

Give us a break

While the *Daily Post* was reluctant to comment publicly on the sale of its controlling interest to the Fiji Government, it was outspoken in its criticism of its rival, the Murdoch-owned *Fiji Times*, during debate over the deal.

By the *DAILY POST*

RECENTLY the *Daily Post* has been the favourite whipping boy of anyone who has anything to say about anything. We get blasted in Parliament, we get blasted by the Government, we get blasted by the Opposition, we get blasted in the newspaper, we get blasted on television and we get blasted on radio.

Yesterday [24 February 1999], on page 6 of the *Fiji Times*, we received one of the cruellest cuts when a man by the name of Yogesh Prasad was allowed to vilify our journalists in its Letters to the Editor column. Mr Prasad said: "One way the Government could have helped the *Daily Post* is by sending their reporters to schools to learn the basic [sic] of journalism and the editorial staff overseas so that they could learn to put [sic] a paper free of bias, master media ethics and cram proper grammar."

Of course we respect Mr Prasad's right to his opinion and the *Fiji Times'* right to publish his nonsense. But we question the ethics of the *Fiji Times* when, while it is willing to run criticism of the *Daily Post*, it is not willing to report on the positive things we have done. For example, on Tuesday this week it published a report of the award of a journalism prize at the University of the South Pacific. The report mentioned almost everything that was in the statement given to the paper. What it did not have the guts to report was that the prize money was donated by the *Daily Post*.

We try as much as possible, within the confines of our limited resources, to provide training, both on the job and outside, to our journalists. Our journalists

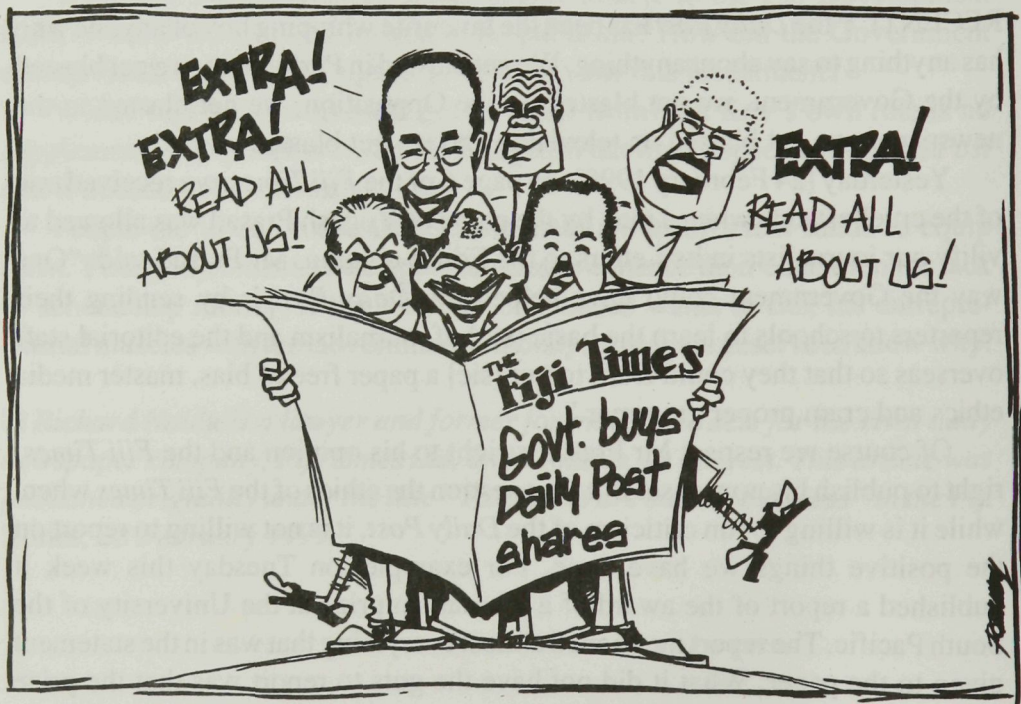
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themselves have gone out of their way to get extra training. Right now we have six journalists studying at the University of the South Pacific and one at Central Queensland University, all being supported by the company to take time off work to study while at the same time fulfilling their duties at work.

We also have a minimum entry level into our newsroom. To be a cadet reporter, one must have at least a form seven pass with at least 70 per cent in English. The fact that we now sponsor a major prize at the USP's journalism school indicates our support for journalism training in Fiji [and the region] and the need to improve journalism standards.

Finally, Mr Prasad, sometimes people say more about themselves by what they say about others. I hope that is not the case with you and the *Fiji Times*.

□ This editorial in Fiji's Daily Post was published on 25 February 1999.



The Fiji Times, 10 February 1999.