



MSG Director General, Mr Peter Forau and Vice Chancellor and President Professor Ian O'Connor shake hands to recognize and formally seal the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between

Griffith University and the Melanesian Spearhead Group Secretariat at Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia 30 January 2014

Griffith University and the Melanesian Spearhead Group Secretariat sign MOU

Griffith University and the Melanesian Spearhead Group Secretariat have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the 30th January 2014 at Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia to consolidate a framework for long-term collaboration and partnership between the organisations.

The purpose of the MoU is to provide clear direction to the agreed activities and to strengthen regional collaboration, including the importance of fostering partnerships between Griffith University and the MSG Secretariat.

The parties believe that mutual benefit can be derived from scholarly interaction, cultural interchange, cooperative research and other forms of collaboration consistent with Griffith University's core commitment of contributing to a robust, equitable and environmentally sustainable society, and the Mission of MSG. The MSG believes that the Melanesian region within the Pacific can be a region of solidarity and cooperation in accordance with shared national interest, with the objective of strengthening wider institutions of regional and international cooperation.

The priority areas in the MOU include climate change adaptation and mitigation research; support for international climate negotiations and related capacity building, including advice and research regarding different mechanisms of regional significance; traditional knowledge and culture in the context of community-based approaches; knowledge-sharing mechanisms relating to MSG climate change activities; and climate change related public policy and governance.

The Director General of the Melanesian Spearhead Group, Mr Peter Forau, said the MoU was a welcome development in the relationship between the institutions. Mr Forau also recognised Griffith University's broad ranging expertise in the area of climate change and environment, and said he was looking forward for a close collaboration and partnership. The Director General also emphasised the important role that the Melanesian Spearhead Group plays in the region and how collaborations would strengthen its expertise and capacity.

President and Vice Chancellor of Griffith University, Professor Ian O'Connor, concluded that the partnership was very welcomed by the university and he also looked forward for a fruitful collaboration. Professor O'Connor also remarked that Griffith University's first vice chancellor had already recognised the importance of the Pacific as a core focus for the university and was pleased to see this focus being expanded through partnerships with important regional organisations.

Representing the MSG Secretariat were Director General, Mr Peter Forau, and Environment and Climate Change Analyst, Mr Stanley Wapot.

Griffith University with its long-standing commitment to effective interdisciplinary collaboration, long and distinguished record in environmental sciences, together with its leadership role in the field of climate change adaptation and mitigation research, can assist MSG in accessing relevant expertise including bringing disciplines together as needed to address key issues, contributing to research and development projects, policy formulation, and capacity building initiatives.

The Melanesian Spearhead Group Secretariat is an inter-governmental organisation comprising of its' five members namely Papua New Guinea; Republic of Vanuatu; Republic of Fiji, Solomon Islands, and the political grouping Front de Liberation Nationale Kanak et Socialite (FLNKS) of New Caledonia. The MSG Leaders endorsed an Environment and Climate Change Declaration in January 2012. The Leader's Declaration on Environment and Climate Change provides a comprehensive approach to tackle fundamental issues in the region, including terrestrial and marine biodiversity, blue carbon, and green growth.

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