

**AUSTRALIA-PAPUA NEW GUINEA EMERGING
LEADERS DIALOGUE**

OUTCOMES REPORT

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Australia-Papua New Guinea Emerging Leaders Dialogue: Outcomes report

The Lowy Institute for International Policy hosted the inaugural Australia-Papua New Guinea Emerging Leaders Dialogue on 26 November 2013. The Dialogue was convened with the support of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and was an initiative that arose from the 2012 Papua New Guinea-Australia Ministerial Forum. Twenty-two emerging leaders from Papua New Guinea and Australia participated in the Dialogue.

The Dialogue focused on four main themes:

- (1) Growing the economy and attracting investment in the Asian Century
- (2) Politics and accountability – new expectations
- (3) National infrastructure challenges – new approaches
- (4) Reform and innovations in the delivery of health and education services

Participants proposed a number of ways people-to-people relations between Australia and Papua New Guinea could be expanded. They also agreed to establish an online forum to continue to exchange ideas and cooperate on new initiatives that will increase mutual understanding, develop small business cooperation and support communities in Papua New Guinea.

The following provides a summary of the discussion at the Dialogue. The report is written on a non-attributable basis. An Outcomes Statement that was presented to the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon Julie Bishop MP, by the co-chairs of the Dialogue at an event following the formal discussion is attached as an Annex.

Growing the economy and attracting investment in the Asian Century

Australia and Papua New Guinea face common challenges in managing the decline of a long resources boom and asserting our place in an increasingly globalised economy. The economies of both countries have many similarities. Resources and agriculture dominate in the export profiles of Australia and Papua New Guinea. Like Papua New Guinea, Australia relies heavily on imports of manufactured goods and pharmaceuticals.

Although Australia and Papua New Guinea are at different levels of development, both face a similar test – balancing their economies. Channelling revenue from mining into other national priorities is proving difficult.

The Asian Century and China

A key focus of discussion was the ways in which Papua New Guinea and Australia could attract investment from the rising economies of Asia. Both regulatory inconsistencies and social reluctance were identified as key barriers here. It was noted that while a number of challenges remain, Asian investors in Papua New Guinea were rapidly adapting to the local environment and often outperforming their Australian counterparts in flexibility, responsiveness and compliance with environmental standards.

Participants noted that China's economic influence in Papua New Guinea, as in Australia, was growing. The PNG government was pursuing deeper economic ties with China. The PGK6 billion loan facility that Prime Minister O'Neill's government negotiated with China was meant to provide a funding source for major infrastructure projects. But it is not clear how or whether PNG would be able to access the full extent of this loan facility.

Public attitudes in Papua New Guinea towards China and Chinese businesses were changing. There was still evidence of some local hostility towards Chinese businesses, including in Bougainville. But the behaviour of Chinese companies in Papua New Guinea was improving. They were learning how to work with local communities and doing it better than in the past. For Papua New Guineans, dealing with Chinese companies was not so different from dealing with Australian or other foreign companies. A number of SMEs were now choosing to source supplies from China rather than Australia. Australian goods were less competitive and there were signs of a wider shift in sourcing. Chinese companies had established good links with rural trade store owners. There was a risk, however, that all local retail and service deliverers would eventually be owned by Asian companies, crowding out Papua New Guinean small business owners.

While there have been suspicions and concerns about Asian investment in PNG, particularly in logging, this is likely to dissipate over time. Asian companies have begun to outperform Australian companies on issues like environmental compliance and social responsibility. They are also quick to respond to community concerns, admitting wrong-doing and compensating before problems grow, whereas Australian companies were perceived to be slower in responding to problems or taking responsibility for environmental damage.

In Australia, the Lowy Institute's annual public opinion polling showed persistently negative perceptions of China. Australians were nervous about levels of Chinese investment and perceived China as a military threat.

Resources industry and rural development

Participants noted that most rural development initiatives in Papua New Guinea were based around mining projects, palm oil and logging. Most of these projects were foreign-owned. This meant that Papua New Guineans were largely not participating in the development of the nation.

Papua New Guinea had for the most part developed good relationships with mining companies. But regulation of the resources sector was not strong. Many mining companies, including Australian companies, did not apply the standards of their home countries to their operations in Papua New Guinea.

A major difficulty for rural people in Papua New Guinea was the lack of policy safeguards for vulnerable communities against natural and human-inspired disasters. Compensation and handouts from foreign companies were making people lazy. Where there was no ownership, there was no sustainability.

Encouraging greater participation from young people in growing the economy and attracting investment will be critical. In that regard, increasing access to lending services was seen as important. Papua New Guinea's banking system could not meet the lending needs of the population. Much informal lending and borrowing takes place outside the banking system. Making better use of ICT services to improve lending services will be important if more rural people are to engage with the economy.

Approximately 85 per cent of Papua New Guinea's population lives in rural areas but government service delivery to rural communities was poor.

Agriculture

Agriculture was a sleeping giant for PNG. Developing the agriculture sector should be a national priority.

PNG's customary land ownership system provided a significant safety net against external shocks through guaranteeing access to food sources. But it also proved to be an obstacle for landowners seeking loans to establish businesses, as customary-owned land in Papua New Guinea could not be used as an asset in the formal financial system. Papua New Guinean farmers could currently earn a reliable living wage from agriculture. If Papua New Guineans could be confident of earning a living wage in agriculture, they could reduce their reliance on the customary land ownership safety net. The agricultural sector in Australia also had its problems. Half of all farmers do not earn a net return from farming after imputed labour costs.

The services sector in Australia was more important than agriculture. Services make up 70 per cent of the Australian economy. Small to medium enterprises provide many of these services. Interaction between small to medium enterprises, large industry and communities can be important in driving change.

Sustainable development

Unlike Australia, Papua New Guinea represented nations within a nation. PNG did not have a viable sustainable development policy. The government's *Vision2050* plan could be described as a 'happy document' which did not contain a sustainable development policy or provide any clear road-map for Papua New Guinean policy planners.

The mining industry was working on sustainable development policies but had a long way to go. The onus, however, should not be on investors but on Papua New Guinea to develop its own policies and regulations to guide sustainable development.

Investment

Negative and often incorrect international perceptions about Papua New Guinea put constraints on encouraging foreign investment. Such perceptions were skewed by statistics and unfortunate news stories and are unlikely to shift until pioneering companies invested and changed them. ExxonMobil's decision to invest in LNG, for example, changed international perceptions about Papua New Guinea and encouraged other companies to invest.

Businesses could make better efforts to publicise their successes in PNG. An Australia-based company, Business Advantage International, publishes magazines and online material on business success stories in Papua New Guinea, which is helping to balance out the negative perceptions of the country.

The *sovereign wealth fund* was as important as ExxonMobil's LNG project in informing investor views of Papua New Guinea.

Politics and accountability – new expectations

Politics

In Australia there was increased apathy amongst youth towards politicians but not political issues. Membership of traditional political parties was low but membership of political advocacy groups such as GetUp was growing. This disengagement of youth is essentially an indication that young people feel political parties are not listening to them. Politics tends to be dominated by rich white men in Australia and in PNG by men who claim Melanesian ‘big man’ status and this created a degree of disengagement.

Political accountability was generally strong in Australia but lacked the vigour of the United States. Australia benefitted from a media which had a strong interest in politics. When politicians know they are being watched and judged, they will seek to improve their behaviour. For example, the knowledge that what happens during the Federal Parliament’s Question Time is broadcast live and will feature on evening television news forced politicians to attend. Media revelations about federal politicians’ claims on public monies for private activities forced the politicians to repay money and changed their behaviour. Making the connection between decision-makers and people’s awareness of those decisions as strong as possible is fundamental to a democracy.

Participants were concerned that the quality of democracy has been declining in PNG. The parliamentary Opposition was small – numbering only five members of parliament at the time the Dialogue was held – and unable to hold the government to account. It could not lead the kind of debate on legislation that was required and this risked abuse of process as the government did not face much scrutiny. Government members of parliament tend to become project managers of district funding programs rather than legislators because this offers more direct engagement with their communities and opportunities to prove they can deliver. Citizens have forgotten about the supporting pillars of democracy which now operate on the periphery and instead focus on politicians’ activities. For example, during the January 2011-12 political dispute between Prime Minister O’Neill and former Prime Minister Somare, the public debate focused on the personalities of the two leaders rather than the legal and constitutional questions that were at the heart of the dispute.

Politicians sought to disparage the role of the media and anti-corruption bodies in Papua New Guinea, which undermined their important role in supporting a vibrant democracy. This was a particular problem because the role of media and civil society in holding the government to account was even more critical now while the parliamentary Opposition was weak. Targeting individual politicians was unlikely to succeed in fostering a better quality of democracy but reforming the ‘macro-democratic’ environment held more promise.

Politics operated differently in Australia and Papua New Guinea. Australian voters were concerned about their back pocket but voted based on the indirect benefits of policies put forward by political parties. Papua New Guinean voters were more concerned about the direct benefits on offer from individual politicians. Australian politicians had to focus more on explaining policies to voters than their PNG counterparts, who focused more on what they could deliver directly to communities. But both faced competitive electorates and had to work hard to be re-elected.

While people in urban areas in PNG had contact with government, it was important to remember that most people in rural areas had no exposure to government. Their experience of government tended only to coincide with general elections, held every five years. Politicians were elected from the sphere of the village, which was consistent with most Papua New Guineans’ experience of living only within

a village, rather than a national context. But voters found it difficult to hold their representatives to account when they went to Port Moresby because the national sphere was so big and complex. Individual Members of Parliament simply took power away from the villages.

While increased connectivity, mobile phones and social media could go some way to improving knowledge about the activities of Members of Parliament, it was no replacement for their spending more time in the districts they represented. Some participants argued more control over funding health and education should be handed to the village level, as it was to state governments and to some remote area authorities in Australia.

Corruption

Participants from Papua New Guinea were very concerned about levels of corruption in their country. They felt Papua New Guinea politicians usually escaped responsibility for their misuse of public funds. There was a cultural component to public acceptance of corruption. Papua New Guineans had grown used to the phenomenon and were largely tolerant of it. It was important for people opposed to corruption to make their concerns better known.

Participants debated ways to address corruption in Papua New Guinea. Some participants believed Australian authorities could do more to assist in investigations of Papua New Guinean citizens investing ill-gotten gains in Australia. Creative solutions could also be deployed to help people engage with the issue. For example, a comedy ‘mockumentary’ television series about corruption in a fictional setting in Afghanistan had succeeded in getting Afghans talking about the extent of corruption.

Media

The media landscape in Papua New Guinea was changing rapidly with the arrival of social media. The ability of Papua New Guineans to access Facebook on their mobile phones had transformed national conversations. Mobile phone network provider Digicel had recognised this and was launching its own news website. But as internet penetration is still low, traditional media continued to be important.

The fast-changing political landscape offered an opportunity for social media and for traditional media in Papua New Guinea. Media was no longer a resource-intensive industry. The fact that big institutions no longer controlled the public message was a big change. The proliferation of mobile phones and growth of 3G allowed more people to interact with each other. People living in rural or remote areas now had an opportunity to guide what the media does. Social media presented an opportunity for everyone to get their message into the public sphere.

Australian perceptions of Papua New Guinea

Australian public perceptions of Papua New Guinea were very narrowly based. Media reporting on PNG focused on mining, corruption and a limited number of other issues like crime and sorcery. It was very difficult for journalists to sell a Melanesia story. Even serious investigative programs like the ABC’s Four Corners struggled to promote PNG stories.

Participants discussed how these perceptions could be altered. Promoting Papua New Guinea literature, arts and sports in Australian schools and universities was one way to capture attention. Using creative media like film and television to portray Papua New Guinean characters could also assist.

National infrastructure challenges – new approaches

Building essential infrastructure was a major issue for both Papua New Guinea and Australia. In Papua New Guinea the lack of national infrastructure affected investment, government services and community development. Roads, bridges, wharves, jetties, government buildings and utilities infrastructure were all essential to ensure services were delivered. Responsibility for infrastructure was divided in PNG. The national government managed high-cost national roads like the highlands highway. Provincial roads were mostly funded and maintained by provincial governments.

The cost of building and maintaining infrastructure in PNG's difficult terrain was high. Responsibility for the transport sector was split across a number of agencies, which did not coordinate to deliver infrastructure services. A number of provinces were accessible only by air and rural airstrips required heavy maintenance. There were no clear government guidelines for infrastructure spending, which unfortunately enhanced the opportunities for politicians to engage in pork-barrelling. The procurement process was complicated. The government requirement to obtain three quotes for contracted work was unrealistic in remote areas. While foreign aid played an invaluable role in supporting infrastructure building, the nature of aid program requirements meant that technical staff were often pulled away from important work to write reports for donors.

If all the infrastructure plans on the government's agenda were implemented it would be unaffordable. There was a need for more advanced thinking on developing infrastructure in Papua New Guinea.

The Australian government's post global financial crisis stimulus package was aimed at investing in infrastructure within Australia. The global economic slowdown gave Australian authorities an opportunity to review inefficiencies in transport. Infrastructure Australia was created in 2008 to review and assist governments and companies plan investment decisions.

Australia and PNG are both island nations that rely on sea lanes for trade in goods. Infrastructure bottlenecks in Australia were costly and degraded Australia's competitiveness. Inefficiencies and higher costs in shipping in Australia, as in Papua New Guinea, meant shipping companies pass on costs to consumers. The work of Infrastructure Australia, including in its port strategy, has shown that consultative planning between governments and companies can help avoid hasty and poor-quality investment decisions.

Agreements between mining companies, government and communities in Papua New Guinea usually refer to infrastructure and development. Memoranda of Agreements could be structured to ensure mining companies take direct responsibility for maintaining local infrastructure rather than channelling funding through the government. This would help to ensure better maintenance of infrastructure as mining companies have vested interests in this; governments do not.

Although foreign investment in infrastructure was highly sought after, there was some capacity within Papua New Guinea to fund national infrastructure. Papua New Guinea's two major superannuation funds, NASFUND and Nambawan Super were large, highly concentrated pools of wealth. There was a strong drive in financial circles in Papua New Guinea to make infrastructural and socially responsible investments in Papua New Guinea, which represented a paradigm shift for investors, who had previously focused on safer investments abroad. A big issue for the funds going forward was liquidity.

Impact of climate

Decisions on building infrastructure have traditionally been based on the assumption that future climate will be the same as past climate. Environmental consultants were increasingly looking at the effects of climate on infrastructure. In Queensland cyclones, flooding and storm surges had devastated infrastructure, caused loss of life and billions of dollars in damage to property. The response of both the state and citizens was to rebuild but they largely missed the opportunity to factor in new information about changing climatic conditions to this task. In Papua New Guinea, much of the Department of Works' infrastructure budget was spent on emergency repair, rather than maintenance or adaptation work that took account of the climate.

Governments in Australia were trying to identify and increase resilience for infrastructure at risk. Taking resilience into account in the construction of new infrastructure minimises the costs of emergency works and maintenance requirements. Local governments usually bore the greatest responsibility for maintaining infrastructure but often did not have good knowledge of the risks they faced or the adaptation options they had.

Both Australia and Papua New Guinea lagged behind other national best practice in managing climate risk to infrastructure. The United Kingdom and New Zealand, for example, were further ahead in managing climate risk to infrastructure and populations, and both Australia and Papua New Guinea could learn from them. Papua New Guinea has acknowledged the need to adapt to climate change but has not resourced government agencies appropriately.

Data collection

Problems with data collection presented particular problems in Papua New Guinea. It was impossible to design appropriate and resilient infrastructure without relevant data. In the health sector, there are variances with data collected by national and provincial governments, hampering effective planning. Foreign investors have withdrawn from potential major infrastructure investments in PNG because of the lack of reliable data.

Reform and innovations in the delivery of health and education services

Poor data on Papua New Guinea's demographics was a major constraint on developing effective education and health policies. There were very serious gaps in delivery of health and education services in rural Papua New Guinea. Capacity building for local people to provide services in rural areas was important. A large number of rural education and health services have been closed because teachers and health workers not from the local area were quick to leave when infrastructure failings or law and order problems arose. Ownership at a local level also brought more effective oversight.

Education

Participants raised concerns about the Papua New Guinea government's decision to provide free primary education. Although the decision was good in theory, it had created further problems for a sector already under enormous strain. Many schools in rural areas lacked the resources they needed and the government was failing to supply them. Demand for education rose when the government abolished fees and class sizes grew. Student-to-teacher ratios were far too high. There were not enough teachers and retaining teachers in remote areas was problematic. The teaching of English was

inadequate, resulting in students being poorly equipped for further education or employment. The number of spaces at universities and colleges was also low for a country of PNG's size.

The provision of free education made it more difficult to develop community engagement and ownership, which was an important element of oversight. An opportunity cost of more children going to school in rural areas was a decline in household agricultural income as children were no longer at home to help their parents with agricultural work. This was a difficult trade-off.

While the Papua New Guinea government lacked capacity at a national level to deliver services, it supported the functions of provincial and local governments. Improvements in service delivery had been achieved through reforms to inter-government financing. Churches were very effective deliverers of education and health services and were supported financially by the government to continue their work. Mining companies assumed responsibility for delivering education and health services in districts where they operated and they coordinated with government in this task. The mining industry also provided scholarships.

Improving internet services would be a boon to the education sector in PNG as access to international sources would enable teachers to keep up with international education standards.

Greater accountability was required to ensure government monies were being spent in the way the government claimed. An online mechanism called 'rate my school' being used in The Philippines, where parents and students volunteered to carry out audits of schools to publish online, was raised as potentially useful for adaptation in Papua New Guinea.

Beyond formal schooling, the use of creative media was an important tool in promoting understanding and educating people. In Australia there are regulations about levels of Australian content in broadcasting, which encouraged producers to reflect Australian identity. Making local content could create heroes and aspirational targets and assist with nation-building, in both Papua New Guinea and Australia.

Health

There were also insufficient health workers in Papua New Guinea. There is one medical school in PNG, which takes only 40 students a year. More nursing colleges were required.

Non-government organisations and community-based organisations also played an important role in supporting health services. Non-government organisations like Susu Mamas, which supports breastfeeding mothers and maternal and child care receives funding from the Department of Health and from the Australian government. But despite their successes and widespread demand for their services, their capacity is also strained. Rural mothers who had volunteered to help their community wanted formal employment and the organisation has limited funds, a situation common to many community-based organisations.

Participants noted that Australia's health sector also had problems. Government spending on health care in Australia was unsustainable. A growing and an ageing population and a shortage of healthcare professionals were major issues in the sector. Australia would not be able to maintain the healthcare system it provides today into the future. Innovation and improvements were essential.

Whilst Australia's health sector was different from Papua New Guinea's, both faced challenges in providing health care in rural communities. For Australia these are particularly significant amongst remote Aboriginal communities, where some of the challenges mirror those in rural Papua New

Guinea. Some of the lessons learned from delivering health services in Aboriginal Australia showed that community-controlled health organisations were better able to adapt to community needs. Locally trained doctors and health professionals were important in delivering community health.

Although applying health models that work in developed countries to the Papua New Guinea context was not straightforward and sometimes inappropriate, there are emerging cheap technologies that could be applied and lessons learned internationally that could be readily adapted in Papua New Guinea, without the need for foreign health professionals to share their knowledge in person. For example, Papua New Guinea's health professionals could benefit from accessing Free Open Access Medication education, a continually expanding database of medical resources online.

Gender-based violence

Gender-based violence was a major constraint on development in Papua New Guinea. Community education that focused on prevention of such violence was rare. Social marketing that sought to change behaviour had to be partnered with community-based long-term education programs.

Expanding people-to-people relationships

When Australian and Papua New Guinea ministers agreed in December 2012 that Australia should host an annual Emerging Leaders Dialogue, they intended that this enhance and promote people-to-people links in a new generation of Australians and Papua New Guineans. Participants at the Dialogue considered how people-to-people links could be expanded.

PNG students who studied in Australia at any level have developed friendships with Australians that have endured. This is particularly true of Papua New Guineans who went to high school in Australia. Enabling connections between children at a young age is as important as university scholarships in developing better mutual understanding. For example, using children's literature to promote reading stories about Papua New Guinea can start at a young age.

There were opportunities for small businesses in both countries to share expertise and cooperate on services projects. This kind of cooperation was already underway between companies represented by two of the participants. Developing more networking opportunities for small to medium enterprises would be helpful in this regard.

Cooperation between similar sized non-government organisations, where skills and expertise were shared on the basis of an equal partnership, could also pay dividends in expanding connections amongst young people from both countries. This model was already working for a non-government organisation that one of the Papua New Guinean participants represented.

While there was already cooperation between universities in Australia and Papua New Guinea, there was room for more personal connections in the tertiary sector where individual emerging leading students and academics were able to be in regular touch with Australian counterparts.

The electronic media sector offered some opportunities for bilateral collaboration. Digital partnerships between Australian and Papua New Guinea outlets could assist newsgathering on both sides.

Bringing together the various leadership initiatives, dialogues and conferences underway in both countries could help with reducing duplication of effort.

Participants agreed to establish an alumni group that would be responsible for sharing and implementing ideas for expanding people-to-people relationships between Australia and Papua New Guinea.

Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop participated in the closing reception for the Dialogue.

It is intended the Australia-Papua New Guinea Emerging Leaders Dialogue be an annual event.

Annex

Australia-Papua New Guinea Emerging Leaders Dialogue Outcomes Statement

26 November 2013

The Lowy Institute hosted 22 emerging leaders from Papua New Guinea and Australia for the inaugural Australia-Papua New Guinea Emerging Leaders Dialogue on 26 November 2013. The Dialogue was convened with the support of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and was an initiative that arose from the 2012 Papua New Guinea-Australia Ministerial Forum. It was agreed at the Forum that Australia would host an annual Emerging Leaders Dialogue to enhance and promote people-to-people links in a new generation of Australians and Papua New Guineans.

The Dialogue identified many commonalities between Australia and Papua New Guinea and proposed a range of new ways to build on and expand people-to-people links. Such links deliver benefits at a community, business and personal level and can also act as a ballast to sustain the official bilateral relationship through difficult times. Links should be built on cooperation and knowledge-sharing, with equality and partnership as the guiding dynamic.

The Dialogue was structured around four key themes:

Growing the economy and attracting investment in the Asian Century;
Politics and accountability – new expectations;
National infrastructure challenges – new approaches; and
Reform and innovations in the delivery of health and education services.

The wide-ranging and vibrant discussion revealed many common challenges faced by Australia and Papua New Guinea. These ranged from slowing growth in the resources sector, to infrastructural bottlenecks, the increasing economic and social burden imposed by the effects of climate change, the need to support investment and growth through improved data collection, and more stable regulatory and fiscal frameworks. Both countries face ongoing challenges in rural service delivery as well as rising public health bills from non-communicable diseases. Australia and Papua New Guinea both needed to do more to encourage young people to engage with the political system. These commonalities highlighted opportunities for Australians and Papua New Guineans to work together on shared challenges.

The Australia-Papua New Guinea relationship must move into a new era and be based on principles of equal partnership and camaraderie. Participants believed pervasive negative Australian perceptions of Papua New Guinea could be turned around. The use of creative media such as film, television and literature and the establishment of new two-way opportunities for young people to travel and work in Australia and Papua New Guinea would assist in increasing awareness about Papua New Guinea in Australia. More professional exchange programs, including programs in journalism, were important, and building university partnerships would provide long-term benefits.

The nature of political participation is changing in both countries, but disengagement with political parties is not necessarily translating to political apathy more broadly. In Australia, while party membership is declining, engagement with political issues via other forums was vibrant. The rise of social media and increasing connectivity was an opportunity to enable citizen journalism and promote the political participation of youth in both countries. In Papua New Guinea, however, care must be taken to ensure that modern forms of communication support rather than supplant traditional cultures.

Accountability was a mutual concern for Australia and Papua New Guinea. Participants suggested that failures in accountability stemmed from a lack of political responsiveness, and disengagement arose from groups and individuals feeling marginalised or ignored. The emerging leaders from Papua New Guinea shared further concern about the weakness of Papua New Guinea's five-member opposition and the ability of the current government to implement policies without adequate analysis of the consequences. Greater diversity and inclusiveness in politics was identified as a road to broader political engagement in Australia, Papua New Guinea and countries throughout the Pacific.

An important focus of discussion was the way in which Papua New Guinea and Australia could attract investment from the rising economies of Asia. Both regulatory inconsistencies and popular resistance to Chinese investment, in particular, are key barriers here. As both countries were facing a growth plateau in their previously booming resources sector, it is critical that new sources of sustainable growth are identified and embraced. Participants noted that Australia, much like Papua New Guinea, had failed to realise the full potential of its mineral resources boom, and that public revenues from the sector could have been invested more productively and efficiently in both cases.

Rural and remote communities needed to see more of the benefits of national economic growth, and resources sector-driven growth in particular. The immense gap between indigenous and non-indigenous health outcomes underlined the need for Australia to consider itself as facing a common challenge with Papua New Guinea. Both were tasked with developing more effective and more culturally tailored remote service delivery with greater local buy-in for rural and indigenous communities in particular; bilateral consultation could prove beneficial.

Both Australia and Papua New Guinea could benefit from learning from other countries' experience with regard to policy and infrastructure that is developed from a proactive, rather than reactive, approach to the rise in natural disasters and the environmental impacts of climate change.

There were already a number of good people-to-people links between Australia and Papua New Guinea and participants agreed it was important not to duplicate existing efforts in developing new links. A mechanism that linked the various existing people-to-people and leadership initiatives would assist in improving the relationship between Australia and Papua New Guinea and preventing duplication.

Participants agreed to establish an online forum to continue to exchange ideas and look at establishing new individual cooperative endeavours. It is hoped that the Australia-Papua New Guinea Emerging Leaders Dialogue will convene on an annual basis.

Jenny Hayward-Jones and Serena Sumanop, Co-Chairs

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jenny Hayward-Jones is Program Director of The Myer Foundation Melanesia Program at the Lowy Institute. Prior to joining the Lowy Institute Jenny was an officer in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade for thirteen years, serving in the Australian missions in Vanuatu and Turkey, where she was Deputy Head of Mission from 2004 to 2007. She worked as Policy Adviser to the Special Coordinator of the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands from its inception in July 2003 and in 2004 and was a member of the election monitoring team in Solomon Islands in 2001. Jenny holds a BA (Hons) in political science from Macquarie University and a Masters degree in International Relations from Monash University; her Masters thesis focused on governance and political change in Vanuatu.

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