



2014 EMERGING PACIFIC LEADERS DIALOGUE

AUSTRALIAN STUDY TOUR





CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3
OUR STORY	3
Tour Group visits Sydney	4
Theme: Environment and Economic Development	4
Tour Group visits Canberra.....	5
Theme: Good Governance.....	5
Tour Group visits Alice Springs	6
Theme: Stability and Strengthening Communities.....	6
Theme: Health and Education	7
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	7
THE AUSTRALIAN STUDY TOUR OHANA FOR 2014	8
OUR SINCEREST ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	8
AUSTRALIAN STUDY TOUR ENGAGEMENTS	9



INTRODUCTION

Australia is one of the most culturally diverse societies in the world. Almost a quarter of Australian residents were born outside of the country and many more are children and grandchildren of recently arrived migrants and refugees.

These multitudes of backgrounds, together with the culture of Indigenous Australians who have lived on the island continent for more than 50,000 years, have helped to create the unique Australian identity and spirit. It has also brought about challenges with cultural cohesion and social harmony for many years.

OUR STORY

The Australian Study Tour for 2014 was based on the Hawaiian word *ohana*, this meaning family, and family meaning no one gets left behind. Bringing together eleven esteemed individuals from around the Pacific, our team navigated what has been a life-changing experience. Our *ohana* leaves behind **our story** of EPLD 2014.

Story telling lies at the heart of Australian Indigenous culture. For thousands of years stories have been handed down from generation to generation. Stories have allowed the world's oldest and continuing culture to understand the land, customs and history.

So, in this light, today, we would like to share our story with you. A story about purpose, people and passion.

It began when we, a group of young leaders from the Pacific, went on an adventure through Australia. On our journey we discovered achievements and uncovered challenges on issues including the environment, economic development, good governance, leadership, security, stability and strengthening communities.

Covering both big cities and rural towns, together we questioned, conversed, laughed and learned as we examined leadership that might - or might not - be suitable to better navigate our future together.

The best place to start is *not* always the beginning. You see, midway through our voyage Australia lost a significant political figure with the passing of former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. As a nation mourned, we were humbled, yet inspired, by what we heard in Parliament in the nation's capital that memorable day.

The current Prime Minister and other parliamentarians expressed their condolences and sympathies whilst reflecting on Whitlam's leadership. Despite Mr Whitlam only being in power for three years, his leadership and legacy stretched well beyond that and he redefined the country. As Opposition Leader, Bill Shorten said, "*he changed the lives of a generation and generations to come*".

Great leaders need to be great thinkers. And great thinkers are those who consider not only the needs of today but the needs of the future. On our journey we saw many displays of sustainability in action and the crucial issue we have in modern society around how we can live in a sustainable manner. We heard how the principles of sustainability have been used at different levels of Australian society. The key behind all these initiatives whether at grass roots or above is portrayed as purpose driven or visionary leadership.

Upon arrival in Australia we first landed in Sydney.



Tour Group visits Sydney

Theme: Environment and Economic Development

The Australian Study Tour Group was privileged and fortunate to visit a number of private enterprises in the Sydney area. These visits were important as they highlighted some of the challenges which local businesses face in changing climates whether it be environment or economical. This part of the report will address a few of these challenges and some suggested solutions by referring to two case studies.

Case Study One – Country Valley Farm

The Country Valley Farm is a family enterprise located an hour's drive south of Sydney and ownership of the farm dates back six generations of the Fairley family. Following the Federal Government deregulation of the Dairy Industry, Farmer John decided to invest in a milk production plant in 2004. As a result of this investment, the family farm struggled financially, nearly going bankrupt and Farmer John was led to look at cost-cutting measures. One of these measures included discontinuing the use of chemicals such as fertilizers and pesticides on the farm and turning to the use of organic products. The impact of this one action actually reversed the farm's fortunes. The worms and insects returned, increasing the carbon in the soil, and the farm lands and vegetation grew healthier again. This directly impacted the cattle stock as it increased the quality of milk produced. The milk was bottled and sold as is with no added preservatives. Due to this organic quality, the customers were willing to buy the milk at the price offered with little complaint thus creating a market for the farm's produce. Farmer John also changed to a renewable energy, hydro electricity company which didn't attract a carbon tax as the farm was not polluting and this had a cost reduction of 15%. Again, going green was proving more cost effective! As a result, money started to flow into the business again which reinvested to adopt other sustainable practices such as introducing their own solar energy thus gradually reducing reliance on the main power grid. The Fairley family didn't realize it at the time but by adopting sustainable environmental practices, Country Valley actually increased in economic productivity.

Case Study Two – Veolia Woodland Bioreactor

The second case study which we would like to refer to is Veolia Woodland Bioreactor. Our visit to the Veolia Woodland bioreactor highlighted Australia's leading role in the Pacific in terms of the use of innovative technologies as well as its uniqueness in managing waste. The bio-reactor was unique in that it was located on an old, 80m deep mine site and the project was focused on rehabilitating that un-used site sustainably.

Public private partnership was evident in the management and operations of the bioreactor with the involvement of the government paying for waste removal from Sydney to the mine site.

The company sorted waste materials; recycled materials from organic and non-biodegradable materials. Organic and non-biodegradable waste were taken to the bioreactor where innovative technologies were harnessed to extract the biogas from the organic waste and the non-biodegradable materials were then used to rehabilitate the mine by filling it up. Heat generated in the process was then used to heat ponds to grow fish and vegetables in an aquaculture and hydroponics system.

Veolia engaged the surrounding community in their monitoring of the odours from the mines and thus they were accountable to the community. The company also had a community fund to support community development and build capacity in terms of innovative sustainable technologies in the community.

Veolia's business strategies and activities are founded on principles of ecologically sustainable development and thus they are the leaders in this area.



After a brief flight from Sydney, we arrived in Australia's capital, Canberra. The first day in Canberra was a memorable one because we were present in Parliament when condolences were given for the late Gough Whitlam. Australia has produced some exemplary leaders in the likes of the late Gough Whitlam and former Prime Ministers.

Tour Group visits Canberra

Theme: Good Governance

Our visits to the following places in Canberra and the leaders we met from government, cultural and sports organizations helped shape our perspectives of leadership and good governance:

- Australian Institute of Sports
- Australian Sports Commission
- Independent MP, Cathy McGowan
- Parliament session on the life of Gough Whitlam
- Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- Governor General, Sir Peter Cosgrove
- National Portrait Gallery

We were able to questions about how they led their teams, departments and communities; if, and how, they were being transparent, accountable and inclusive; and if they had a succession plan to lead their team to greater statures. A summary of what we witnessed, experienced and learned is highlighted in these paragraphs.

Good leaders whether in sport, the political arena, cultural or religious sphere are trailblazers making a path for others to follow. Great leaders, however inspire people to reach higher, dream bigger and achieve greater. The ability to inspire people to reach great heights of performance and success is a skill that leaders need. Passion, purpose, humility, respect, courage and the will to listen are just some characteristics that make a great leader. Perhaps the most important leadership skill a leader can develop is the ability to provide inspiration to your team, your community, your people, your 'ohana' or family. If you can inspire them to reach for the stars, they just might bring you the moon.

Throughout our tour, we met and spoke with many inspirational leaders from all walks of life and learned about those whose leadership impacted on the landscape of Australia. Through them, we were able to get a glimpse of their successful leadership styles.

There were also lessons learned through the eyes of the women leaders that we met and spoke with. Strong women who showed confidence, and courage to navigate their leadership journey in their different settings. Listening to Cathy McGowan, Australian MP, talk about her own leadership was quite a humbling experience. As she said, *"It's not what you do, it's how you do it. A leader must have a clear vision, always begin with the end in mind. Understand power and authority. Know your power and where it comes from"*.

We felt Cathy McGowan, and the following women, are good role models for aspiring and emerging women leaders, and especially young girls:

Cathy Freeman, Australian Olympic Gold medalist said, *"I enjoy being a role model and a woman. It all comes down to having the confidence of who you are."*



Kylie Bonanni, Deputy Mayor of Alice Springs said, *“The stronger women become, the stronger girls will become. If you are going to do something, give it 100%. Don’t give up.”*

We also saw the importance of leadership and recognizing the crucial role it has in building a society. As Senator Bonner, Australia’s first Aboriginal Senator said, *“We’ve got to come together, that’s what we want, as one people. We’re all Australians regardless of your ethnic background, political beliefs or religious beliefs, we are all one.”*

In the true spirit of leadership, and the tradition of the Commonwealth Study Conference (CSC) and Emerging Pacific Leaders Dialogue (EPLD), we were fortunate to receive assistance from CSC and EPLD alumni to help guide our Canberra experience.

Through meetings with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), we still see that within Pacific Island Countries, there are only a little over 6% of Pacific women parliamentarians, quite low compared to the global average of 20%.

On their work with governance and women’s empowerment, one senior DFAT official shared, *“It’s not just women’s leadership but leadership that works for women.”*

While we don’t necessarily see their visibility, women are leading our families, communities and countries.

At the end of our Canberra tour with high level officials, sports leaders and Indigenous researchers, we take away reflections on good governance and leadership of hope, vision, determination, resilience, trust, responsibility and humility.

Whilst the issue of security was not specifically discussed, it was exhibited obviously while in the Australian capital. Recent events and threats to Australian Government officials and public servants in general resulted in an increased security threat to the country. This included a visual external presence of Federal Police and tight security measures upon entering Parliament House, with further screenings when going into actual Parliament.

After driving back to Sydney, we boarded another flight and flew to Australia’s red centre, and the most geographically central rural town of Alice Springs.

Tour Group visits Alice Springs

Theme: Stability and Strengthening Communities

A 20-minute drive away from the Alice Springs airport, our study tour visited the Centre of Appropriate Technology (CAT). In trying to strengthen communities, CAT houses a pivotal project called *Bushlight* which is founded on providing renewable and sustainable housing for remote Aboriginal communities. With the aim of building capacity for Aboriginal communities, CAT assists in maintaining their housing infrastructures with renewable materials that ensure their longevity. With material such as solar panels and life-time kitchenettes, this encourages Aboriginal communities to not only live on country but to thrive on country.

Alice Springs provided us with the unique opportunity of sleeping under the stars in swags and exploring the outback. Again there was a focus on communities and how they are able to operate in remote areas without heavy reliance on infrastructure.



We witnessed people living off the land for food and medicinal use and we discovered their formula that has proved successful thousands of years. "*We only kill the animals that we see a lot of, don't eat everything you see.*" This showed the thinking of leaving behind enough for the next generation to grow and nurture.

We visited the Titjikala community where there was a clear strategy to develop and build the community. The Women's Center aimed to support elderly people as well as young children. Capacity building in the community meant there was employment opportunities that coexisted alongside the various centres, and this in turn meant community participation was very high. We witnessed the environment that supported people to produce art and learnt that the funds raised for their sales were shared between the artist and the centre - with the artist getting 60% of income and 40% going back into the sustainability of the Art Centre.

Theme: Health and Education

Batchelor Institute is a dual sector tertiary education provider that seeks to address the education gaps for Indigenous and Torres Strait Islanders. Access to education for Indigenous people through Batchelor has meant learning that is aligned to the needs of their communities and integration of their own Indigenous pedagogies. Education is a fundamental priority that communities need in order to grow, self diagnose and, where required, provide solutions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Australia is a leader in the Pacific in many areas, such as technological innovation and environmental sustainability, however cultural integration needs to become more of a focus for Australians so they can also be a model of social cohesion within the Pacific.

Many Australian leaders have vision but more must adopt sustainable best practices based on good governance principles. They must be able to communicate well with others to ensure their message is not only heard but understood and shared.

We longed to see more cross-pollination of excellence, so when Australian communities see something that works they share it with others and build capacity across the nation more effectively.

Inspired and completely committed to take our learnings from our Australian adventure, we are now motivated to use our individual voices, creativity and positions of growing leadership over the next 20 years to implement real changes in our own communities.

The learning from this experiential tour has paved a way for us to network with each other in effecting change in the societies each of us come from. There are many challenges in store, but we won't give up easily as we know that our commitment to achieving change is driven by our passion. We have vowed to continue our dialogue as we will need each other's thoughts, ideas and constructive feedback to empower us to be more effective. We believe that as ohana, we need to keep our fire burning, likewise in leadership we need all our strengths combined together to change our societies for the better.



THE AUSTRALIAN STUDY TOUR OHANA FOR 2014

- ☒ Veronica Ng Lam – New Zealand (Group Leader)
- ☒ Bianca Crocker – Australia (Liaison Officer)
- ☒ Logan Munro – New Zealand
- ☒ Donald Kerslake – Samoa (all around the world)
- ☒ Shalom Akao – Solomon Islands
- ☒ Donna Hoerder - Fiji
- ☒ Jimmy Gnai – New Caledonia
- ☒ Diane Mirio – Papua New Guinea
- ☒ Kodep Ogumoro-Uludong – Northern Mariana Islands
- ☒ Simona Kilei – Tuvalu
- ☒ Josie Jackson – Vanuatu

OUR SINCEREST ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- ☒ Commonwealth Study Conferences (Australia), including Mr Richard Warburton, Chairman
- ☒ Pacific Leadership Foundation, including Ms Brenda Heather-Latu, Chair
- ☒ Emerging Leaders Pacific Dialogue including special mentions;
 - Conference Co-Chair, Her Royal Highness, The Princess Royal, Princess Anne
 - Conference Co-Chair, The Hon Edward Nipake Natapei MP
- ☒ *Australia Study Tour Committee and Coordinators:*
 - Mr Brian Pickett - also Chief Executive at Commonwealth Study Conferences (Australia)
 - Mr Glenn Peiris
 - Ms Omeima Sukkarieh
 - Ms Philippa Woodhill
 - Ms Kim Ralston
 - Mr John Huigen



AUSTRALIAN STUDY TOUR ENGAGEMENTS

- ☒ Gallipolli Mosque, Auburn
- ☒ Wali Fayazi and Family, Auburn
- ☒ Tip Top Bakeries, George Weston Foods Limited Group of Companies, Chullora, New South Wales
- ☒ Susan Skuodas, Executive Manager -Communications and Community Engagement , Sydney Olympic Park
- ☒ Carol Whittaker, ANZ Stadium, Sydney Olympic Park
- ☒ Dr. Chris Roberts, Chief Executive Officer/President and Ryan Carpenter, Senior Clinical Marketing Manager, Cochlear Limited, New South Wales
- ☒ University of Canberra Brumbies/Australian Sports Outreach Program, Australian Sports Commission
- ☒ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
 - Elizabeth Wilde, Pacific Regional Branch Secretary
 - Fiona Way, Pacific Women’s Parliamentary Program
 - Tracey Newbury, Director, Pacific Women Shaping Pacific Development
 - Dr Julien Barbara, Centre for Democratic Institutions, Australian National University
 - Stephen Deklin, Pacific Leadership Program
 - Nick Smith, Scholarship Program
- ☒ Cathy McGowan AO, MP Federal Member for Indi, Parliament House, Canberra
- ☒ Parliament House – House of Representatives, Gough Whitlam tribute
- ☒ John Paul Janke, Director Community & Public Relations, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
- ☒ Sir Peter Cosgrove, Australian Governor General, Government House, Canberra
- ☒ Lake Burley Griffin, Australians of the Year Walk and/or the Anzac Parade Walk and Tent Embassy
- ☒ National Portrait Gallery , King Edward Terrace, Parkes
- ☒ Henry Gundry, Environment and Operations Manager, Veolia Woodlawn Bio-reactor, Tarago, NSW
- ☒ John Fairley, Country Valley Farm, Picton, NSW
- ☒ Harold Furber, Aboriginal Leader & Chair, Desert Peoples Centre
- ☒ Peter Renehan, Centre for Appropriate Technology
- ☒ Kenny Croker, Board Member, Centre for Appropriate Technology
- ☒ Bruce Walker, CEO, Centre for Appropriate Technology
- ☒ Mike Crowe, Campus Director, Batchelor Institute
- ☒ Cameron Miller, General Manager, Ingkerreke Outstation Resource Centre
- ☒ Loy, Bush tucker walk and talk on ‘Country’
- ☒ Denise Johnson, Manager, Titjikala Women’s Centre and Community Centre, Titjikala, Northern Territory
- ☒ Titjikala Arts Centre, Titjikala, Northern Territory
- ☒ Deputy Mayor, Kylie Bonanni
- ☒ Chris Tudor, Headmaster, St Philips College
- ☒ Owen Cole, Director Yeperenye Shopping Centre
- ☒ Brad Bellette, Managing Director, Bellette Media
- ☒ His Worship The Mayor, Damien Ryan, Alice Springs
- ☒ Herman Lee, Assistant Manager Aurora Hotel, Alice Springs