



OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL COORDINATOR

REGIONAL ASSISTANCE MISSION TO SOLOMON ISLANDS

MEDIA RELEASE

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RAMSI a Model of Regional Cooperation

RAMSI's new Special Coordinator, Mr Graeme Wilson, has described the Regional Assistance Mission as an excellent example of regional cooperation.

Mr Wilson made the remarks while welcoming the Prime Ministers of four of RAMSI's 15 contributing countries today.

The four leaders, who were briefed at the mission's headquarters on the outskirts of the Solomon Islands capital, Honiara, comprised the current Chair of the Pacific Islands Forum, the Premier of Niue, Mr Toke Talagi as well as the Prime Ministers of New Zealand, Samoa and Cook Islands. Also in attendance at the briefing were the Foreign Ministers of New Zealand and Cook Islands.

Mr Wilson, an experienced Australian diplomat who took over the reins of the mission on 15 January, told the four leaders that their presence at the base today provided testimony to the regional nature of RAMSI which is the mission's underlying strength.

"RAMSI is a partnership between Solomon Islands, RAMSI and the Pacific Islands Forum," Mr Wilson said.

Mr Wilson said the oversight of this partnership by the Pacific Islands Forum had provided an extremely valuable mechanism to resolve issues as they arose and to keep the partnership moving forward in a constructive and cooperative way.

"The regional nature of RAMSI also enables the mission to draw from the diverse cultures and experience of the 15 contributing countries.

"Achieving RAMSI's mission to restore Solomon Islands as a peaceful, well-governed and prosperous nation requires hard work and generosity of spirit. That spirit very much underpins the philosophy behind RAMSI – the idea of a region coming together to help a neighbour in its time of need."

Mr Wilson said that the close working partnership between the Pacific Islands Forum, the Solomon Islands Government and RAMSI is the result of the goodwill and perseverance of many. He asked the leaders to carry RAMSI's message of heartfelt thanks back to their people for the service they have provided to RAMSI, Solomon Islanders and the region.

"Over the past five and a half years, thousands of police, military and civilian personnel from across the region have served with RAMSI and worked side by side with Solomon Islanders. I sincerely thank your countrymen and women for their personal contribution to the Solomon Islands-RAMSI partnership. Whether through

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carrying out their daily duties as advisers to the Solomon Islands Government; by mentoring Solomon Islands public servants; or by closely interacting with the Solomon Islands community, the individual efforts of those who have worked for RAMSI have combined to make a great contribution to the success of this mission,” Mr Wilson said.

This collective effort has helped to ensure the ongoing strong public support for RAMSI within Solomon Islands and to make RAMSI a model of regional cooperation.

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