

EDITORIAL: He waka eke noa

OUR ROOTS are firmly based in the Wansolwara—the Pacific—but this edition truly reflects our global range of interests, with contributions from authors in Indonesia, Malaysia, Fiji, Hawai’i, Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand. We are delighted to bring you a range of global perspectives on the media and journalism and to connect scholars and practitioners, covering everything from conspiracy theories and corruption to newsroom practice, employment, training and much more in between.

Although we are separated geographically we all share common interests and common concerns. As this edition of *Pacific Journalism Review*, once again produced under the auspices of the Asia Pacific Media Network, goes out, the world continues to face threats from war, climate change, disease and the resurgence of rightwing regimes. Journalists are faced with far more dangerous working environments and uncertain employment, while academics are faced with closures of departments, cuts to funding and research and an apparent lack of understanding about the value of tertiary education from those who hold the purse strings. As we went to press, news came of the closure of a 50-year-old journalism degree course—at Charles Sturt University, Bathurst, which has produced some of Australia’s top journalists (McCutcheon, 2023).

Despite these threats, we can take comfort in knowing that as journalists and academics we are not alone and that through this journal’s own global forum we can continue to share ideas and insights and strengthen our contributions to industry, society and the academy. There is a Māori saying: ‘He waka eke noa,’ which means ‘We are all in this together.’ *Pacific Journalism Review* is our waka—our canoe—and we are proud to have you along, whether as a contributor or a reader, on the voyage.

As usual we have a strong focus on the Pacific, with articles about media ethics in the Marshall Islands, issues of social media and political governance in Fiji and questions of how free media really are in the Islands in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. We also have a strong contribution from Australia, with examinations of a successful capstone project at Curtin University by **Kathryn Shine** and an unpacking of post-COVID-19 media freedom in Fiji, Palau, Solomon Islands and Tonga amid challenges over disinformation with a team of panellists led by Australian National University researchers Amanda Watson and Shailendra Singh. From the University of Sydney, Sanjay Ramesh applies democratic deficit theory to explain why the failure of political governance has been commonplace in Fiji where lack of media freedom, democratic bargaining, political transparency and accountability has led to political dysfunction and political strife.

Once again we include a Photoessay, featuring the work of Queensland

academic **Kasun Ubayasiri** from Griffith University, who presents a portfolio of photographs of members of a community who worked for the release of 120 refugees locked up in an urban motel in Brisbane.

From Aotearoa New Zealand, we have a historical study by Radio New Zealand executive editor **Jeremy Rees** on the way journalism education and training used to be carried out in this country. Drawing on the records of the Commonwealth Press Union (CPU) and local journalism training bodies, he shows how training used to be tied to the needs of the industry rather than being dominated by more theoretical and academic interests.

Gavin Ellis argues in ‘Media, the courts, and terrorism: Lessons from the Christchurch mosque attacks’ that the way the judiciary and the New Zealand media cooperated on their coverage of the terrorist attack on the two Christchurch mosques offer valuable lessons on balancing the right to a fair trial and a desire to stop the courts being used as a forum for white supremacist propaganda.

Conspiracy theories have continued to play an unwelcome part in political and social life in New Zealand, the Pacific and Australia and we have several articles touching on this theme, including a review of **Byron Clark’s** new book, *Fear*. Clark himself has partnered with **Emanuel Stoakes** from the University of Canterbury to analyse the 2021 ‘Groundswell’ protests, in which locally-based influencers and ‘alt-media’ platforms disseminated conspiracist, unscientific narratives on COVID-19 and global warming. Elsewhere, editor **Philip Cass** examines the role such ideas and the churches played in influencing Pacific Islander communities in Auckland about vaccination.

In our Special Report ‘The world according to China: Capturing and analysing the global media influence strategies of a superpower,’ **Johan Lidberg** from Monash University leads a team of researchers analysing Chinese strategies seeking to influence global media through surveys of officials from journalism unions in 87 countries.

In ‘Government loudspeakers How Indonesian media amplifies the state’s narrative towards the West Papua Movement,’ **Justito Adiprasetyo** shows how six Indonesian mass media organisations have reacted to the government’s labelling of West Papuan pro-independence groups as terrorists.

In other coverage of the Pacific, **Ann Auman** from the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa examines the role of ethical values and practices among Marshall Islands journalists, which also provides insight into their perception of their role in society. This is based on a case study of a journalism workshop organised in June 2022 by the new Pacific Media Institute established in Majuro, hosted by the College of the Marshall Islands, with funding by the Pacific Media Assistance Scheme (PACMAS).

From ANU, Jope Tarai provides a study of the impact of social media on the 2022 Fiji General Election, expanding on his previous work with the 2014

and 2018 elections. Also examining the impact of social media on the public sphere, Sara Chinnasamy and Ingrid Volkmer of the University of Melbourne share the results of research involving news journalists of both traditional media and digital news portals in Malaysia.

In our Frontline section, founding editor **David Robie** looks back on the work of AUT's Pacific Media Centre as the 'Voice of the voiceless' in his study of its academic and research advocacy and activism. It highlights the role the PMC played in nurturing young Asia-Pacific student journalists and providing them with the opportunity and encouragement to become confident community advocates.

Our Review section covers a wide range of titles, including examinations of two new books on Radio Australia, Australia's public voice in Asia and the Pacific. We also examine a biography of iconic New Zealand peace campaigner and researcher Owen Wilkes, who gained fame in New Zealand, Australia and Scandinavia for his investigation into American military bases and communication facilities.

And finally, this edition also has its moments of sadness as we mark the deaths of three remarkable women, **Tui O'Sullivan**, **Jill Jolliffe** and **Shirley Shackleton**.

Tui O'Sullivan (Te Rarawa) was a founding member of the Pacific Media Centre advisory board and an advocate for *Pacific Journalism Review* from 2007 until she retired in 2018. She was the first woman and the first Māori appointed to a permanent position at what is now Auckland University of Technology in 2000. At AUT, where she worked for more than 40 years, she developed the first Women on Campus group. She helped establish the newspaper *Password*, a publication introducing new English speakers to New Zealand society and culture. She taught courses on the Treaty of Waitangi when the treaty was a subversive idea. Outgoing PMC chair Professor Camille Nakhid said in a message to Tui's whānau:

AUT will never again see the likes of a person with the mana of Tui O'Sullivan. The Pacific Media Centre will never know again the unwavering support of a kuia like Tui. The strength, guidance, and sincerity that Tui brought to the Centre made it a beacon of advocacy for Pacific peoples and nations in Oceania. From the very beginning, Tui's wisdom and fierceness have led the way for the Centre to survive and to thrive at AUT, and to be respected in Aotearoa and around the world. Tui stood up against policies and practices that would have compromised the mission of the Centre. (Nakhid, 2023)

Former PMC chair Isabella Rasch added, 'Tui advocated passionately for all equity groups; it was Tui at the lead of many of our now embedded traditional equity events . . . [She] established scholarships for Māori and Pasifika students that did not exist before.' Founding *PJR* editor David Robie recalled, 'Tui was an extraordinary and very special person. I felt really privileged to have

her watching our back in the struggle for diversity equity. Her enthusiasm and dedication were an inspiration for us all. She was especially supportive to our students on projects or internships, whether in Beijing, Jakarta, Manila, Suva or right here in Aotearoa.’ Aroha mai, aroha atu Tui.

Journalist and author Jill Jolliffe’s work took her around the world, including 16 years in Portugal, reporting on corruption and injustices, including the killing of five Australian, British and New Zealand journalists at Bálibo on the eve of the Indonesian invasion of Timor-Leste in 1975. Her commitment to East Timorese independence endured over decades. Paying tribute, Timorese leader Xanana Gusmão, said: ‘Jill was an activist, a rebel and a fighter . . . She is one of us.’

Shirley Shackleton’s journalist husband Greg was killed by Indonesian special forces in Timor-Leste in October 1975 and she became a campaigner for justice for the journalists murdered—the Bálibo Five. She saw the Australian government’s treatment of the killings as a litmus test of Australia’s East Timor policy. She continued to pressure the government for a Federal Police investigation of those responsible for the deaths, culminating with Australian politicians and diplomats being put in the dock and scrutinised under oath in a Coronial Inquiry in 2007.

Next year *Pacific Journalism Review* celebrates 30 years of publishing, a remarkable milestone. Watch our website for news of our plans.

DR PHILIP CASS

Editor

Pacific Journalism Review

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