

BUILDING VALUATION CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINABLE SOUTH PACIFIC COMMUNITIES.

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SUMMARY

Land, or more correctly the lack of clearly defined property rights to land and the resources associated with access, is commonly cited as a major cause of dispute and resultant instability in the developing island nations of the South Pacific region. Land is different in the South Pacific in that the majority of it was not alienated under colonisation. Some 83-97% of land remains vested in the stewardship of customary guardians. Because of colonisation, the western term ‘ownership’ has been inappropriately adopted where land is held under communal, tribal, or familial arrangements. The problem raised by the confusion over ‘ownership’ is compounded, as the economic importance of land is at the nexus of customary norms and the emergent aspirations of individualised materialism in these post independence nations. Moreover, there is a widespread lack of appreciation of the broad range of property rights held by the multiple stakeholders in the resource rich nations of Fiji, Solomon Islands, and Papua New Guinea.

Tasked with negotiating these challenges are a small cohort of property professionals. The majority are land management graduates from the University of the South Pacific or the Papua New Guinea University of Technology, who have studied their degree in their second (or third) language. Unlike their counterparts in developed countries, these graduates often return to senior positions in Government lands departments, without the support of mentors or professional bodies to help them navigate the early years of their career.

This paper draws on case studies from two Commonwealth nations in the Pacific, Samoa and the Solomon Islands, where recent USP graduates found themselves in the position of Chief Valuer and Valuer General respectively. Both have moved to progress Valuation legislation and are keen to proctor the support of professional institutions. They, and their new private practice counterparts, need institutional support to assist with governance issues and the evolution of valuation models (particularly leasehold approaches) that are appropriate for the appraisal, marketing economic development, and financial management of inalienable customary land. Currently the size of their immature property markets, income levels, and lack of professional mentoring make it difficult to obtain membership of international or offshore property institutions. The paper concludes with an agenda suggesting how CASLE can take a leading role in initiating support to build valuation capacity for sustainable communities in developing Commonwealth Nations in the Pacific.

KEY WORDS

Valuation, Legislation, Profession, Land, Pacific, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Roadmap.

INTRODUCTION

In writing this paper, I am obliged to be open about my motivations and the purpose in placing valuation in the Pacific squarely on the agenda of the Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy. I set the scene for this approach at the CASLE meeting at Danbury Park, Chelmsford, in 2004, where I spoke on the role of Surveyors, Land Economists and Related Professions in the Pacific Islands in assisting in the alleviation of poverty (Boydell, 2004a). In that paper, I reflected on the address that Robert Steel made to the 1980 CASLE meeting in Papua New Guinea, in which he highlighted the professional potential in the areas of surveying and mapping, land management, land use, land reform, land development, land transaction, land valuation, construction economics and management of the seabed (Steel, 1980). It is now 27 years since that thought provoking 1980 seminar... and, as ever, patience continues to be tested in Pacifica.

As I reminded CASLE three years ago, in 1980 Steel suggested that “it would be of immense value to the development of CASLE professions in the Pacific if the seminar could (a) identify the contribution which the profession can make to social and economic progress in the Pacific islands, and (b) deliberate on the specific steps that need to be taken to: (i) propagate the value of surveying and land economy skills; (ii) draw attention to the considerable manpower requirement of these skills, especially in land economy; (iii) provide the educational facilities needed to expedite recruitment; (iv) ensure adequate practical training to complement academic education; (v) provide a means of continuing professional development after qualification, to ensure that every practitioner is up-to-date and is aware of new techniques and practices; and (vi) strengthen the organisation of the profession in each country and so enable it to make its contribution to policy making in all matters relating to land.”

In Christchurch in 2007, I build on three of Steel’s 1980 points: (iv) professional training, (v) continuing professional development, and (vi) strengthening the profession at a national level. In 2004, I focused on PNG and Fiji, both of which have established academic institutions, legislation to support registration and limited professional representation. I will emphasise valuation capacity in this paper through the experience of two of their neighbours, Samoa and the Solomon Islands, where I have land management graduates who look to me to champion their plight on the Commonwealth stage.

A PLEA FROM THE SOLOMON ISLANDS

By way of example, in March this year I received an email from a past Solomon Islands graduate of the University of the South Pacific who had returned home and needed a reference to support a tender that he was bidding for. I share the contents in Box 1 below to provide context for the challenge.

Dear Dr. Spike Boydell,

Good day to you. Its me Charles Koroni your student at USP emailing you on behalf of Esther Tegu, Robert Misimaka, Lilian Ha'apio and myself.

Through your teachings, advices and encouragements we have been so inspired and have formed a Real Estate Valuation firm called Solomon Islands Real Estate and Valuation Services. We registered this firm just last week.

Just today an opportunity pops up here, from the Solomon Islands Home Finance Limited (a Statutory Body) for a valuation tender. Expressions of interest are invited from all interested valuers (individuals and firms) to value the Solomon Islands Home Finance Limited's properties, mainly residential buildings.

Our firm would like to submit a tender bid, and as this is our first time to do such we feel in need and desperately need some advices from you on what you know of tender bidding and etc. We also desperately need reference letters from you confirming that we have completed BA Degree in Real Estate, Land Use Planning and LMD respectively, and that we are qualified valuers as far as USP concern.

This Valuation Tender Bid will be closed on 4: 30 pm Monday 12 March 2007.

We thank you so much for the good work you have done in our lives and continuous assistance in our striving.

Kind regards.

Koroni Charles

Box 1: Setting up Solomon Islands Real Estate & Valuation Services (source: Charles Koroni pers.comm.)

I responded promptly, but was drawn to the enormous challenge and expectation confronting graduates returning to their developing island countries. Charles expands on this in a reply to my email a week later, which I share in Box 2.

Dear Spike.

Solomon Islands is very much the same as when you were here. I mean there is no list of qualified valuers available and nobody here can offer valuation advices. There is no valuers registration act in the Solomon Islands now. However as you know the Stamp Duty Act (2003) requires valuations to be carried out by a "Certified Valuer" The current status of the registration is still the same as was before.

I think the Registrar of Companies have some indication on who should be a qualified to practice as a valuer. As long as your application for valuation firm (real estate firm) business name is accepted by the Registrar of Companies you are allowed to do valuation under that business name and that you are certified. That is the normal practice here at the moment.

You can't believe it. Valuation reports here very poor. Don't even follow the format of valuation reports. Very unprofessional valuers are destroying the real estate industry in Solomon Islands. I am looking at forming and association of valuers to help in regulation of certification of valuers in collaboration with the appropriate section of the Government.

I am still working as the Chief Infrastructure Officer in the Ministry of Police and National Security, Justice and Legal Affairs. My aim is to work here until when the firm is fully established and fully functioning then I will resign to run the business full time. I am working extra harder doing ministry's work as well as of the Business at my own time.

Thank you so much for the email.

Kind regards.

Charles Koroni

Box 2: Identifying the challenge (source: Charles Koroni pers.comm.)

I met with Charles, Esther, Robert and Lilian in Honiara two months later. I found four young professionals so eager to learn and raise the bar on valuation in their country. But who is there to mentor and guide them through what Robert Steel referred to as ‘(iv) ensure adequate practical training to complement academic education’? As Charles highlighted, any Solomon Islander who registers a business name can undertake valuations. There is no Australian, New Zealand or International valuation company in the country. There is no one in place in private practice from whom they can gain a breadth of valuation experience and counsel.

Understandably, there is a significant lack of public trust in the valuation profession when it comes to land dealings and supporting the decision making process. The view of the lenders that I spoke to in Honiara (Tait Jenkins at ANZ, together with his counterparts Lindsay Atkinson and Craig Longeran of Westpac) is that the quality of valuation reportage is very limited. This view is supported by the Valuer General, Stanley Waleanisia, who was a mature age straight ‘A’ student who only returned from USP last year having completed his BA and Postgraduate Diploma in Land Management. He was appointed into the position of Valuer General, as his predecessor Eric Gorapava has been elevated to the role of Under Secretary in the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Surveys. Stanley shares his views of the valuation challenge in the Solomon Islands in Box 3.

Valuation in Solomon Islands is a profession struggling to be properly established and get legal recognition. Since its conception, it continues to experience difficulties and challenges.

The historical foundation of valuation is not well documented; however, the first qualified local Solomon Islander graduated with a Diploma in Land Management in 1980’s. From 1980’s to 2007, more than 20 qualified Valuers graduated with the single largest number from the University of the South Pacific in 2005. The figure excludes related professions like architects, quantity surveyors and others who are also carrying out valuation work to clients. This year, six valuers are working in various government departments while the rest work in banks and other private companies.

Currently the challenges facing the profession are lack of a recognized association to control and maintain the profession; lack of unified qualification background; low professional ethics; lack of association; lack of credible real estate information and unpopularity of the profession. Valuation is done by anyone who has the skill including Valuers, architects, structural engineers, economists and physical planners. There is no control of who is supposed to practice in valuation work.

There were attempts in the past to formulate a “Valuers Registration Act” to deal with registration of property valuers, establishment of board and to control and maintain professional standards. The last time it was presented in the Cabinet was in 1995, and it remains in the form of a Bill. It is envisaged that the Bill will be resubmitted within the current government’s term and hopefully to become an Act.

The lack of unified qualification background allows ordinary persons or firms to engage in the business of property value assessment. The demand in the market for such service results in the growth of unqualified service providers. Subsequently it results in low professional ethics in the area of compliance with standard, duty care, conflict of interest and confidentiality.

The Valuation profession also suffers from a lack of reliable property market information. Information on sales, mortgages, charges are most of the times does not reflect the amount agreed between the seller and buyer. There is no contract of sale required to reflect the true value of sale making it untrustworthy. In the growing property market of Honiara it would be helpful to valuers if reliable property information were readily available for appraisal.

Despite the challenges already discussed, there is a lot of potential in the growing property market in Solomon Islands particularly Honiara. Currently the total number of properties in Honiara is about 6,800 which worth about SBD \$ 700 million. This market continues to grow as more and more properties are developed every year. It presents significant opportunities to valuers in Solomon Islands to be more competitive and more professional in the conduct of their duty in the course of realizing personal economic dreams.

While the property industry is creating more opportunities, there is need for the profession to be well established. It needs intervention in establishing the professional Solomon Islands Valuers Association. The intervention may require the engagement of expertise of qualified professional valuers from relevant Universities in Australia, New Zealand or Fiji. It may also mean seeking assistance from Australia Property Institute (API) and the Pacific Rim Real Estate Society (PRRES), whichever community that is willing to take on the assignment. In the same trust the enactment of the Valuation Act will help solve some of the challenges facing the valuation profession.

Box 3: Valuation in the Solomon Islands (source: Stanley Waleanisia for accessUTS)

It is precisely the type of assistance that Stanley alludes to that I now bring to the attention of CASLE. During my seven and a half years as Head of Land Management at the University of the South Pacific, I raised the plight of the property profession in the Pacific with the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors on many occasions in my role as a Board Member of RICS Oceania and sometime RICS International Native Title Spokesperson. Whilst the RICS identifies itself as the brand of property professionalism worldwide, it is not a charity and is driven by the economic constraints of our neo-liberal world. Even to a humble valuer, the sums do not stack up when valuation graduates in the Solomon Islands have a net annual salary of AUD\$5,000 or UK£2,000. At those levels, even the concessional annual professional fees for the Australian Property Institute or the RICS are well out of reach.

So how does CASLE become part of the solution? It is in the area of capacity building. This can be achieved by drawing attention to the limited engagement with professional development in the Commonwealth arena, with a view to proctoring donor support. There is a complementary or secondary solution, which is to promote the establishment of professional mentors who are prepared to act with magnanimity by giving of their time to counsel and guide the aspiring profession in countries like the Solomon Islands. The Australian Property Institute has provisionally indicated some tentative support, yet unrealised. However, it is important to ensure that such benevolence is not undertaken for economic advantage at the expense of the aspiring indigenous professionals and the naïve property market in their respective countries.

In discussing capacity with Tait Jenkins, the General Manager of ANZ in Honiara, he reiterated the limitations of current valuation advice. We discussed the potential of the burgeoning Solomon Islands Real Estate and Valuation Services. He highlighted the need to provide the whole picture, the complete service, and to deliver the product

in a timely and professional manner as far as the Bank is concerned. He shared concerns about the lack of mentoring, identifying that if someone came to town who was prepared to offer a comprehensive service they would, in his words, ‘clean up’. Clearly, the current quality of reportage would scare the Head Office of the bank, but they are rarely involved given the general dollar value of commercial loans, which is commonly less than a home loan in Australia. However, if a major hotel development was planned, with for example a \$60m lend, Head Office would pay a great deal of attention not only into the company but also into the actual valuer. Such matters are co-ordinated from Australia by the ANZ real estate credit unit.

The valuation issues surrounding inalienable customary land compound the challenge for offshore professionals and for the local aspirants. The valuation methods currently in use appear to be ill suited to a customary ownership regime. The valuation of customary lands, especially those lands occupied by tenants is a major issue. In most cases, a standard capitalisation rate of 6% has been applied to attribute a notional land value, but in the case where there are no actual sales, this unimproved capital value (UCV) may be fictional. However, an ongoing source of concern and potential for political conflict is the way in which government lands departments may, discretionally, reduce this capitalisation rate if they consider that it is not affordable by tenants. This raises the potential risk of recourse against the Valuer General / Chief Valuer or the Minister for Land, albeit few tenants are likely to take action if charged lower than a ‘statutory’ rent. The situation is compounded when different discount rates are applied to customary land and government land.

An example from the Solomon Islands is where a map of UCV ranges has been adopted for State land in the capital, Honiara, following the development of a “value” database by consultants. This database is largely premised on area, proximity to roads and distance from the central business area. However, the previous Valuer General felt some of these figures unrealistically high and not affordable, so used his professional judgement to lower them as needed (to levels ranging to as low as 0.5% to 1.5% of the hypothetical UCV, rather than the prescribed 6%). In contrast, with changed political administration, the incoming Valuer General feels pressured to maintain the ‘tone of the list’ from the database provided by the consultants. This may result in significant increases for tenants at next rent review, albeit only to the level prescribed by the consultants. However, the hypothetical UCV database leaves both current and prior valuer open to criticism.

The key underlying fact with all income approaches to valuation is the recognition that it is the rental potential of a property, sometimes expressed as a net cash flow, that is primary in the valuation process. This means that capital value (and the adoption of a UCV approach) is secondary and derivative. For the Pacific, this should be a welcome truth because rentals are the only focus of practical attention.

Valuers educated within economic paradigms where sale and capital value of land is the primary focus of property investment, are not trained to recognise this fact. In countries like Australia, Britain, or the US, valuers are taught methods that are aimed at computing capital values and the import of this methodological perspective into the Pacific has created a difficulty for practitioners who will work purely on rents (given the inalienable nature of customary land).

A related but distinct problem in the Pacific is that the property markets, especially for non-urban lands, are thin and immature. Unlike established markets in Australia, Britain, or the US, there is relatively little market data, and many anomalies. This

means that valuation through comparable sales or rentals is difficult. This problem, combined with the tendency to adopt foreign valuation methods, has led to the tendency to apply simple general rules for valuation that appear to disadvantage the customary owners financially.

MEANWHILE, IN SAMOA...

Whilst Samoa has benefited from a long period of political stability, many of the valuation challenges highlighted for the Solomon Islands can also be found in Samoa. We can also find my former students running government and private valuation offices. Like his Solomon Island counterpart, the Chief Valuer in Samoa, Patea Malo Setefano, has an undergraduate degree in Land Management from USP. Patea found himself in the post in his early twenties. As the only graduate valuer in government, he was painfully aware of his own limitations and lack of mentoring, so returned to postgraduate study in his early thirties, which is when I first met him. I have visited him in his office in Apia on a number of occasions, and it is in this environment (rather than a classroom in Suva) that one can fully appreciate the importance, scope, and challenges that confront him in this role.

His workload centres on managing the valuation needs of the corporate estate, comprising 11% of the country by area. This includes major compensation cases, such as the expansion of Salelologa town and the current major airport road resumption in preparation for the 2007 South Pacific Games, through to providing valuation advice on leases over customary land for the Minister of Land who (as trustee for customary landowners) is negotiating with offshore hotel ventures.

Another graduate of mine, Lui Seru, a Fiji Islander married into a chiefly family in Samoa and has set up the country's most dynamic property company: Central Property Valuers. He had a couple of years private practice experience in Fiji before he relocated to Apia. Despite a lack of mentoring he has done exceptionally well with a practice that embraces sales, lettings, development and professional valuation advisory. In Box 4, Lui summarises his overview of the Samoan Property market.

The Samoan Property market is a thriving industry but like many other Pacific Island countries is plagued by many problems and has its own limitations. The buying and selling of real estate in Samoa only began to capture the interest of Samoans in the past 15 years and during this time Samoa has seen almost a 150% percent increase in property values.

This surge in property values has also highlighted the growing problems the property market faces. These problems are becoming increasingly evident and measures must be taken to organize and regulate the property market better.

One of the main problems the Samoan property market faces is the need of land use planning and legislation to regulate residential and commercial development. Land use has always been an issue especially in the Apia CBD. Apia has seen rapid infrastructure development in the past few years and commercial developments in the Business District have been stunted by the many residential properties located close to the CBD. Without planning, many of these prime commercial sites continue to be used for residential purposes, therefore limiting the expansion of the Business District. Land use legislation, a proper zoning system and town planning will greatly benefit the growth of the commercial sector in Samoa.

Another issue that affects the property market is the escalation of property values of value of both residential and commercial freehold properties, which has made it difficult for the local residents to purchase land. Land price in some residential areas has jumped by 100 percent in the past two years. This is fuelled by the change in lifestyle of the local Samoans and also by land grabbing by Samoans overseas. In the past Samoans were comfortable living in the extended family setting and most were living on customary land. However with education and a change in lifestyle, many Samoans have moved away from home and moved to town to live on their plot of freehold land. Samoans living overseas are also starting to return home and are purchasing freehold land. Many of these Samoans bring with them cash to purchase property and pay above market value in order to get the best properties. Given these factors, property has become very expensive for the average island boy.

The issue of having commercial access to customary land: the majority of land in Samoa is Customary Land and due to the legislation governing customary land, these lands cannot be used for commercial purposes, are difficult to deal with and are a thorn to the economic development of Samoa. Customary land surrounds the majority of the freehold properties in Apia, acting as a buffer to development and expansion of the town. In the future Samoans must devise a system to make it possible for customary land to be used for commercial purposes and be of equal value with freehold land.

The lack of infrastructure and amenities in areas such as Malololelei, Afiamalu and Tiavi needs to be addressed in order to create more land to meet the increasing demand for residential land. The development of these areas will also encourage economic growth in areas outside of the CBD.

Samoa will continue to grow and establish itself as one of the leading nations in the Pacific. However, this progress can be hampered if these problems are not tackled.

Box 3: The Samoan Property Market (source: Lui Seru for accessUTS)

It is relevant to mention that there are only 197 active leases (2005 data) over Customary Land (which comprises 81% of the country by area) in Samoa, with 80 relating to Government use, 85 for religious purposes and only 32 relating to commercial activity. The adoption of commercial development leases over customary land is in its infancy. The creation of Freehold title is forbidden by the Constitution (s.102).

Whilst in Samoa in June 2007, I walked into the office of another relatively recent graduate, Toeupu Kaisara, and was greeted with ‘thank God you are here – can you help me with this hotel valuation?’ He was referring to a complex legally bound valuation for a potential international hotel development that would test the resources of an experienced international advisory hotel valuer, and I was his only potential for guidance... Somehow, I do not think this is the sort of continuing professional development that Robert Steel had in mind for point (v).

STRENGTHENING THE PROFESSION

In respect of point (vi), both Samoa and the Solomon Islands have Valuers Registration legislation currently drafted but as yet unread by Parliament. Graduates in both countries see such legislation as a critical step in clarifying their capacity and expertise. To an outsider, the May 2007 draft of the Samoa Land Valuation Bill may

appear unnecessary in a marketplace where there are only a handful of candidates with potential for registration and licensing as valuers. However, the proposed statute (at s4.(2)(f)) enables the Ministry responsible for lands to 'liaise and enter into arrangements with any entity in Samoa or elsewhere, for the purpose of improving or reviewing standards for the practice of land valuation, and the qualifications and professional development of valuers. The Ministerial support enables the government to work with CASLE, should it be guided to do so, to improve such standards and further professional development.

The proposal (s15.(c)) to approve National Valuation Practise Standards may seem at odds with the availability of overarching International Valuation Standards (IVSC, 2005). However, IVSC does not engage in a discussion on inalienable customary land. The effective utilisation of customary land depends on its effective valuation. There are several reasons why valuation approaches imported from other countries are not appropriate for the Pacific. This is especially the case for the valuation of land on a wide scale. In most western countries, land is privately owned and traded. For this reason, there are well-developed property markets from which land values may be deduced. In the Pacific, land is seldom sold freehold, so the notion of land value becomes problematic; however, it has been retained as the basis for computing land rents. This has led to a number of major problems.

In addition, State valuers have limited resources as follows:

- Limited skills for valuation (lack of mentoring);
- Limited numbers of valuers;
- Limited funds and resources for field visits; and,
- Lack of professional/institutional body/support/guidance.

Efficient utilisation of customary land necessitates the valuation of underlying land, or site, value. Special problems associated with this include:

- Revaluation intervals are often too long;
- With majority of land customary there is insufficient market evidence for UCV determination using comparable sales method.;
- UCV is an artificial construct;
- A market for rentals should be encouraged and used as a valuation basis;
- Movement of rentals should keep lease transfer value close to the depreciated value of improvements;
- This has practical valuation difficulties on a year by year basis;
- May be evident at point of leasehold sale; and,
- Perhaps revaluation at resale may be a practical strategy.

With the adoption of standard capitalisation rates in the Pacific, capitalising rental is a suspect method for valuing customary owned land. Unfortunately, the proposed Samoan Land Valuation Bill (at s.16) encourages a formulaic valuation system, advising that the 'Ministry may, from time to time, determine and publish a Formula Valuation System as a guide to valuing land in Samoa'. Such an approach runs the risk of creating grounds for future conflict. Valuation tools need to go beyond technical prescription, requiring research to develop a better-articulated theory of

modern customary property that will be capable of integrating customary social values with modern commercial efficiency. Closely related to this is the need to develop appropriate valuation methodologies for the Pacific and this will be best done through quality university research (such as, by way of example, Boydell et al., 2007).

Meanwhile in the Solomon Islands, The Valuers Bill was drafted in 1995 but is yet to be approved by Parliament. As Charles and Stanley highlight above, there is an urgent need to enact such legislation to provide clarity in respect of those who are eligible to tender valuation advice in the country. The proposed Solomons legislation does not contain any proposal for a formulaic approach.

Given the small size of the profession and potential cohort of registered valuers in Samoa, there is a proposal to combine with the surveying profession to establish the Samoan Institute of Land Professionals. The intent is detailed in s.12 of the proposed Samoan Survey Bill of 2007, a clause that is to be integrated into the counterpart Valuation Bill. This identifies the function of the Institute 'to protect and promote the interests of the land professions in Samoa, and the interests of the public in relation to the activities of land professionals'. However, independently there remains a capacity challenge and one that I encourage CASLE to support/address.

MOVING FORWARD WITH CASLE ENGAGEMENT

The primary stated objective of CASLE is defined as 'fostering the development of the profession in all Commonwealth countries' (CASLE, n.d.). As I have outlined above, there is a particular need to foster the emergent profession in two particular countries that I have identified as part of Schedule 5 (Pacific) of the CASLE Constitution, namely Solomon Islands and Western Samoa.

In the abstract, I promised that this paper would conclude with a suggested agenda indicating how CASLE can take a leading role in initiating support to build valuation capacity for sustainable communities in developing Commonwealth Nations in the Pacific. I realise that it is not my role to set the agenda for CASLE in the Pacific, and it is presumptuous for me to suggest otherwise. However, someone has to propose a roadmap if we are to realise the worthy intent proposed by Robert Steel. Despite the pleas for guidance and assistance I receive from within the Pacific, it falls on me to consolidate and bring those Commonwealth voices to the CASLE arena.

At the 2004 CASLE General Assembly, presumably because of my provocative paper and interaction at the sessions, I was invited to step into the role of CASLE Regional President for the Pacific. I cordially declined this honour, instead deferring that an indigenous member of the professional community best serves such a role. However, I realise, in hindsight, that the challenge for a national of any given Pacific country is that they can, in many ways, be limited by the challenges and expectations in their own country. To this end, if there is to be facilitation and engagement at a State level to support, by way of example, Western Samoa and the Solomon Islands this engagement should be led by the Commonwealth Association of Surveying and Land Economy by a regional President through a broad appreciation of the national issues across the surveying and land economy disciplines.

Associations like CASLE, and for that matter the UN agencies, are often constrained by the view that they cannot directly approach Governments to offer advice, rather a country must approach the Association or Agency to invite intervention. This is something of a conundrum, in that it often takes intermediaries like me to allow the

voices of Charles, Stanley, Lui, Patea, Toeupu and their peers to be heard at international fora. From within their roles, it is all too difficult to facilitate government contact with CASLE.

To this end, my suggested (presumptuous) roadmap is as follows:

- a) The incoming CASLE Regional President for the Pacific proactively make a direct approach to the Government of Samoa and the Government of Solomon Islands respectively, to offer advice and support for the enactment of the draft Land Valuation Bill (Samoa) and The Valuers Bill (Solomon Islands). This will facilitate an overarching level of governance in country and foster collaboration with CASLE.
- b) Under the auspices of CASLE, seek financial support from the Commonwealth to allow the CASLE Regional President for the Pacific to visit Samoa and the Solomon Islands, with a view for those visits to:
 - (i) Progress facilitation with Government in respect of legislation and the importance of establishing national representative professional bodies;
 - (ii) Raise awareness in Government and with the public on matters of national policy on which the evolving profession is competent to offer informed opinions and advice; and
 - (iii) Meet with media in country to promote awareness of CASLE and the profession.
- c) In accordance with Article 2(b) of the CASLE Constitution, the Regional President for the Pacific should establish a working party for the purpose of:
 - (i) In the Solomon Islands, ‘foster the establishment of professional societies in countries where none already exists and to promote their usefulness for the public advantage’. The key indicator of progress and success will be catalysing a local representative professional body with government recognition through to acceptance as a formal member of CASLE.
 - (ii) In Samoa, provide guidance, support and mentoring to the embryonic ‘Samoan Institute of Land Professionals’ to enable elevation to formal membership of CASLE.
- d) The CASLE Regional President for the Pacific to advertise for ‘CASLE mentors’ from within established members in the wider region (including Australia and New Zealand) and the International Federation of Surveyors, to support Robert Steel’s recommendation (iv) ‘ensure adequate practical training to complement academic education’. As detailed above, there will be a need for the CASLE Regional President for the Pacific, with the support of established professional organisations in the Pacific region, to scrutinise prospective mentors to ensure their motives match the aspirations of the countries and that their actions are not motivated by financial gain.
- e) Proactively support collaborations for the development of ‘professional techniques and practices attuned to national needs’ in Samoa and the Solomon Islands. This includes the development of valuation tools appropriate to the

financial management of inalienable customary land. This support can be achieved through:

- (i) the endorsement of grant applications to, amongst others, the Commonwealth, World Bank, DFID, AusAID, NZAid, and RICS Foundation;
 - (ii) the establishment of a CASLE workshop (real or e-virtual) on the valuation of inalienable customary land, with related media activity.
- f) The CASLE Regional President for the Pacific to provide an annual progress report to CASLE towards the target of enacted valuation legislation and established professional bodies in both Samoa and the Solomon Islands by the next CASLE General Assembly in 2010.

In concluding, I accept that I have identified just two countries from the Pacific region and emphasised the development of the valuation (land economy) profession. My reasons for this are straightforward. Firstly, the timing is right. There are recent graduate property professionals in both Samoa and the Solomon Islands who have the will and drive to make this happen, but they need the support of the particular kind outside engagement that CASLE represents. Secondly, we have to start somewhere in respect of these countries. By supporting one Commonwealth country in Melanesia and one in Polynesia CASLE will have the maximum potential for success in progressing tangible outcomes from the worthy goals outlined in the CASLE Constitution. If enacted, this roadmap has the potential to realise professional leadership in building sustainable communities in two more Commonwealth nations.

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BIODATA

As Professor of the Built Environment, Spike Boydell takes a leading role in developing the research directions and achievements of the construction, property, urban planning and project management disciplines in the UTS Centre for Applied Built Environment Research (CABER). He leads the UTS Property Rights Research Group, and is currently engaged in research projects on: the City as Common Property; Sustainable Urbanism; and, the Financial Management of Customary and other Land in the South Pacific. He has held academic positions in the UK, the South Pacific, and Australia.

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