CTF stayed until 2013, the last time it was called out formally to assist the PPF was in 2006. CTF patrolling ceased in 2010 and it stopped providing perimeter security at Rove Correctional Centre in 2011.

Arrests and prosecutions

The first year saw many former militants arrested by RAMSI police and charged for crimes such as murder, abduction, rape and robbery. These arrests helped remove the prevailing climate of fear that had held back development in Solomon Islands for so long.

Many of the people arrested were those that stood to lose most from the RAMSI intervention, and who, in RAMSI's assessment, were most likely to take violent action against RAMSI or the Government.

Teams of RAMSI police investigators were formed to investigate the many crimes that had been committed during the Tensions period. The investigations were conducted quickly, but without fanfare. PPF officers also helped prepare case files and secure witnesses, and worked in the RSIPF Prosecutions Branch.

RAMSI refused to negotiate, compromise or do any deals. By the end of the third year, RAMSI had made 6,300 arrests for militant and criminal activity, which represented more than one per cent of population.

The successful prosecution and imprisonment of key Tension militants, many for life sentences, built confidence in the authority of the Government and the rule of law.

Community support

RAMSI did not restore law and order alone. It worked with a small but important cadre of peacebuilders and mediators, including the National Peace Council, faith-based groups, NGOs, women's peace groups, chiefs and United Nations agencies. A significant proportion of the weapons, for example, were handed to the National Peace Council or the Melanesian Brothers in 2003. Mediators also played an important role in the peaceful surrender of Harold Keke.

It was a tribute to all the nations and soldiers involved that RAMSI never fired a weapon during the first year. Equally, it was a tribute to the commitment of the people of Solomon Islands to reclaim their nation from the thugs and thieves that had held the country to ransom for three long years.

Textbox: April 2006 riots

On 18 April 2006, riots erupted in Honiara following the election of Snyder Rini as Prime Minister amid allegations that Rini's appointment had been 'fixed' with funds provided by local Chinese business figures. Over the next two days, large-scale looting, rock-throwing and burning of Chinese-owned businesses took place in Honiara, with almost 90 per cent of the colourful Chinatown district destroyed and many Chinese leaving the country.

At the request of the new Prime Minister, an additional 120 soldiers and 45 police were flown in from Australia to bring the situation under control. By sunset on 19 April, as the embers still glowed in Chinatown, the nation's single most devastating public order crisis and the first serious security challenge since RAMSI's arrival was over. 25 RAMSI police officers had been injured seriously, no lives had been lost.

In the days that followed, a number of prominent personalities including two newly-elected MPs were arrested for instigating the riots. Facing a vote of no confidence, Snyder Rini resigned and Manasseh Sogavare was elected to lead the nation shortly afterwards.

The Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the riots found that "the best explanation for the rioting and looting is that it was organised by a group of criminals." The court cases against those alleged to have been behind the incident were eventually dismissed.

The Commission found that the April 2006 riots had involved mistakes in policing, stating that "senior officers...failed to appreciate that their core business was the preservation of peace and the protection of life and property." It also concluded that RAMSI's Participating Police Force (PPF) and military contingent did not have enough personnel available on the day to adequately deal with the threats that arose from the RSIPF's own lack of armed public order capability.

Lessons learnt from the experience shaped the nature of the training that RAMSI provided subsequently to the RSIPF. RAMSI also ensured that all its PPF officers received Pijin lessons and actively rebuilt relations with the community.

Police Development

When RAMSI arrived, the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) had lost the trust of the people of Solomon Islands. Having taken sides during the Tensions, many of its members were part of the problem, not the solution. Malaitan police officers, for example, had opened the police armouries to the Malaitan Eagle Force. Some police officers had resorted to intimidation and violence for personal financial gain. Others were siphoning off millions of dollars through unauthorised 'allowances' and other payments. Notoriously, police sergeant Edmund Sae murdered former police commissioner Sir Frederick Soaki in 2003 and his long-awaited arrest in 2015 closed the book on the Solomon Islands' most wanted list of Tensions-era fugitives.

Police commanders also helped militants circumvent their Townsville Peace Agreement undertaking to disarm by recruiting Guale and Malaitan militants as "special constables". These 'specials' waged violent 'joint operations' in the Weathercoast against Harold Keke in the name of the government, and demanded money from the Government.

The RSIPF needed to be purged and re-built in order to regain the community's and government's confidence.

It is therefore a remarkable testament to the many decent, hard-working Solomon Islands police who seized the opportunity to remake their force and their future, the RSIPF is 14 years later one of the best in the region.

Cleaning up the force

Shedding the RSIPF of comprised officers was an important first step for RAMSI and RSIPF leaders.

RAMSI disarmed the RSIPF within weeks of the Mission's arrival and disbanded the feared and ill-disciplined Special Tasks and Rescue (STAR) Division, which included the officers from the Police Field Force (PFF) that played a central role in the police armoury raids and coup in 2000.

More than 400 police officers were removed in the first year alone and, by the end of 2005, over 130 police officers had been arrested – some for serious crimes such as murder, robbery, assault, intimidation and corruption. Both Deputy Commissioners were arrested for fraud and abuse of office, as well as two of the most senior paramilitary officers.

RAMSI police placed a high priority on internal investigations to clean up the force, with Participating Police Force officers working alongside RSIPF officers. Systems for disciplinary action were re-instated, robust merit-based recruitment systems were instituted to stop the recruitment of *wantok*, and a swathe of voluntary redundancies were offered over the years, including to ensure the ‘special constables’ left the force.

“The RSIP has become a force more difficult to get into, but a force easier to get thrown out of”.

— a common refrain of the first RAMSI Participating Police Force Commander, Ben McDevitt

Today, almost two in three members of the RSIPF were recruited after RAMSI’s arrival. This means it is a young force, but one that has benefited from 14 years of training and support from RAMSI. Moreover, in recent years, there have been deliberate efforts to improve the ethnic and gender balance among RSIPF officers, particularly in the specialist units.

And importantly, the RSIPF’s Professional Standards and Internal Investigations (PSII) team is today a well-functioning unit that plays a key role in enforcing police discipline and accountability. Officers continue to be removed if they do not meet the standards expected of them.

Training and mentoring

The RSIPF has benefited from early and ongoing development from RAMSI. It began with joint operations and investigations in 2003 and the first recruit course in July 2004 (16 women, 14 men from all provinces).

From 2005, the PPF increased its focus on training, mentoring and advising, guided by a Strategic Review. It wasn’t until after the 2010 national election, however, that the PPF truly focused on the strategic development of the RSIPF and the transferring of responsibility for frontline policing, which occurred in Honiara in 2011 and across the nation by 2013.

The RAMSI Participating Police Force had in-line officers and later advisers in every department and almost every unit in the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force. Capacity development has occurred in areas such as: leadership, general duties, community policing, family violence, maritime policing, investigations, fire and rescue, emergency and disaster response, learning and development, and corporate support. Cross-cutting themes have been: governance, accountability, responsibility, discipline, and gender equality.

Over the final few years, the RSIPF Executive and RAMSI focused on developing the next generation of police leaders and raising police standards, discipline and accountability. RAMSI also spent considerable effort helping the RSIPF to strengthen its public order management, crime

prevention and community policing capabilities, as well as the corporate side of running an effective police force.

In terms of leadership development, for example RAMSI enrolled 37 senior RSIPF officers in 2016 in a Senior Executive Enhanced Development Strategy (SEEDS) program, which provided personalised, professional development and leadership training. Additionally, by May 2017, almost all RSIPF officers had completed Accountability, Authority and Responsibility (AAR) training delivered by 8 RSIPF instructors that were trained by RAMSI.

RAMSI also supported public and corporate communications, and literacy and numeracy in the RSIPF.

Textbox: Rearmament

The Solomon Islands Government decided in late 2013 to a staged and limited rearmament of the RSIPF, and asked RAMSI to support community consultations, train the selected units and help put in place the necessary systems and safeguards. Three years later, in May 2017, the Police Response Team and Close Personal Protection team were rearmed.

These units had received a high level of training from RAMSI, particularly on use of force and tactical decision-making. Officers that did not meet the high standards were transferred elsewhere. Robust standard operating procedures and systems were also put in place to secure, issue, carry, use and return firearms, as well as to ensure the highest standards of professional behaviour.

In June 2016, RAMSI gifted a purpose-built National Response Department (NRD) facility, which includes headquarters for the RSIPF's specialist police units and a police armoury equipped with biometric security and close circuit television monitoring. The facility enables officers to respond quicker to security incidents.

Community consultations by the RSIPF, RAMSI and the Ministry of Police, National Security & Correctional Services, which reached over 27,000 people directly across the nation, revealed that the people of Solomon Islands were overwhelmingly supportive of limited rearmament.

Limited rearmament will enable the RSIPF to safely and effectively protect Solomon Islanders and the nation, as well as ensure Solomon Islands was able to meet its international obligations to provide armed security at its international airport and to protect visiting dignitaries. It also enabled the RSIPF to deal with armed offenders and manage crocodile populations.

Until rearmament occurred, RAMSI was the only organisation authorised to carry firearms in the country and it therefore deployed its Specialist Response Group to assist the RSIPF in all police operations where lethal force needed to be an option.

Infrastructure, mobility and technology

RAMSI made a substantial investment in the development of the RSIPF's infrastructure. It has:

- constructed 146 police houses and refurbished fifteen houses throughout Solomon Islands;
- constructed or significantly refurbished all nine provincial police headquarters, including cells and barracks accommodation in strategic locations in Western and Malaita Provinces, as well as a number of provincial police posts (e.g. Tetere, White River);
- added to the RSIPF Headquarters in Rove, West Honiara, an Executive Building, Quartermaster Store, Radio Workshop, Operational Safety Training facility, National Response Department building with a state-of-the-art armoury, a forensics facility, a 24/7 Police Communications Centre, a conference and training facility, and numerous other upgrades;
- built a new fire and rescue headquarters in central Honiara;
- constructed and upgraded a national emergency and disaster response training facility at Hells Point, East Honiara;
- constructed boat sheds and boat ramps in the provinces; and
- relocated buildings and training facilities from the RAMSI base to RSIPF locations.

RAMSI also installed major radio communications and IT infrastructure upgrades in Honiara and the provinces to assist the RSIPF improve its response times and better deliver corporate and enabling services. Of note, RAMSI connected provincial police posts to the national government's SIGNet communications system and rolled out the Justice Information Management System (JIMS), which tracks cases from the dispatch call to prosecution. RAMSI also helped install human resource management (Aurion) and other back-of-house corporate systems.

Over the years, RAMSI has also donated hundreds of police vehicles, fire trucks, fire trailers, banana boats and sea-going vessels. To promote local ownership and build the capacity of local systems, RAMSI and the RSIPF also entered shared funding agreements and RAMSI helped the RSIPF to work through local procurement processes to purchase equipment, vehicles and maritime vessels jointly.

RAMSI also helped introduce a range of new police technologies, including: fingerprint scanning, random breath testing, specialised fire and rescue equipment, an ambulance service and trials of, for example, Global Positioning System (GPS) vehicle tracking systems.

Policy and vision

RAMSI supported a range of analyses and internal reviews to help the RSIPF formulate its strategic direction, justify its budget bids to government and guide its work plans and operational and enabling services. Some of the most important policy documents in recent years were the:

1. True Cost of Policing (2011) and Appropriate Costs of Policing (2015) reports, which were funded by RAMSI and provided the RSIPF the necessary ammunition to engage more effectively with SIG budget processes and secure a Cabinet commitment to increase the police budget annually until 2020. This was important as for many years RAMSI had provided high-levels of logistical and financial resources to the RSIPF that would not be available in a post-RAMSI environment. In 2010, it was estimated that RAMSI provided around 60 per cent of logistical and financial resources to the RSIPF. Due to these reports and the subsequent budget submissions the RSIPF received substantial funding increases from 2011 to 2016.
2. Capability Development Plan 2016-2020, which plotted five years of capability investments. The costed Plan, which was supported by RAMSI and developed following a capability review funded by RAMSI, identified future gaps and needs in police capability, including once RAMSI departed. The Plan sets out how the RSIPF will spend promised budget increases and guides the work of post-RAMSI police development partners.
3. Crime Prevention Strategy 2016-2018, which centres on building partnerships with communities and stakeholders to prevent crime, solve problems and investigate incidents. The Strategy was supported strongly by RAMSI, including in terms of an extensive and wide-ranging program of community engagement that reached over 83,000 Solomon Islanders across all provinces and addressed the four drivers of crime identified in the Strategy: alcohol and drug abuse, family violence, issues affecting youth, and environmental and resource issues (e.g. logging and mining). The Strategy repudiates the old crime response model and advocates community policing, community ownership of social issues, and using traditional and *kastom* systems of justice to solve low-level, non-criminal, issues.
4. Police Act 2013, which provides a solid and sustainable foundation for policing into the future. RAMSI sponsored the review of the 1972 Police Act 1972 and supported the development of the Police Bill 2012, which was passed by Parliament in 2013 and came into effect in March 2014. The Act provided an updated legislative framework

governing the RSIPF's external relations, governance, employment and powers and duties, as well as the conduct and discipline of staff.

RAMSI also supported a range of other analyses, including reviews of corporate services and a gender snapshot, to guide decision-making in the RSIPF.

National disaster and emergency response

RAMSI supported the Solomon Islands' National Disaster Management Office (NDMO), Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCCC) and RSIPF incident management response capabilities, both in times of routine activity and during crises.

When requested and resources permitted, RAMSI itself provided air and maritime support to search and rescue operations and aero-medical evacuations from remote locations.

Textbox: Disasters

RAMSI has always been there in times of crisis.

2007 Western provinces Tsunami: A major earthquake registering 8.1 on the Richter scale struck Solomon Islands' western provinces on 2 April 2007, triggering a large tsunami. Over 50 people were killed, 900 homes destroyed and thousands left homeless. RAMSI worked closely with international donors and Solomon Islands National Disaster Management Office to provide immediate relief.

2013 passenger ferry sinking: RAMSI helicopters and boats played a critical role in saving all 399 lives aboard a passenger ferry after it sank off Malaita on 18 December 2013. This was one of many search and rescue operations that RAMSI supported over the years.

2014 Honiara floods: On 3 April 2014, heavy rain and flash flooding on Guadalcanal Island caused significant damage to homes, infrastructure, health and livelihoods. Honiara's Mataniko River burst its banks and washed buildings into the river. The RSIPF led the response and RAMSI provided advisory, logistical and other support, including patrols and aerial support to assess damage. An estimated 52,000 people were affected, 23 people lost their lives and, initially, over 10,000 displaced people were living in 30 evacuation centres.

Fire and Rescue

The RSIPF's Fire and Rescue Department was in tatters in 2003. Under the guidance of eight advisers from Fire and Rescue New South Wales (Australia) over 13 years, RAMSI trained RSIPF Fire and Rescue Department officers in basic to advanced fire-fighting and rescue skills.

RAMSI helped re-start the fire stations in Honiara, Auki, Gizo and Noro and built the observation tower at Honiara International Airport. RAMSI also introduced a fleet of large fire-fighting trucks, smaller 4WD Striker trucks and community fire-fighting trailers across the nation. It provided protective clothing, breathing apparatus, hoses, pumps, thermal imaging cameras and a host of other specialised equipment.

RAMSI also helped, through the provision of training and equipment, the RSIPF to establish an ambulance service in Honiara.

Together, RAMSI and RSIPF secured reforms to building codes and inclusion in the first-ever fire and rescue legislation in the Police Act 2013. They also led fire safety education campaigns in the community.

The RAMSI fire and rescue advisers were the only non-police members of the Participating Police Force.

A very different force today

As RAMSI drew down, the Participating Police Force increasingly viewed the RSIPF's success as the product of its own success. Indicative examples of the gains made by the RSIPF include:

- Other Pacific nations now request training from the RSIPF. It has delivered, for example, public order management tactics training to the Vanuatu and Nauru police forces, and an Operational Safety Trainer Qualifier Program to the Samoa Police Service.
- The RSIPF now support disaster relief efforts in neighbouring countries. It deployed, for example, an Australia-gifted patrol boat and RSIPF officers to Vanuatu following Cyclone Pam in 2015.
- In 2016, the RSIPF met United Nations policing standards and began deploying contingents to the UN mission in Darfur, Sudan.
- Today, the RSIPF operates in areas where it was not welcome only a few years ago. Chiefs and other community leaders are now working with the police to prevent anti-social behaviour.
- The RSIPF is actively pursuing corruption investigations (e.g. Operation Janus) and have, for example, arrested a government minister and the head of the police ministry. Hearteningly, more and more junior RSIPF officers are also challenging and reporting poor behaviour by senior police officers.
- The RSIPF successfully managed the planning and delivery of security operations for a series of complex, large-scale and overlapping events across two weeks in July 2016. These events included a National Healing and Apology Week, the Solomon Games, Pacific Islands

Development Forum (PIDF), Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) Summit and a 500-strong a pro-West Papua rally.

- The RSIPF is a leading agency in terms of pursuing gender equity and empowering women within its ranks, with a number of senior female officers, gender-balanced recruit courses and almost 20 per cent of the force being female.
- The RSIPF also leads the efforts of the Solomon Islands public service in the fight against gender-based violence, which is endemic in the country as it is in the broader Pacific region. It led, for example, the community engagement, gazettal and implementation on the 2013 *Family Protection Act*. As a result, police across the nation can issue instant protection orders.

These gains have been safeguarded by the commitment of successive Solomon Islands governments to the neutrality and independence of the police, which it has demonstrated by appointing international commissioners from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and the United Kingdom since 2003.

Most RAMSI programs of assistance ended in 2013, but it took four extra years of support to further strengthen the RSIPF to a point where it was possible to end RAMSI's operational policing role and to normalise regional assistance to the RSIPF.

Today, the RSIPF is considered one of the best police forces in the Pacific region. Its re-armed Police Response Team (PRT), for example, meets international standards, and the RSIPF's Explosive Ordinance Disposal (EOD) team is known as one of the best World War Two ordinance disposal units in the Commonwealth.



Correctional Services

Correctional Services Solomon Islands (CSSI) is a strong, professional and self-sustaining agency that meets United Nations standards for prisoner accommodation and treatment.

As with the RSIPF, RAMSI arrived to find in 2003 that many correctional officers had left their posts, others needed to be purged from the organisation, the facilities required extensive rehabilitation, and there were reports of human rights abuses. Moreover, the high tempo of arrests by the PPF in the early months and the inability of the courts to consider the cases immediately meant that improving the prisons was a top priority.

RAMSI personnel were placed in top positions, including the role of Commissioner, and quickly recruited a new cohort of local prison officers. The Rove prison in Honiara was refurbished with British assistance, but the conditions remained harsh at first, which contributed to a riot in August 2004.

RAMSI subsequently built or upgraded six prisons across the nation, which now operate in accordance with UN standards. Safety and security incidents in the prisons halved between 2006 and 2007. RAMSI also built accommodation for CSSI officers.

RAMSI helped ensure that 80 per cent of officers had internationally-accredited training in correctional practices when RAMSI withdrew from the sector in 2013, and helped facilitate a greater gender balance among recruits. It also supported tertiary and pre-tertiary education in relevant areas for CSSI officers.

The *Correctional Services Act 2007* set a new direction for CSSI. It emphasised rehabilitation, not punishment. As a result, RAMSI supported prisoner rehabilitation programs that worked to ensure recidivism rates were below 10 per cent. The Tetere Prison farm in East Honiara was re-opened and proved particularly effective in this regard. RAMSI also helped introduce programs that provided inmates with work and life skills and encouraged inmates to directly address their offending behaviour, strengthen relationships with their families, and develop pre-release plans.

The transfer of skills and control from RAMSI personnel to Solomon Islanders was smoother and quicker than most other areas supported by RAMSI, and was a good example of a conditions-based exit. Some of the contributing factors were the early handing over of the leadership reins (Commissioner position in 2008, complete leadership in 2012), a relatively quick reduction in technical advisers (from 60 in 2005, to 18 in 2009 and 10 in 2010) and longer deployments/rotations of RAMSI advisers (12 months). The last in-line RAMSI prisons adviser concluded in early 2011.

Courts and justice sector

With 3,390 arrests and 4,900 criminal charges laid by RAMSI's Participating Police Force during its first year of operations, Solomon Islands' courts ought to have never been busier, but the justice system was not equipped to deal with the complexity and the volume of the cases.

Prosecutors and public solicitors had to be recruited, and both the Office of the Director for Public Prosecution (DPP) and the Public Solicitor's Office (PSO) needed to be strengthened. There was a shortage of magistrate and judges, and international judges were recruited to preside over the sensitive Tension trials. It therefore took well over a year for the first trial – the prosecution of GLF leader Harold Keke – to begin in 2005.

Prior to the 2009 Partnership Framework, the overwhelming focus of RAMSI had been the strengthening of institutions for the purpose of processing the Tension-related trials through the formal system. With RAMSI's support, most of the offenders from the Tensions period were prosecuted and many are now serving life sentences for their crimes. This was an important factor in building confidence in the rule of law.

For its final four years of RAMSI's civilian law and justice program (2009-2013), RAMSI focused on capacity-building and working towards an affordable and sustainable sector.

RAMSI's programs of support were focused necessarily on central agencies in Honiara. Access to justice in rural areas remained a challenge due to limited infrastructure, housing and insufficient staff willing to deploy outside Honiara.

In Honiara, capacity development was hamstrung by the very high proportion of professional vacancies and problems with retaining qualified and experienced personnel. While significant gains were made through RAMSI's technical adviser model, sustainability has remained an ongoing issue.

Across the full 10 years, RAMSI helped strengthen the rule of law and increase access to justice services by:

- improving court operations through streamlined court procedures, better court registries and staff training;
- decreasing the average length of remand;
- shortening the timeframe for handling both civil and criminal cases – for example, between 2009 and 2011, the average length of time between being charged to trial in the Magistrate's Court fell from nearly 18 months to two weeks;

- constructing the Auki Magistrates' Court and refurbishing the courtrooms and chambers at the High Court and Central Magistrates Court in Honiara, as well as renovating the headquarters (Kalala House) of the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs and Ministry of Police, National Security and Correctional Services;
- planning and counsel support to the PSO and DPP, with were both roles being filled by Solomon Islanders early in the assistance program;
- working with the Attorney-General's Chambers to help manage the Government's legislative drafting load and improve the legal advice to Government;
- supporting the National Judiciary to deliver regular and impartial decisions;
- improving the terms and conditions of judicial appointments and employment across the sector to address vacancies, particularly in the Magistrate's Court, Public Solicitor's Office and the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.
- establishing a new family protection unit in the Public Solicitor's Office to help women affected by domestic violence
- supporting the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to argue successfully that rape in marriage should be illegal, resulting in a change to Solomon Islands law; and
- supporting research (3 years, 3,000 people) on local-level justice to facilitate better access to justice at the village level.

"There have been significant improvements in judicial services."

— The RAMSI Decade: A Review of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands 2003-2013, Jon Fraenkel, Joni Madraiwiwi and Henry Okole, 14 July 2014.

The Chief Justice and SIG's Justice Sector Coordination Committee (JSCC), supported by a middle management Justice Sector Technical Operations Group (JSTOG), played an important role in guiding RAMSI's institutional strengthening efforts and accountable cash grants, as well as the transition to indigenous legal practitioners and administrators.

Australia built on RAMSI's civilian law and justice program through a four-year AUD 61 million capacity building program, which has been extended for another four years to 2021.

Economic Governance

During the years of the Tensions, the economy and public finances of Solomon Islands experienced a devastating collapse.

Real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) – the value of all goods and services produced in Solomon Islands in a year - fell by 62 per cent. Government expenditure plummeted, leading to significant reductions in essential community services. When RAMSI arrived, the Government's payroll payments had not been made for several months.

The country's finances were under extreme pressure. Militant and criminal elements had been demanding money from Government following the overthrow of the Ulufa'alu Government in 2000. Political patronage was rampant, ghost names were added to the public sector payroll, and customs authorities granted damaging exemptions on import and export duties.

The Government could not meet its domestic or international debt repayment obligations and public debt ballooned. The build-up in arrears saw international financial institutions stop lending to Solomon Islands, and local businesses refused to supply goods and services to the Government. Telephones in government ministries were, for example, disconnected.

The stability of the currency and the sovereignty of government finances were threatened.

Stabilisation

One of the first things that RAMSI's team of financial and Treasury officials did was to start repaying public servants, which allowed schools, hospitals and other public services to start delivering services again.

The Budget Stabilisation Team placed a strong emphasis on improving tax collection and compliance, assisted by a taxation amnesty. It also worked hard to tighten expenditure discipline and controls.

Stabilising public debt was another early priority. A negotiated debt agreement with domestic bond holder resulted in the lifting of a High Court order over consolidated funds. The team also worked hard to verify the arrears of local creditors to strengthen and regain the trust of the private sector.

RAMSI injected AUD 10 million in the 2004-05 budget and paid \$3 million of Solomon Islands' arrears to the international financial institutions so that the World Bank and Asian Development Bank would re-engage and the country again had access to low-cost finance.

Financial management

Once the economic and financial emergency had been resolved, RAMSI worked closely with the Ministry of Finance and Treasury to improve revenue flows and public financial management systems.

Revenue collection grew significantly. Pre-RAMSI domestic revenue totalled SBD 258.2 million in 2002. In 2007, government revenue increased to SBD 1.1 billion, and in 2012, this figure reached just over SBD 2.5 billion. This reflected RAMSI-led improvements in Inland Revenue taxation administration and compliance and the removal of many tax and customs concessions, as well as a round log export boom and influx of retail outlets following the return of law and order.

The increased domestic revenue and re-engagement of donors also enabled SIG to contribute, alongside donors, to development projects and investments. In 2002, more than half of recurrent expenditure was funded by donors. Ten years later, domestically sourced revenue exceeded recurrent expenditure.

RAMSI also worked closely with the Ministry of Finance and Treasury to improve budget expenditure controls, to better control payroll spending and procurement processes, manage bilateral and multilateral donor budget support and prevent budget overruns by ministries. This proved to be a challenging task and was complicated by the growth of constituency development funds.

RAMSI helped introduce an improved cash management system and in 2010 Treasury bill auctions were held for the first time in 25 years, which enabled the Bank to manage currency volatility.

To reduce the nation's debt levels, RAMSI supported debt workouts and agreements and Solomon Islands did not borrow during the 10 years of RAMSI's support, although towards the end a Debt Management Strategy was approved by the Government and Honiara Club members that positioned the Government to be able to undertake limited new borrowing for high quality social and economic infrastructure investments.

RAMSI trained and mentored finance and treasury officials, as well providing twinning and external education opportunities. In 2005, there were around 100 RAMSI advisers in the Ministry of Finance and Treasury. This was whittled down to 25 advisors supporting economic governance by 2013.

RAMSI also supported major economic reforms that helped strengthen the economy and business confidence and resulted in a gradual improvement of living standards. It helped establish and staff an Economic Reform Unit in 2004 that provided government with policy advice on ways to generate growth and raise incomes. The Unit performed very well (e.g. engaging

multinational institutions and developing the foreign investment law) during the 10 years of RAMSI's support, but further work to find new engines of broad-based growth is still required. The country remains aid-dependent.

Together with Solomon Islands officials, RAMSI helped make doing business in country easier. Key reforms, which were developed in consultation with local businesses and foreign investors, and improvements included:

- Reduced business costs and reduced entry barriers – for, example, the average time it takes to start a business reduced from 56 to 9 days;
- A modernised legal environment for business and streamlined its administrative processes, including through a new Companies Act, new Companies Registry and the Secured Transactions Act;
- Streamlined processes for work and residency permits to enable business to engage skilled labour more quickly;
- The Foreign Investment Act, which reduced processing times for foreign investment applications, and reduced restrictions on areas in that foreigners could invest;
- A reduction in tariff rates, which reduced the cost of imported business inputs;
- Reduced business inputs through competition reforms in key sectors such as aviation and telecommunications, leading to more competition and reduced prices. In 2010, for example, Telekom's exclusive licence was revoked and the entry of Bmobile saw the costs of cell phones, SIM cards and mobile phone calls fall by 50 per cent or more;
- Resolving land trusteeship issues that permitted the restarting of palm oil operations in North Guadalcanal, as well as support for the resumption of mining at Gold Ridge. Reactivating key industries created jobs and economic activity; and
- Support for Solomon Islands trade expositions.

Other important economic and public finance reforms included:

- Improved accountability and transparency in financial management through the passage of the 2013 Public Financial Management Bill 2013, which made Solomon Islands a more attractive option to international donors and international financial institutions;
- Reforms to state-owned enterprises, to improve their financial management and governance and improve their service standards. This included Solomon Airlines; Solomon Islands Broadcasting Commission (SIBC); Solomon Islands Post; Solomon Islands Printing;

Solomon Islands Water Authority (SIWA), and Solomon Islands Electricity Authority (SIEA);

- Reforms to both tax policy and administration to improve the fairness and efficiency of the tax system, including the exemption process for taxes and duties;
- A comprehensive study on rural livelihoods that permitted donors to assist small and medium enterprises;
- Establishment of a Financial Intelligence Unit in the Central Bank;
- Whole-of-government preferred supplier agreement, which resulted in significant cost savings on, for example, IT equipment from 2012;
- Roll-out of the Aurion payroll system and training in the SIG Accounting System (SIGAS), which helped cleanse the government's payroll of false identities; and
- Codes of conduct in key revenue collection agencies, including the Internal Revenue Division.

Economic activity

With a slight interruption caused by the Global Financial Crisis in 2009, the Solomon Islands economy grew over 80 per cent in real terms while RAMSI was supporting economic governance.

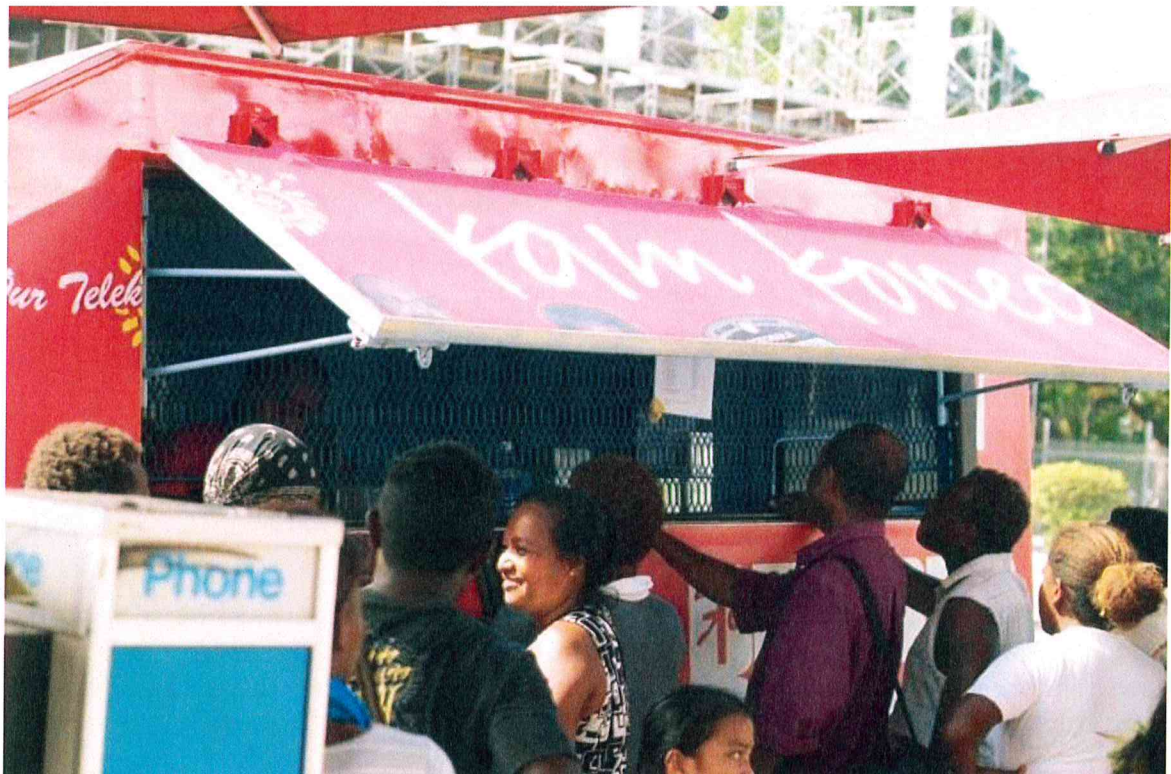
Disciplined fiscal policy measures and economic reforms resulted in a stable cash position and mainly balanced or surplus budgets. By 2011, cash reserves had been built up to cover three months of expenditure and foreign account reserves had nine months of import cover.

RAMSI's support also led to an impressive fall in government debt. The Government's debt rating reduced from a high to moderate risk, and its debt to GDP ratio fell from over 70 per cent in 2003 to 12 per cent, well below the accepted sustainability benchmark of 30 per cent.

While RAMSI's support to the Customs and Excise Division led to improved excise and revenue collection and cargo examination in the main sea and air ports, similar progress was not made on the border shared with Papua New Guinea.

The stability and reforms introduced with the support of RAMSI provided a more conducive investment environment, from donor, government and private sector sources. The reduction in sovereign risk combined with reduced complexity and cost of doing business helped to attract new investments in the mining, agriculture, tourism and fisheries sectors. In 1996, total investment was around 4.5 per cent of GDP. Between 2005 and 2013, investment averaged around 20 per cent of GDP per year.

In sum, the Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI reversed the economic decline, improved living standards and seen economic growth equalise at around 3 per cent per annum.



Machinery of Government

The RAMSI Machinery of Government (MoG) Program commenced in 2005. It was an ambitious program designed to restore Solomon Islands' public sector, government accountability and democratic processes. It helped successive government organise themselves better to deliver public services.

RAMSI focused on working with counterparts to: improve cabinet and parliamentary processes; reform the public service; strengthen the watchdog institutions that ensure government and public service run fairly and openly; support electoral management and associated civic education; and promote the participation of women in government and decision-making.

Over the years, MoG's initially wide remit was streamlined. In its later years, the program focused less on technical advisory support, and more on policy dialogue, deeper engagement and partnership.

RAMSI provided support to more than a dozen Solomon Islands Government agencies across eight sub-programs.

Reform and better governance came in many forms. The central agencies that were being assisted by RAMSI made good progress. The implementation of their new policies and reforms, however, was often dependent on the uptake and cooperation of line agencies and legislators.

Parliament

Partnering with the National Parliament Office (NPO), RAMSI improved the effectiveness of parliamentary services, the representative role of parliamentarians, the law-making procedures of Parliament and its capacity to oversight Government.

Hansard was made available electronically and a functioning library was established and used regularly by Members of Parliament. Advice to the Speaker also improved markedly.

Importantly, the parliamentary committee system was revived. The Public Accounts Committee, for example, met for the first time in 20 years in 2006 to consider Office of Auditor-General reports. The number of committee meetings grew quickly – from

Machinery of Government sub-programs

- Public Service Improvement
- Solomon Islands Government Housing Management Project
- Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Information Communications and Technology (ICT) Support Unit Transitional Support
- Provincial Governance Strengthening
- Institutions of Integrity (Accountability)
- Electoral Systems Strengthening Program
- Parliamentary Strengthening
- Women in Government

seven in 2004 to 133 in 2009, including 40 public hearings across the country.

Additionally, from 2010, parliamentarians began to declare their pecuniary interests.

With RAMSI's support, by 2012, the staff, planning and systems of the National Parliament Office had matured to a stage where it no longer required external assistance.

Separately, RAMSI worked with the Attorney-General's Chambers to improve legislative drafting and the legal advice offered to Government, and helped strengthen Cabinet processes.

Electoral System

RAMSI supported the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission (SIEC) to manage, plan and conduct national elections, as well as improve public understanding of the electoral system.

In addition to training and resourcing Electoral Commission staff, RAMSI helped to revise and update electoral rolls and conduct nationwide voter registration and civic education programs. It also helped reform electoral legislation and processes, including to minimise electoral fraud. In 2006, for example, SIEC introduced a single ballot.

As a result, international observers declared that the 2006 and 2010 general elections were 'free and fair'; and, tellingly, the 2014 election, which was held after RAMSI had ended its support, was similarly declared 'free and fair'.

Media and government communications

RAMSI advisers supported the Government Communications Unit in the Office of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to help the Government explain how it was improving the lives of Solomon Islanders.

To improve news and current affairs programming more broadly, RAMSI funded a media assistance scheme (SOLMAS) that supported journalists, media institutions and media and broadcast links to deliver informative and balanced communication that supported accountability, transparency, citizen voice, good governance and stability. The management of the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC) received mentoring. Additionally, RAMSI supported, for example, 44 highly-regarded journalism training and media awareness sessions in 2012 that involved over 700 participants from 20 organisations across media, government, non-government organisations and academic institutions.

Public Service

When RAMSI arrived in 2003, the public service was barely functioning. To start building a professional and accountable public service that provided timely and quality government service delivery, RAMSI helped introduce a Code of Conduct, merit-based recruitment and performance management processes, as well as a new Human Resource Strategy to give clearer guidance on the roles and responsibilities of public servants.

Within two years of RAMSI's arrival, a record 18 of 21 government departments reported to Parliament.

Training programs, delivered through the revitalised Institute of Public Administration and Management, which delivered 33 training programs to over 1,020 participants in its first year of operations (2006), helped staff understand how a modern public service operated.

RAMSI also helped develop a Human Resource (HR) Management Strategy for the public service, a HR Manager's Forum, support for several government task forces to review HR management rules and processes, and the first baseline Solomon Islands Government Human Resources Management Survey.

A cross-check made possible by new HR and payroll systems detected hundreds of false identities on the government's payroll. In 2011, for example, 500 'ghost' teachers were identified, releasing 3 per cent of the Education Ministry's payroll budget.

Thanks to RAMSI's support, public service recruitment and performance management processes is now more transparent and merit-based, with all vacant positions advertised for open competition and managed centrally by the Public Service Commission.

Parliamentary endorsement of a Public Service Code of Conduct in December 2009 helped improve the performance and integrity of public servants. Since late 2012, Permanent Secretaries have also been held accountable publicly through performance contracts signed with the Prime Minister and Chairman of the Public Service Commission.

Additionally, RAMSI supported the management of government housing and the introduction of a new Public Service Rental Scheme. Despite RAMSI's support, which ended in 2011, the Government Housing Unit struggled to maintain its registers and upkeep of houses.

RAMSI also supported the Information Communications and Technology (ICT) Support Unit, which introduced centralised Solomon Islands Government databases, email management and training for ICT support officers.

Integrity Institutions

RAMSI worked hard to improve three institutions charged with ensuring government integrity and accountability.

The Office of the Auditor General became one of the strongest performing ‘watch-dog’ institutions. From 2011, it was auditing all government ministries, and providing audit opinions on statutory bodies and state-owned enterprises. It also did not shy away from controversial audits on topics such as overseas scholarships and constituency development funds. The Auditor General exposed \$433 million of corrupt and fraudulent payments across ten audits between 2005 and 2006. These audits were led by Solomon Islanders from 2008.

RAMSI’s support to the Leadership Code Commission, which is responsible for maintaining a registrar of pecuniary interests and investigating abuses of office, led to steady improvements in the work of the Commission. By 2007, it was managing over 100 active investigations, and it fined 400 leaders in 2010 for not reporting their pecuniary interests.

RAMSI also helped the Office of the Ombudsman to work better with other agencies and improve provincial access to the Ombudsman. It took some time, but guided by a strategic plan, the operations of the Ombudsman were reformed and significant headway was made. By 2009, more than 80 per cent of back-logged cases had been resolved.

Provincial Governance

To strengthen the capacity of provincial governments to support service delivery and enhance rural economic development, RAMSI worked with the Ministry of Provincial Government and Rural Development and provincial governments to improve their financial management systems and reporting, and to strengthen the capacity of provincial administration.

The introduction of new simplified cash accounting system and computerised payroll systems across all provinces meant, for example, that provincial governments had robust and trackable financial systems, although some provincial administrators struggled with the technology.

RAMSI support for provincial governments ended in 2012.

Women in Government

Supporting gender equality and women’s empowerment was a cross-cutting theme in RAMSI’s capacity-building work (see below).

Under the Machinery of Government Program, RAMSI strongly supported the work of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs and the Solomon Islands National Council of Women to advocate for greater

participation by women in leadership and decision-making. A Policy Coordination Unit was established within the Ministry in 2012 to enable improved coordination and implementation of gender equality policy across government.

RAMSI also supported women in leadership mentoring programs and was the major funder of the national government's 2010 policy on gender equality and women's development.

It also encouraged women to run for office in the 2010 election at the national and provincial level. No women were elected in the national parliament, but the number in provincial legislatures rose from two to five, including the first-ever Deputy Premier.



RAMSI adviser Sharron Thurston from New Zealand, and her Solomon Islands Inland Revenue Division colleague, Joseph Dokekama, are among those who helped make significant improvement to the Solomon Islands Government's ability to collect revenue.

Cross-cutting issues

From 2009, the Solomon Islands and RAMSI formalised three cross-cutting themes in their *Partnership Framework* that had not always been dealt with strategically or evenly across the three pillars of assistance.

The themes were: capacity development, gender equality and anti-corruption. Interestingly, the inclusion of gender issues faced some resistance on the grounds that it was viewed as an outlier to RAMSI's main mandate.

Capacity development

At the heart of RAMSI's mandate was the objective of helping to create the conditions whereby Solomon Islanders could once again resume full control of their country, lives and future. Capacity development was therefore an integral part of RAMSI's work and its conditions-based exit. Indeed, RAMSI's job was to put itself out of a job. This was achieved through the progress garnered under the three pillars of capacity-building assistance (see above).

Gender equality

Women's empowerment was a regular consideration in RAMSI's early planning and support activities across all its pillars. RAMSI advocated for gender-mainstreaming across its programs and in the Solomon Islands Government more broadly. Its efforts were spearheaded by the flagship Women in Government program.

Sadly, progress was slow. Women's participation in government and national and provincial parliaments, for example, remained low, and proposals for Temporary Special Measures were not adopted.

In 2009, RAMSI appointed a Gender Adviser to guide the application of gender equality principles across its three pillars. A gender stocktake of RAMSI's work in 2010 revealed that 63 per cent of RAMSI's activities were aligned with the Solomon Island Government's new Gender Equality and Women's Development Policy, mostly focused on equal participation in decision-making and elimination of violence against women. The Adviser and stocktake led to strengthened support mechanisms for gender under RAMSI's development assistance.

RAMSI's Law and Justice Program made steady improvements to female participation in the sector. The number of women in both the RSIPF and Correctional Services Solomon Islands steadily increased, and both institutions formed a Women's Advisory Network.

During its final four years of police capacity-building, RAMSI's support for women's empowerment focused on promoting women in policing and combating family violence.

By 2016, 20 per cent of the RSIPF's workforce were women and 50 per cent of new recruits were women: one of the highest rates of female participation across Solomon Islands Government agencies. RAMSI's Office of the Special Coordinator also led a review of RSIPF's gender policies, and the Commissioner of the RSIPF placed a zero-tolerance policy in regards to RSIPF officers engaging in domestic violence.

RAMSI supported the RSIPF's preparedness and capacity to implement the Family Protection Act 2014, which criminalised family violence and enabled the police to issue instant protection orders. Ahead of the Act's gazettal in April 2016, the RSIPF, with RAMSI's support, developed nation-wide training packages for frontline officers to understand their obligations and powers under the legislation and completed an extensive community awareness program across the country.

RAMSI was also a strong supporter of gender-based violence crisis and referral centres in Solomon Islands. It also published books and documentaries to celebrate women's leadership and suppress violence in the home.

Anti-corruption

RAMSI worked actively in partnership with Solomon Islands agencies to tackle corruption.

First, RAMSI helped strengthen the institutions that detect corruption, including the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force, Auditor-General, Ombudsman, Leadership Code Commission, Central Bank and Ministry of Finance and Treasury. For example, RAMSI added 9 new investigators to the Leadership Code Commission, worked through the Ombudsman's backlog of cases, established a Financial Intelligence Unit in the Central Bank, and supported audits that exposed \$433 million of fraudulent disbursements in 2005-06. RAMSI also helped the Ministry of Finance and Treasury to scrutinise state-owned enterprises, the use of public funds and the application of taxes and duties.

Second, RAMSI's Participating Police Force supported anti-corruption taskforces and investigations by gathering evidence and preparing cases. This included support for the joint RAMSI-RSIPF Corruption Targeting Taskforce and the RSIPF's *Operation Janus* (2016-17), which investigated and charged a number of high-profile politicians and officials. These investigations led to the arrest of former prime ministers, serving and former national ministers, former provincial premiers, senior government officials and senior statutory office-holders.

Third, RAMSI emphasised the importance of ethics and professionalism to new Members of Parliament, government officials and the police and correctional officers that worked in partnership with RAMSI, including through the development of codes of conduct.

Finally, RAMSI supported the prosecutions and courts system, through new court houses, providing both prosecution and defence lawyers and strengthening the prisons system so there was a capacity to deal with the corruption prosecutions.

A stocktake of activities in 2010 identified that there were 24 distinct RAMSI activities that targeted corruption. Good progress was made at the bureaucratic level in terms of systems and processes, but the lack of progress at the political level was a barrier to further action.

After the 'Transition' in 2013, RAMSI continued to support the police to strengthen their investigations, prosecutions and internal investigation capabilities of the RSIPF. Pleasingly, junior police officers increasingly reported on the corrupt practises of high-ranking officials and police commanders.

Overall, the response to, and support for, RAMSI anti-corruption advocacy efforts was patchy. While there was reasonable progress on individual corruption-focused activities, both RAMSI and the Government struggled to address corruption as a cross-cutting issue. Corruption in government and misuse of political power continues to be a major concern of the people.

Solomon Islands Government has recognised these ongoing concerns and its need to address them. Ahead of RAMSI's departure, the third Sogavare Government drafted and tabled a suite of anti-corruption legislation in Parliament.

Nation-building in partnership

RAMSI helped create an environment that allowed successive Solomon Islands Governments to lead the difficult task of reconciliation and nation-building throughout the country.

The view of Solomon Islands, RAMSI and Pacific Islands Forum nations was that only Solomon Islanders could find lasting solutions to the underlying causes of the Tensions.

"Our country cannot deny the fact that this assistance has given our country space: the environment to re-build our country and the opportunity to map out a future for our people and make decision and implement programmes that address the root causes of the ethnic tension."

— Prime Minister Hon. Dr Derek Sikua MP, Presentation to Foreign Relations Committee, 18 September 2008.

“If our house is dirty, you don’t ask someone else to clean it up. Dealing with the underlying causes of the Tensions is the responsibility of Solomon Islanders. This is our country, our people and our future, so let’s work together to build it for our future generations.”

— John Wasi, the final Solomon Islands Government Special Secretary to RAMSI, 2016-2017.

A major step forward was the establishment of a Solomon Islands Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in 2009. The Commission listened to the stories of former political and community leaders, militants and survivors and delivered its recommendations in 2012. The Solomon Islands Government has sequenced and prioritised the recommendations and is currently drafting legislation and a policy framework that responds to the TRC report.

Separately, Solomon Islands governments have pursued lasting stability and security through meaningful reconciliation between Solomon Islanders and conflict rehabilitation, long-term national development strategies, and political, legal, social and economic reforms.

Some of the important programs and initiatives undertaken in recent years include: a National Apology by the Government; a National Healing Week during which the former militant groups reconciled; UNDP-supported peace-building summits with provincial and national leaders; the tabling of anti-corruption bills in Parliament; further consultations on reforms to the political parties and electoral systems; the ongoing pursuit of constitutional federalism; agreements that will lead to three major infrastructure projects (a hydro-electric dam, undersea internet cable, and sports stadium); the development of a new framework for dealing with land; and, a second gun collection and destruction program in cooperation with former militants. The Government has also begun formulating a National Security Policy.

RAMSI, too, has been a vocal advocate of peace-building and nation-building. It has supported the peace-building agenda in cooperation with bodies such as the National Peace Council, Ministry of National Unity, Peace & Reconciliation, Transparency Solomon Islands, the Solomon Islands Christian Association and the United Nations Development Program, as well as its support for local media organisations and civic education campaigns.

Over the years, RAMSI has participated in many reconciliation ceremonies and also funded a number of ‘peace projects’, including roads and bridges that connected communities and helped grow local economies.

Community outreach

Solomon Islands is a country where many people only have access to information by word of mouth. Visiting and talking to communities was therefore an important way for RAMSI to hear from Solomon Islanders and explain how RAMSI was working with the Government to improve their country and their lives.

Teams of RAMSI civilian, police, and military personnel and their Solomon Islands Government counterparts travelled the nation throughout the mission, including under the banner of RAMSI's popular Community Outreach Program, which began in October 2006.

RAMSI also undertook extensive community consultations on the 'Transition', ahead of the end of RAMSI's military contribution and its civilian development programs in 2013, and RAMSI's conclusion in 2017.

Along with the RSIPF and the Ministry of Police, National Security & Correctional Services, RAMSI also undertook two years of community consultations that revealed the people of Solomon Islands supported overwhelmingly the limited rearmament of the police. It also provided strong support to the Government and RSIPF in relation to the roll-out of the Crime Prevention Strategy, new family protection laws and the two firearms amnesties.

As noted above, RAMSI also helped Solomon Islands agencies to engage the people and media organisations to improve their news and current affairs programming. It supported the Government Communications Unit and the media units of Parliament, the RSIPF and several ministries.

Textbox: Talking Truth

RAMSI took seriously its responsibility to consult with Solomon Islanders, including the 80-85 per cent of the population who live in rural areas. One of the important mediums was radio. Since deploying in 2003, RAMSI has sponsored a radio program, 'Talking Truth', which was broadcast nationally on AM, FM and shortwave bands via the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation. It was initially broadcast weekly, but reduced in frequency over the years. The show began by explaining why RAMSI was in Solomon Islands and ended explaining why RAMSI was leaving. In between, the 'Talking Truth' program covered the wide breadth of law enforcement and state-building issues that RAMSI supported over the years. The radio program was often broadcast from provincial locations to ensure the views of Solomon Islanders outside Honiara were heard. RAMSI also used talkback radio to answer questions from the outer regions of the archipelago.

Beyond RAMSI: sustaining the gains

The work of RAMSI is being continued through bilateral mechanisms. The friendships, partnerships and investments made together, through RAMSI, by Solomon Islands and RAMSI contributing nations are lasting and the Pacific region will continue to '*helpem fren*' as long as its assistance is sought.

In 2013, the Australian and, to a lesser extent, New Zealand governments continued RAMSI's civilian development assistance in the justice, economic governance, machinery of government sectors. In 2017, the Australian Government renewed its justice and governance programs for another four years.

In terms of police development, Australia has agreed provide a substantial, bilateral police development programs to build on the work of the RAMSI Participating Police Force. New Zealand will also deliver a complementary program focused on crime prevention and community policing.

Additionally, Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands are negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding on police cooperation, and multilateral support will be provided under the Forum's Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police network and Melanesian Spearhead Group initiatives.

Australia and Solomon Islands have also finalised a treaty that would facilitate a faster response from Australia or an Australia-led coalition to a request from Solomon Islands for security or disaster assistance.

Pacific Islands Forum Leaders and Foreign Ministers have welcomed these ongoing contributions from Forum nations.

Lessons for future security cooperation

RAMSI is rightly hailed as a success. It did as much as it could in the circumstances and with the best of intentions. We should not be embarrassed about celebrating its achievements, but equally we should not be shy about looking closely at what worked and did not work, and drawing on those lessons if there is ever a need for regional cooperation on a security and/or state re-building exercise.

The RAMSI experience is brimming with lessons for Pacific cooperation and interactions with fragile states. Every intervention will occur inevitably in a unique set of circumstances, but RAMSI taught us that better security and state-building interventions are:

- welcomed by the host government and public;
- a collaborative partnership, with skills transfers and inclusion an early and deliberate focus, particularly for staff in line positions, once the emergency situation stabilises;
- viewed as providing the nation the time and breathing space to recover the lost ground and address the underlying causes of the conflict, rather than a panacea for all ills;
- drawn from and endorsed by the region;
- shaped through consultation and coordination - internally, bilaterally and regionally – over the course of the mission;
- mandated based on a sound assessment of the challenges and achievable outcomes;
- established with all key agencies and nations involved jointly in the pre-planning, implementation and reporting;
- deployed and operated under a clear legal framework;
- commenced with large numbers and superior firepower if restoring law and order;
- willing to advocate several ‘game-changing’ policies once normalcy returns;
- focused on building public trust and confidence in the mission and, as soon as possible, in partnered government agencies;
- not persuaded to drawdown quickly or look for an early exit strategy; and

- conscious that it could be an extended (e.g. 15-year) commitment.

Observers have also acknowledged a number of other broad 'take-aways':

- resetting and strengthening Westminster systems of government that jar with Melanesian concepts of power and patronage can be slow, incremental, sometimes challenging, and rarely linear;
- with only three fully-fledged militaries in the Pacific Islands region (Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Tonga), policing is an important component of the stability equation and worthy of a strong or at least deliberate focus in national and donor development programs in the Pacific;
- the participation of Pacific Islanders (Melanesians, Polynesians, Micronesians) is critical to forging of Pacific-style solutions for Pacific-style problems. The Pacific Islander members of RAMSI provided authoritative voices and ideas, and also useful yardsticks to measure progress;
- joint training, operations and tasks improve the capabilities of all the contributing nations; and
- public perception surveys can help governments to be more open to criticism and re-think public service delivery, as well as create space for civil society to grow.



Timeline: 2003-2017

2003

April: Solomon Islands Prime Minister Sir Allan Kemakeza requests urgent assistance from Australia.

5 June: Australia offers to lead a regional assistance mission if a formal request is made by the Solomon Islands Governor-General on the advice of Cabinet (occurred on 4 July) and the mission had regional endorsement.

30 June: Pacific Islands Forum Foreign Ministers endorse the RAMSI deployment under the *Biketawa Declaration*, an agreement concluded in 2000 that Forum members would act in times of crisis or in response to a member's request.

11 July: Solomon Islands National Parliament passes unanimously the *Facilitation of International Assistance Act*, which authorises the Governor-General to confer powers to RAMSI (occurred on 23 July).

24 July: Thousands of Solomon Islanders gather at Honiara's Henderson International Airport to witness the arrival of more than 2,000 soldiers, police and civilians from Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. On the same day, the RAMSI Treaty, which set out the mission's mandate, was signed in Townsville by the Prime Ministers of Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and Tonga, and senior officials from Solomon Islands and Samoa.

6 August: The RAMSI Participating Police Force (PPF) establishes its first provincial presence in Avu Avu, restoring a police presence on the

Weathercoast for the first time in nearly five years. Over coming months, RAMSI establishes a presence in 17 provincial locations.

31 July to 21 August: Thousands of weapons are handed in across the nation by former militants, police and other gun-holders during a 21-day firearms amnesty.

13 August: Guadalcanal militant leader Harold Keke surrenders peacefully to RAMSI Special Coordinator, Nick Warner, and Participating Police Force Commander, Ben McDevitt.

22 August: A major peace rally fills the streets of Honiara celebrating the nation's newfound peace.

12 September: Rove Central Prison re-opens, with the first 12 cells of what becomes a 300-bed high security facility. On the same day, the World Bank and Asian Development Bank re-engage with Solomon Islands after RAMSI makes a US \$3 million debt payment.

1 November: First 100 days of RAMSI: 3,700 firearms destroyed, 340 arrests, Government finances stabilised and payroll restored.

2004

February 2004: Nauru and PNG agree to contribute police.

June: Magistrates Court sits in Temotu Province for the first time in almost eight years with the support of RAMSI.

21 October: RAMSI Police vehicle shot on Kukum Highway;

Participating Police Force officers from Nauru and Tonga narrowly escape serious injury.

November: The Solomon Islands' Intervention Task Force concluded RAMSI's first year had been very effective in helping rebuild the nation, with a restoration of law and order and improvements in the functioning of key government agencies, notably the courts and judiciary, the Royal Solomon Islands Police Force and the Ministry of Finance and Treasury. The Task Force also highlighted the great appreciation and support that many Solomon Islanders had expressed for the RAMSI intervention.

December: The small island nation of Tuvalu contributes police officers.

22 December: Participating Police Force officer Adam Dunning shot dead in Honiara, RAMSI's first and only casualty by armed opposition.

2005

31 January: The trial of renegade Guadalcanal Liberation Force commander Harold Keke – the first major Tensions-related trial – begins.

10 March: Australian soldier Jamie Clark, 21, dies tragically after falling into a cave in the foothills of central Guadalcanal during a routine patrol.

7 July: A review of RAMSI by the Pacific Islands Forum Eminent Persons Group commended RAMSI for restoring law and order, strengthening government finances, engaging in institutional strengthening and building the government's capacity to undertake reforms. It observed signs of economic recovery but underlined that the "hard part lies ahead" and Solomon Islands must lead the rebuilding process.

1 September: RAMSI launched a civic education project to educate citizens about their democratic rights and responsibilities in a democracy ahead of the 2006 General Election.

20 December: New Foreign Investments Act becomes law with RAMSI's assistance, leading to a five-day process for registering a new foreign investor.

2006

9 March: A Financial Intelligence Unit established with RAMSI's support in the Central Bank of Solomon Islands to tackle money laundering and investigate suspicious cash dealings.

March: Federated States of Micronesia contribute police to RAMSI.

18 April: Two-days of riots erupt and wide-scale looting and burning of Chinese-owned businesses follow the 5 April election and subsequent swearing in of Prime Minister Snyder Rini. 25 RAMSI police officers were seriously injured.

May: Marshall Islands and Palau contribute personnel to RAMSI.

May: People's Survey Pilot conducted in selected areas of Honiara and Guadalcanal, Malaita, Western and Choiseul Provinces. The annual People's Survey would show that public support for RAMSI never waned, remaining above 85 per cent.

September: Solomon Islands Government expels Australia's High Commissioner for alleged interference in political affairs after expressing concern about the impact of a government-appointed Commission of Inquiry into the April riots on the arrest of three members of parliament in relation to the riots.

October: Teams of RAMSI's civilian, police and military personnel and Solomon Islands counterparts begin travelling the nation to listen to the people of Solomon Islands and explain how RAMSI was working with the Government to improve their lives under the Community Outreach Program.

25 October: Pacific Island Forum Leaders create a six-country, officials-level Enhanced Consultative Mechanism (ECM) on RAMSI to help rebuild confidence between the Government and RAMSI.

17 October: Niue joins RAMSI, sending two of the nation's 16 police officers. Now every country member of the Pacific Islands Forum contributes personnel to RAMSI.

27 December: Solomon Islands Government prohibits the re-entry of its Australia-born police commissioner following police investigations, charges and searches in relation to the immigration status of the Attorney-General.

2007

2 April: RAMSI assists with relief efforts after a large earthquake and tsunami struck Solomon Islands' Western provinces, killing 52 people and destroying 900 homes.

April-June: A Pacific Islands Forum Review, which considered six concerns raised by Solomon Islands, recommended greater regionalisation of the mechanisms that govern and monitor RAMSI to address 'inadequacies in the dialogue mechanism' between Solomon Islands and RAMSI.

August: Institute for Public Administration and Management re-opens with RAMSI assistance as a

training centre for Solomon Islands public servants.

2008

22 February: The first Forum Ministerial Standing Committee on RAMSI meets in Honiara to provide additional oversight and governance to RAMSI.

8 March: First RAMSI Women's Breakfast held for more than 200 women marking International Women's Day.

June: RAMSI apologises for the tragic death of a young Solomon Islands woman in a fatal accident involving a RAMSI vehicle driven by an off-duty Samoan police officer in Honiara.

2009

10 March: First Special Coordinator's Award for Women presented to community volunteer, Betty Komasi, in recognition of her founding of the Mercy School in the Burns Creek settlement. RAMSI also appoints a Gender Adviser to strengthen efforts on behalf of women and men of Solomon Islands.

April: Partnership Framework between Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI endorsed by both parties and the Forum Ministerial Standing Committee on RAMSI.

28 August: New Correctional Centre opens in Auki, Malaita Province.

12 November: The Foreign Relations Committee's 'Inquiry into the Facilitation of International Assistance Notice 2003 and RAMSI intervention' is tabled in Parliament. It praises RAMSI for the significant achievements under its three pillars and concluded the greater involvement of the PIF in governance

issues had addressed the Solomon Islands Government's concerns about sovereignty and insufficient coordination. It observes that rebuilding the police was a significant and long-term challenge and the Government must address the root causes of the ethnic tension.

1 December: Launch of the new Public Service Code of Conduct, which was developed with assistance from RAMSI.

2010

March: *Being the First: Storis Blong Olketa Mere lo Solomon Aelan*, the first book on Solomon Islands' women leaders launched with RAMSI's assistance.

6 May: New court complex opens in Auki, Malaita, jointly funded by Solomon Islands and RAMSI.

July: Leadership Code Commission and Ombudsman's Office move into new shared facilities built by Solomon Islands and RAMSI.

4 August: National Election conducted smoothly. RAMSI helped with civic education across the nation about the parliamentary process, encouraged women to run for office, strengthened election management, improved voter registrations systems, transported ballot papers and ballot boxes, and bolstered Royal Solomon Islands Police Force security operations ahead of during the election.

12 August: Fatal shooting of a Solomon Islander on the outskirts of Honiara. First and only time that the actions of RAMSI personnel operating in the line of duty result in the death of a Solomon Islander.

December: Revenue collections exceed SBD1 billion in 2010, the first time in the history of the nation.

2011

March: First of 146 new police houses formally handed over to RSIPF officers and their families in Honiara by RAMSI's Police Accommodation Project.

11 May: Dovetail dialogue on RAMSI's Transition held between the Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI officials.

August: RAMSI Police withdraw from the first provincial police post (Buala, Isabel Province) as part of the Transition to a solely police assistance mission.

16 November: Solomon Islands Police Response Team lead the quelling of a near-riot in Honiara following the election of Gordon Darcy Lilo as Prime Minister.

2012

April: *Mere Blong Iumi, Stori Blong Oketa* documentary capturing the experiences of Solomon Islands women produced by the RAMSI Public Affairs Unit premiers on local One Television.

June: Achievements of the Solomon Islands-RAMSI partnership feature in an exhibition on peacekeeping at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

August: New RSIPF Provincial Police Headquarters opens in Isabel Province.

November: New Provincial Police Headquarters open in Gizo, Western Province. The final New Zealand Defence Force platoon departs.

2013

April: Papua New Guinea Defence Force troops farewelled at the Mission's Headquarters in Honaira.

May: Australia commits AUD500 million in its 2013-14 budget for RAMSI, guaranteeing the Mission's tactical police component and another four years of police capacity development in Solomon Islands.

30 June: RAMSI's civilian development activities shift to Australian and New Zealand aid programs and other development partners.

24 July: Large celebrations attended by Pacific leaders and ministers to celebrate RAMSI's 10th anniversary and mark the end of RAMSI's military and civilian development assistance.

22 August: PPF-RSIPF Drawdown Strategy 2013-2017 agreed, including an agreement that RAMSI would reduce its resources and footprint with a view to transferring full responsibility for policing and national security before 30 June 2017.

8 October: RAMSI announces it has gifted 32 boats to the RSIPF, increasing its fleet four-fold, as part of the maritime mobility plan funded jointly by the Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI.

2014

1 March: The new Police Act 2013, which was developed with RAMSI's support, comes into effect and provides the necessary legal foundations to support a modern RSIPF.

3 April: Flash flooding on Guadalcanal causes significant damage to homes, infrastructure and livelihoods, affecting an estimated

52,000 people. The RSIPF leads the overall response to the floods, with RAMSI support in operational planning, aerial support, search and rescue operations and patrols. Gold Ridge Mine suspends its operations and RAMSI deploys technical experts to assist the Solomon Islands Government assess risks from hazardous materials on site.

16 May: Community unrest fuelled by frustration with flood relief efforts managed by the RSIPF Police Response Team with support from RAMSI.

July: Seif Ples clinic for victims of family and sexual violence opens with support from the RSIPF Sexual Assault Unit and RAMSI.

August: Solomon Islands Government passes the *Family Protection Act 2014*, which formally recognises protection orders and provides the basis for assistance to victims of domestic violence.

September: RSIPF officers conduct training in Public Order Management for Nauru Police Force members. Before RAMSI left, the RSIPF would also train police in Samoa and Vanuatu.

19 November: Solomon Islands national election is declared free and fair by electoral observers. The RSIPF successfully conducts its largest and most visible operation since 2003, supported by RAMSI, which increased its numbers to support election security operations.

9 December: Firearm and arson attack near Mbike Island, Central Province, on a boat that had transported 17 newly elected Members of Parliament. No one injured or killed.

2015

March: Provincial consultations on the limited and staged rearmament of the RSIPF commence.

June: RSIPF successfully lead the planning and delivery of security for the Melanesian Spearhead Group Leaders' Summit in Honiara.

10 June: RAMSI hands over new RAMSI-built police station in Auki, the capital of Malaita Province.

July: The influential 'Appropriate Cost of Solomon Islands Police Service' report presented to Solomon Islands Government, and later endorsed by Cabinet. The Solomon Islands Government subsequently increased the RSIPF budget by 20 per cent in 2016.

September: Auki-based RAMSI police advisers withdrawn, 12 years after setting up the post to support the RSIPF in Malaita Province.

14 October: Long-time fugitive Edmund Sae arrested in Malaita for the 2003 murder of former Police Commissioner Sir Frederick Soaki, closing the chapter on one of the last major Tensions-era crimes.

November: RSIPF and RAMSI launch a children's story book to discourage alcohol abuse and family violence and build trust in the police.

December: The RSIPF conduct high visibility patrols and boat safety operations throughout the Christmas period.

2016

April: Family Protection Act enters into force.

12 May: Gizo-based RAMSI police advisers withdraw from Western

Province. Now RAMSI is only based in Honiara.

June: The RSIPF finalises its new Crime Prevention Strategy and introduces Random Breath Testing after an extensive public awareness campaign.

29 June: Opening of the RAMSI-built RSIPF National Response Department headquarters and armoury at Rove Police Headquarters in Honiara.

4 August: RSIPF and Ministry of Finance and Treasury sign an agreement that leads to the high-profile *Operation Janus*, which investigated and prosecuted fraud and corruption in the Solomon Islands public service throughout 2016 and 2017.

August: The Solomon Islands Government endorses the RSIPF's five-year Capability Development Plan, which will inform government decision-makers and guide future development partners.

September: Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders endorse the withdrawal of RAMSI in June 2017 and congratulate Solomon Islands and RAMSI on the significant progress made to date.

December: A 7.8 magnitude earthquake strikes off the coast of Malaita Province. The RSIPF provide first response, with limited assistance from RAMSI.

2017

January-April: RAMSI and SIG step up their extensive program of community consultations ahead of RAMSI's conclusion in June 2017.

May: Members of the RSIPF's Police Response Team and Close Personal Protection team are rearmed so that

the RSIPF can protect its communities, borders and waters.

22 May - 9 June: Second firearms amnesty and gun collection and destruction program.

25 June: A week of end-of-mission and farewell celebrations commence in Honiara, including the launch of this museum exhibition.

30 June: RAMSI mission concluded.

RAMSI Principals

Special Coordinators

(Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade)

Quinton Devlin	2015-2017
Justine Braithwaite	2013-2015
Nicholas Coppel	2011-2013
Graeme Wilson	2009-2011
Tim George	2006-2008
James Batley	2004-2006
Nick Warner	2003-2004

Deputy Special Coordinators

(New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade)

Alex Cameron	2015-2017
Richard Griffith	2013-2015
Wayne Higgins	2011-2013
Mary Thurston	2011-2011
Justin Fepulea'i	2009-2011
Jonathan Austin	2007-2009
Paul Ash	2005-2007
Peter Noble	2003-2005

Assistant Special Coordinators

(Fiji)

Mataiasi Lomaloma	2005-2017
Sekove Naqiolevu	2004-2005

Participating Police Force Commanders

(Australian Federal Police)

John Tanti	2016-2017
Mark Ney	2015-2016
Greg Harrigan	2013-2015
Paul Osbourne	2011-2013
Wayne Buchhorn	2009-2011
Denis McDermott	2007-2009
Will Jamieson	2005-2007
Sandi Peisley	2004-2005
Ben McDevitt	2003-2004

Combined Task Force Commanders

(Australian Defence Force)

LTCOL Brenton Gasteen	2012-2013
LTCOL Campbell Smith	2011-2012
LTCOL Paul Landford	2010-2011
LTCOL David Thompson	2009-2010
LTCOL Neil Grimes	2009
LTCOL Russell Lowes	2008-2009
LTCOL Glen Weir	2008
LTCOL Mark Flanagan	2008
LTCOL Stephen Coggin	2007-2008
LTCOL Ian Upjohn	2007
LTCOL Peter Connor	2007
LTCOL Rowan Martin	2006-2007
LTCOL Jeffrey Quirk	2006
LTCOL Andrew Gallaway	2006
MAJ Rohan Jayawardena	2005-2006
MAJ Jonathon Heap	2005
MAJ Darren Wright	2005
MAJ Martin May	2004-2005
MAJ Michel Gallegos	2004
LTCOL John Hutcheson	2004
LTCOL Quentin Flowers	2003-2004
LTCOL John Frewen	2003

Development Coordinators

(AusAID)

Jane Lake	2012-2013
Paul Kelly	2007-2010
Blair Excel	2006-2007
Catherine Walker	2004-2006
Margret Thomas	2003

