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# Editorial A cooperative future

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**W**ELCOME to the first issue of *Pacific Journalism Review* to be jointly edited by the editors of *PJR* and *Australian Journalism Review*. The trigger for this cooperative editorial venture was the major conference held in Auckland in December 2006, involving the Journalism Education Association of New Zealand (JEANZ) and Australia's Journalism Education Association (JEA).

Anyone who has been to New Zealand will appreciate that it is an excellent destination for a conference, and that Auckland is a beautiful part of New Zealand in which to locate it. Titled 'Journalism Downunder: The future of the media in the digital age', the conference was hosted (and very well organised) by AUT University in Auckland. It produced a high standard of trans-Tasman discussion and debate, in the process drawing attention to our many areas of common interest and few points of difference.

The papers published here have been selected from the large number presented at the conference. Other papers will be published in the next issue of *Australian Journalism Review*, due to appear mid-year. *PJR* editor David Robie and I have worked hard to select high quality papers which will be of greatest interest to our respective readerships. All papers, including those presented in the refereed strand of the conference, have been reviewed separately for publication.

The conference programme incorporated a wide range of perspectives on journalism, from industry to academe, from radical to conservative, from Europe to the South Pacific. Keynote speakers were Roy Greenslade, professor of journalism at City University, London, and past editor of the *Daily Mirror*; Te Anga Nathan, head of news and current affairs at Maori Television Service; and Peter Cavanagh, chief executive and editor-in-chief of Radio New Zealand. These presentations were followed by an impressive range of papers, and those published here represent only a small selection from an extensive and diverse programme.

Readers from more distant parts of the world might not appreciate the close ties existing between Australia and New Zealand. Indeed, little more

than century ago when the Australian colonies amalgamated to form the nation that is modern Australia, New Zealand almost joined the federation. Despite a time-honoured tradition of friendly rivalry between the two countries, we have a great deal in common.

The Auckland conference demonstrated that this is just as much the case for journalism academics as for any other field. The great success of the conference provides further evidence that our common interests far outweigh our differences. The proof of this is before you, and I hope you enjoy reading it.

**Ian Richards**

Editor, *Australian Journalism Review*

TWENTY years ago, a suave, but little known, lieutenant-colonel in the Royal Fiji Military Forces—the third-ranked officer—staged a coup against both the democratic government of the Pacific nation and the high chief commanding the army. At the stroke of 10 o'clock on the morning of 14 May 1987, ten soldiers wearing gasmasks burst into the parliamentary chamber, across the road from what is now the Holiday Inn.

'Sit down everybody, sit down ... this is a military takeover,' said the young squad leader. Then Lieutenant-Colonel Sitiveni Ligamamada Rabuka, dressed in a suit and *sulu*, stood up in the public gallery. Striding towards the Speaker, Rabuka declared: 'Please stay calm, ladies and gentlemen. Mr Prime Minister, please lead your team down the right.' His troops led Fiji Labour Party prime minister Dr Timoci Bavadra, and his month-old cabinet and MPs at gunpoint into captivity.

Since that original military coup, there have been three more, once more by Rabuka in September that year to complete his bid for 'indigenous supremacy'; then by bankrupt businessman George Speight and renegade elite 'counter-terrorist' soldiers in May 2000, and finally by military commander Commodore Voreque Bainimarama in December 2006—this time claimed to be for a 'multiracial' and 'corruption free' Fiji.

Just as in the 10-year civil war in Bougainville and the political upheavals in New Caledonia, Solomon Islands and Tonga, the performance of the media in the coups has been challenged and faced scrutiny. This edition of *PJR* includes two research papers on the Fiji coups presented at the

Auckland conference, one by Canberra University's doctoral candidate **Anthony Mason**, who has interviewed 15 Australian and New Zealand coup reporters, and Radio Niu FM's **Christine Gounder**, who interviewed 13 Fiji journalists and four foreign scribes in the course of her research masters degree at AUT University.

*PJR* is pleased to encourage debate out of these these papers about coup coverage. Commentaries by **Matt Mollgaard** of AUT University, the Pacific Islands Media Association's **John Utanga** and *Tematairiki* publisher **Tab-erannang Korauaba** reflect the new realities of the digital age and Pasifika media also contribute to the edition. Auckland media barrister **William Akel** examines privacy and the global media; **Philip Castle** assesses the 'mysterious slow death' of the contemporary police reporter; **Susan Hetherington** explores the use of the wiki in a virtual newsroom (both contributors from the Queensland University of Technology), and Divine Word University's **Patrick Matbob** deconstructs the *Post-Courier's* use of media advocacy.

A research article by **Jahnabi Das** of the University of Technology, Sydney, profiles freelance journalists and the notion of professionalism while Waikato University's **Ann Hardy** and **Alastair Gunn** compare the roles of police, media and the public in coverage of the inquiry into the 2003 murder of six-year-old Coral-Ellen Burrows.

Massey University's **James Hollings** contributes a research report about the national census and profiling of New Zealand journalists—'Still European and female, but older'. Like my colleague, Ian Richards, I am delighted that this journal is providing an avenue for diverse quality research in the region.

## **David Robie**

Editor, *Pacific Journalism Review*

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