

# SI Credit Unions learn of good governance

By DOUGLAS MARAU

A DEVELOPMENT Educator's Credit Union Leadership and NGO representative Governance Workshop has been conducted on Monday in Honiara.

The workshop was aimed to recognise the importance of the role of credit unions in the economy and their contribution to the economic development of the country especially to the 85 per cent of the country that does not have access to financial services.

Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Solomon Islands Denton Barawa praised SICUL for its work in enhancing access to financial services for rural communities.

"The Central Bank of the Solomon Islands and the Registrar of Credit Unions recognise the importance of the role of Credit Unions in the economy and also their contributions towards the economic development of the country especially to the 85 per cent of the country that does not have access to financial services," Mr Barawa said during the workshop.

Mr Barawa said Solomon Islands can only be a peaceful and prosperous nation if the majority of our population engaged in economic development participating equally in the sharing of the benefits of the economic growth.

"To achieve this, it is the credit unions that can be in the rural areas where the majority of our population live and where the formal banking sector cannot reach," he said.

The Deputy Governor of CBSI also highlighted the



Deputy Governor of CBSI Denton Barawa speaking to participants during the opening of the Credit Union's governance workshop.

benefits of financial inclusion to both urban and rural people as well as CBSI's commitment to financially support SICUL in its endeavours to strengthen and enhance its operations.

"This valuable support will bring financial services to communities that have previously been excluded," he added.

Executive Officer of the Credit Union Foundation Australia Peter Mason told the workshop that an evaluation has already been carried out on several of the Microfinance Rural Resource Centres in the rural communities.

Mr Mason said this is to help them develop access to financial services.

To assist these communities, he said the Credit Union Foundation Australia would facilitate some training to run their own Savings Clubs.

He said some of the key priorities include working with rural communities to set up a further 10 Microfinance Rural Resource Centres which will include a micro enterprise fund which

will be available to community members as small loans for village based income generation enterprises.

"The plan includes a Microfinance Rural Resource Centre for each of the provinces," Mr Mason said.

He said Credit Union Foundation Australia is aware of the communication barriers in the country and to resolve this it had provided two-way radios for the Microfinance Rural Resources Centres.

CBSI is currently providing budgetary support for the employment of the new General Manager of SICUL and have already supported the renovation and refurbishment of the SICUL head office.

Participants of the workshop include the Chairman of the Solomon Islands Credit Union League (SICUL) Moses Tepai and also representatives from the credit unions, savings clubs and Microfinance Rural Resource Centres.

The workshop was sponsored by Credit Union Foundation Australia.