

Box 4.7.1 Enhanced Cooperation Programme: Australian Police in Papua New Guinea

A Papua New Guinea (PNG) Supreme Court ruling derailed Australia's first post-RAMSI attempt at further intervention in the Pacific region, six months after Australian federal police began patrolling their former colony.

Signed in June 2004, Australia's five-year, nearly AUD\$1 billion (US\$744 million) enhanced cooperation program (ECP) stipulated the deployment—which commenced in December—of 210 Australian police officers and 64 public servants to bolster the PNG state against service delivery breakdowns, a growing law and order crisis, and endemic corruption in politics, business, and the public service. In May 2005 the PNG Supreme Court declared unconstitutional a treaty clause granting Australian officers

immunity from prosecution. The police were then promptly withdrawn.

Like RAMSI, the ECP established in response to Canberra's concern over 'failed states' in the Pacific—which are potential threats to Australia's security. The program also reflects new thinking around enhancing the effectiveness of aid to PNG and suggests post-RAMSI confidence in the positive potential of intervention in the region. Its aim is to transfer skills to local counterparts by (1) empowering Australian police to exercise the functions of the Royal PNG Constabulary, including the power of arrest; (2) giving Australian officials positions in police headquarters, criminal investigations, prosecutions, and other areas; (3) placing Australian public servants in mentoring and supervisory roles in strategic,

in-line PNG government positions; and (4) integrating Australian judges and legal officials into the judicial system.

At the time of writing, the principal challenge facing the ECP is how to re-deploy the police. A compromise arrangement may accomplish this, but in vastly reduced numbers and not on the front line of law enforcement activities—with perhaps forty Australian officers in resource-rich provinces to build capacity among provincial police and station commanders. If approved, the ECP still faces important questions about sovereignty and accountability, given that the degree of direct control envisioned for the Australians is a significant departure from the traditional role of consultants and contractors.