

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.

□ This full paper has been published by the *Australian Journalism Review* in the December 1999 edition under the title, "Fairness, balance and the Pacific media's cultural imperative". ISSN 0810-2686

□ The Australian Press Council published Robie's full report and supplementary papers as "1999 Australian Press Council Fellow: David Robie — Report and speeches." ISBN 0949856460

□ *Pacific Journalism Review* editor David Robie was chosen as the 1999 Australian Press Council Fellow, following Lord Wakeham in 1997. (There was no appointment in 1998). Email: David.Robie@usp.ac.fj