

EDITORIAL: Finding the Pacific voice

GOOD journalism remains central to the needs of the Pacific and her people.

Good journalism education is central to this issue of *Pacific Journalism Review*, which features a selection of papers on journalism education in the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand. Drawn mostly from the papers presented to the Fourth World Journalism Education Congress (WJEC16), and the pre-conference organised by the Journalism Education and Research Association of Australia (JERAA) and the Pacific Media Centre with the Media Educators Pacific (MeP) at the Auckland University of Technology in July, they all reflect the importance of good journalism and good journalism education.

Speaking at the opening of the preconference, University of Auckland Associate Professor **Toolesulusulu Damon Salesa** said the profession was vital for bringing the Pacific community together. Dr Salesa, director of the newly founded New Zealand Institute for Pacific Research, which sponsored five Pacific media educators to attend the conferences, said journalism helped people engage in the public sphere.

‘Journalism is central to the public interest of the Pacific,’ he said. ‘It protects culture and especially language. However, the world has changed drastically, making it difficult for journalists to keep up with the scale of some of the issues affecting the Pacific.’

That is also a major challenge for journalism educators, especially in the Islands, where resources may be slim, staff few and commitment to professional standards a challenge to corrupt governments and institutions. The relationship between journalists, governments and the people remains vexed.

In Fiji, censorship remains a problem, although as always in these situations there is what gets into print (or on air) and what people know ‘really happened’. Meanwhile, in Tonga, Prime Minister ‘Akilisi Pohiva also stands accused of censorship, but claims that he is in fact fighting a continuing attack on his government by members of the Tongan Broadcasting Commission, acting as a front for conservative elements from the previous, noble-dominated administration.

At the end of the conference, veteran publisher **Kalafi Moala** pleaded for journalism educators to help raise the standard of journalism in the Pacific. His call should be heeded for raising the standard is something that can be done through co-operation and collaboration, but it must be led by educators and journalists who understand the needs of the Pacific nations and peoples.

We need to keep in mind, too, that Pacific journalists now operate here in Aotearoa/New Zealand, which has offered a haven on occasion to journalists

who have had to leave their homeland. As Moala said at the conference:

Auckland is the hub of education, trade, transportation and communication for Western Pacific Island nations. There are many of us from the Pacific Islands who regard Auckland as home or our second home. (Moala, 2016, p. 118)

Given the size of Pacific diasporic communities in New Zealand, it is worth remembering that stories about the Pacific may originate in the west Auckland suburb of Henderson as much as the Solomon Islands' capital of Honiara.

Producing good journalists who can report accurately on the Pacific is not just important for the Islands, it is also vital for New Zealand and the region's other metropolitan powers. We need to find the right people to *skulim olgeta samting long mekim nius*, but we also need to teach *palagi* journalists how to cover a formal Samoan event in Wellington.

Drawing on contributions from academics and journalists in the Pacific, Australia and New Zealand, the articles in this edition of *PJR* cover a whole range of issues confronting journalists in the region. More articles will be published in 2017.

A number of the articles deal with issues arising directly from the classroom; finding the best way to teach professional skills; the threats to journalism students and the value of capstone projects to students.

We begin with **Emily Matosororo's** account of the student protests at the University of Papua New Guinea earlier this year, which also feature on this edition's cover. UPNG has never been the most settled campus, but this year's ructions were aimed at trying to overthrow what was perceived as a corrupt government. The story also had major significance as an example of how badly a story can be misreported when accounts began to circulate that students had been killed when police opened fire on peaceful demonstrators; 23 were reportedly wounded.

We stay in Papua New Guinea for our next article in which **Maria Sagrista** and **Patrick Matbob** of Divine Word University explore the digital divide in that country. This is a pioneering piece of research that identifies as many gaps in the knowledge as facts and points the way to some excellent opportunities for further study.

Staying in Melanesia, but moving to Solomon Islands. **Alexandra Wake** examines an Australian journalism training programme in that country and reports on the outcomes and the attitudes of local journalists towards it.

Shailendra Singh and **Eliki Drugunalevu** examine three cases of cyber-bullying of journalism students working on the student newspaper *Wansolwara* at the University of the South Pacific, drawing attention to the downside of modern communication technology and raising important issues about how students and educators can respond.

PJR editor **David Robie** looks at how media convergence over the past 20 years has opened opportunities for competing newspapers, television stations and online publishers to form alliances to promote innovative news-gathering strategies. The article looks at *Pacific Scoop* and *Asia-Pacific Report* as a combined case study. *PJR* associate editor **Philip Cass** looks at the use of student media to teach professional journalism skills in several countries, including Fiji.

Matt Mollgaard explores the role of Radio New Zealand International as a source of information in the Pacific, as a tool of New Zealand government ‘soft power’ and asks what the future holds under a government hostile to public broadcasting.

At the conclusion of this section, **Kalafa Moala** reflects on the state of journalism in the Pacific and says it is time for Pacific journalists to find their own voice.

In a special research report by **James Hollings, Folker Hanusch, Ravi Balasubramanian** and **Geoff Lealand**, we look at the state of journalism in New Zealand. Conducted as part of the Worlds of Journalism Study the report finds that Kiwi journalists are under more pressure than ever before, working longer hours and worried about the ethical issues arising from new media. Significantly, it also finds that women journalists in New Zealand continue to be discriminated against in terms of pay and that even though they make up the majority of journalists, they are under-represented in management and suffer in terms of promotion.

Our *Frontline* section, under the editorship of **Wendy Bacon**, features **Chris Thomson** and **Bonita Mason** reflecting on a project involving university journalism students and a campaign to give a major park in inner city Perth, Western Australia, a second Indigenous name drawn from the Nyoongar language. The article also includes the story produced by the project.

In our non-themed section, **Grant Hannis** investigates the Len Brown affair and how digital media was used by right wing blogger Cameron Slater to expose the Auckland mayor’s extramarital affair and what happened when the mainstream media picked up the story and expanded on it, leading to the end of Brown’s political career.

Trevor Cullen investigates the widespread use of capstone units in Australian journalism courses. A recent development in Australia, undergraduate journalism capstone units are offered by 16 universities in Australia to prepare final-year undergraduates for work.

In an article analysing contemporary newspaper representations of police corruption in Indonesia’s leading daily English-language newspaper, *The Jakarta Post*, **Sharyn Davies, Louise Stone** and **John Buttle** show how, in spite of many obstacles, the paper takes a critical view.

We end, as usual, with our reviews section. Highlights include University of

Auckland academic **Maria Armoudian's** new book *Reporting from the Danger Zone* and several new books on journalism education and the media in New Zealand, Australia and Scandinavia.

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Reference

Moala, K. (2016). Pasifika solutions for Pacific problems. *Pacific Journalism Review*, 22(2), 118-121.

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THE NEXT edition of *Pacific Journalism Review* will be centred on climate change in the Asia Pacific region and globally when we return to our usual publication schedule in May and October. The edition is being edited by David Robie, Chris Nash and Shailendra Singh with a call for papers on Page 215 of this issue. The deadline is February 20. For the current edition, we had more peer-reviewed and accepted WJEC2016 papers than could be published in one volume. We plan to devote the October 2017 edition to 'Asia-Pacific journalism education' to continue this theme.

My appreciation goes to Philip Cass who took on the editorship of this edition at a time of challenging changes with my absence in Europe on sabbatical.

Contributors to this and future editions would notice that *PJR* has upgraded its submissions software. This is thanks to the AUT Library team which has established the Tūwhera open access Online Journals System (OJS) platform. *PJR* and *Applied Finance Letters* are the two pioneering Tūwhera publication guinea pigs. Tūwhera was launched in October with much revelry: tuwhera.aut.ac.nz. To be frank, our journey has been a learning curve with some unexpected hurdles along the way.

Thank you Luqman Hayes, Donna Coventry and Craig Murdoch for your



PACIFIC MEDIA CENTRE

At the launch of Tūwhera: AUT's director of learning and research services Shari Hearne (left) with *Pacific Media Watch* contributing editor TJ Aumua and the Pacific Media Centre's Advisory Board chair and *PJR* board member Associate Professor Camille Nakhid.

support and patience. We remain convinced that ultimately this is going to be a more satisfying and more efficient publication process. So please bear with us for the time being and support the tireless efforts being put into the journal by Philip, David, Del, Wendy, Susan, Allison and others.

At present we have two websites, our main one (pjreview.aut.ac.nz), which carries all our archives and galleries and was recently expanded to cover every edition and paper back to the founding year in 1994—thanks to an intern, TJ Aumua, who is now trying her luck as a journalist far from the Pacific—and our new submissions site (ojs.aut.ac.nz/pacific-journalism-review/about/submissions).

By the time you read this editorial, it will already be past Christmas and into 2017, and our team wishes you a creative and prosperous year in journalism education and research.

Kia kaha, kia kaha manawanui.

Professor David Robie
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