Fairness, balance and the Pacific media

Several Pacific papers were presented at the inaugural World Association of Press Councils’ Oceania regional conference in Brisbane in June. The first was an overview of the region.

By DAVID ROBIE

EVOLVING Press councils in two Pacific nations, Fiji and Papua New Guinea, have made major contributions to notions of fairness, balance and accountability in the region, and the raising of professional standards. They have also warded off varying attempts to gag or hinder the news media from carrying out its role in the public interest. But pressures and dilemmas continue in the region, often from a cultural as well as a political perspective. The media in some countries is refreshingly outspoken and courageous; in others there is a worrying trend towards self-censorship. Journalism education is also of growing importance in the Pacific and a key foundation for media freedom.

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