

Constitutional Reform Unit

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PRESS RELEASE

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CRU shares condolence for Prof. Ronald Watts

The Constitutional Reform Unit (CRU) shares its condolence with the rest of the Federalism scholars and community on the passing of Prof. Ronald L. Watts on 9th October 2015.

Director of CRU Mr. Philip Houlia conveyed this to the experts' team as soon as CRU was informed of this heartfelt news.

"So sad to hear the passing of Prof. Watts," Mr. Houlia said on email, "it was also our hope that he sees this project through. On behalf of CC, EPAC and the Secretariat, we extend our condolence to Ron's family and friends."

Prof. Ronald Watts is a Canadian and a leading scholar on federalism.

He first met the Constitutional Congress (CC), Eminent Persons Advisory Council (EPAC) and CRU in September 2013, along with colleague Prof. Yash Ghai for the first audit of the 2011 Draft Federal Constitution.

Prof. Watts' audited and provided expert advice to the Solomon Islands' Constitutional Congress, which included the topic of fiscal (monetary) federalism.

His second undertaking in Solomon Islands was in March 2014. He was part of the experts' team that worked with the 4th Joint CC & EPAC Plenary to review the proposed Federal Constitution. The result of which is the *2nd 2014 Draft Federal Constitution of Solomon Islands*.

During the Joint Plenary, Prof. Watts' invaluable contributions included his comments on the type of federalism Solomon Islands is looking at, now known in the draft as "cooperative federalism".

His straightforward explanations and advice on substantive matters within the constitution gave insight to the 4th Joint CC & EPAC Plenary during the review.

In a memorial service held in his honour in Canada, his colleague John Kincaid's tribute described Prof. Ronald Watts as distinguished in his work involving federalism and intergovernmental relations worldwide.

“Among others, Ron addressed federalism challenges in Nigeria, Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, the former Yugoslavia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Cyprus, Pakistan, India, Nepal, and, most recently, the Solomon Islands,” Mr. Kincaid said, “Just mentioning these places makes one realize both the importance and the difficulty of Ron’s chosen work.”

“Ron’s passion for federalism, I believe, stemmed from his passion for peace, democracy, and the dignified coexistence of the diverse peoples who inhabit our planet,” Mr. Kincaid said in his tribute published on the *International Political Science Association’s Research Committee 28* (IPSARC28) website.

Prof. Ronald Watts’ professional contribution to the Constitutional Reform process in Solomon Islands will be greatly missed.

He is replaced by Prof. Nico Steytler, an advisor and professor of law – who specializes in constitutional law, inter-governmental relations and local government.

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