



Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade

29 OCT 2003

Mr Gerard Hindmarsh
Tukurua
RD 3
TAKAKA 7172

Dear Mr Gerard Hindmarsh

Thank you for your letter of 3 September concerning the Banaban people on Rabi Island in Fiji, which was referred to me by the Prime Minister.

You will be pleased to hear that over the years the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID) has provided assistance to the people of Rabi, including the Banabans, in a variety of ways, including most recently through its Fiji programme and Head of Mission Fund (HOMF). Some of the projects funded by NZAID, in addition to the generator project you mention, include grants to build houses; to transport building materials and to assist with reconstruction in the areas most affected by Cyclone Ami at the end of 2002.

You may also like to note that although Rabi is a Fiji Island, the Kiribati Government consider the Banabans living there to still be Kiribati nationals, and as such, they are eligible for scholarships under the NZAID scheme for Kiribati. There has been at least one Banaban student from Rabi accepting a scholarship under this circumstance.

NZAID is also happy to consider support for appropriate projects on Banaba in response to requests from the Kiribati Government within the context of the existing NZAID programme to Kiribati.

An NZAID officer has recently travelled to Rabi and has been encouraging the Council to prepare a Development Plan which would provide a framework for requests for assistance from donors, as well as a basis for representations to the Fiji Government for development projects. This approach is intended to enhance the prospects of Rabi attracting donor assistance. It is also planned

that the New Zealand High Commissioner in Suva will shortly make an official visit to Rabi.

Please be assured that your concerns have been relayed to the relevant NZAID Programme Managers for Kiribati and Fiji.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Goff". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "G" at the end.

Hon Phil Goff
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade