



REGIONAL ASSISTANCE MISSION TO SOLOMON ISLANDS

MEDIA RELEASE

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Leading Solomon Islands with Melanesian values

Executive leaders from Correctional Services and across government have learnt new ways to fight corruption by bringing Melanesian experiences and values together with the values needed for good development.

Twenty-four senior executives from Corrections, Justice, Ministry Public Service, Police and Customs attended a four-day workshop in executive leadership run by Divine Word University, PNG. The course was a Correctional Service Solomon Islands initiative with support from Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI.

Outgoing Commissioner of Correctional Services, Barry Apsey, said the course was originally designed to meet the capacity development needs of Corrections, but was expanded to bring together leaders from different areas of government to learn together.

“Leading an organization can be challenging. The executive leaders’ workshop is an important opportunity to bring people from different areas of government who face similar challenges. Together they can share their ideas for developing their organizations,” Mr Apsey said.

Course facilitator, Dr Alfred Tivinarlik from Divine Word University, said the course explored community values versus government systems, and how to get the best development outcomes for Solomon Islands.

“The course is based on recognizing and building on good values: the values we need for development,” Dr Tivinarlik said.

“We take values from the community, values that make organizations run well, values of leadership, and learn how to bring them all together.”

Current Deputy Commissioner of Corrections, Francis Haisoma, who will be taking over the Commissioner role in November, said enforcing discipline and standards was an important part of leading an organization.

“As an organization, we need to look at our values, and live according to those values,” Mr Haisoma said.

Mr Haisoma said Corrections had spent a lot of time developing the capacity of its leadership.

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“We have a strong executive team, and with the assistance of RAMSI advisers we will continue to move forward as an organization,” Mr Haisoma said.

Deputy Police Commissioner, Walter Kola, one of four police executives attending the course, said the course was of benefit in learning to recognize cultural values and Melanesia leadership styles.

“We want to develop best practice and how to stand strong and make fair decisions,” Mr Kola said.

“You can’t disconnect the wantok system; but you can’t undermine organizational practice.’

Dr Tivinarlik said if Melanesian countries use the community way to develop the country, they will never develop.

“The whole of Solomon Islands must benefit, not just individuals,” Dr Tivinarlik said.

“We don’t tell people what to do. We help them find solutions, clarify where the tensions are so that they are informed when they have to make choices as leaders.”

Participants said another benefit from the workshop was meeting other leaders who face the same challenges.

“Executives can talk together about their experiences, instances where people ask them for money, we talked about using values to get through this process,” Mr Kola said.

“We have to take these things on ourselves, and then we need to teach them to others,” Mr Kola said.

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