

South Pacific Legal Assistance Matters

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The International Branch, Criminal Law and Security Division of the Attorney-General's Department is involved in helping Pacific states with continuing legal education, and mutual assistance in criminal and law enforcement matters.

Several projects are currently being undertaken by the Department:

- The South Pacific Forum's Law Enforcement Declaration is being implemented. The Declaration involves the preparation of draft legislation covering the areas of mutual assistance in criminal matters, forfeiture of the proceeds of crime, and the modernising of extradition arrangements. A plan has been approved by the Pacific Islands Legal Officers Meeting (PILOM). It involves preparation of a matrix to determine the current state of laws of the region, appointment of a legal drafter, and preparation of draft laws. Australia has agreed to fund the costs of the legal drafter.
- The Continuing Legal Education Committee held its first meeting after the 1992 PILOM. Australia will help draft the 3-5 year Plan, continue with a project to provide CLE videos, work with the Department of Foreign Affairs to administer the international legal scholarship scheme, and develop proposals for continuing legal education in advocacy and legal drafting.

- A police prosecutors' course is to be developed jointly by UPNG and the Australian Police Staff College in Manly. Linkages with other groups and institutions are being organised.

Several bilateral legal assistance projects are under way, including:

- assistance with consolidation of laws, and provision of computer equipment where feasible;
- provision of court procedure manuals, in hard copy and disk;
- provision of copies of South Pacific Law Reports;
- funding and facilitation of visits to Pacific states by law librarians;
- provision of legal texts, law reports and legislation and provision of equipment to aid information exchange.

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