

# Definition

This working group is committed to expanding the availability and affordability of housing in Melanesia. This includes:

- Pursuing the greater availability of housing finance.
- Supporting the development of housing options (including low-cost) and associated infrastructure.
- Working in collaboration with government and supra-national bodies to improve the policy and regulatory environment for housing.

# Issues Participants can address when they go home:

1. Further develop and promote financial literacy.
2. Explore strategic partnerships between provident funds, microfinance and mortgage providers.
3. Explore 'next-generation' saving schemes and employee housing plans.
4. Secure mortgage insurance products from underwriters and improve access to general insurance.
5. Superannuation funds can explore the viability of real estate developments by developing pilot projects.
6. Explore innovative business models for Enterprise Challenge Fund partnerships
7. Lobby governments to remove impediments to home ownership. These impediments include:
  - Scarcity of land for development
  - Taxes and regulations
  - Inadequate infrastructure investment

# Issues which require Government participation:

1. Improve the regulatory environment in relation to:
  - Land administration
  - Dispute settlement
  - Contract enforcement
2. Build government capacity to better manage
  - Land administration
  - Urban planning
  - Infrastructure
3. Encourage the development of appropriate incentives through the tax system.

# Issues which require Government participation (cont.):

3. Aim to reduce the costs of developing housing by:

- Working with government to improve access to suitable land
- Lobby government to reduce the tax burden on new housing developments
- Develop public-private partnerships to extend the reach of infrastructure and essential services

4. Foster efficient domestic manufacturing of construction materials.

# Issues which require a Regional approach:

1. Need for a coordination role to be undertaken by a supra-national body.
2. Regional organizations (PIFS, PPF, SPC, MSG, World Bank, AusAID, NZAID) to be made aware of the discussion points and proposed action plan developed at this meeting.
3. Approach international multilateral agencies (ADB, relevant UN agencies such as UNDP and the Commission for the Legal Empowerment of the Poor etc) for financial and technical assistance.
4. Commitment to facilitate ongoing meetings on national and regional basis
5. Undertake baseline research to quantify the underlying unmet demand for housing across the sub-region
6. Publicise the outcomes of this inaugural housing roundtable (Regional press)

# Going Forward...

Agreement to:

- The definition
- The name of the working group
- PITIC coordinating the next steps
- Preparation of country baseline analyses
- Inclusion of housing finance materials on PRCM
- Production of an open letter and brief synopsis of this meeting