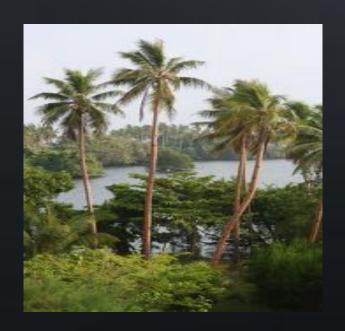
RENNELL

AN ISLAND OF TWO HALVES

Luke Kiddle. Conference presentation. New Zealand Development Studies (Dev-Net) Conference: "Pacific Currents, Global Tides", Wellington, New Zealand. 2016.





OUTLINE

- BACKGROUND
 - LINKS TO NZ
- BASIC INFORMATION
- WEST RENNELL EXTRACTION
- EAST RENNELL HERITAGE
- CONCLUSION (WHY RENNELL'S IMPORTANT)

Solomon Islands





RENNELL: BASIC INFORMATION

- PART OF RENBEL PROVINCE
- POPULATION 3000 APPROX.
- POLYNESIAN
- WORLD'S LARGEST RAISED CORAL ISLAND
- Customary Land Tenure Chiefly System
- Peripheral
- POLITICAL FLUX
- FEATURES VERY HIGHLY IN SOLOMON ISLANDS MEDIA

WEST RENNELL: WHERE LOGGING AND MINING RULE

- EXTENSIVE LOGGING SINCE 2006
- MORE RECENT BAUXITE EXTRACTION
- THE COMPANIES HAVE CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE WITH PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT AND ALSO CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONSIDERABLE APPLICATION OF 'GOODWILL'
- Convoluted series of decisions, overturned decisions & High Court battles
- PRIVILEGED GROUPS
- DIVISION & CONFLICT
- 'THE WILD WEST': GENERALLY THE COMPANIES MAKING THEIR OWN RULES AND GETTING AWAY WITH IT
- Increased alcohol and drug consumption in communities with links to logging and mining









EAST RENNELL: UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE LISTED

- LISTED IN 1998, AFTER CONSIDERABLE NZ SUPPORT. 1 OF ONLY 7 SITES IN THE PACIFIC
- CITATION: "EAST RENNELL, AS A STEPPING STONE IN THE MIGRATION AND EVOLUTION OF SPECIES IN THE
 WESTERN PACIFIC, IS AN IMPORTANT SITE FOR THE STUDY OF ISLAND BIOGEOGRAPHY..... EAST RENNELL
 IS A TRUE NATURAL LABORATORY FOR SCIENTIFIC STUDY"
- First site inscribed based on natural criteria under customary ownership and management
- Lake Tengano: the largest lake in the Island Pacific (29 km long; 10 km wide)
- Dense 20M canopy forest
- Wildlife: 43 species of birds, 4 endemic. 11 species of bats, 1 endemic. Endemic sea snake.
- Tourism Potential
- PROTECTION:
 - SOLOMON ISLANDS PROTECTED AREAS ACT 2010 RECOGNISES WORLD HERITAGE PROTECTION BUT IN PRACTICE HAS NOT OCCURRED
 - RenBel Province Lake Tengano Natural Heritage Park Ordinance 2009 only in draft
 - ULTIMATELY SELF-MANAGED BY CUSTOMARY LANDOWNERS











BUT.....

- The hoped-for tourists just never arrived, despite investment in ecotourism
- HUGELY EXPENSIVE TO VISIT
- SMALL-SCALE LIVELIHOODS PROJECTS HAVE LARGELY FAILED
- LOCALS ARE AWARE OF THE UNIQUENESS OF THEIR ENVIRONMENT AND THEIR 'GIFT TO THE WORLD' BUT SIMPLY ARE NOT BENEFITTING
 - "WHAT IS THE POINT OF WORLD HERITAGE?" A COMMON REFRAIN
- LOGGING APPLICATIONS HAVE NOW BEEN LODGED OVER CONCESSIONS THAT INCLUDE AREAS WITHIN THE WORLD HERITAGE AREA
- In 2013 UNESCO PLACED EAST RENNELL ON ITS 'WORLD HERITAGE IN DANGER' BLACKLIST

THREATS

- UNESCO DETERMINED THAT LOGGING IS THREATENING THE OUTSTANDING UNIVERSAL VALUE OF EAST RENNELL
- THE COMMON SHIP RAT HAS A NEW PRESENCE AND IS REPORTEDLY DECIMATING COCONUT TREES
- CHANGES IN THE LAKE SALINITY
- EAST RENNELLESE ALSO SEE THE RELATIVE BENEFITS THAT MANY WEST RENNELLESE WITH LINKS TO THE LOGGING AND MINING COMPANIES HAVE

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

- THERE IS A RECOGNITION THAT NEW FOCUS IS NEEDED
- BETTER TRANSPORT AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS CONNECTIONS WOULD HELP
- NGO Live and Learn have been looking at the prospect of forest protection by selling Carbon Credits
- UNESCO KEEN ON A COMPREHENSIVE RECOVERY PACKAGE SUPPORTED BY NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS
- REALISTICALLY, OPTIONS ARE LIMITED (???)

CONCLUSION

- (WEST) RENNELL IS A MESS. INCREDIBLY DIVISIVE
- SO SMALL AND REMOTE UNLIKELY TO ATTRACT REPUTABLE LOGGERS AND MINERS
- What is happening in West Rennell presents a model of a very bad path forward for other parts of Solomon Islands
- IMPROVED GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES/REGULATIONS FOR EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES IN SOLOMON ISLANDS ARE DESPERATELY NEEDED
 - S.I NOW DEVELOPING ITS FIRST NATIONAL MINERALS POLICY
- THE THREATS TO EAST RENNELL'S HERITAGE LISTING ARE REAL AND SIGNIFICANT
- But options for ensuring locals benefit are limited
- NZ HAS A STAKE
- RENNELL REMAINS AN ISLAND OF TWO HALVES: BUT FOR HOW LONG?

THANK YOU!

LUKEKIDDLE@GMAIL.COM

(PHOTOS LUKE KIDDLE, EXCEPT SLIDES 7 & 8 FROM HUGHES & TUHANUKU, 2015, LOGGING AND MINING IN RENNELL: LESSONS FOR SOLOMON ISLANDS. REPORT TO WORLD BANK AND SOLOMON ISLANDS GOVERNMENT)