

In Conversation with PM Sogavare

Written by Damian Kelly
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On 14 August 2017, our own Lauren Moscovis and I were able to join Prime Minister Sogavare at the Lowy Institute in Sydney for a conversation regarding the successes of the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (**RAMSI**), his fears for the future of the Solomon Islands, and the capabilities that will enable his country to achieve greatness in the future.

The room was packed with several people standing toward the back of the room, as a mostly seated office listened to the Mr Sogavare and RAMSI Special Coordinator James Batley conduct a no-holds barred discussion spanning the recently signed Australia-Solomon Islands Security Treaty, “The tensions” that existed prior to RAMSI, and the economic and trade policy Mr Sogavare’s government is undertaking.

The audience represented a diverse range of groups interested in Solomon Islands’ future, including the Solomon Island High Commissioner to Australia and consulate officials, members of the Lowy Institute Solomon Island mission, university students, and members of NGOs such as Peacifica.

Through the audience questions the Prime Minister reiterated his government’s commitment to international citizenship and trade, stating that it was his policy that the Solomon Islands continue to be “enemy to none, friend to all.”

After the question and answer segment of the evening concluded, everyone had a chance to share a sandwich with the Prime Minister.

We can’t wait to hear from Mr Sogavare next time he is in Australia, although we will have to find an excuse to go back to the Lowy Institute for another round of haloumi sandwiches much sooner than that.

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