



**Australian South Sea Islanders (Port Jackson) Limited**

Wantok 2013 National Forum

National ASSI Secretariat (NASSI) Elections

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ASSI.PJ Board and Strategy Team

## National ASSI Secretariat Elections – Wontok 2013

### **Preamble.**

*We would like to acknowledge and pay our respect to one of the oldest living and surviving cultures among our family of nations on the small planet we all share as our collective home, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Nations and Peoples upon whose land we live and work with toward a more mutual, harmonious and prosperous future.*

*Many of our ASSI people now share their stories and songs and have learnt learn to live and work together on their traditional lands. And let us also acknowledge the deep wisdom, knowledge and spirituality that are embedded forever within the Aboriginal Custodianship of this Country.*

### **Background**

The people addressed by this document have multiple generations of birthright within Australia and are descendents of those brought into Australia, well over a century ago, from the Islands of the South Pacific in order to work the northern cane and cotton fields. The objective of this document is to further the collective interests of our people by creating a network of Australian South-Sea Islanders (ASSI) associations and by developing national structures that can present a unified presence for these associations and advance our interests.

Because a majority ASSI associations and organisations are currently unfunded the initial structures and roles that will be described in this document must of necessity be voluntary. Yet it is hoped that these structures will give rise a political presence that can attain wider support, including Government funding, that will culminate in permanent organisations that will secure the culture, presence and future of ASSI who have a unique history and heritage and who make a distinctive contribution to the rich tapestry of Australian cultures. While making these claims it must also be acknowledged that with the passage of many generations the descendents of our people have also acquired European, Asian and/or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander forebears.

This document attempts to lay the basis for the development of three separate functional structures each of which will aid the development and proliferation of multiple local associations of Australian South-Sea Islanders (ASSI) and which will contribute to the development of a collective national presence. These three functional structures include:

- The Ethics Council (EC) – an advisory group composed of ASSI elders and/or eminent persons whose main task is to advise both the Secretariat Board of Directors (SBOD) and the National ASSI Secretariat on matters of ethics, history, heritage and culture.
- The eight-member Secretariat Board of Directors (SBOD) whose major task is to oversee the development of policy and guide the development and functions of the Secretariat.
- Finally there is the choice of a specific ASSI association to act as the National ASSI Interim Secretariat over the next three years.
- The functions of these three groups will be described below.

The three functional structures are represented in Figure 1.

It is also suggested that each of these three national bodies come up for re-election each three years. It also is suggested that the re-elections be staggered. Hence the initial period of the National ASSI Secretariat be three years, the initial period of the SBOG be two years and the initial period of the Ethics Council be four years. Thereafter the life each body will be set at three years and only one body comes up for election each year.

Finally, this document must acknowledge the hard work, success and momentum established by the efforts of the Association of South-Sea Islanders – Port Jackson Branch (ASSI.PJ). Their efforts have helped to establish the social, political, educational and economic goals of the organisation.

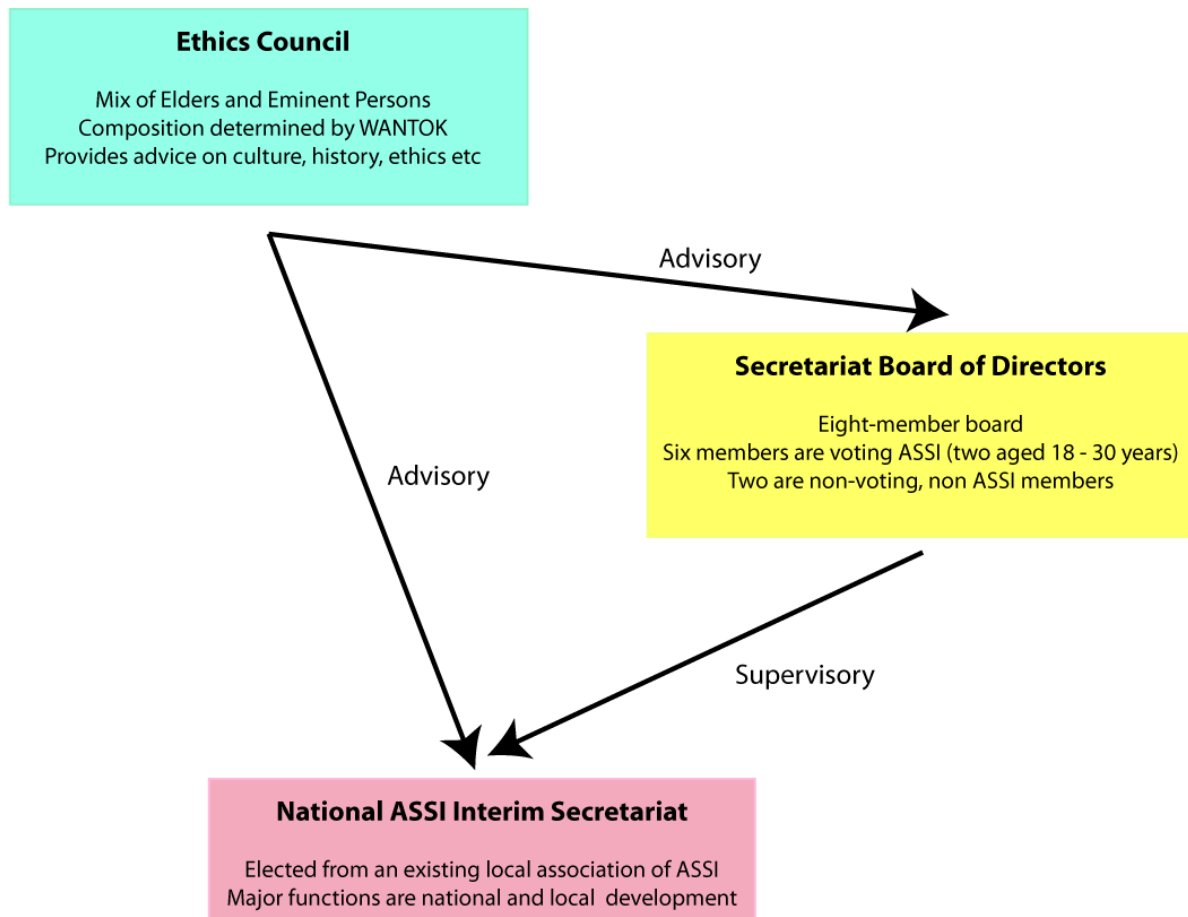


Figure 1: The three functional structures of governance and management

The following points describe purposes and procedures of the national structures that will guide the development of ASSI and their functions.

1. General meetings, known as 'WANTOK', will potentially bring together all members of registered ASSI organisations and will deal with general business, determine the membership and advisory functions of the Ethics Council and approve the constitution under which the SBOG and the Secretariat will operate.
2. The Ethics Council will be constituted at WANTOK 2013 and will provide advice and guidance concerning matters of ethics and culture and will be available to support and advise the Secretariat Board of Directors. It is expected that membership of the Ethics Council will include elders from the collective of functional ASSI organisations and eminent persons whose presence contributes to the role of the council. It is suggested that the initial council be elected for four years.
3. One of the roles of the Ethics Council will be to structure a small impartial group of scrutineers to oversee the elections of the Secretariat Board of Directors (SBOD) and the National ASSI Interim Secretariat.
4. The Secretariat Board of Directors (SBOD) will be composed of a democratically elected, central organizing group of eight members.
5. These eight members of the SBOG will be composed of six members elected from the Associations of South-Sea Islanders (ASSI), two of whom will include 'youth' aged 18-30 years. These six are to be registered ASSI members and must be nominated by registered ASSI organisations. In addition the eight members of the SBOG will also include two elected non-ASSI, non-voting members who are associated with the collective ASSI community and who have also been nominated by registered ASSI organisations.
6. All nominations for membership of the SBOG must come from registered ASSI organisations. The eight members of the SBOG will be democratically determined by elections held at the 2013 General Meeting known as 'WANTOK 2013' (Held in Brisbane on November 1-3). Nominations can be received electronically or in hard copy, with a closing date of 5pm Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013.
7. Nominations for membership of the SBOG can only be made by registered ASSI organisations. Information about the nominated persons and the nominating ASSI organisations (including details of the achievements of these organisations) will be posted on the website and Facebook page of the Association of Australian South-Sea Islanders – Port Jackson Branch (ASSI.PJ) prior to WANTOK 2013. That information about associations nominating for the Secretariat will be posted to the WANTOK 2013 website by Friday, November 1, 2013.
7. The list of selection criteria for the nominating registered ASSI organisations will be as follows. The organisation must be able to demonstrate:
  - Registration with either ORIC or ASIC
  - A proven history of stable and effective administrative structure and management practice
  - A proven capacity to lobby their local government and local government agencies on behalf of their association of Australian South-Sea Islanders (ASSI)
  - A Proven ability to market their organisation and promote their presence and product through the media
  - A list of commendable achievements with regard to ASSI affairs over the last 5 years (2008 – 2013)

- A proven capacity to build relationships and partnerships with other amenable organisations that are ultimately beneficial to ASSI organisations.
8. The SBOG will act as a board of directors on behalf of the national registered ASSI organisations and will be responsible for establishing and supervising:
    - Recurring management activities on behalf of the national body
    - The promotion of the national interests of the associations including advocacy and lobbying
    - The expansion of local associations; promotion of the interests of the national body
    - The securement of funding and investments on behalf of the national body
  9. The constitution under which the Secretariat will operate has been partially structured by recommendations attached to this document. These recommendations will need to be presented for approval at WANTOK 2013 or by a specially convened WANTOK meeting.
  10. Guidelines for the proposed Secretariat were informed by the following ideas:
    - Initially both the Secretariat and the management structure operate in a voluntary capacity. If, in the future, monies were to be received from Government or other sources for administrative purposes then it may be possible to fund either or both the Secretariat and the management positions (at the present there are no funds available).
    - It is assumed that all the financial and administrative activities of the Secretariat will be transparent and will follow the principles of best practice. Negotiations are currently being undertaken to provide insured and legal protection to the officers of the Secretariat through the pro bono services of a well-respected legal and accounting firm.
    - The over-arching organisation would be founded on the original cultural, social economic vision agreed to at WANTOK 2012
    - This organisation allows for:
      - Membership (proposed at \$10 per year) from all ASSI registered persons who are of South-Sea Island descent. Registration provides these members with voting rights.
      - Registration as 'Associated Members' (proposed at \$10 per year) is available for those who are associated with ASSI organisations but who are not of South-Sea Island decent. Associated Membership permits non-voting rights at WANTOK and also allows for nomination for non-voting positions on the Secretariat.

## **National ASSI Secretariat and Secretariat Board of Director Nomination and Election Processes**

### **Purpose and Objectives of the National ASSI Secretariat**

The purpose and role of the Secretariat is to:

- Develop management structures for local associations of ASSI and refer both policy and management structures to the Secretariat Board of Directors for review
- Provide advice in relation to development of individual local associations of ASSI
- Develop mechanisms that monitor and evaluate governance within local ASSI organisations
- Work with local and regional ASSI associations and stakeholders to advance the aspirations of ASSI
- Advocate, negotiate and lobby for the interests of the national ASSI associations
- To serve as an, 'Agent for Accountability,' that encourages Civil Servants within Government Departments to Act upon current Government commitments to ASSI
- To Justifiably pursue actual instatement of the outlined commitments found within the Qld Governments ASSI Recognition Statement and Action Plan and the New South Wales equivalency for the benefit of ASSI
- To enter into Robust negotiation with Government in the formulation of Partnerships with ASSI for bringing to fruition Government Commitments in Culturally appropriate innovative and creative ways
- Maintain community rapport through communication with the elected Secretariat Board Directors and presidents of local ASSI associations/organisations
- Provide a forum and a voice for the Australian South Sea Islanders
- Promote and advance the aspirations of ASSI and to gain official recognition for ASSI by the Australian, State and Territorial and Local Governments, as a culturally and linguistically diverse, minority group of Australian citizens among whom are a disproportionate number of disadvantaged persons
- Work to have legislation passed that provides additional assistance necessary to enable the ASSI to attain equality of life with other Australians
- Research, create and establish entities that are historically, traditionally, culturally, socially, technologically and futuristically appropriate for ASSI
- Make submissions and proposals for contributions that promote the objectives of the National ASSI
- Develop financial awareness and engage in financial activities that promote the welfare of ASSI members and ASSI entities
- Develop an awareness and pride in the unique history and culture of members of the ASSI
- Identify, preserve and maintain the significant cultural heritage including sites, artefacts, and oral histories of ASSI and ensure that these assets have adequate legal protection for future generations
- Ensure that culturally transmitted oral histories are secured in written form and that members and future generations of the ASSI learn the importance of these elements and develop a deep connection with their heritage and their history
- Ensure that any interested parties have free and unencumbered access to these heritage assets
- Advocate for the recognition and protection of the human rights of ASSI people;
- Create an accurate national overview of ASSI ancestry

- Develop media, marketing skills and technical/digital communication skills that promote the interests of the members of the ASSI
- Keep appropriate records
- Develop budgets

In doing this the Secretariat receives support and advice from:

- Secretariat Board Directors
- Ethics Council (Providing advice on History and Culture)

### **Responsibilities of the National ASSI Secretariat**

*(Candidate's should consider the following points as selection criteria to determine their suitability, capacity and capability to effectively and successfully fulfil the responsibilities of the National ASSI Secretariat)*

The National ASSI Secretariat will:

- Manage the day-to-day business of the Secretariat
- Manage Secretariat funds
- Monitor the role of the Secretariat and consider the development and implementation of future corporate governance structures to enable the Secretariat to grow
- Make recommendations to the eight-member Secretariat Board of Directors in relation to policy
- Contribute to the development of local ASSI associations
- Receive and approve national membership applications from local ASSI associations
- Identify, seek and negotiate long-term funding support for the Secretariat
- Write funding proposals
- Build and maintain current strategic relationships with appropriate ASSI stakeholders including local and regional ASSI associations/organisations
- Build and maintain relationships with State and Commonwealth government agencies to advance ASSI aspirations
- Monitor and manage communications and media activity in relation to information flow between the Secretariat and outside media sources in relation to ASSI business and upcoming ASSI events
- Manage questions concerning ASSI business including stakeholder details, funding, investments, governance and management structures
- Organise ASSI events including conferences and WANTOK
- Manage internal communications (using current digital and social media sources) that provides information to national ASSI membership (this will also involve internal publications)
- Collect and pass significant information (for example, of cultural or historic importance) to the Ethics Committee for collation and storage

## **Essential Requirements for ASSI Association Candidates for Secretariat**

It is essential that ASSI association candidates have:

- A proven capacity to develop and manage a stable and effective local administration for their association
- Obtained registration with either ORIC or ASIC
- A proven capacity to create a local presence and lobby local/council authorities in relation to ASSI local affairs
- A proven capacity to create a local presence in terms of local media that is favourable to ASSI interests
- A list of local achievements with regard to their local association over the period 2008 – 2013.

## **Role of an elected Secretariat Board Director**

Each member of the Secretariat Board of Directors should contribute to good governance by:

- Thinking and acting strategically
- Creating and communicating a vision for the future wellbeing of the National ASSI
- Ensuring the continued development of local ASSI associations
- Contributing to joint plans for future ASSI welfare
- Formulating ASSI national policies and rules
- Ensuring that all share the benefits of ASSI membership and that all associations practice transparent, accountable and democratic decision-making in which all - elders, women, men, and families have their say
- Ensuring that
- Managing Secretariat risks
- Monitoring and reviewing Secretariat performance (financial management and other)
- Ensuring that all legal responsibilities and obligations are met
- Steering the Secretariat to fulfil its vision
- Reviewing reports on the management of finances, projects, programs, services and resources arising from the National ASSI Interim Secretariat
- Ensuring that all three bodies act in accordance with cultural practices and traditions

## **Responsibilities of an elected Secretariat Board Director**

*(Candidate's should consider the following points as selection criteria to determine their suitability, capacity and capability to effectively and successfully fulfil the role and responsibilities of an elected Secretariat Board Director)*

Specific responsibilities of directors are to:

- Hold regular Board meetings
- Ensure regular attendance at Board meetings
- Keep proper minutes of Board meetings
- Govern the National ASSI Interim Secretariat
- Monitor National ASSI Interim Secretariat records, minutes and reports
- Monitor budgets and expenditure
- Approve budgets arising from National ASSI Interim Secretariat
- Ensure Secretariat is compliant with policies and rules



- Ensure reports are sent to regulatory body
- Monitor and analyse risk to the organisation
- Develop and/or approve policies
- Develop and/or approve the strategic business plan
- Monitor local ASSI associations and their applications for registration with the National ASSI organisation
- Set the direction for the National ASSI Secretariat

### **National ASSI Secretariat and Secretariat Board Director's Legal Responsibilities:**

Both the Secretariat and the Secretariat Board of Directors will be provided with legal advice and will be expected to:

- Act with care and diligence
- Act in good faith
- Avoid any improper use position, information or resources
- Declare any apparent conflicts of interest
- Avoid any form of insolvent trading

### **Example of ideal qualities of the Secretariat and Board Directors**

Potential Board Directors will:

- Use their own time to improve the Secretariat and the community
- Entertain and or generate new ideas or initiatives to benefit the Secretariat
- Be respected by the community
- Seek and entertain other people's point of view
- Be able and willing to work with people in the community
- Ensure that the Secretariat runs according to its rules and the legislative requirements;
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity in the way they fulfil their role and work in the best interest of the members.
- Model sound and ethical leadership
- Inspire a shared vision
- Review and even challenge the appearance of weakness in the system
- Enable others to act
- Encourage effort and spirit on the part of members
- Walk in the spirit of reconciliation

## **Candidate Nomination Processes**

### **Secretariat Nomination Process**

Any registered ASSI Association/Organisation/Corporation is entitled to be nominated to be a candidate for consideration at the National ASSI Interim Secretariat elections at Wantok 2013 held in Brisbane on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2013.

To become a candidate for the Interim Secretariat the interested party must a registered Association / Organisation or Corporation. The interested party should complete the attached 'Interim Secretariat Candidate' nomination form and submit it electronically to ASSI.PJ through their website. Candidate associations that meet requirements will have their details where your nomination posted on the WANTOK website for people to view. Applications must be received by Friday November 1 and information will be posted on the WANTOK website.

While not obligated, Secretariat candidates are strongly encouraged to carefully consider the purpose, objectives and responsibilities of the Secretariat as outlined in this document. It is also strongly encouraged that candidates outline in their nomination form their demonstrated experience in meeting the selection criteria.

Secretariat nominations will close at 5pm on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013.

Associations making application for the Interim Secretariat will have the opportunity to make a 5-minute presentation at Wontok 2013 in which they can outline claims as to their suitability, capacity and capability to undertake the role and responsibilities of National ASSI Interim Secretariat.

The election date for the National ASSI Interim Secretariat is Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2013.

Applications for the role of **National ASSI Secretariat** should include the following details:

**ASSI Association Name:**

**Date of Application:**

**Date of Registration:**

**Names of current President (Leader) and current Secretary:**

**Name/s of President/s (Leader/s) and dates of incumbency/incumbencies:**

**Name/s of Secretary/s and dates of incumbency/incumbencies:**

**Lists of accomplishments and or achievements in the locality (local region) of ASSI association in the period 2008 - 2013:**

**Contributions (if any) to the National ASSI organisation:**

## **Secretariat Board Director Nomination Process**

Any registered ASSI Association/Organisation/Corporation is entitled to nominate one potential member to the Secretariat Board of Directors.

Nominations for the role of Director must be received electronically through the ASSI.PJ association website.

Secretariat Board Director nominations will close at 5pm on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013.

Information about candidates and their nominating associations will be posted on the WANTOK 2013 website.

Elections for the eight positions on the National ASSI Secretariat Board Director will be held at WANTOK 2013.

Please note that only **one** candidate may be nominated by each registered ASSI Association, Organisation or Corporation.

While not obligated to do so, candidates for positions on the Secretariat Board of Directors are strongly encouraged to carefully consider the roles and responsibilities of an elected Secretariat Board Director as outlined in this document. This document also strongly urges candidates to outline in their nomination form their demonstrated experience in meeting the selection criteria.

Candidates will have the opportunity to make a 3-5 minute presentation at Wontok 2013 in which they can present their claims as to their suitability, capacity and capability to undertake the roles and responsibilities of National ASSI Secretariat.

The election date for the National ASSI Secretariat is Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2013.

Applications for the role of **Secretariat Board of Directors** should include the following details:

**Title and Name of Candidate:**

**Name of Sponsoring ASSI Association:**

**Date of Registration of Sponsoring ASSI Association:**

**Names of current President (Leader) of Sponsoring ASSI:**

**Contact details of current President (Leader) of Sponsoring ASSI:**

**Experience and skills (including work experience and work skills) that contribute to the successful fulfilment of the role of Secretariat Board Membership:**

**Lists of accomplishments and or achievements that make the candidate a suitable member of the Secretariat Board of Directors:**

**List of three referees (two of whom must be ASSI members and the third must be a non-member) plus their contact details:**

## **Election Process**

National ASSI Secretariat and Secretariat Board Director Elections will be held by ballot by registered participants of WANTOK 2013 on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2013 at Queensland State Library.

Ballot papers and notes on voting procedures will be distributed and explained at WANTOK 2013 before elections commence.

The current National Interim ASSI Body will select a party of five scrutineers to conduct the elections and undertake the count. One of the five will be nominated as the Chief Scrutineer.

A membership fee \$10 per person has been set by the current National Interim ASSI Body toward defraying the cost of the venue, other expenses and providing each attendee with a bag containing the program and other details (information) needed for attendance. In addition, the bag of each registered attendee will contain a voting documents summarising information about candidates and containing a stapled collection of coloured ballots. These ballots are provided in bags going to registered members only. Each registered member signs for their bag and in signing they agree to respect the ballot process.

**Ballot 1** is red in colour and is for the election of the **National ASSI Secretariat**.

**Ballot 1** contains a list of all the candidate associations for the role of the **National Interim Secretariat**. Alongside each listed association is a box and the instructions clearly state that the registered member is place one CROSS (X) in the box indicating the association of their choice.

**Ballot 2** is blue in colour and is for the election of candidates for the four senior (older) places on the **Secretariat Board of Directors**.

**Ballot 2** lists all the candidates for the four senior places each of which is associated with a box. The instructions are to place four CROSSES (X) in the boxes indicating the voters choice of four senior members of the **Secretariat Board of Directors**.

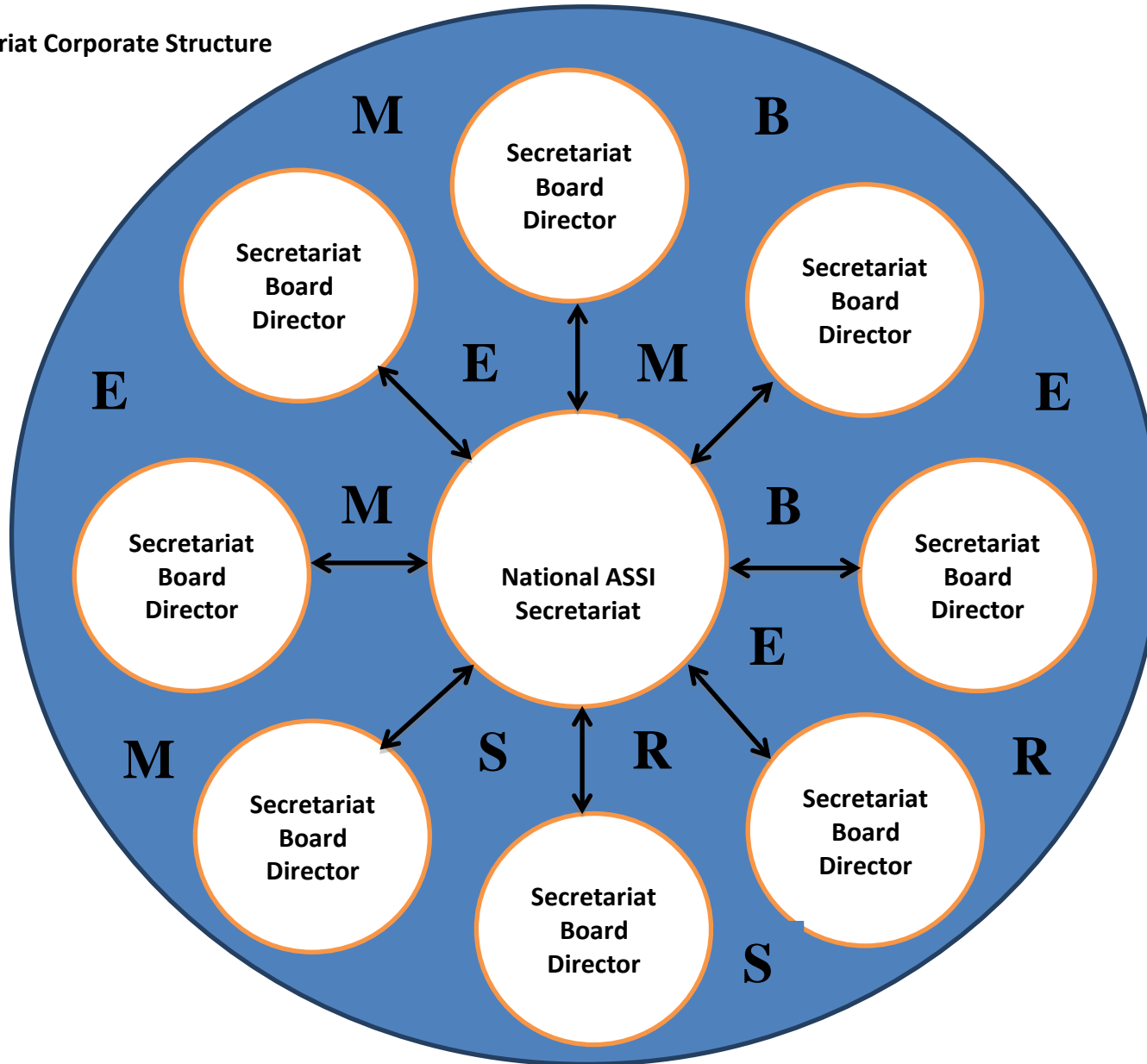
**Ballot 3** is green in colour and is for the election of candidates for the two youth places on the **Secretariat Board of Directors**.

**Ballot 3** lists all the candidates for the two youth places. Associated with each name is a box. Instructions are to place two CROSSES (X) in the boxes indicating the voters choice of two youth members of the **Secretariat Board of Directors**.

**Ballot 4** is yellow in colour and is for the election of candidates for the two non-voting non-ASSI members of the **Secretariat Board of Directors**.

**Ballot 4** lists all the candidates for the two non-voting non-ASSI places. Associated with each name is a box. Instructions are to place two CROSSES (X) in the boxes indicating the voters choice of non-voting non ASSI members of the **Secretariat Board of Directors**.

National ASSI Secretariat Corporate Structure



# **WANTOK 2013 - PROGRAM (3days)**

## **Day 1 - Friday 1<sup>st</sup> November 2013**

- 8:00am** Doors Open  
**9:00am** Pastor Ray Minniecon MC, Welcome to Country & Acknowledgements  
**9:10am** Opening speeches Patron Bonita Mabo, Brisbane Lord Mayor, tbc MAQ Minister, Vanuatu Minister Ralph Regenvanu, Paramount Chiefs, distinguished guests  
**9:30am** Entertainment – Solomon Island Dancers, Tanna Island Dancers, Charlie Bobongie, Shireen Malamoo, Indigo Ukulele Group  
**9:45am** History of Australian South Sea Islanders achievements  
**10:00am** ASSI.PJ President – Waskam Emelda Davis (speaks to mandate)  
**10:10am** Setting the scene 'Why we are here' facilitated by Paramount Chief Duane Anlilipel Aptvanu Vickery  
**10:40am** ASSI.PJ Report – Work undertaken to date since Wantok 2012  
**10:55am** Government commitment verses questionable delivery – Graham Tanner  
**11:10am** ASSI Community 150 briefing – Shirley Fatowna family reunion (others tbc)  
**11:25am** Historical Advisory Panel – Prof. Clive Moore; ASSI Chronology & the Pacific Island fund, Prof. Gracelyn Smallwood; Community Cohesion and Activism, Prof. Doug Hunt; Vanuatu 1860's, Prof. Steve Mullins; Torres Strait Connection and North QLD, Dr Francis Bobongie; reconnecting with Mailaita. Q&A

## **12:00 LUNCH**

- 1:00pm** Kastom & Culture leadership – Minister Ralph Regenvanu  
**1:30pm** Moving forward through effective leadership – Paramount Chief Duane Vickery  
**2:00pm** Proposed National ASSI Governance structure – briefing  
**3:00pm** Open forum discussion for formal decision from Wantok 2013 forum participants  
**3:20pm** Afternoon Tea  
**3:40pm** Role and responsibility of the secretariat board directors (selections & confirmations)  
**4:30pm** Election process  
**5:00pm** Overview of Day 2

## **Day 2 - Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2013**

- 8:00am** Doors Open  
**9:30am** SLQ Archive images access, Mackay births deaths and marriages register & Old QLD Kanaka Mission Baptisms  
**10:30am** Wantok 2012 screen culture – Q&A  
**11:00am** 150 News story highlights – VASSIC, Tweed Heads ASSO (tbc)  
**11:30am** Kastom & Culture Practices (Traditional belief systems) – Minister Ralph Regenvanu  
QLD Kanaka Mission Baptism records, Mackay births death and marriages records (tracing families process) – Professor Clive Moore  
**12:00pm** LUNCH  
**1:30pm** Voting briefing process  
AFTERNOON TEA  
**3:30pm** VOTING IN A NATIONAL SECRETARIAT and Secretariat Board of Directors  
**5:00** END Day 2

**Day 3 - Sunday 3rd November 2013**

**10:00am** Church Service – Pastor Ray Minniecon  
**12:00pm** LUNCH  
**1:30pm** Finalisation, Consolidation, Looking Forward  
**5:00pm** END Day 3

Sincerely,



Emelda Davis – President  
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