

Editorial

Journalism and related information and mass communication issues have a dearth of outlets in the South Pacific. While the region's news media has developed technically in leaps in bounds in the last decade and journalistic standards have risen, the region's information profile remains much the same. The major daily newspapers remain dominated by foreign ownership — the newest daily, *The National* in Papua New Guinea, is Malaysian-owned — and television/radio remains, in spite of the increasing number of privately owned FM broadcasters, in the hands of the state or, in the case of PNG's EMTV, an Australian television network.

Given this situation there is surprisingly little reflective journalism or analysis of the state of the media today in the Pacific, or of issues such as freedom of information, freedom of expression, ethics, ownership, gender in the media, development, and the public relations industry. None are better placed to provide this sort of insight into the media than the tertiary research and teaching institutions of the region.

Besides the long-established University of Papua New Guinea journalism diploma and degree programme (which was founded in 1974 and has educated a generation of Papua New Guinean and other Pacific journalists) and Divine Word Institute's communications arts courses at Madang (1981), the Pacific Journalism School was launched at Manukau Polytechnic in New Zealand (1987) and the University of the South Pacific has started a French-funded journalism degree course this year. It is timely then that we at UPNG's new South Pacific Centre for Communication and Information in Development should produce this first issue of *Pacific Journalism Review*.

Planned as an annual publication, *PJR* will combine the characteristics of an academic journal and a professional industry publication. It will include both research and articles of general interest by journalists and media people — anything that will enhance the quality of journalism and the study of it in the South Pacific will be considered for publication by the editorial board. Indeed, this issue includes an article by a first-year journalism student at UPNG, and a senior journalism student, **Tande Temane**, is one of the co-editors as part of his requirement in an advanced print media production course.

Perhaps some may say that for a publication with 'Pacific' included in the title there is surprisingly little regional content. We make no apology for this. Papua New Guinea has by far the biggest news media industry and academic media research tradition among South Pacific island countries. In

recent years, information about the media has tended to be dominated from Fiji, Tonga and Western Samoa. This first issue of *PJR* is intended to restore some balance. However, future issues will be far more regional in content and we invite contributions. Should readers wish to debate any issues raised in this edition we have a Forum section and we welcome your views.

Papua New Guinea is the first country in the region with a national communication and information policy. It is a contentious issue in PNG and several contributions address it. **Neville Togarewa** points to the anomalies and contradictions of the NICP policy while discussing a ban imposed by the former Wingti Government on the National Broadcasting Commission reporting of a supposed 'secessionist' summit among Islands region premiers. This is of particular interest as no such ban was ever imposed during the six years of the Bougainville civil war which appeared to be finally drawing close to peace in October. Three papers from the 'The Role of the Media in PNG' seminar in July, sponsored by the PNG Council of Churches, also discuss the issue — **Rev Oria Gemo** defends the policy and explains its objectives; another member of the policy making committee, **Fr Diosnel Centurion**, discusses the 'prophetic role' of Christian media; and **David Robie** examines some of the ethical dilemmas posed by the policy.

In other contributions, **James Pinder**, in his wry *Times of Papua New Guinea* column *Pinder's Watch*, gives an amusing account of how things 'are going down the gurgler' in the media; **David Robie** describes the occupational hazards of journalists globally and what this means in the Pacific; Fiji's news magazine *The Review* tells how it came close to being deregistered over a revelation about an unprofessional liaison between Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka and a reporter; **Anna Solomon** discusses the role of women in the media; and we publish part of the transcript of ABC *Four Corners* reporter **Deborah Richards'** 'Bush Bugarap' documentary on the plunder of forests which caused such a stir in PNG.

Also published are **Sorariba Nash's** disturbing account of the media 'propaganda' trends in PNG, particularly in Government press offices; **Jessie Waibauru** pays a tribute to two decades of the UPNG student journalist newspaper *Uni Tavur*; and the *Times of Papua New Guinea* contributes an editorial on the abortive Bougainville peace conference.

Happy reading and we look forward to a wide selection of contributions next year.

David Robie