

Uni Tavor and media education at UPNG

Uni Tavor, the award-winning journalism training newspaper at the University of PNG is the only newspaper in the South Pacific to have an 'editorial charter'. The paper also observes the Charter of Student Press Rights under the United Nations Convention on Freedom of Information.

By DAVID ROBIE

THE UNIVERSITY of Papua New Guinea has made a significant and valuable contribution to tertiary journalism education throughout the South Pacific for the past two decades. It has produced more than 150 graduates in that time, many of them in leading positions in the news media today.¹

Some UPNG graduates also hold prominent positions in the media in other Pacific countries. For example, Solomon Islander Alfred Sasako is the South Pacific Forum's Public Information Officer in Suva, Oseah Philemon is the editor of the *Post-Courier* and Dominic Kakas is editor of *The Independent*. And Sorariba Nash, who was among the pioneering graduates, is now broadcast journalism lecturer. Among current graduates, Solomon Islander Champion Ohasio has returned to his country and is acting editor of the *Solomons Voice* while Colin Taimbari and Isaac Nicholas have already made names for themselves as successful police reporters on the *Post-Courier*.

According to recent research, 68 per cent of Papua New Guinean journalists have a tertiary qualification and this contrasts with countries such as Fiji which has just 16 per cent.² The university has also produced most of the region's journalism education texts and manuals, including the three-volume *News Manual* by the late Peter Henshall, and David Ingram, both former lecturers, and more recently *Nius Bilong Pasifik: Mass Media in the Pacific*, edited by me.⁴

Print journalism at the university's new South Pacific Centre for Communication and Information in Development has undergone dramatic changes in less than four years. At the beginning of 1993, we had merely a pile of rusting


typewriters and students were writing news stories by longhand.⁵ Two Macintosh Classic computers along with some desktop publishing software were donated by the Ministry of Communication and Information (a few months later the suppliers tried to repossess the computers because the ministry had failed to pay for them). At the time, the journalism training newsletter *Uni Tavor* was a modest A4 format with no photographs printed on canary yellow paper. Its distribution was also limited, with little market penetration outside campus.

Throughout 1993 and 1994, the newsletter was consolidated as a professionally produced publication using PageMaker software, graphics and half-tones. But the A4 format was retained because this was the only option available while printing at the University Printery — an operation that took almost two days for a circulation of 1500.

It became increasingly clear that for the Journalism Studies component of SPCenCIID and for students themselves to really develop in this computer technological age, a quantum leap was needed in newspaper production. However, it was also equally clear that amid the climate of tertiary budgetary cuts in Papua New Guinea and their crippling impact on the university that we would need to be creative and innovative in finding ways to make the desired changes.

I embarked in 1994 on a three-pronged plan to turn *Uni Tavor* into a highly competitive and professional newspaper along the 'community newspaper' lines of some overseas countries — in other words selling advertising space to cover our printing and production costs, and distributing the paper free.

As the paper merely needed to break even, this took some of the financial pressure off. However, it would still be a herculean task to establish the paper's



Uni Tavor

A conch shell — the voice of truth and independence

Landowners slam bill's 'secret agenda'

The landowners' protest was held last year — did not involve any of the Upper Fly River community leaders.

The attention that the bill is necessary to protect the nation against speculators and corrupt politicians (claims is merely propaganda). If the claims are specious and unfounded.

INSIGHT REPORT

PREPARED UNDER UNPAC'S NEW INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM PROJECT

K4b damages claim in clear

THE FACTS BEHIND THE LEGAL TUG-OF-WAR OVER COMPENSATION

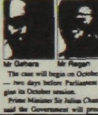
Editorial □ Page 4
About report □ Page 5
K4b report □ Page 7

'Shut out' Ok Tedi writs case to start

By NEVILLE TOGARASA

Ok Tedi landowners claim they have been "shut out" by the Government. Ok Tedi Mining Ltd and BSP want about making arrangements for the K110 compensation package and the

Two actions are not justified and meant to be a secret political agenda against public discussion. That is a violation of the constitution. If the bill becomes law, every Papua New Guinean resource owner would be affected.



Mr Gathers **Mr Ferguson**

with reacting the Mining (Ok Tedi Eight) Supplemental Agreement (SAG) which offers a one-off K110 million compensation package and will require national consent.

Mr Gathers will represent 100 landowners who each filed writs at the court registry on September 6, 1994. The case will begin on October 13 — two days before Parliament begins its October session.

Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan has said the Government will proceed

instead of processing and filing writs to enable us to continue proceedings, he wanted the landowners to pay K45,000 for each.

"The Government has threatened Court rules so we have filed writs (and). This is what I will be arguing."

The Victorian Supreme Court decided that the writs were valid and that the Government's attempt to block the writs was an attempt to circumvent the law — on the basis of speculation.

But the most damage claims for alleged negligence remain open.

University of PNG constitutional law lecturer Tracy Sagan said she was now working to stop landowners pressing similar cases in Papua New Guinea.

"It is quite likely that the judgment would stop the landowners continuing their actions here in PNG," he said.

"And that will remain an option for them."

He said he would be surprised if there was no serious constitutional challenge in the legislation at all — it was passed.

Mr Gathers said he welcomed the Metropolitan decision because the writs and the Ok Tedi landowners' case would be heard in the court.

Court orders squatter off campus

University students protest over last week's election on two occasions.


By NEVILLE TOGARASA

By JOHN MATTHEWS

The National Court has responded to a University of PNG case by ordering the eviction of a student squatter living illegally on the main Wageningen campus. He was accused of obstructing two courses.

Several accounts aimed at getting off of public making no-middle, excluded students and their residential halls.

Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Lester Hill said the court order was sought



University students protest over last week's election on two occasions.

AIDS contest contenders

Three teams have been announced for the National AIDS Contest. The teams are: 'AIDS Awareness', 'AIDS Prevention', and 'AIDS Relief'. The contest will be held in Port Moresby on October 15th.

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Uni Tavor ... award-winning style.

PACIFIC JOURNALISM REVIEW 3:2 1996 95

credentials as a viable advertising medium, especially when all student staff are part-time, including myself, a lecturer teaching four or five other courses as well.

First we established a local network for all computers in the desktop publishing program. Then I modified the At Ease program designed for educational needs with a multi-work station network. I designed a graduated access system suitable for reporters, subeditors and editors working in a sophisticated publishing program involving several titles besides the fortnightly newspaper *Uni Tavour*.

I followed this with a design revamp of *Uni Tavour* at the end of 1994 in preparation for a relaunch as a tabloid newspaper. In February 1995, thanks to the enthusiastic support of then *Post-Courier* general manager Alan Robinson, production manager Doug Teale and other staff we made the transition to publishing as a tabloid. As a commitment to the training of the country's future journalists, the *Post-Courier* — largest circulation newspaper in the South Pacific — agreed to print the paper at cost. We are grateful for the opportunity for students to gain experience at producing a real newspaper under the pressure of deadlines. *Post* administrative manager Luke Sela and SPCenCIID head Rhonda Eva launched the new newspaper with the first print run on 23 February 1995. Immediately the paper enjoyed considerable success and popularity as a tabloid and currently has a circulation of 2000.⁶

In June 1995, *Uni Tavour* won an award for the best community/student newspaper in the Pacific Media Awards.⁷ The paper also won the 1995 Ossie Award best student publication honour with the judge, Max Suich, chief executive of the Sydney *Independent Monthly*, saying the paper was 'by far the most impressive' of the student publications: 'It has a level of maturity in its writing and editing and a concern with serious national issues that made it stand head and shoulders above the others.'

The newsroom works on a very professional basis. A new newsroom was completed in early 1995. A student editor and a chief-of-staff are selected and appointed each semester on the basis of a written application responding to an advertised job — just like in real life. The prospective editor has to 'sell' her or himself to get the job. These positions are chosen from among students on the advanced Print Production II or Advanced News Practice courses. Senior subeditors, who are on the introductory Print Production I course, are allocated tasks such as pictures editor, sports editor, features editor and so on by the editor in consultation with the print lecturer.⁸

The students conduct their editorial conference and assign rounds and stories just like any newspaper. My role as managing editor is really as a guide to the students — I teach the necessary editorial skills, ensure the production targets and deadlines are met, support the editorial conferences with continuous

Uni Tavor is a campus-based community newspaper which will be distributed free fortnightly to readers as widely as economically possible. It is a journalism training newspaper with the following purposes:

1. To provide a vehicle for members of the University of Papua New Guinea community to communicate news and opinions to one another, subject only to constraints of space, public interest, topicality and readability, as determined by the print journalism teaching staff and appointed senior student editors of the South Pacific Centre for Communication and Information in Development (SPCenCIID).

2. To inform the people of the nation about issues affecting Papua New Guinea through high quality news reports, feature articles and analysis.

3. To promote a fairer and more tolerant society, and for an improved quality of life for the students and citizens of PNG.

4. To ensure, in particular, that the activities and concerns of the relatively poor and powerless are represented in news and opinion articles.

5. To inform the nation of important media and information developments, and to contribute to debate ethical and media issues.

6. To offer practical advice to students about community and academic life.

7. To avoid denigrating any individual or group unless the benefit to the general public from publishing such material exceeds the hurt to the individual or group concerned.

8. To pursue all these goals with a sense of humour, and with a warm delight in the diversity of life.

***Uni Tavor's* editorial charter .**

evaluation of the students' work, reinforce the social responsibility and accountability of student journalists, explore ethical and professional dilemmas as they arise, and ensure the students follow the Papua New Guinea Journalists' Association code of ethics.

In terms of accountability and guidelines, *Uni Tavor* is the only newspaper in the South Pacific to have an 'editorial charter', a mechanism used increasingly in many countries to establish editorial quality. The paper also observes the Charter of Student Press Rights in accordance with the spirit of the United Nations Convention on Freedom of Information. The newspaper's slogan is 'A conch shell ... the voice of truth and independence'.

After a period of consolidation for six issues as an eight-page publication in the first semester, *Uni Tavor* took another great leap forward in July 1995 with the introduction of a major new course, the 16-week graduate Certificate in

Investigative Journalism. This meant the newspaper added an extra four-page liftout — the 'Insight Report' investigative supplement — each issue. But the improvements did not end there. For the special Independence anniversary edition on 16 September 1996, marking two decades of PNG as a sovereign nation, *Uni Tavor* produced a 24-page issue with four-colour editorial and advertising content.

Financially, *Uni Tavor* came close to meeting its budget. Although the paper did not cover all our costs for the year, we had a very successful Independence issue and the profit from that edition almost covered the issues published at a loss.

Now in 1996 *Uni Tavor's* emphasis has shifted to producing an electronic newspaper. In January, it became the first newspaper in the South Pacific to produce an electronic edition on a World Wide Web site. Thanks to long-standing cooperation with the Australian Centre for Independent Journalism at the University of Technology in Sydney, with which SPCenCIID has been negotiating a memorandum of understanding, the newspaper has been able to piggy-back on the ACIJ home page to have its own web site.

The Web URL is: http://acij.uts.edu.au/UniT_Home.html

This means that readers, researchers and media people on the Internet can get access to the latest *Uni Tavor* edition complete with stories, some graphics and photographs on their home PC. The new arrangement gives students an opportunity to work with the Internet and email software programs through the non-government and educational Pacific-wide communications cooperative, Pactok. This also provides an interactive alternative news service, 'Nius' and at a fraction of the cost of wire services for the daily and weekly press.

The Nius Web URL at Pactok is: <http://www.pactok.net/docs/nius>


50 Bookmarks Options Directory Window

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Location: http://acij.uts.edu.au/UniTavor/Unit_5_96.html

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 **Uni Tavor**
A conch shell — the voice of truth and independence

http://acij.uts.edu.au/UniTavor/Unit_5_96.html

Vol 22, No. 5, 10 May, 1996

Campus repairs crisis hits uni
Powerful social mystery opens

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Front Page

- **Campus repairs crisis hits uni.** (Reporter: Michael Muse)
 - The University of PNG faces a crisis over maintenance of its facilities
- **Powerful social mystery opens.** (Dick Soranba & Gorethy Semu)
 - A detective mystery with a powerful social message opens at the creative arts faculty
- **Miss UPNG report stuns protest.** (Self Reporters)
 - A group of students harassed staff of Uni Tavor, in an angry response to the last issue's front page report that Miss UPNG is not a registered student.

Focus

- **Toothless Tiger? No. This watchdog knows how to bite.** (Reporter: Raphael Semel)
 - A special report on how the Ombudsman (an independent commission that keeps tabs on Government bodies) publishes, secures.

The *Uni Tavor* web site on the Internet.

Students now graduating from UPNG have a level of computer literacy undreamed of three years ago in a Pacific tertiary institution. Many graduates can now produce a publication in their own right through the reporting and subediting stages. They also have some firsthand experience of the hard economic realities of advertising and distribution.

The publications produced by SPCenCIID include: *Uni Tavor*, a fortnightly tabloid newspaper covering campus, regional and national news and current affairs, and also South Pacific issues.

Ita Diba, a quarterly newsletter covering communications issues and the work of the university's South Pacific Centre for Communication and Information in Development.

Pacific Journalism Review, an annual or twice a year journal debating mass media, communications, journalism and related issues. This is subscribed to very widely by libraries and news media organisations in the region.

Campus Toktok, an occasional newsletter published in close association with *Uni Tavor*.

Nius Bilong Pasifik: Mass Media in the Pacific, a comprehensive resource book on the South Pacific news media with emphasis on Papua New Guinea. It includes a 40-page socio-economic and media country profile.

Recommendations:

Much of what has been described sounds very positive in terms of what SPCenCIID has achieved. However, the downside is that the journalism program has always been severely under-resourced at the university.

All computers have been donated from outside sources, not a single one being supplied by the university. I would like to stress here how grateful we are for the valuable direct financial support we have enjoyed from several organisations, notably the New Zealand High Commission, *Post-Courier*, UNESCO and Cuso through the Canada Fund. Without their support it would not have been possible to expand our program as dramatically as we have done. In the case of New Zealand, it helped found the journalism program in 1995 and funded it for three years. It has been heartening to have their support 20 years on.

But there are still many areas that SPCenCIID needs financial and material support. These are areas that realistically, given the budgetary cuts, cannot be provided from within the university. Some of these needs include:

- ❑ Air conditioning and floor covering for the *Uni Tavor* newsroom to protect the computers and publication production.

- ❑ Substantial funding for a major upgrade of the broadcasting studio and installation of a broadcast newsroom.

DAVID ROBIE

- ❑ Funding for the expansion of the data base and development of an editorial library.
- ❑ Funding for a news-gathering vehicle for the Centre.
- ❑ Funding to underwrite field trips to enable students to make environmental and other journalistic assignments to other parts of PNG.
- ❑ Development funding for publications.
- ❑ Funding for specialised short courses.

SPCenCIID's program gives journalism students an innovative, challenging and wide-ranging basic vocational training and academic education. After they graduate, the responsibility for furthering their education and specialised training rests with the news media organisations. Some have been rising to this challenge, others have neglected their responsibility. And others have been blaming the university without making any commitment to journalism training themselves.

While some media organisations have shown a commitment to journalism training by working closely with the centre through the Board of Journalism Studies, set up by the university in 1994, other media groups have conveniently ignored it.

Future plans for expanding the centre's program include more specialised mid-career short courses — such as investigative journalism, desktop publishing, environmental journalism and public affairs journalism — in partnership with media organisations. The investigative journalism certificate course began in 1995 and desktop publishing started in June 1996 with assistance from AusAID.

Papua New Guinea is rich in human and media technological resources, and ideally there should be close cooperation between the media organisations and the educators. The country should rely on home-grown expertise where possible.

And there should be pride in the progress of the centre's accomplishments in journalism education as after all it is both the pioneer and the longest standing journalism training institution in the South Pacific.

Notes:

¹ Memorandum from Benjamin Naing, Deputy Registrar (Academic), UPNG, to David Robie, 4 December 1995 in response to the author's request: 110 one-year diplomates in Journalism graduated up to 1985; 13 two-year Diploma in Media Studies graduated since 1990; 23 graduated with four-year Bachelor of Journalism degrees since 1989.

² Layton, Suzanna, 'The demographics of diversity: profile of Pacific Island journalists', *Australian Studies in Journalism*, Vol 4, p 137, 1995.

³ Henshall, Peter and David Ingram, *The News Manual: A Training Book for Journalists*; Vol 1: Basic Techniques; Vol 2: Advanced Reporting; Vol 3: Ethics and the

Law, Port Moresby: Poroman Press, published with financial help from the Pacjourn project of UNESCO, 1991.

⁴ Robie, David (ed), *Nius Bilong Pasifik: Mass Media in the Pacific*, Port Moresby: University of PNG Press, 1995, 274 pp.

⁵ Robie, David (producer) and Jameson Bere (director), *Uni Tavor: Two Decades of a Student Press*, 17 minute video produced to mark the 20th anniversary of the founding of the newspaper *Uni Tavor*, 1994.

⁶ *Uni Tavor*, Vol 21 No 1, 24 February 1995.

⁷ See *Uni Tavor*, Vol 21, No 7, 21 July 1995.

⁸ See *Development Communications: Journalism, Public Relations, Library and Information Studies 1996 Handbook*, Port Moresby: South Pacific Centre for Communication and Information in Development (SPCenCIID).

David Robie is Lecturer in Print Journalism at the University of Papua New Guinea's South Pacific Centre for Communication and Information in Development (SPCenCIID). This paper was presented at the 'Freedom at the Crossroads: The Media and the Constitution' Seminar under the title 'Electronic Student Newspaper: Uni Tavor and Print Media Education at UPNG', Sir John Guise Indoor Stadium, 29 February-1 March 1996.

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