



**AUTONOMOUS BOUGAINVILLE GOVERNMENT  
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT**

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**Members of the Board  
Jubilee Australia  
NCCA Offices  
Level 7, 379 Kent St  
NSW 2000  
Australia**

1 December 2014

Dear Board Members,

Further to my letters to you dated 26<sup>th</sup> October and 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2014, in the absence of any response in the four weeks since my last letter, I seek your assurance that the Board is giving serious attention to the matters I raised in those letters. I would be grateful for your advice as to when I can expect a response from the Board to those issues. In addition, I write to raise additional issues on research approvals and research ethics.

Concerning research ethics, any organisation that states publicly that it ‘undertakes scientific research’, as does Jubilee, must expect to be held to account in terms of adhering to the highest standards in terms of both methodology and research ethics. It must have in place protocols and processes directed to achieving the highest possible research ethics standards.

The matters raised in my letters about the *Voices of Bougainville* report give rise to important questions about the ethical standards involved in your research. Research involving highly sensitive issues in a complex and divided post-conflict situation such as Bougainville inevitably involves risks of causing harm, not just for interviewees, but also Bougainville’s broader population. Proper research ethics protocols and processes would provide some assurances about such research being undertaken in such a way as to minimise such risks.

I request the Board to provide the ABG with detailed information about Jubilee’s research ethics protocols and processes, and how they were applied to the research in question.

Your website gives prominence to a Jubilee Australia Research Centre ‘overseen by a Committee of leading Australian academics and researchers in the field’ which ‘strengthens our capacity for rigorous, academic based research’. Claims about oversight by leading academics and a capacity for ‘rigorous’ research surely involve Jubilee holding itself out as adhering to normal research ethics protocols and processes. Further, an oversight role for the Jubilee Research Centre Advisory Committee surely implies that it has roles in relation to setting ethical standards and ensuring that they are met.

Yet the ABG has received advice that one member of the Advisory Committee (previously called the Advisory Board) with strong PNG connections has severed connections with Jubilee in large part because he was not consulted about the research at any time (though he also acknowledges that some criticisms of the report are justified). Further, he advised Jubilee that the report should be withdrawn, on the basis that the research had involved outsiders who had not engaged in adequate consultation about the whole situation, and who had taken a partisan view about a situation of which they were apparently inadequately informed.

In the light of your website's above claims, serious questions arise when at least one prominently featured senior academic has had no role in overseeing sensitive research in a country that he knows well. If Jubilee's Research Centre Advisory Committee (or any predecessor) was not involved in oversight of this research, then what is the Committee's purpose, and why does Jubilee advertise its role in oversight of Jubilee's research?

Some Australian 'not-for-profits' do participate in processes that provide avenues to hold them accountable for their research and other work. In particular, ACFID oversees a complaints process applicable to ACFID members. I understand that part of the rationale for such a process is to support efforts to improve the standard of research undertaken by NGOs, so that they move beyond advocacy to evidence-generating research.

Examination of ACFID's website suggests that Jubilee Australia is not an ACFID member. I would be grateful for your advice in that regard. If, however, Jubilee is not a member of ACFID, what accountability mechanism is available to handle complaints about Jubilee and/or its research? If such mechanism exists, is Jubilee choosing to avoid accountability?

Finally, Jubilee is presumably aware that a foreign citizen involved in research work in PNG is required to obtain a research visa. Administration of visa applications is handled by the PNG National Research Institute (NRI), Waigani, National Capital District. The NRI contacts the ABG in relation to any application for research being undertaken in Bougainville. These procedures are followed as a matter of course by other researchers working in Bougainville.

There is no evidence of any communication to the ABG from NRI about research visas in relation to the Jubilee project in Bougainville. I therefore request your advice as to any foreign citizens involved in work in PNG in relation to that project, and whether any such person applied for and was granted a research visa, in accordance with the laws of PNG?

Yours sincerely,



**John L. Momis**  
**President**  
**Autonomous Region of Bougainville**