

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)

Rennell Island



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







Managers:

make me happy.

Make me feel stuff?

But I can't stop from it.
I love it.



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 ECO-TOURISM
- 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 RENNEL
- 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!

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(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)