

**Journalism Education  
in the South Pacific,  
1975-2003:  
Politics, Policy  
and Practice**

**Volume 1**

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## **STATEMENT OF SOURCES**

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original and my own work, except as acknowledged in the text. The material has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for a degree at this or any other university.

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David Robie

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1 December 2003

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Kia kaha manawanui.

**David Robie**

Auckland, 1 December 2003

## ABSTRACT

University education for South Pacific journalists is a relatively recent development. It has existed in Papua New Guinea for merely a generation; it is less than a decade old at degree level in Fiji, and in the former colonies in Polynesia. At the same time, mean age, experience and educational qualifications have been rising among journalists in the major Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) member countries, Australia and New Zealand, as the news media has become more professionalised. While the Papua New Guinea media has largely depended on journalism education to provide the foundation for its professionalism, Fiji has focused on a system of ad hoc short course training funded by international donors.

This thesis examines the history of South Pacific university media education and its impact on the region's journalism. Its first objective is to test the hypothesis that tertiary education has a critical influence on how Pacific journalists practise their profession and perceive their political and social role in a developing society faced with the challenges of globalisation. Secondly, the thesis aims to analyse the political, economic and legal frameworks in which the media have operated in Papua New Guinea and Fiji since independence. Third, the thesis aims to explain and assess in detail the development of journalism education in the South Pacific since independence.

The theoretical framework is from a critical political economy perspective. It also assesses whether the concept of development journalism, which had its roots in the 1980s debate calling for a 'New International Information and Communication Order' (NWICO), has had an influence on a Pacific style of journalism. The thesis argues within a context where journalists can be considered to be professionals with some degree of autonomy within the confines set by a capitalist and often transnational-owned media, and within those established by governments and media companies. Journalists are not solely 'governed' by these confines; they still have some freedom to act, and journalism education can deliver some of the resources to make the most of that freedom. The thesis includes historical case studies of the region's three main journalism schools, Divine Word University (PNG), University of Papua New Guinea and the University of the South Pacific. It demonstrates some of the dilemmas faced by the three schools, student journalists and graduates while exercising media freedom. Research was conducted using the triangulation method, incorporating in-depth interviews with 57 editors, media managers, journalists and policy makers; two newsroom staff surveys of 15 news organisations in Fiji and Papua New Guinea in 1998/9 (124 journalists) and 2001 (106); and library and archives study. It also draws on the author's personal experience as coordinator of the UPNG (1993-1997) and USP (1998-2002) journalism programmes for more than nine years.

The thesis concludes that journalists in Papua New Guinea (where university education has played a vital role for a generation) are more highly educated, have a higher mean experience and age, and a more critically sophisticated perception of themselves and their media role in Pacific societies than in Fiji (where almost half the journalists have no formal tertiary education or training). Journalists in Fiji are also more influenced by race, cultural and religious factors. Conversely, PNG journalists are poorly paid even when compared with their Fiji colleagues. There are serious questions about the impact that this may have on the autonomy of journalists and the Fourth Estate role of news media in a South Pacific democracy.

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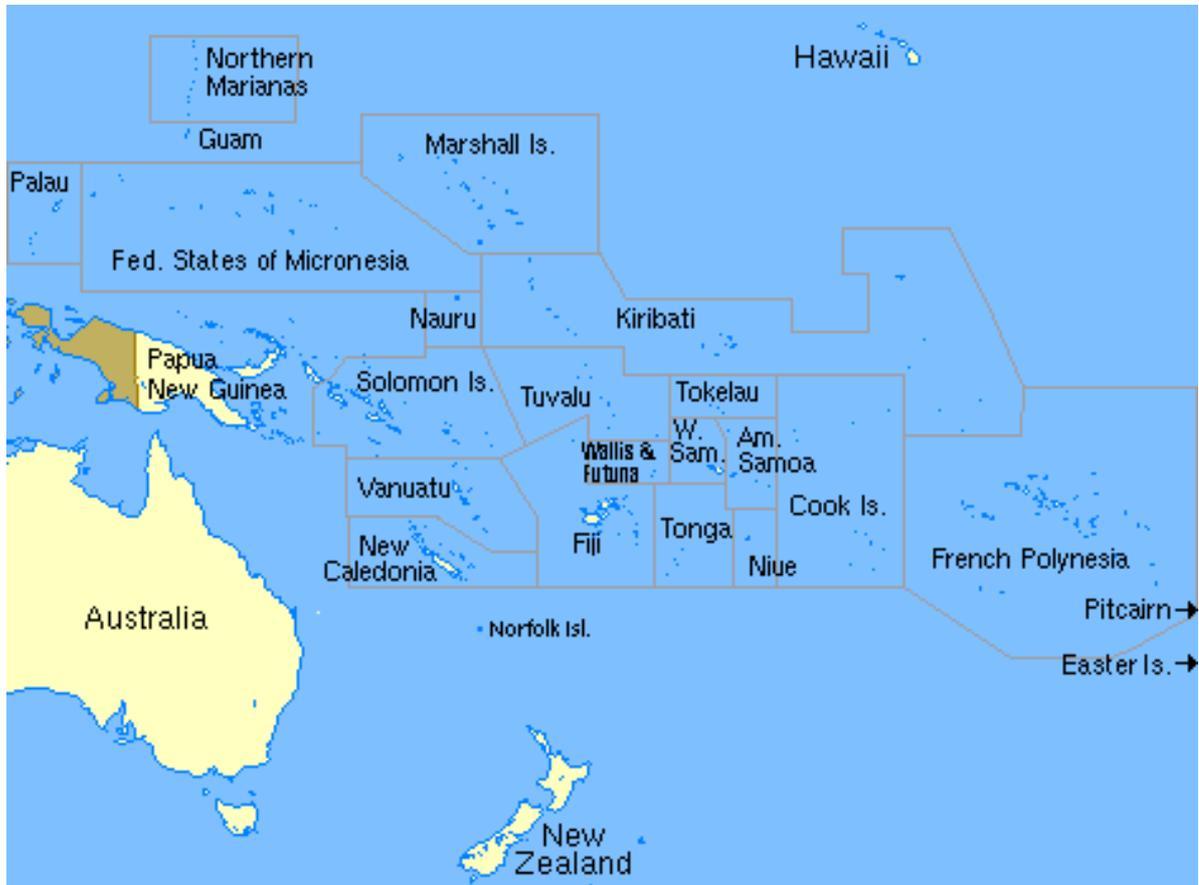
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## ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY

AIT or AUT	Auckland Institute of Technology, which became the Auckland University of Technology in 2000
ABC	Australian Broadcasting Corporation (and Radio Australia)
ABU	Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union, an association of broadcasting organisations in Asia, Pacific and the Middle East
AFP	Agence France-Presse, a French international news wire service
AM	Amplitude modulation
AMIC	Asia Media Information and Communication Centre, Singapore
AP	Associated Press, a US international wire service
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BRA	Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA)
CCF	Citizens' Constitutional Forum (Fiji Islands)
CBA	Commonwealth Broadcasting Association, an organisation of public broadcasting authorities in Commonwealth nations
CFTC	Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation
CI	Communications Institute (Goroka, PNG)
CUSO	Canadian University Service Organisation
development journalism	News that concentrates on national development and nation-building issues
DWI or DWU	Divine Word Institute, later (in 1998) becoming Divine Word University (PNG)
EAJE	English Association of Journalism Education
ESJ	École Supérieure de Journalisme de Lille, France
FBC	Fiji Broadcasting Corporation Ltd (also known as Islands Networks Ltd in the late 1990s)
FES	Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, a German foundation providing media and broadcast funding in developing nations. FES supplied funding for PIBA for several years.

FSM	Federated States of Micronesia, including four states — Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk and Yap
FIMA	Fiji Islands Media Association
FIT	Fiji Institute of Technology
FJA	Fiji Journalists' Association
FJI	Fiji Journalism Institute
FM	Frequency modulation
GTZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
IAMCR	International Association for Media and Communication Research
IFJ	International Federation of Journalists
IMSC	Independent Media Standards Committee (Papua New Guinea)
IPDC	International Programme for the Development of Communications, an UNESCO-based source of information about communications development needs and resources
kina	PNG currency
PJA	Pacific Journalists' Association, independent umbrella group of Pacific journalists unions affiliated to the International Federation of Journalists
PACBROAD	Technical assistance arm of the Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association
PACJOURN	Pacific Journalism Development and Training Project, UNESCO-assisted scheme
Pacnews	Pacific News Service, news exchange produced in tandem with PIBA's broadcast training scheme PACBROAD
PANPA	Pacific Area Newspaper Publishers' Association
PIBA	Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association, association of public service and commercial broadcasters in the Pacific; office in Suva
PIMA	Pacific Islands Media Association, association of New Zealand-based Pacific journalists and media people; office in Auckland
PINA	Pacific Islands News Association, association of news executives and employees, primarily privately owned print and broadcast media; office in Suva
PMI	Pacific Media Initiative (Ausaid)

PNGJA	PNG Journalists' Association, affiliated to the PJA and International Federation of Journalists
NBC	National Broadcasting Corporation (PNG)
NCTJ	National Council for the Training of Journalists (UK)
NIO	National Intelligence Organisation (PNG)
NZJTO	New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation
OPM	Free Papua Movement
PCRC	Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (Fiji Islands)
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum (formerly South Pacific Forum — SPF), the political body of independent Pacific nations
raskol	A Tok Pisin word literally meaning 'rascal'. It is a term used loosely to describe all criminals or delinquents.
RSF	Reporters Sans Frontières
RSHETP	Recommendation on the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel (UNESCO)
SPCenCIID	South Pacific Centre for Communication and Information in Development (UPNG)
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
TVNZ	Television New Zealand
USP	University of the South Pacific
UP	University of the Philippines
UPNG	University of Papua New Guinea
WACC	World Association of Christian Communication
wantok	A Tok Pisin word meaning literally 'one talk' – people speaking the same language. But it is used more loosely to describe a 'brotherhood', clan or extended family.



**Map 1: The South Pacific**  
Source: Ogden Pacific Island Resources

## CHAPTER ONE: Introduction

IN LATE May 2000, masked Fijian gunmen seized a consignment of books from the United States bound for the University of the South Pacific Regional Journalism Programme in Suva. The small cardboard box was stashed in a postal courier mail van hijacked by coup front man George Speight's supporters hoping to find hard cash. Two months later the carton was recovered by police from the ransacked Parliament and handed over to me; torn open but intact. Ironically, inside were six copies of Betty Medsger's *Winds of Change: Challenges Confronting Journalism Education* for the USP programme and University Library at the Laucala campus, Suva. This was a poignant reminder of the realities facing Pacific media and journalism education. Politics in the region have been increasingly determined by terrorism, particularly in Melanesia, such as in Fiji, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. And with this development comes a growing demand on the region's media and journalists for more training and professionalism.

Since Speight's illegal seizure of Parliament on 19 May 2000, politics in Fiji have remained under the threat of terrorism. Equally, in the mid-1990s, politics in Papua New Guinea remained hostage to the Sandline mercenary affair and its legacy. While the Speight upheaval cost a relatively modest 15 lives — all indigenous Fijian — the fear of it happening again, and next time being even bloodier, remains a concern. Fiji politics are still driven by a continuing threat to reinvoke terrorism if governments do not pursue a narrow particular direction, defined as ensuring 'indigenous paramountcy' (Lal, 2001: 7; Robertson & Sutherland, 2001: xvii-xix; Prasad et al, 2002, 10).<sup>1</sup> Fiji is already a country prone to having

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<sup>1</sup> According to authors Robertson & Sutherland (2001) in *Government by the Gun*, many of Fiji's leaders have failed to address a feeling of indigenous alienation, disaffection within their communities and institutions and lack of understanding of their economy, let alone being integrated in the global economy. Instead, the leaders have 'exploited the disadvantage of the Fijian masses by projecting it as the disadvantage of all Fijian people, the elites

coups (three so far) and it risks becoming consigned to a fate of economic, political, and legal instability, in effect a ‘banana republic’.<sup>2</sup> Respect for the law has been rapidly diminishing.

Although Speight was eventually condemned to death for treason on 17 February 2001, the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment within five hours by the Prerogative of Mercy Commission. But few believe the masterful media manipulator will serve more than a token symbolic period in ‘prison’; he is detained on the tropical isle of Nukulau, off Suva, a former haven for local picnickers. Ten of his co-conspirators pleaded guilty to lesser charges and were given relatively minor jail sentences (none will serve more than three years), while two — leading journalist Josefa Nata and chiefly politician Ratu Timoci Silatolu — denied the treason charges against them and were sent for trial. They were found guilty on 20 March 2003, but Justice Andrew Wilson postponed sentencing until June to enable the legislators to sort out the treason legislation. Finally, in spite of an apology to the nation by Nata in mitigation, both were sentenced on 27 June 2003 to life imprisonment.<sup>3</sup>

The role of Nata — ‘I was just a public relations consultant’ — was at the centre of crucial issues in Fiji over journalism ethics, integrity, independence and training (I was just a PR consultant: Nata, 2002). Nata, one of Fiji’s first journalism graduates,<sup>4</sup> was formerly coordinator of the Fiji Journalism Institute (FJI), a Government-supported training centre established by media industry people that eventually closed in 1999 under a cloud about accountability over donor agency funding (Kumar and Bibi, 2000: 8). He represented the hopes of a generation of media industry people who had hoped to establish the institute as a credible and professional journalism training centre.

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included. They have used the rhetoric of the “paramouncy of Fijian interests” to hide the reality of the paramouncy of elite Fijian interests. The interests of the Fijian masses have always come a distant second. The 2000 crisis brought this contradiction into focus as never before. How to resolve it is the indigenous question. It is the key question facing Fiji today. It is Fiji’s unfinished business.’

<sup>2</sup> Two coups by Lieutenant-Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka took place on 14 May 1987 and 25 September 1987. The attempted coup by rogue businessman George Speight was on 19 May 2000.

<sup>3</sup> The judge ruled that Timoci Silatolu must serve a minimum of nine years in prison before being released and Jo Nata seven years.

University education for journalists is a relatively recent development in the South Pacific. Although it has existed in Papua New Guinea for a generation, it is less than a decade old at degree level in Fiji, and in the former colonies of Polynesia. At the same time, mean age, experience levels and educational qualifications have been steadily rising among journalists in the major Pacific Islands Forum member countries, Australia and New Zealand, as the news media has become more professionalised. While the Papua New Guinea news media has largely depended on journalism education to provide the foundation for its professionalism, Fiji has focused on a system of ad hoc short course training funded by international donors.

The quality and lack of professional formation of journalism practitioners in the region has been a frequent theme of criticism for politicians (*see* Chaudhry, 1999; Kaitani, 2003; Masterton, 1989; Millett, 1996; Naidu, 2003; O'Connell, 2001; Robie, 2001a, 1999f; Skate, 1999; 9; Vayeshnoi, 1999a, 1999b; Weber, 1999). Among the harshest critics of the region's media has been Mahendra Chaudhry, particularly during his year as Fiji's first Indo-Fijian Prime Minister before being deposed by the coup plotters. Drawing comparisons with the United States and other countries where journalism integrity was perceived to be eroding, Chaudhry remarked in a surprisingly tough speech at the launching of the Fiji Media Council's Code of Ethics (*Appendix 11*):

There is no doubt that media credibility is dropping. The public is becoming critical of media practices and its self-adopted watchdog role. The industry needs critical self-appraisal and a rethink of whither it is headed.

Fiji is not isolated from these developments. The media in Fiji also needs to take stock of how it is behaving and whether it is facing a crisis of ethics. Since taking office, my Government has had occasion to be extremely disgusted by the antics of some elements in

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<sup>4</sup> University of Technology, Sydney (UTS).

## *1: Introduction*

the media who have used the medium of the newspaper and television to further their own personal agendas to discredit the Government (Chaudhry, 1999: 4).

Part of Chaudhry's speech dealt with general training and professional standards:

Ethics, professionalism, standards and training — these are the key elements of the industry that need serious attention. Failure to address these issues has put the integrity of the entire [Fiji] industry in question. It is the duty of media organisations to ensure local journalists are trained to acceptable standards (*ibid.*).

In Papua New Guinea, then Prime Minister Bill Skate told a World Press Freedom Day seminar in Port Moresby in May 1999 that he supported press freedom, but promptly launched into a strong criticism of media standards and training:

When I watch television and I see a person making claims against another person, and the television station plays the story without seeking comments to balance the story, I feel sad for the media of my nation. Perhaps the problem with this style of reporting is lack of training by the companies [that] own our media outlets.

It disappoints me when I see foreign companies, which own media outlets in Papua New Guinea, ignore media and journalism development in our country. These companies earn money from our nation but do not put sufficient money back into training and developing our journalists (PNG premier backs press freedom, 1999: 9).

While the majority of journalists in Papua New Guinea do have formal training and qualifications, this is not the case in much of the rest of the Pacific, including Fiji where newsroom staff has traditionally been school-leavers with little or no experience, and no formal

training. Many news organisations rely on donor-funded short courses coordinated through bodies such as the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA), Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association (PIBA) and Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) Regional Media Centre in association with Ausaid, Commonwealth Press Union, UNESCO and others. It is questionable how well such short courses have served the region and whether they have really contributed to the long-term sustainability of journalism professionalism. Some see the aid as ‘flawed’, ‘embarrassing’ or ‘poorly planned’ (Sorariba, 1997; Hooper, 1998; Thaman 2001). Other critics have the view that some training initiatives are ‘symptomatic of a failure of leadership among those in the Pacific, as well as those from donor nations, who lead the stampede to the trough of development aid dollars’ (Hooper, 1998: 13). Media educators in the region with strong industry backgrounds stress the need for education. Veteran New Zealand broadcaster Pat Craddock, for example, with some six years of training and education experience in Fiji, and who has also run workshops in Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Tonga, emphasised the need for more professionalism:

Journalism in the South Pacific has a short history. I recall being in the Solomon Islands a few years ago. The newspaper was a cyclostyled newsheet of several pages that was published about once a week. So many politicians view journalism as workers who can be told what to say. Tonga has an abysmal record of dealing with criticism from within its boundaries ...

Pacific politicians show little respect for the media. If a journalist gets offside with authority — a politician can effectively destroy the work environment for the journalist (Craddock, interview with author, 2002).

Another Pacific educator and trainer with considerable experience of Fiji and Tonga, Ingrid Leary, said neophyte journalists benefited from

training that teaches trainees news media analysis as well as practical skills. While much emphasis is put on the importance of hands-on training — and no doubt this is imperative — I consider one of the most valuable benefits to come out of organised training is an analysis of the role of the media and its relationship with good governance, freedom of speech, human rights and executive power. Only a genuine understanding of what is at stake can give journalists the will and wisdom not to bow to the considerable pressures placed on media freedom in the South Pacific by governments, commercial enterprises and even by non-government organisations. For this reason, the courses need to be taught in genuinely non-partisan forums, such as universities and polytechnics, rather than through United Nations or other NGO courses, or government-sponsored courses, which are all open to claims of hidden agendas (Leary, interview with author, 2003).

However, some media industry leaders share the view espoused by former *PNG Post-Courier* publisher Tony Yianni, who is now chief executive of *The Fiji Times*:

We are just spoiled by the universities. All the surveys show that we have probably more university graduates working in the media in Papua New Guinea than any other country. And we have to take control of our own destiny. And to do that one media company can't do it [alone]. But collectively we can.

Even though we have been producing newspapers [in PNG] for fifty years, we are still kind of at an infant stage because English is a second language for Papua New Guineans (Yianni, interview with author, 2001).

During his time at the helm of the *Post-Courier* in the late 1990s, Yianni initiated an innovative in-house training programme by establishing a K100,000 training centre in the newspaper office with a time capsule recording Papua New Guinea's media history and a glass window

overlooking the newsroom. But it was a ‘neutral’ venue established for training media workers of all Papua New Guinean news organisations.

I consider the training room ‘foreign territory’, or — how can I say it — not a *Post-Courier* thing. When you come to the media training centre ... it is not just for the *Post-Courier*, it is for everybody.<sup>5</sup>

Tired of his company being a nursery for journalists who move on to greener pastures, Fiji Broadcasting Corporation Ltd (FBCL) chief executive Francis also opted for in-house training. But whether such industry promises eventuate remains to be seen.<sup>6</sup>

We have often been used as a training ground for journalists in Fiji. They come in to get their training through the cadet scheme, and then they leave us.<sup>7</sup> We now want to create our own journalists who are moulded in our format of news. So we are opting for younger journalists. It’s a long process ... And basically an extensive in-house training programme

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<sup>5</sup> Yianni added (interview with the author, 28 April 2001): ‘So [the in-house training centre] is neutral territory, as opposed to next door, which is our newsroom. It is fully exposed — there are windows there and you can see what’s going on there. But when you’re in that training room you are completely separated from the *Post-Courier*. It is a joint thing. We gain by getting lots of people together and talking about their experiences or realising that the same things happen on television as on radio, or in the press — the same problems and the same pressures...

<sup>6</sup> Email interview with University of the South Pacific assistant journalism lecturer Shailendra Singh, formerly editor of *The Review* news magazine, by the author, 31 March 2003: ‘My personal experience in 1989 [on *The Fiji Times*] was that the cadet reporters’ position was advertised, saying training would be provided. Reality: Not a single hour of training was provided in the three-month’s probation [period that] I was there. We were not even briefed before being sent out to do a story. It was sink or swim. Those who are able to learn on the job — and quickly — survive, others don’t. The feeling seems to be that on-the-job training is best. But no on-the-job training is provided; you learn from other reporters, who themselves don’t know all that much. A lot of mistakes are made which is seen daily even today. Reporters lose credibility — is it any wonder journalists are held in such low esteem in Fiji? This explains the deterioration of the standards in Fiji. Only now has the industry started to take notice.

And if there are ten opportunities a year for all the media companies for training and we all do it together then it’s a lot better than just ten single opportunities.’

<sup>7</sup> Several news organisations claim to be operating cadet schemes, yet anecdotal evidence from working journalists in their newsrooms suggests that they don’t really exist. Certainly, there are no formal cadet schemes with grading systems as has been the norm in Australia and New Zealand, for example. ‘On training: media outlets, especially the profitable ones, should invest in training. They don’t spend a cent on training now (R). ‘Media circles in Fiji should consider a joint venture with tertiary institutions to train journalists.’ (FS) ‘Journalism courses in [high/secondary] schools and cadetships should be encouraged and developed.’ (EMTV)

on all facets of society. Not just politics — everything, and then giving them on-the-job training (Herman, interview with author, 2001).

Veteran Fiji journalist and media commentator Debbie Singh is also cautious. Basing her judgement on past experience and a high staff turnover in newsrooms, she argues that most Fiji news media organisations believe that on-the-job ‘training’ or hands-on experience is the quickest, cheapest option.

This quick fix’ enables daily news delivery in spite of the standard or whether one can understand what is being reported (Singh, interview with author, 2003).

This thesis examines the impact of education on Pacific journalism. Its first objective is to test the hypothesis that tertiary education has a critical influence on how Pacific journalists practise their profession and perceive their political and social role in a developing society faced with the challenges of globalisation.<sup>8</sup> Secondly, the thesis aims to analyse the political, economic and legal frameworks in which the media have operated in Fiji and Papua New Guinea since independence. Thirdly, the thesis seeks to explain and assess in detail the development of journalism education in the South Pacific since independence. The theoretical framework is from a critical political economy perspective. It also assesses whether the concept of development journalism, which had its roots in the 1980s debate calling for a ‘New International Information and Communication Order’ (NWICO), has had an influence on a Pacific style of journalism (*see* Friere, 177; Hester, 1987; Loo, 1994,; MacBride, 1980; Maslog, 1992; Merrill, 1979, 1983; Richstad & Nnaemaka, 1981; Richstad, 1984; Siebert et al, 1956).

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<sup>8</sup> *See* Robertson, Robbie (2003). *The Three Waves of Globalisation: A History of a Developing Global Consciousness*. London: Zed Books.

## *1: Introduction*

The thesis argues within a context where journalists can be considered to be professionals with some degree of autonomy within the confines set by a capitalist and often transnational-owned media, and within those established by governments and media companies (Gans, 1979; Tuchman, 1978: 65; Sparks, in Deuze, 1991; 10). The thesis includes three historical case studies of the region's three main journalism schools — Divine Word University (Madang, Papua New Guinea), the University of Papua New Guinea and the University of the South Pacific, Fiji. Research was conducted using the triangulation method, incorporating focus interviews with 57 editors, media managers, journalists and policy makers; two newsroom staff surveys of 13 news organisations, and library and archives study. The thesis also draws on my personal experience as a Pacific journalist, media educator and coordinator of the UPNG and USP journalism programmes for more than nine years (1993-2002).

Following this Introduction, Chapters Two and Three outline the literature review and research methodology. Little media research has been done in the South Pacific, and even less based on empirical studies or political economy. Major research has included surveys of the profile and demographics of journalists in Papua New Guinea (Phinney, 1985), the South Pacific region (Masterton, 1989) and a comparison of eight Pacific countries in terms of media freedom (Layton, 1993). Fiji Islanders Lasarusa Vusoniwailala (1976) and Makerita Waqavonovono (1981) were concerned with issues such as a free press in a developing multiracial society, and manipulation of Pacific media and 'cultural colonisation'. But no serious research appears to have been undertaken on journalism and education in the South Pacific until now.

The overall method used by Professor Julianne Schultz in a survey of Australian journalists as part of a six-nation Media and Democracy project in 1992 — her findings were published in *Reviving the Fourth Estate* (1998) — provided a focus for the structure of this study, which has incorporated quantitative and qualitative methods of random survey, focus interview,

participant observation and archival research. However, given the small samples in conducting surveys of the South Pacific media, the field has been narrowed by surveying all available editorial staff of 15 news media organisations in Fiji and Papua New Guinea. The questionnaire has also adapted some examples drawn from other developing country media surveys (cited in Weaver, 1999).

For the purposes of this study it is assumed that a more complex media system, such as in Fiji and Papua New Guinea — the countries that host all three Pacific university journalism programmes — would feature a comparatively greater population of journalists, encouraging efficiencies in data collection and analysis. It is also assumed that journalists in these complex systems would have more training and be better acquainted with the realities of media freedom and a professional ethos than those working in countries where the news media is small and involving mostly Government-owned systems. The development of industry driven vocational journalism training institutions, such as at Samoa Polytechnic (founded in 2001) and Fiji Institute of Technology (2003), has not been included in this research.

All news media organisations surveyed publish or broadcast predominantly in English, although some have vernacular editions. The 15 news media organisation sample represents the total national news media of the two countries. Previous samples in the Pacific were not as comprehensive or as focused on the two major countries where media education is based.

Chapter Four describes how the news media in South Pacific countries, as in many other nations, have faced increasing criticism over professional and ethical standards. Criticism in the region focuses on lack of professional training of journalists, poor education standards, lack of knowledge of the political and social institutions, cultural insensitivities, and what is perceived as a questionable grasp of ethical issues. The media, some argue, is too ‘Western’ and not the ‘Pacific way’. Others, particularly politicians, are keen to introduce regulatory controls to ‘rein in’ the media (*see* Kaitani, 2003; 1996; Robie, 1998a, 1999b; Iangalio, 1996; Singh, 2002;

Vayeshnoi, 1999b). However, the media industry has been quick to defend its integrity. While acknowledging some shortcomings — including a lack of training — it insists self-regulation is best option. The following two chapters also provide contextual background on the Fiji and Papua New Guinea news media and regulatory frameworks.

Chapter Five outlines the Papua New Guinea news media, including two national daily newspapers, one national weekly newspaper, one provincial biweekly newspaper (and three regional editions of a national newspaper), one national television station broadcasting via satellite to the much of the rest of the nation, a national public radio network of 19 provincial stations, and two FM private radio systems.

Chapter Six provides an overview of the Fiji news media and the legal, social and political constraints that impact on it. The media comprises three national daily newspapers, two major radio station groups, one state-backed television station, one community based television channel, one regional news magazine, and one regional news agency. The military coups in 1987 and the putsch in 2000 clearly had a traumatic effect on the news media. While regulatory media reforms have been promised by three successive governments since 1996 — when the Thomson Foundation was engaged to prepare a far-reaching report for the future of the media industry — public debate about the draft legislation had not been aired in Parliament at the time this thesis was completed. The fraught climate has also impacted on journalism education in the country.

Chapter Seven describes how journalism education and training was introduced at UPNG at the beginning of 1975, when the New Zealand Government agreed to fund a one-year undergraduate Diploma in Journalism course for an initial two-year period. It outlines and analyses how the programme expanded and developed into the region's pioneering journalism school, and founded the Pacific's first journalism newspaper, *Uni Tavur*.

Chapter Eight profiles Divine Word University's growing contribution to journalism education and training in the region, particularly through the extraordinary and visionary efforts of the late Father Frank Mihalic. Along with evolution of the Communications Art programme at DWU, publication of *Wantok*, a unique newspaper in the South Pacific, has become a benchmark of national development and the contribution that good journalism can make to education at grassroots level.

Chapter Nine outlines the contribution of the University of the South Pacific's two journalism education programmes — a certificate course in the 1980s and a degree programme established with French aid in the mid-1990s. The USP programme is the only genuinely regional media course, but its development has at times been hampered by political pressure — notably in the period after the 1987 military coups, and then again with the attempted coup by George Speight in May 2000.

In Chapter Ten, the empirical findings of the thesis indicate marked differences in the profiles of Fiji and Papua New Guinea journalists, especially in education and professional formation, salaries and in their professional attitudes. The final chapter, the Conclusion, assesses and discusses these findings and presents some recommendations for the future of media education in the region.

During the later period of research in this study, issues such as sedition and treason were increasingly becoming political problems and also challenges for journalism educators. Sedition is the 'political crime *par excellence*, used in the 18th and 19th centuries in direct attempts to silence critics of Government' (Robertson, 1989: 174). Australian-born British human rights barrister Geoffrey Robertson, QC, wrote that the crime was broadly defined as 'promoting ill-will between different classes of citizens, raising discontent and disaffection among the people, and bringing the Government or the laws into hatred, ridicule or contempt' (*ibid.*). In Britain in 1764 it was used against John Wilkes and the printers of radical papers,

who assailed George III with such seditious remarks as ‘You have never been acquainted with the language of truth until you heard it in the complaints of your subjects’<sup>9</sup> The *Libel Act 1792* removed the power of a judge to decide whether a particular piece of writing was seditious and gave it to juries. This deterred subsequent governments from using this law to stifle political criticism of their policies.

In the South Pacific, the crime of sedition is alive and well three centuries after it ceased to be useful in Britain as a ‘weapon against writers and agitators’ (*ibid.*). Although no editors and journalists have actually been jailed for sedition, many have been threatened under such laws, particularly in Fiji, Samoa and Tonga. One target of such threats, *Taimi ‘o Tonga* publisher Kalafi Moala was jailed for 30 days for alleged contempt of Parliament in October 1996 (see Moala, 2002; 1996: 13-14) and his Auckland-based newspaper was banned in February 2003.<sup>10</sup> Threats were also made against politicians.

In February 2000, three months before Speight’s attempted coup in Fiji, Radio Fiji reported that some officials of Fiji’s former ruling Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei (SVT) of Sitiveni Rabuka, defeated in the 1999 General Election, were being investigated for alleged sedition (Robie, 2001b: 99). The report led to an angry attack by then Opposition Leader Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, splashed across the front page of the *Fiji Sun* on February 16. Ratu Inoke denied that there was any investigation of officials for allegedly inciting moves to overthrow the Chaudhry Government, adding that the Government was ‘fabricating evidence’.<sup>11</sup> However, the following day Home Affairs Minister Joji Uluinakauvadra confirmed the probe.<sup>12</sup> In Papua New Guinea, former military commander Brigadier Jerry Singirok, the man who halted the Sandline mercenaries in 1997 — an act that led to the ousting of the Chan Government — was

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<sup>9</sup> *R. v. Miller* (1770), 20 State Tr. 870, cited by Robertson (1989: 174).

<sup>10</sup> See Pacific Media Watch for constitutional and legal developments on this controversial banning: [www.pmw.c2o.org/2003/tongadraftmediaresp.html](http://www.pmw.c2o.org/2003/tongadraftmediaresp.html) (Retrieved 30 June 2003).

<sup>11</sup> *Fiji Sun* (2000, February 17).

<sup>12</sup> Uluinakauvadra confirms probe (2000, February 8). *Fiji Sun*.

charged with sedition. According to the late Peter Henshall, and David Ingram, former University of Papua New Guinea journalism educators who wrote *The News Manual*:

Sedition is words or actions designed to cause people to act unconstitutionally. It is a good test of any democratic society to see where it draws the line between honest political disagreements and sedition.

Today, laws on sedition often have more to do with promoting racial and social harmony than with protecting the state. Sedition is often defined as the intention to promote feelings of ill will or hatred between different races, classes of religious groups within the country (cited in Robie, 2001b: 99).

Sensitivities over sedition in the Pacific are particularly strong in the Fiji Islands as a legacy from the military coups era; in Papua New Guinea, over Bougainville; in the Solomon Islands, over the ethnic unrest on Guadalcanal; and in Tonga, over the transition to democracy. Usually vigorous debate can include robust condemnation of the failings of governments providing the criticism is sincere and does not include calls to overthrow the state.

In the Pacific, the trend has been in the larger countries towards self-regulatory mechanisms, such as the industry-funded Papua New Guinea Media Council and the Fiji Media Council, but these have at times been severely criticised (*see* Naidu, 2001; Panichi, 2001; Robie, 2003; Singh, 2002; Solomon, 1996). There have been few developments parallel to the MEAA (Australian Journalists Association) judiciary committees and the industry ombudsman characteristic in several other countries in the region, or even the independent media watch style programmes such as broadcast by Radio New Zealand, and ABC television (Pearson, 1997: 235). This has left the media councils as the only avenues of recourse for individuals complaining of ethical breaches in the print or electronic media in Fiji or Papua New Guinea.

But in other countries in the region, such as Samoa and Tonga, there is relentless pressure for regulation. Pearson (2000: 23) noted:

Throughout the 1990s there had been a spate of defamation actions brought by political figures against local media outlets, most notably a criminal libel charge over an article about the former Prime Minister published by the *Samoa Observer* newspaper. Other muzzles had been injunctions preventing publication of corruption allegations, the jailing of a journalist for scandalising the court, and the passing of legislation requiring journalists to reveal their sources during defamatory interlocutory proceedings.

‘Journalists, as arch whistle-blowers,’ notes Fiji columnist Seona Smiles (2001: vix), are often viewed in the Pacific as a ‘trouble-makers who stir up situations unnecessarily’.

There are deep-rooted beliefs in South Pacific societies about respect for authority that can translate into a lack of accountability and transparency, coupled with a strongly disapproving attitude towards those who question, probe and publish. The Pacific is littered with instances of publishers and journalists being chastised and chased (*ibid.*).

Another challenge facing Pacific journalists is the importance of improving their educational standards, professionalism and standing in society. Their dilemma was foreshadowed some two decades earlier by Sean MacBride in his case for a New World Information Order in *Many Voices, One World* (1980) in which he wrote about an ‘educational environment’ for communication (p 25): ‘In many countries even today, journalists are not regarded as members of an acknowledged profession and they are treated accordingly’ (p 262). To overcome this situation, argued MacBride, ‘journalism needs to raise its standards and quality for recognition everywhere as a genuine profession.’ The independence of the journalist is not only threatened

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by lack of professionalism or pressure and intimidation from governments, rebel movements or terrorist groups, it can also be affected by powerful media owners. As a Commonwealth study on media freedom, *Speaking Freely*, noted in a section on the Pacific: ‘Although journalists may operate in an environment free from government interference, their writings may be dictated by their employers, as is now increasingly common (Ingram, 1999, 16).

Together, all these issues pose a complicated and unique melting pot of challenges for the journalism educator and education in the South Pacific.

## CHAPTER TWO: Literature review

Of course, freedom of the press does not mean freedom without responsibility. In an emerging nation such as Papua New Guinea, we believed the media had a very important responsibility to report news accurately and to give equal opportunities to report news accurately, and to give equal opportunities and facilities for the expression by the citizens of opposing or differing views.

*John Momis, Papua New Guinean constitutional architect, 1996<sup>1</sup>*

Training schemes in the media remain largely on the basis of “on-the-job” experience. ... only the larger newspapers can afford new trainees as cadets. This is part of the reason why journalistic careers are, with few exceptions, not very highly regarded by locals, as they not only lack training opportunities but also are poorly paid in comparison with such alternatives as Government positions, which also offer greater security.

*Macerate Waqavonovono, law and media scholar, 1981<sup>2</sup>*

IRONICALLY, while university journalism courses in New Zealand had spawned the establishment of similar courses in the South Pacific (such as at the University of Papua New Guinea in 1975 and nineteen years later at the University of the South Pacific)<sup>3</sup>, relatively little reliable information was published about these pioneering courses.<sup>4</sup> It was not until University of Canterbury postgraduate journalism student Kim Newth (1997) embarked on a research

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<sup>1</sup> Momis, John (1996). Section 46 — why it was included. *Pacific Journalism Review*, November, 3 (2): p 62.

<sup>2</sup> Wakavonovono, Makereta (1981). Who manipulates Pacific Media?: Influences on Newspapers and Television. *Pacific Perspective*, 10(1): 22.

<sup>3</sup> The UPNG course was founded in 1975 by New Zealander Ross Stevens with NZ aid seed funding; the original certificate course at USP was founded by Australia-based New Zealand media academic Dr Murray Masterton in 1987 and although the successor, a degree programme at USP, was founded by the French Government aid with founding coordinator François Turmel, the second coordinator, David Robie (1998-2002), was also from New Zealand. Several NZ staff also contributed to the USP programme, including Pat Craddock and Ingrid Leary.

project that a serious attempt was made to provide a history of New Zealand journalism schools. Her paper spanned a period of eighty three years, with a 'primary focus being on the early years leading up to the re-introduction of a diploma course' at the University of Canterbury in 1969 (*ibid.*: 45). Newth found it noteworthy that

university journalism training in New Zealand has had a close connection with the wider industry. Times of crisis have tended to occur when the diploma course ceased to meet the needs of media employers, or when communication between universities and the industry was poor.

Since the early 1900s, the consistent goal of both university training and the industry has been to encourage high standards of journalism in New Zealand through an effective recruitment programme (*ibid.*).

### ***The New Zealand perspective***

The need for university training in journalism was 'generally recognised' by the then Canterbury College as early as 1908 (*ibid.*). Three years later, the University of New Zealand formally adopted regulations for a graduate Journalism Diploma and noted that 'the demand for the course came from the newspaper proprietors themselves' (*ibid.*: 46). However, over subsequent years support for university education in New Zealand remained patchy. By the mid-1970s, the diploma still failed to attract high numbers of applicants. In 1972, for example, only 14 students were selected from just 24 applicants. Three years later, in 1975, the same year that the New Zealand supported undergraduate journalism course began at the University of Papua New Guinea, there were again only 24 applicants for the course, and only one of the

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<sup>4</sup> Newth (1997) refers to a journalist in *The Australian* (Early journalism courses in New Zealand, 7 October 1991) who cited *The Australasian Journal* as a source to research the topic, 'but could find no other source in Australia'.

1974 graduates was offered immediate employment by a metropolitan newspaper'.<sup>5</sup> However, by 2000 New Zealand's three main journalism institutions<sup>6</sup> had become universities, 'reversing a tradition of close relationship with polytechnics' (Thomas, 2000: 1).<sup>7</sup> New Zealand journalism education is not only influenced by the media industry, it also closely follows industry methods (Thomas, 2001: 156).

According to Lealand (1998: 113), who conducted two media industry surveys in 1987 (see Lealand, 1988) and 1994<sup>8</sup>, New Zealand journalists were well educated, with nearly two-thirds of those participating in the latter survey having 'gained some tertiary (college) level education'. Also, journalists in New Zealand were predominantly female and young (67 per cent of women were aged 35 years or younger, compared with 40 per cent of males in the same age group) (Lealand, 1998: 112).

More than one third (37 per cent) had completed an undergraduate degree in the humanities or social sciences. These figures represent a rise from the numbers reported in the 1987 survey, supporting the claim that the general education level of the profession is on the rise. In the 1994 survey seven per cent had also completed postgraduate studies, and considerable numbers had participated in a wide variety of educational opportunities ranging from dance and drama to teacher training and management studies (*ibid.*: 113).

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<sup>5</sup> Priestley, Brian (1980). Journalism training at the University of Canterbury: A Discussion Document, p 2, cited by Newth (1997).

<sup>6</sup> Besides the University of Canterbury's long-established postgraduate journalism programme, the Auckland Institute of Technology became Auckland University of Technology in 2000 and it also offers a masters and doctorate programme in communication studies, while Wellington Polytechnic journalism school was absorbed into Massey University's School of Mass Communication and Journalism. AUT is the largest journalism programme in New Zealand with up to 200 second-year students and about 60 final-year Bachelor of Communication Studies degree or Graduate Diploma in Journalism students.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas (2000) reported: 'Auckland Institute of Technology, which trains about 55 journalists a year, became Auckland University of Technology on 1 January 2000. The Wellington Polytechnic school, training 40 journalists, became a university when its parent merged with Massey University in 1998. Whilst Canterbury university is the oldest established school, its university base has always set it somewhat apart in the eyes of the old-style editors as "too academic".'

<sup>8</sup> Commissioned by the NZ Journalists' Training Organisation (NZJTO).

Two dedicated training courses were established to cater for Pacific Islands and Maori journalists. The Manukau Polytechnic taught Pacific Islands journalists until it closed in 1990 and a Waiariki Polytechnic course in Rotorua was geared to the needs of the tangata whenua, or Maori population, but was long troubled by lack of funding, staff and resources. However, according to Lealand (1998: 112), who surveyed some 50 Maori journalists in his 1994 survey, the specialist courses have made little impact.

Such courses have not yet made much numerical difference in the ethnic composition of the New Zealand journalistic workforce. In the 1994 survey, there were just over four per cent of Maori journalists and less than one per cent were from a Pacific Islands background ... few Maori journalists in the 1994 survey occupied senior positions in a profession largely dominated by Pakeha journalists (94 per cent) and, many would argue, Pakeha interests and news values.

This is significant given that New Zealand political institutions and society are seeking to honour partnership clauses of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi agreement between Pakeha settlers represented by the British Crown and the tangata whenua.<sup>9</sup> The partnership officially sanctions the sharing of resources and the use of Maori as the second official national language of New Zealand.

New Zealand journalists were not always 'highly educated'. Traditionally, they had trained on the job (Thomas, 2000: 1). They began work as cadets aged about 16, and did 'menial tasks around the office' such as collecting the shipping news notes (*ibid.*). A feature of early journalism education in New Zealand at universities was an industry bias where for many years newspapers had 'hankered back to the "good old days" and preferred juniors who trained-on-

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<sup>9</sup> Lealand (1998: 112) also points out that 'the large Pacific Island groupings in New Zealand (Auckland, New Zealand's largest city, also has the largest Pacific Island population of any place in the world.'

the job' (Thomas, 1999: 45). Industry regulations provided for training for cadets on newspapers, but according to an old guard editor who was 'founding father' of one major journalism school, young journalists were 'simply not being taught'.<sup>10</sup>

Fear was an important component in any training that was provided in the old-fashioned strictly hierarchical newsroom (*ibid.*).

### ***The Australian perspective***

Like New Zealand, Australia has a media culture modelled on Britain, although in the past decade it has become increasingly modelled on the United States (Henningham, 1998a: 91). University journalism courses began at Queensland (1921) and three other Australian universities in the 1920s and 1930s, Melbourne, Sydney and Western Australia. But only Queensland survived into the 1970s (Kirkpatrick, 1996: 257). However, from then on university journalism courses flourished with 22 in existence today. An estimated 4,500 journalists work in mainstream news media organisations. This is a very low figure of only 250 journalists per million of population compared with 450 in the United States (Henningham, 1998b: 334). However, about the same number again (4,500) are employed in non-news media, specialist or entertainment magazines, public broadcasting, or as freelancers.<sup>11</sup> The Australian Journalists Association, an affiliate of the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance, numbers about 12,000 members, including cartoonists, photographers and public practitioners. A study

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<sup>10</sup> Ruth Thomas (1999) cited now retired Geoff Black, a former editor of *The Auckland Star's Eight O'Clock*, who was founding tutor of the then Auckland Institute of Technology (later Auckland University of Technology) journalism course in the 1970s.

<sup>11</sup> According to a NZ Journalists Training Organisation survey researched and cited by Lealand (1998), in the period 1994-95, 1,738 journalists were working for city, provincial, or community newspapers and state-owned or private radio or television stations in New Zealand.

of journalists' education in the early 1960s cited by John Henningham<sup>12</sup> (1998b: 336) found that only five per cent of metropolitan newspaper journalists had a degree:

This has changed considerably. By the 1990s, 35 per cent of Australian journalists had a degree, while a further four per cent had a diploma. A further 16 per cent have undertaken some tertiary study. Included in the figures are four per cent who have undertaken postgraduate study. In all, some 55 per cent of contemporary journalists have studied at a university or equivalent tertiary institution (*ibid.*).

Henningham noted that while the proportion of graduates among journalists was much higher than that of the general workforce (14 per cent), it was much lower than among professional occupations (60 per cent). He added: 'In the trend towards becoming a university educated workforce, journalism in Australia lags well behind the United States , where more than 82 per cent of journalists have a degree' (*ibid.*)<sup>13</sup>

In her 1992 survey of Australian journalists as part of the 10-nation Media and Democracy project, Julianne Schultz noted that the scale and power of the news media threatened to undermine its continued viability as the Fourth Estate. But, she concluded, the ideal of the Fourth Estate continued to be cherished and nurtured by journalists (Schultz, 1998: 233).

Most of the 286 Australian journalists who responded to the Media and Democracy survey ... were committed to the idea of the news media as the Fourth Estate. The commitment of these journalists to the Fourth Estate is, however, highly idealised; what they do in practice does not always match the theory (*ibid.*).

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<sup>12</sup> John Henningham, foundation chair in journalism at the University of Queensland and founding editor of the *Australian Journalism Review*, was the first Australian journalist to gain a PhD in journalism and also the first journalism professor. He is regarded as an authority on empirical journalism research.

### ***The European perspective***

According to German media scholars Romy Fröhlich and Christina Holtz-Bacha (1993: 13) in a comprehensive study of European approaches to media education, national systems of journalism training involve an interplay of three dimensions:

- The role and function that a society ascribes to its journalists,
- The structures in the field of journalism (e.g. legal regulations, unions and journalism councils), and
- The media system. Although similarities between some countries can be found in particular dimensions, differences in others lead to ‘the great inhomogeneity’ of journalism training in Western Europe.

Access to journalism is free throughout Western Europe and there are two different ways of entering the profession: 1. Direct entry, or 2. Training outside the media companies. Direct entry includes any mode of on-the-job training controlled by a media company. Journalism education outside media companies is either provided in the form of vocational training by ‘stand-alone’ schools of journalism or as journalism studies at the university level with overlapping between these two modes. Against this framework, Fröhlich and Holtz-Bacha identified four groups of countries:

*Integrated journalism education and training at university level:* Finland, Sweden and Spain.

The clearest trend towards ‘an academisation’ of journalism education can be seen in Sweden, where more than half of the journalists come from journalism programmes at the universities.

*Concentration of journalism training at stand-alone schools:* Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, and Norway. In Italy, guidelines for the first journalism school approved by the *Ordine de giornalisti* (Journalists’ Council) were approved in 1990.

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<sup>13</sup> This figure of 82 per cent is cited from the Weaver and Wilmoit (Weaver, 1998: 404) survey in 1992 findings for American journalists with degrees; however, Medsger (1996: 8) put the figure at 94 per cent of ‘new journalists’ — those with from one to 11 years’ experience from her 1996 survey.

*Mixed system of journalism training outside media companies combining courses at stand-alone schools and universities:* France, Germany, Ireland and Portugal. Compared to other European countries, formal journalism training has a long tradition in France with the first journalism school founded as early as 1899 at the College of Social Sciences in Paris. Currently, four journalism schools and four university programmes in journalism are recognised through collective agreements between the journalist unions and publisher associations. More than 62 per cent of French journalists have a university degree (compared to 54 per cent of French white-collar workers) and the women tend to be better educated than men, according to a 1988 national survey (McMane, 1998: 196). The French system is highly influential in New Caledonia and French Polynesia in the South Pacific, overseas territories with comparatively strong news media industries. Also, the French Government funded the first four establishment years of the USP degree journalism course from 1994 and a French journalism school, l'École Supérieure de Journalisme de Lille, assisted with the curriculum.

*Countries dominated by an on-the-job training philosophy:* The main representative is Britain, but this category also includes Austria. A 1995 national survey found that there had been a significant rise in educational qualifications among British journalists with almost half (49 per cent) having a degree (Henningham & Delano, 1998: 149). According to Fröhlich and Holtz-Bacha, 'in no other country can we find a formalised vocational training system with such great emphasis on the practical side' (1993: 20). The National Council determines the guidelines for the period of practical training for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ), founded in 1952 and comprising representatives of the newspaper publishers and the journalist unions. The British craft emphasis on journalism training traditionally influenced the Australian and New Zealand approach to journalism. This continues today through the New Zealand Journalists' Training Organisation (NZJTO), which regulates standards at the polytechnic course level, although the

universities do not sit comfortably with this, whereas in recent years Australia has moved closer to an American model with most journalists being educated at universities.

Changes in recent years concerning the commercialisation and privatisation of the broadcasting market, the introduction of management techniques for the media, the general globalisation of communication and the increasing concentration of media ownership worldwide has led to moves towards greater homogeneity in European journalism education. A growing number of Eurojournalism programmes and networks have emerged in several countries. Special courses concentrate on European political, economic, social and cultural institutions and issues, and exchange programmes have also been boosted. According to Fröhlich and Holtz-Bacha:

The ways journalists are educated influence their self-perception. Their perception of themselves and their role in society in turn leads to differences in journalistic practice. While this is an obstacle to any move towards the homogenisation of journalism training models in Western Europe, it can also be seen as a chance for extending the scope and quality of training programmes in individual countries through international cooperation (1993: 24).

In a paper addressing the 'redirection of journalism education', Dutch media academic Mark Deuze indicated that formal journalism education was a key role player in 'equipping both today's (in terms of further training) and tomorrow's media professionals with the tools to grapple the social, cultural, professional and economical developments that threaten, challenge but most definitely change the profession of journalism' (Deuze, 2000: 1). Examining the literature, Deuze identified the 'true values' or ideals of journalism as (p 2):

- Journalists provide a public service;
- Journalists are neutral, objective, fair and (thus) credible;

- Journalists must enjoy editorial autonomy, freedom and independence;
- Journalists have a sense of immediacy, validity and factuality;
- Journalists have a sense of ethics and legitimacy.

However, Deuze warned that all of these key values or ideals in journalism had been changing or would change, and journalism education needed to adapt to survive (p 3).

### ***The United States perspective***

Unlike countries such as Australia and New Zealand, journalism education at universities was well established and the norm for most of the 20th century in the United States. The number of graduates receiving bachelor's degrees from university journalism schools in various media and communication fields dramatically grew by 1,500 per cent from 3,131 to 52,799 in the 25 years from 1966 to 1991, according to a 1995 survey by Ohio State academic Lee B. Becker and graduate student Joseph D. Graf (cited by Gutiérrez, 1996: vi). However, while the proliferation of departmental names accurately represents a field that is both expanding and converging — as new media are created and as established media find new partnerships — it is also confusing for students seeking careers in the news and for the news organisations looking to connect with them. Budget-conscious university administrators, looking for ways to consolidate programmes and save costs, too often looked for a 'convenient way to lump everything from journalism to speech pathology under one roof' (Overby, 1996: v). Charles L. Overby, president of the United States media lobby group Freedom Forum, noted:

It is probably counterproductive to fight that trend. But let's not pretend that it is all journalism or that all resources devoted to things besides journalistic core values are helping to prepare future journalists ...

In that regard, the battle over who is hired and promoted to teach journalism — real journalism — seems to have been a losing one for news professionals. I am aware of many situations where editors with distinguished service were turned down in favour of candidates with less distinguished service but with advanced degrees (*ibid*).

The Freedom Forum commissioned Betty Medsger, a journalist and journalism education administrator, and the Roper Centre of the University of Connecticut to spend a year investigating the ‘winds of change’ affecting journalism education. Roper’s team surveyed by telephone 1,041 print and broadcast journalists from across the nation who had one to 11 years of journalism experience by mid-1995.<sup>14</sup> Also by telephone, Roper surveyed 500 newsroom recruiters and supervisors at print and broadcast media organisations, and 446 university journalism educators by mail. In the 1996 report, *Winds of Change: Challenges Confronting Journalism Education*, Medsger noted that while the winds were strong, ‘there was disagreement among educators and journalists about whether they were fresh winds or destructive winds’ (p 5). She was critical of the trend to merge journalism education into communication courses ‘designed not to prepare journalists’, which had gained velocity because:

- Downsizing and ‘mergermania’ have become as popular on campuses as they are in corporations.
- New technologies compel faculties to learn and teach new skills, especially new research skills.
- Educators and journalists are confused about the shape of journalism, even in the near future.
- It is unclear whether the future of journalism is bright and more exciting, or blurred.

Among some of Medsger's most important findings (pp 7-8) were:

- Journalism education is very important to news organisations. (Among those who became journalists between 1984 and 1994 and were employed as journalists in 1995, 71 per cent studied journalism at some level.)<sup>15</sup>
- The future of journalism education has been jeopardised by university hiring policies and philosophies of journalism education that have led to a decline in hiring faculty with significant experience and expertise in journalism.<sup>16</sup>
- Journalism educators themselves, including those who have doctoral degrees, do not strongly support the doctorate as a criterion for hiring journalism educators.
- The future of journalism is jeopardised by low salaries that are driving out the next generation of journalists.<sup>17</sup>
- Today's new journalists — those who have been journalists one to 11 years — are the most educated in US history. At least 94 per cent of them have bachelor's degrees.

This latter finding contrasts with the 1992 survey of American journalists by David Weaver and G. Cleveland Wilhoit of Indiana University, which showed that 82 per cent of journalists in the United States had degrees. However, it was consistent with earlier US research in 1971 (Johnstone et al, 1976) and 1986 (Weaver & Wilhoit) that showed American educational levels of journalists was steadily rising. The 1992 survey 'suggested that the "typical" U.S. journalist was a white Protestant male with a bachelor's degree from a public college, married, 36 years old, earning about US\$31,000 a year,

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<sup>14</sup> See methodology in the Medsger Report (1996): 'The reasoning was that it was considered that a journalist would need at least a year in the profession to judge the usefulness of his or her educational preparation. The 11-year cut-off ensured that contemporary journalism education was being evaluated' (p 1).

<sup>15</sup> This figure included 47 per cent who majored in journalism at the undergraduate level and nine per cent who have master's degrees in journalism (Medsger, 1996: 7).

<sup>16</sup> Increasingly, noted Medsger, the essential requirement for being hired to teach journalism is a doctoral degree, without regard for the quality or length of experience as a journalist: 'In fact, 17 per cent of journalism educators never worked as journalists and an additional 47 per cent have less than 10 years' experience as journalists' (p 7).

<sup>17</sup> 'Among new journalists age 25 and under, 57 per cent earn less than US\$20,000 a year, including 22 per cent who earn less than US\$15,000 a year' (Medsger, 1996: 8).

working in journalism about 12 years, not belonging to a journalism association, and employed by a medium-sized (42 journalists) group-owned daily newspaper' (Weaver & Wilhoit, 1998: 397). 'Such a picture is inadequate,' added the authors. Their findings also showed a far more complex mix in 1992: 'There were substantial numbers of women, non-whites, non-Protestants, single, young and old, and relatively rich and poor journalists working in the US for a wide variety of small and large news media, both groups and singly owned.' Many of these journalists differed from the 'typical' profile:

For example, Black and Asian journalists were more likely to be women than men, not to be married, to have higher incomes (US\$37,000 to US\$42,000) than the typical journalist, to have worked in journalism ten to eleven years, to be members of at least one journalism association, and to work for larger (100 to 150 journalists) daily newspapers (*ibid.*: 398).

But overall the prognosis for the future of journalism is rather grim, according to columnist Russell Baker who wrote in a *New York Times* review of five new books about the state of health of American media. He observed that journalists had 'discovered that their prime duty is no longer to maintain the republic in well-informed condition — or to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable, as the old gospel has it — but to serve the stock market with a good earnings report every three months or, in plainer English, to comfort the comfortable' (Baker, 2002: 4).

### ***Political economy and the media***

Globalisation and the transnationalisation of economic life has made some assumptions of political economy irrelevant. Thus some commentators (Cox, 1995: 34; Hettne, 1995: 8; Hope, 1996, 71-77) argue that political economy has been 'reborn', or redefined, as international

political economy (IPE). In the IPE context, the perspectives associated with the three historical traditions of 'liberalism', 'mercantilism' or state-building, and a Marxist critique, are related to the dynamics of a transnational global economy and, such as in the case of news media corporations, its possible political frameworks.

*Liberal international political economy* is still a mainstream perspective, but has a less distinct identity than the other two perspectives. The liberal vision is that of a borderless world, at least in terms of economic activity.

*Realist international political economy* focuses mainly on the nation-state system and the role of international political relations in the organisation of the global economy. It is often referred to as the 'neo-realist' tradition, which acknowledges actors other than states and sources of power other than military.

*Neo-Marxist international political economy* is concerned with the dynamics of global capitalism. This did not originate with Marx, but developed as a perspective during the era of imperialism and became more relevant during the rise of structuralist, dependency and world-system theories in the 1960s and 1970s. The 'critical school' developed with a rediscovery of Gramsci and his set of useful conceptual tools such as hegemony, civil society and historic bloc (Hettne, 1995: 4). Problem-solving theory helps to maintain the status quo; critical theory is a means to changing it. Along with Gramsci, Karl Polanyi and Fernand Braudel were also concerned with strategy as well as analysis: 'The purpose of understanding the world is to be better able to change it' (Cox, 1995: 35). Robert Cox, the intellectual father of the Gramscian school, rejects the 'end of history' thesis associated with Francis Fukuyama and equally the 'culture of contentment' view of John Kenneth Galbraith:

Against this, there is the perception that decay is evident and widespread: social polarisation on both global and domestic levels, depoliticisation and non-participation that undermine the legitimacy of political institutions, and which extend from contempt for the political classes in evolved pluralistic societies to a perception of the state as enemy of the people in less fortunate countries that have known repressive dictatorships. Stirring within this decaying legitimacy are various movements of identity and protest, some seeking to reinvent democracy, others steeped in a new authoritarianism (Cox, 1995: 36).

Critical political economy takes a line of reasoning that links the constitution of the good society to the extension of citizen rights, broadening political choices and debate as elaborated by the German theorist Jurgen Habermas in his highly influential notion of the ‘public sphere’ (1989). In his *Selected Writings*, Antonio Gramsci (1988) developed an insight into the role of journalism in the organisation and manufacture of consent: the process by which hegemony (intellectual and moral leadership) operates. Writing from his own experiences as a journalist in Italy in the early part of the 20th century, Gramsci identified the importance of the media — ‘publishing houses, political newspapers, periodicals of every kind’, describing them as the ‘most dynamic part’ of the ideological structure of society. Michael Meadows sees Gramsci’s interpretation of Marxism as closest to a theory of culture, an ideology defining a ‘set of commonly-led ideas and assumptions, which enable particular ideas to predominate’ (Meadows, 1998: 5). Gramscian views observe the operation of hegemony in mainstream media through the practices of journalism. They offer a theory of journalism as a series of practices implicitly part of the ‘strategic management of information, ideas and therefore, culture’ (*ibid*: 7). Hence Konai Helu Thaman’s view of a Western ‘mirror’ of Pacific culture through the media. She believes Pacific media and news institutions should reflect values such as consensus rather than majority decision-making, group rather than individual orientation,

inter-personal relationships rather than personal confrontation, restraint rather than criticism, and cooperation rather than competition (Thaman, 2001: 10).

An important contrast between the perspectives of Habermas and the French poststructuralist theorist Michel Foucault is that there is an opposition over their views on a definition of 'truth', a vital concept for journalists and the media. Habermas represents the philosophy of the modern age, where truth 'appears as firm knowledge', while Foucault is identified with the philosophy of classical antiquity, a philosophy of praxis where truth is 'construed as a practical consideration' (Peters et al, 1996: 51). Some 'dependency' or 'media imperialism' theorists have defined the nature of the 'global embrace' as 'less than cuddlesome' (Gurevitch, 1996: 207). Their critique centred on the notion that the conditions of postcolonialism were hardly different from those of colonialism, 'only subtler' (*ibid.*). Developing countries are still frequently dependent on the First World for economic, political and cultural resources.

The media are seen as part of the institutional apparatus that creates such dependencies by providing Western-produced packages of information and entertainment that carry and transmit Western cultural values. Development through media contents and policies is part of the process of cultural hegemony (*ibid.*).

Other political economy critical theorists such as Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky (1994) point to a propaganda model as a tool for explaining the biases and frameworks of assumptions exhibited by some sectors of the media. They claim in their book analysing examples such as what they regard as flawed coverage of East Timor, Guatemala, Nicaragua and the Vietnam War by the US media:

The mass media do, in fact, literally suppress a great deal ... But even more important in this context is the question of the attention given to fact — its placement, tone and repetitions, the framework of analysis within which it is presented, and the related facts that accompany it and give it meaning (or preclude understanding). That a careful reader looking for a fact can sometimes find it with diligence and a sceptical eye tells us nothing about whether that fact received the attention and context it deserved, whether it was intelligible to the reader or effectively distorted or suppressed (Herman & Chomsky, 1994: xv).

Long-standing concerns about the rise of the great press barons at the turn of the twentieth century focused on how the proprietors might use their property rights to hinder the flow of information and open debate: ‘Not only did proprietors like Pulitzer and Hearst in the United States and Northcliffe in England own chains of newspapers with large circulations, but they clearly had no qualms about using them to promote their pet political causes or to denigrate positions and people they disagreed with’ (Golding & Murdoch, 1996: 19). These concerns about potential abuses of power have been reinforced in recent years with the emergence of the multimedia conglomerates such as Rupert Murdoch’s News International empire. Such concerns are replicated in the South Pacific with powerful Murdoch newspaper holdings in both Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

### ***Development communication and journalism***

Normative media theories argue that the true relationship between social systems and the press can be understood by examining social beliefs regarding the nature of human beings, knowledge and truth, and relationships between individuals and the state. Normative theories expose the connections between social understandings of truth, the masses and the state on the one hand and press ownership, functions, controls and taboos on the other (McQuail, 1987:

109-110; Maslog, 1992; Romano, 1998: 60-61; Tiffen, 1989: 28-29; Windschuttle, 1988). Dominant paradigms on development communication have mirrored changes in wider discourses about the nature of development in the many newly independent states that emerged after the Second World War. Mass communication was seen as an instrument for national development.

The role of communication on development seems obvious: when a road is built into a village, things change. First the physical changes: more houses and markets are built. More offices and more stores. More money comes in. More goods are sold and more stores built. Then a factory is built to supply the needs of the local people.

When newspapers, magazines, books and films are brought in through those roads, more things change. People change in the way they think and look at things. Then radio and television come in over the airlines and bring with them new words and ideas. They bring in the speeches of government officials calling for national self-discipline or advising farmers how to produce more rice per hectare or how to kill the mosquitoes (Maslog, 1992: 41).

Gradually, argues Filipino media professor Crispin Maslog, the old order is undermined, tradition breaks down, and change gets underway — a change hastened by the advent of mass media. The first major study on the role of communication in development was based on six Middle East countries — Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Turkey. It was conducted by Columbia University researchers in 1950-51 and led to Daniel Lerner's theory of modernisation (1958). From his study comparing 73 countries, Lerner found there was a four-stage pattern in development. First came urbanisation, followed by the development of literacy skills. Then media participation was followed by political participation.

However, structural theorists challenged the bases of the modernisation approach, claiming that reliance on Western-style communication was among factors exacerbating Third World problems. In the 1960s, many Third World nations called for reforms of both international economic and communications systems, with their demands reaching a culmination with the 1980 MacBride report, *Many Voices, One World*. Building upon older critiques of colonialism and imperialism, cultural dependency theorists blamed Western monopolisation and manipulation of the media for perpetuating international and local inequalities and for imposing inappropriate Western values and cultural frames on developing societies (McQuail & Windahl, 1993: 219-222). Although the superiority and utility of Western modernity were contested, the mass media was still perceived as a tool that could aid education and engender national unity.

A third wave of theorists focused on quality of life and human dignity issues. Arguing that the economic development debate obscures the underlying systemic inequalities that prevent true 'human development', they sought new measures as an alternative to economic statistics to evaluate each nation's quality of life and success in meeting human needs.

Some argued that development communication was in fact a 'fifth theory' of the press in addition to the four theories identified by Fred Siebert et al (1956) — authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility and (Soviet) totalitarian. Analysts such as Maslog (1992: 43) argue that these are not theories so much as 'types' in a typology of press systems. According to this theory or typology, the basic role of the press in an authoritarian system is to serve the state. The libertarian model, however, is the antithesis of this view. It espouses freedom of the press from government control. All ideas are given a fair hearing in society, which becomes a 'free marketplace' of ideas. The social responsibility theory is a modification of the libertarian approach to media. It could be characterised thus: 'The power and near monopoly position of the media impose on them an obligation to be socially responsible.' (Siebert et al, 1956: 3). The

totalitarian theory is a variation of authoritarian theory: Whereas authoritarian is ‘negative’ in nature, aimed at stopping anything against state interests, totalitarian uses its total power in ‘positive’ control to achieve its objectives. Totalitarian also involves the principle of state ownership. However, Maslog argues that totalitarian is too rooted in the Soviet and Cold War model and would now be better termed ‘social centralist’ theory instead (*ibid*: 48).<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps the most perceptive writer addressing development journalism issues in the Pacific region is Eric Loo. He has been critical of the stance of Australian, New Zealand and other Western journalists who in his view have misrepresented development journalism, arguing that its advocacy role ‘conflicted with traditional journalism as they knew it — free and fair’ (Loo, 1994; Merrill, 1979).

To them, development journalism was covert propaganda and positive news reporting. Development journalism in Third World countries was to Western journalists simply journalism that was outrightly supportive of government projects and policies. However, journalists from India and the Philippines who pioneered the practice saw development journalism as more than reporting which was supportive of development projects. It was a way of reporting where journalists and people interacted closely.

The development journalists boast of their identification with the struggles of the communities for improvements in their living conditions, social welfare, political participation and economic equity (Loo, 1994: 2-3).

In fact, it could be argued that development journalism — with its emphasis on going beyond ‘merely telling the news’ and seeking to ‘re-engage’ the public in civic life — has

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<sup>18</sup> There is a dialectical relationship between the theories. (Maslog, 1992: 48): ‘From an authoritarian thesis there developed a libertarian antithesis. The synthesis of these two resulted in the Soviet totalitarian model during the early years of the 20th century.’

many parallels with the notions of public journalism in Australia, New Zealand and other Western countries (*see* Deuze, 2001; Venables, 2001; Merrill, 1996, Merritt, 1996).

### ***'Media wars' and their relevance to the Pacific***

In a sense, the cultural studies and postmodernist tensions with social science empiricists have in recent years migrated from Britain to Australia and have been also playing out in the media education arena. The place of mass communication theory in journalism curricula has become the centre of what has been billed as 'media wars'.<sup>19</sup> According to Keith Windschuttle, 'the journalist's realist view of the world with a corresponding empirical methodology, the commonly accepted ethical obligations for journalists, and the skill of clear writing (and thinking) are often subverted by the curriculum, the theories and the practices of the academics' (Breen, 1998: 4).

Obscure expression is a clever tactic to adopt in academic circles where there is always an expectation that things are never simple and that anyone who writes clearly is thereby being shallow. Instead of signalling a communication theorist's inability to communicate properly, obscurantism ... is assumed to equal profundity (Windschuttle, 1998a: 31).

Windschuttle, who had earlier written a book on the political economy of the Australian media (1988), claims that the leadership of most major Australian journalism schools is 'invariably in the hands of cultural studies theorists' (Henningham, 1999: 184.). He has argued that such schools have caused a 'betrayal of the hopes and aspirations' of students who flock in their

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<sup>19</sup> The phrase was adopted at a 'Media Wars' conference in Brisbane, Australia, 1998, with the papers published in a special edition of *Media International Australia* (No 90, February 1999), entitled: 'Media Wars: The pen may indeed be mightier than the sword'.

[www.gu.edu.au/centre/cmp/MIACP90.html](http://www.gu.edu.au/centre/cmp/MIACP90.html) (Retrieved 24 April 2003).

hundreds to journalism schools to learn something about journalism and its practice. The debate was also strongly influenced by Betty Mesdger's Freedom Forum report *The Winds of Change: Challenges Confronting Journalism Education*, that critiqued the repercussions from communication studies' 'takeover' of journalism education in the United States from the 1950s onwards (Medsger, 1996: 53-64). According to John Henningham (1999: 184), the 'empirical methods of the social sciences and some humanities are far closer to journalism than postmodern, subjective approaches to knowledge'. He added:

This perhaps is one of the great sorrows of the dominance of cultural studies approaches; journalists undertaking employment or study in such departments, or students whose commitment is to the practice of journalism, have been bamboozled and perhaps alienated forever from academic scholarship because of the obscurantism, subjectivity and arcane nature of the cultural studies field (*ibid.*)

Henningham suggests that many professional journalists engaged at universities as junior academics are encouraged to study for higher degrees and conduct research, but are directed into 'waffly and anti-journalism research areas foreign to their own professional experience and inclinations' (*ibid.*) In his opinion, it would not be surprising if they gave up in despair. Henningham has made a strong case for journalism as a discipline to have the status of a stand-alone department. He laments that too many journalism educators have failed to honour a notion articulated by Joseph Pulitzer in 1902: 'Journalism is, or ought to be, one of the great and intellectual professions' (Ziff, 1992: 49). Henningham adds:

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The debate began after *The Australian's Higher Education* section published a version of Keith Windschuttle's critique 'Media's theoretical Breakdown' (18 March 1998).

I believe that journalism as an academic discipline can only survive and thrive when journalism has full academic status equivalent to that of other major disciplines of a university. J-educators in aggregated departments should feel no shame in aspiring to departmental autonomy for journalism — indeed not have to have this aspiration suggests a failure to fully value or appreciate journalism (Henningham, 1999: 185).

If journalism educators share Pulitzer's vision, believes Henningham, then they ought to ensure that in universities journalism deserves to be 'on at least equal footing with other departments, including vocational departments — law, medicine, architecture, business etc' (*ibid.*). Ironically, Henningham lost this fight at the University of Queensland in 2001 with cultural studies proponents engineering the incorporation of the previously successful Journalism Department into the School of Journalism and Communication. He opted for early retirement and establishing his own private journalism institution, Jscool in Brisbane, during 2002. His assessment in hindsight after the changes:

I don't think I'm alone in thinking there has been a sharp decline in the UQ journalism quality over the last two years (personal feelings aside), following the departure of senior staff, the non-replacement of positions (so there are now fewer journalism staff than several years ago, despite an increase in student numbers, and no-one above senior lecturer level), the absence of a permanent head of department, effective closure of the International Journalism Centre, and the merging of journalism with communication.<sup>20</sup>

Henningham argues that journalism departments ought to develop their own advanced research degree programmes rather than surrender the field to communication studies. In his view, 'the integrity of journalism as a discipline is corrupted if it is academically

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<sup>20</sup> Henningham, John, personal email communication to the author, 9 February 2002.

subservient to a field like cultural studies, which is essentially hostile to journalism, ignorant of its practices and *raison d'être*, and ambivalent about journalism's role in a democratic society' (Henningham, 1999: 186).

However, several media academics with strong industry backgrounds argue persuasively for better integration of media theory into the practice of teaching journalism (Bacon, 1998: 81; Hirst, 1998: 87; Ravell, 1998: 91). While Julia Ravell argues for more graduates who are aware of their political role both in the media and society, she concludes that 'liberal journalism training has abrogated this pedagogical role'. She adds:

Journalism training 'needs' include understandings of the complex networks of capital, power and information and their effect on Enlightenment notions of truth and objectivity. Cultural studies theories provide tools for situating news values in their historical contexts and interrogating their complicity with the projects of modernisation, developmentalism and consumerism (Ravell, 1998: 92).

Separating theory and practice into 'separate packages which do not speak to each other is not a solution', argues University of Technology Sydney's associate professor in journalism Wendy Bacon (1998: 81). Her approach is to 'bring them into fruitful dialogue and engagement with each other' (p 82):

One of the problems with Windschuttle's position is that he assumes some pedagogical consensus at the 20 or more Australian universities teaching professional journalism. In fact, there are a range of practices.

But she acknowledged that underlying the issues Windschuttle had raised were important questions about the nature of media educators' approach to journalism teaching and practice.

What are the characteristics of the journalism we practice in universities? What kind of scholarship links with that practice? What are the implications of theory for the journalism we do, and just as importantly, what are the implications of journalism for the theory and research we do? What is the relationship of journalism to ideas of critical public intellectual practice? What role might university-based journalists play in maintaining a critical intellectual and public culture, particularly at times when that culture is threatened? (*ibid.*)

Given the influence of American paradigms on teaching journalism in other countries in Asia and the Pacific, they are likely to have an impact eventually in the region's teaching institutions (Tebutt, 1998: 4). Although cultural studies or postmodernist perspectives have been relatively slow to play a role in media educational debate in the South Pacific, and even in New Zealand, a generic 'mass communication' approach to journalism education during restructuring in the late 1990s at UPNG has weakened what was once the leading journalism school in the region. Issues such as how to better integrate theory with professional practice in journalism education and the media industry in the Pacific are vitally important and remain a challenge.

### ***South Pacific media research***

Scholarly interest in the South Pacific media has been fairly limited, and interest in journalism education even rarer. Expatriates have done much of what has been accomplished. American media professor Jim Richstad (1984, 1981, 1973) and also Fiji Islander Lasarusa Vusoniwailala (1976), who prepared a case study on Fiji as a 'free

press in a developing multi-racial society’, did significant early work. So did Anne Walker (1976), who researched the relationship between mass media, community involvement and political participation in Fiji. Makerita Waqavonovono (1981), writing in *Pacific Perspective*, was concerned with what she considered to be manipulation of the Pacific media and ‘cultural colonisation’. She noted in her study of four countries — Fiji, Niue, Samoa and Tonga — based mostly on qualitative findings that radio broadcasting had become the most influential news media and the ‘only form of “mass communication” in the Pacific’ (p 15).

One reason for the dramatic impact of radio on island listeners is that any statements broadcasted [sic] tend to be accepted as truth. A Fiji radio announcer, for example, recounted a story of two villages practising ‘bush law’, in which news items heard on radio were mutually accepted as the final criteria of truth and the only reliable sources of information (*ibid.*).

At the same time, added Waqavonovono (p 16), newspapers served a ‘very basic educational function’ as one of the few regular reading materials in the islands. They had a long life span and were ‘often passed from one household to another’. Waqavonovono contrasted the weak state of the vernacular press in Fiji with the ‘significant’ publications in Tonga such as *Kalonikali Tonga*, or *Tonga Chronicle*. On the other hand, she commented, Ratu Luke Vbuidreketi, editor of the Fijian newspaper *Nai Lalakai*, noted a somewhat [evolving] situation: ‘*Nai Lalakai* used to be effectively a Fijian version of *The Fiji Times*; this is no longer true’.

As well as considering the mainstream media, Waqavonovono also analysed the magazine industry in the Pacific, including ‘risque’ — as she described it — publications

such as *Playboy* or *Playgirl*;<sup>21</sup> the popularity and longlife of comics comparable to the vernacular press;<sup>22</sup> and traditional mass communication such as the ‘coconut wireless’.<sup>23</sup> Waqavonovono also had concerns about the level of foreign ownership and staffing in the media, particularly the newspapers, and the limited training.

Unlike other Government and private enterprises, there is minimal systematic training within the newspaper groups in the four island countries that were studied. (A small beginning was made by the University of the South Pacific 1981).<sup>24</sup> In any case training programmes would seriously handicap the staff available in Western Samoa, Tonga and Niue, where minimal staff exists for newspapers (one or two journalists in most of these areas) that serve only a small population or a small section of the community. It is not surprising that due to this factor, a scholarship offer for journalist training in the Pacific in 1977 and 1978 was not taken up by any of the newspaper groups. A slight exception to the rule may be the occasional sending of journalists abroad for short foreign-financed courses (*ibid.*: 22).

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<sup>21</sup> According to Waqavonovono (1981): ‘*Playboy* and *Playgirl* were the only two magazines of this type then allowed to be sold in Fiji as the Crown Solicitor’s Office banned the sale of others. In Tonga, according to one official, “Tongans don’t go hot over *Playboy*” nor generally do they have access to it, as it is not sold in the bookshops. In Niue, a curious situation existed, where the bookshop owned by the Ekalesia Niue (the main Protestant church, deriving from the London Missionary Society), sold these magazines under the counter to “responsible citizens”’ (p 18).

<sup>22</sup> Waqavonovono (1981): ‘Comics are widely read by people of all ages throughout the central Pacific. Those not literate in English can usually follow the story from the pictures. The first of a locally owned vernacular comic, a Fijian version of the popular *Phantom* series — *Bera na Liva* — hit the market in Suva in late 1978. It made popular reading for the non-English speaking population. Like the vernacular newspapers, the lifespan of comics is usually long and one can easily spot tattered comics still circulating from one household to another’ (p 18).

<sup>23</sup> Waqavonovono (1981): ‘Of all the traditional means of communication and information \_ transfer — the lali or the beat or wooden drums, the blowing of the conch shells, heralds or “talking chiefs” — the word-of-mouth medium or what is more generally known as “coconut wireless”, plays the most significant role in contemporary smaller island societies, or rural communities within the larger islands. The extent to which it may contradict, supercede [sic] or oversee the formalised media would make an interesting study’ (p 19).

<sup>24</sup> The writer demonstrated a customary unawareness of the developments in journalism education in Papua New Guinea during this period by comparison. At that stage, the University of Papua New Guinea journalism programme had been turning out graduates for six years.

Richard Phinney (1985), a Canadian journalist on attachment as a cadet counsellor with Papua New Guinea's state broadcaster National Broadcasting Commission (NBC), conducted a survey of 42 PNG journalists in October, 1984. He surveyed non-expatriate journalists at the NBC, the *PNG Post-Courier*, *Niugini Nius*, *Times of Papua New Guinea* and *Wantok*. At the time he observed with his findings:

The results go some small way towards filling the huge gap in research about journalists in the developing world, but may be of special interest to *Australian Journalism Review* readers since the mass media in Papua New Guinea has its roots in Australian colonial administration and in Australian journalism (Phinney, 1985: 40).

Phinney found that by Papua New Guinea standards, journalists were 'extremely well educated' (p 42). In a country with then 35 per cent literacy, 32 (76 per cent) respondents had some tertiary education. All but three of this group had passed a one-year diploma course in journalism at the University of Papua New Guinea.

While Brisbane journalists, for example, lived in an almost purely English-speaking environment, English was a second or third language for most Papua New Guinean journalists.<sup>25</sup> Also, while 42 per cent of the participants in the Brisbane study had fathers who were either managers or professionals, 'it is probable that the parents of the majority of Papua New Guinean journalists are small scale farmers who received little formal education. This was certainly the case among NBC journalists' (*ibid.*).

Phinney asked the journalists whether they were 'capitalist or socialist': Just one answered capitalist, 10 answered socialist, while the balance said neither description

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<sup>25</sup> According to Phinney (1985): 'in the home village, the local language is spoken, and in the towns the most common languages are Tok Pisin and Motu. Despite its official status, English is still very much a foreign language in Papua New Guinea, its use largely limited to schools and the work place.'

matched their political views. Also only nine of the journalists supported a political party.

Summarising the political views, Phinney noted:

While a left-of-centre orientation would concur with studies of American<sup>26</sup> and Australian<sup>27</sup> journalists, ideological labels such as ‘left wing’ and ‘right wing’ don’t have much meaning in Papua New Guinean politics, and weren’t readily understood by many journalists I worked with (*ibid.*: 42).

Phinney concluded from the survey that Papua New Guinean journalists were prepared to take steps to defend the principle that news media should be free from political control. ‘It appears unlikely that the Government will attack this principle in the near future,’ he wrote, perhaps unwisely basing this on the fact that the introduction of television was being left completely in the hands of a private Australian company<sup>28</sup> indicated that the country’s politicians were ‘far more concerned with the economics of the mass media than with its manipulation’. The controversial 1987 draft *Media Tribunal Bill* (see Chapter Six) and the start of the Bougainville civil war in 1989 swiftly led to greater political pressures on the Papua New Guinea media.

In 1988, New Zealand media academic Dr Murray Masterton, founding coordinator of the original University of the South Pacific journalism certificate programme, conducted a survey of newspaper readers, radio listeners and journalists in the ten countries then served by USP. He found that ‘universally they believe their news services make too many errors in fact and interpretations, that their stories are incomplete and

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<sup>26</sup> Cited by Phinney (1985): Ismarch, A. H., E. E. Dennis (1978). A profile of newspaper and television reporters in a metropolitan setting. *Journalism Quarterly*, 55: 739-743.

<sup>27</sup> Cited by Phinney (1985): Henningham, John (1981). The television journalist: A profile, *Media Information Australia*, November, 2: pp 3-7.

<sup>28</sup> At the time, it was NBN Ltd. However, the Australian company that did eventually introduce television in Papua New Guinea was Channel Nine through Media Niugini Ltd (EM TV).

lacking in background, [and] that they are too often no more than Government handouts' (Masterton, 1989: 46).

That island news services are considered sub-standard, even by the islanders, is not surprising. In the 10 countries that make up the area served by [USP] remains only one true daily newspaper, *The Fiji Times*. But Fiji's population roughly equals the other nine island nations put together. There is a daily in Rarotonga, thanks to generous Government support, but it prints little of what Australians would call news (*ibid.*).

In 1990, LaTrobe scholar Julianne Horsfield in Australia examined the introduction of foreign-owned broadcast television into Papua New Guinea, concluding that the failure of the Government to apply some form of control in the so-called 'culture industries' reflected a continued inability to assert its will in policy — 'especially in policy where foreign investment is involved, as was the case with the largely foreign-owned Papua New Guinea Press' (1990: 168). Long term communication policy was sacrificed for the immediate demands of electoral strategy (Foster, 1998: 75). Eight years later, American academic Robert J. Foster gave an even more depressing account of the establishment of television in Papua New Guinea, saying the 'much-touted strength of PNG's indigenous societies to determine their futures appears to be severely compromised — if not by a weak national state, then by the agents and agencies (both domestic and foreign) of a strong global market' (Foster, 1998: 76).

Media manipulation was the concern for Pramila Devi (1992) who examined the role of the Fiji news media at the time of the 1992 General Election, the first since Rabuka's military coups in 1987. She carried out content analysis of coverage. Devi also examined various models of control of the media in Western countries, self-censorship, media propaganda, education, socialisation and the training of journalists. She noted that a

‘responsible’ press, a term often stressed by politicians of all parties, was one that did not disturb the status quo. Or it was one that disturbed it the least.

[A] responsible press is one that does not challenge the ideological foundations of the Government of the day. Thus, in the US during the [1991 Gulf War] invasion of Iraq, the responsible press was one that did not pay much attention to the anti-war protests at home or one that did not report from the Iraqi perspective. The basic tenet of the ‘responsible press’ concept is that the press has assumed the role of safeguarding the central foundations of the status quo (*ibid.*: 5).

Devi also highlighted the issue of media ownership as an important factor in the independence of the editorial policy. In 1987, the military authorities closed Fiji’s two daily newspapers for a time after they published strong editorials condemning the May 14 coup. They were later allowed to resume publication on condition that they would not publish any news item that would ‘incite racial antagonism’.

The military regime-established guidelines of so-called ‘accurate’ and ‘responsible’ reporting were to be pursued. The international media mogul Rupert Murdoch-owned daily, *The Fiji Times*, agreed to operate under this policy guideline, while the *Fiji Sun*, also under foreign ownership, but with the heavy influence of a local director, Miles Johnson, disagreed. *The Sun* had written a scathing editorial the day after the coup. *The Sun* remained closed. *The Fiji Times* continued operation with caution — engaging in self-censorship. Unlike *The Fiji Times*, the *Fiji Sun*, also owned by foreign nationals — the Auckland-based publisher Philip Harkness and Sally Ah Sian, of the Sing Tao Ltd of Hongkong, refused to operate under extensive censorship, deciding to wind up its operations following the second coup in September 1987 (*ibid.*: 8).

Instead of informing and educating the voters about the real issue, the 1990 Constitution, which had been widely condemned as ‘undemocratic, racist and feudalistic’, and a concern for at least half the country’s population, the press was more concerned with creating ‘political heroes’. According to Devi, the papers ‘created political heroes of those who fitted their vision of political development, and overtly tried to influence the voters to vote for such heroes’ (*ibid.*: 29).

For the dailies [in Fiji], democracy meant an elected Parliament. It meant nothing more. If the rules meant that half of the country’s population would be under perpetual political domination by the other half, it did not matter. If the rules meant that the commoner and urban Fijians were of no consequence in the nation’s political processes, for the dailies this did not matter either. Democracy was Parliament sitting regularly; how was the Parliament [was] constituted was of no consequence (Devi, 1992: 2).

Australian-based American media academic Suzanna Layton carried out probably the most comprehensive survey to date of journalists in the South Pacific in 1992. This involved sampling eight countries and territories in the region and focused on media freedom in the region (Layton, 1992, 1993, 1995a). She aimed to ‘reach as many journalists as possible’ because the professional population is small and dispersed over a large area, and because of the diversity of the media, its ownership and the cultural context (1995a: 125). A total of 164 respondents from the eight countries participated in the survey for a 60 per cent response (p 127). In her thesis, she claimed the emergence of a ‘Pacific-style’ of journalism, an essential Western approach to media heavily influenced by local cultural customs such as the ‘wantok’ system in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands: ‘Pacific islands journalists are thus seen to be actively synthesising a “Pacific-style” journalism out of the two traditions [that] shape

their identity and give their lives meaning’ (p 404). Unlike African journalists (Golding and Elliot, 1979), Pacific journalists do not espouse a ‘guilt complex’ as a result. The traditional conservatism of the Pacific is acknowledged, as is the reality of accelerating social change’ (Layton, 1993: 404).

While she was a lecturer at Griffith University, two years after completing her doctoral thesis, Layton prepared a draft report on media training needs in the Pacific as a consultant in association with AusAID. She attended the 1997 Pacific Islands News Association conference in Port Vila, Vanuatu, and conducted mostly unstructured interviews with an unspecified number of journalists from the region.<sup>29</sup> Among her preliminary observations were:

- Training activity generally appeared to have fallen from levels in the late 1980s and early 1990s.
- This appeared true for both regional and national media sectors. Thus fewer regional organisations were hosting media training, as were fewer national press clubs.<sup>30</sup>
- Broadly speaking, PIBA continues to oversee the most cohesive programme of non-formal training courses, workshops and seminars in conjunction with FES, GTZ and TVNZ. Most activities 1995-6 have been carried out in-country and address a variety of skill needs levels in the production, technical, management and marketing areas. In 1997, however, the

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<sup>29</sup> Layton, Suzanna (1997). Media training needs in the Pacific. First findings. Unpublished draft report. August 8. Nathan, Queensland: Griffith University. At the PINA convention, she also met representatives from PINA, PIBA, GTZ, AIBD, the UNESCO Regional Communications Office (Apia), UNDP, the Cox Centre, the International centre for Journalists, the Australian Embassy (Fiji), the Fiji Journalism Training Institute, the Fiji Islands Media Association (FIMA), the Journalism Association of Western Samoa, Pres Klab Bilong Vanuatu and the Cook Islands Media Association as well as journalists and media managers.

<sup>30</sup> According to Layton (1997): ‘The reasons are complex and not fully researched to date, but initial impressions centre on the reduced US activity in the region (the US Embassy in Suva, the Asia Foundation, and the Peace Corps were all formerly active in the media sector), the reduction (and possible cessation) of German and French funding for media training, the reduction of SPC Regional Media Centre funding, reduced activity of the part of international NGOs (International Federation of Journalists), and the global mandate of other international organisations (AIBD, Thomson Foundation, Freedom Forum, Commonwealth Journalists’ Association, Commonwealth Broadcasting Association) in which the Pacific needs must compete with needs from other lesser-developed regions. In the case of the contractor’s project, the lack of proposal writing skills on the part of media organisations themselves has hindered delivery of training initiatives to date.

number of training activities planned had lessened, and become more focused on assisting regional broadcasters to cope with the new commercial challenges to their industry.

- UNESCO training activities centre on IPDC-funded newsroom computerisation projects in Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu; and support for ‘train the trainer’ (along with British Aid) and new communication technologies workshops.
- PINA Pacific Journalism Development Centre activities ‘have yet to be fully researched, but include workshops on the indigenous language press, government-media relations, reporting using new technologies,’ and ‘train the trainer’ workshops ,
- In formal training activities, Layton concluded ‘USP has approximately 30 students enrolled in second year journalism studies’ and ‘discussion has not taken place yet with UPNG, but the consultant understands the journalism course there is facing significant obstacles’.<sup>31</sup>

The latter conclusion was of some concern given that Layton made several ill-informed statements about UPNG and journalism education without consulting any of the programme staff to seek accurate information. While some of the information was correct, notably the success at gaining external funding, the assessment of the administration support and staff situation was simplistic to the point of being misleading. However, Layton correctly indicated that throughout the region ‘professional mobility remains high, resulting in a continuing need for the most basic levels of training in print and broadcast reporting and production’. She highlighted some of the findings of her doctoral research:

Research from the early 1990s showed nearly 50 per cent of [Pacific] journalists were less than 30 years of age, and that one-quarter (25 per cent) had one year or less experience.

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<sup>31</sup> Comments by Layton (1997) on UPNG included: ‘Two staff positions are vacant, the sole remaining lecturer is teaching 48 students in nine courses, and four core production courses have been cancelled. With little support

Forty six per cent of males had three years or less experience, as did 58 per cent of females. According to evidence presented at the [PINA] meeting and in the post-meeting workshops, these figures continue to reflect the situation in the industry today. One representative comment: ‘Sending a cadet to interview the PM — it’s an insult!’ (Layton, 1997: 3)

While Layton’s samples and findings in her doctoral work were a significant and important contribution to Pacific scholarship, she was perhaps too heavily influenced by a small and influential self-interested section of industry to the point of being selective about her sources. This led to her being taken to task over claims about the genesis of some Pacific publications and over ‘territory and politics’ in *Australian Studies in Journalism* (Robie, 1996b: 369, Cronau, 1996: 371, Layton, 1995b: 292).<sup>32</sup>

Six years after Layton’s work, University of the South Pacific academic Dr Esther Williams completed research into broader issues such as how does information and communication play a significant role in the in the political life of indigenous Fijians. She addressed several questions, including whether culture and traditions reduce information access and control political participation (1998: xv). Born and raised in Fiji, from the Mataqali Soso, of Vevukana village on Vanuabalavu Island, Williams found herself ‘searching for reasons why

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evident from the administration, the lecturer has creatively and successfully sought funding and other assistance from European-based agencies, the contractor and UTS in Sydney.’

<sup>32</sup> Peter Cronau (1996: 373) wrote: ‘In using quotes which omit others’ criticisms of PNG Government propaganda while falsely accusing me of supporting BRA propaganda, it seems Layton is letting her biases show’ (p 373).

David Robie (1996b): ‘In attempting to find a spurious genealogical link between two contrasting “schools” of Pacific media publications, [Layton] failed to recognise the major differences in their objectives. ‘Like the *Pacific Island Press* (Blarney, Richstad et al.), published in 1973 by the East-West Centre’s Communications Institute, the *Pacific Islands Communications Journal* (earlier known as *the Pacific Islands Communication Newsletter*) was founded by largely expatriate academic initiatives. However, *Nius Bilong Pasifik* [Robie, 1995a] and its offshoot, *Pacific Journalism Review*, are professionally journalist-driven from within the Pacific. While the *Press* and *PICJ* tended towards a Hawai’i/Microneaia/Fiji/Tonga/Samoa focus with a close association with the Suva-based Pacific Islands News Association (PINA), both *Nius* and the *Review* evolved from International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) initiatives in the Asia-Pacific region and have been firmly based at the University of PNG, which has the longest running (21 years) and most extensive tertiary journalism education programme in the Pacific.’

democracy could not survive in a large number of developing countries, particularly in Fiji' (*ibid.*). She wrote that it was possible to conclude that lack of information was not the problem for Fijians,

but rather, the difficulty is inherent in a number of factors: the way people perceive information, communication and democracy and their role in all this; the impact of culture including the 'Fijian way of life' on the control of information; the general negative attitudes on information held by leaders in Fiji; and the lack of an organised information communication system. Fijians in both urban areas and the rural village did not know what exactly information could and could not do for them (Williams, 1998: 317).

While Williams did not focus specifically on the media in her doctoral work, her later research about the 1999 Fiji General Election produced some interesting conclusions on the political role of the media. She found that the 'general lack of interest' people in Fiji took in the radio, newspapers and television political campaign publicity was rather surprising (Williams, 1999: 81).

A high 33 per cent did not listen to the radio or watch television on any political campaign, and 27 per cent seldom listened to the radio or watched television... [I]n the newspapers, 21 per cent of voters indicated that they read the newspapers every day, 25 per cent indicated that they usually did, 23 per cent indicated that they never read any items relating to the election campaigns in the daily newspapers (*ibid.*).

Former Fiji academics such as Dr Robbie Robertson and Dr William Sutherland, and some journalists, criticised the youthful inexperience of Fiji journalists as being a factor in the attempted coup by renegade businessman George Speight and his group of silent backers

through misrepresentation of policies of the Labour-led Chaudhry Government and the political upheaval (Robertson & Sutherland, 2001: 7; Lal, 4; Parkinson, 2000; Robie, 2001a; Revington; 2000; O'Callaghan, 2000; Woodley, 2000). In an unpublished politics dissertation at the University of Canterbury in 2001, Paul O'Connell compared the news media in Fiji and Tonga, addressing the question of whether it operated in 'a way that sustains democratic values?' O'Connell acknowledged the low levels of journalism and training in the region and said the media needed to be equipped with the 'necessary intellectual tools' to be able to deal with the 'contentious issues of culture and tradition' (O'Connell, 2001: 26). He concluded:

Whether culture is being misused to censor freedom of speech, or whether it has a tacit effect as self-censorship, it must nonetheless be acknowledged as a factor preventing democratic freedom of expression. There is little doubt that culture and tradition cannot be changed to accommodate the media, however the media can learn ways around culture and tradition without compromising the standards of good journalism' (*ibid.*).

American Robert J. Foster (1997) and colleagues wrote of the critical role of the mass media and their functional control in the shaping of a public sphere discourse in Papua New Guinea in *Nation Making: Emergent Identities in Postcolonial Melanesia*. According to contributor Edward LiPuma (1997: 51), there were two dimensions to the issue: one was the extent to which history was made and portrayed in the mass media so that 'normative positions appear to be the result of political consensus rather than of contestation'. Examples cited included the presence of foreign companies in extractive industries (fishing, forestry and mining) often being portrayed by politicians as an 'uncontested realisation of the nation's will and interests'. The second dimension was to

what degree was the transformation of contestation into consensus an expression of hegemonic power.

Another American academic, Robert A. Hooper, also had concerns about education and training for broadcast journalism in the late 1990s. Assessing the status of sustainable broadcasting, he was particularly pessimistic about the University of Papua New Guinea, describing broadcast journalism there as ‘moribund and under threat of closure’ (Hooper, 1998: 17): ‘Journalism training, including broadcasting, has received decreasing levels of staffing, funding and other support in recent years, in spite of the notable successes of the programme, including award-winning student publications’. However, while Hooper considered that the University of the South Pacific had excellent media centre facilities featuring television studios and radio broadcasting facilities, and a large technical staff, he believed the university’s potential was neglected.

With millions of dollars invested, the university could serve as a regional broadcast educational centre and producer of quality local television programmes for emerging broadcasters. However, USP rarely appears to view itself in this role. A million dollar TV studio is often left idle except for the simple taping of lectures and events, while state of the art video equipment is routinely rented out for commercial purposes (*ibid.*: 17).

Hooper rated the studio facilities as ‘technically superior’ to those found in many Australian, American and New Zealand universities.<sup>33</sup> However, ‘as with the University of Papua New Guinea, the problems at USP involve a chronic lack of institutional leadership and support’.

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<sup>33</sup> At the time his paper was written, Robert A. Hooper was an executive producer for KPBS-TV Public Broadcasting, San Diego, USA, and a Visiting Associate Professor of Communication at the University of California, San Diego. He had served as a Fulbright Scholar in Malaysia and Fiji and had conducted television training in American Samoa, Fiji, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and Western Samoa.

## **Conclusion**

The need for university training in journalism was recognised early the 20th century in both Australia and New Zealand — by Canterbury College as early as 1908 (Newth, 1997) — but it was not until the 1970s that it became fully established in both countries as a norm. Ironically, this was the same decade that the first university journalism school was established in the South Pacific, at the University of Papua New Guinea in 1975 as a New Zealand aid project. Three years after the Canterbury College initiative, the University of New Zealand formally adopted regulations for a journalism diploma and noted that ‘the demand for the course came from the newspaper proprietors themselves’ (*ibid.*: 46). However, over subsequent years support for university education in New Zealand remained patchy. By the mid-1970s, the diploma still failed to attract high numbers of applicants.

New Zealand journalists are well educated, with nearly two-thirds of those participating in a 1994 survey having ‘gained some tertiary (college) level education’. Also, journalists in New Zealand are predominantly female and young (67 per cent were aged 35 years or younger, compared with 40 per cent of males in the same age group) (Lealand, 1998: 112). Research by John Henningham (1998b: 336) showed that by the 1990s, 35 per cent of Australian journalists had a degree, four per cent had a diploma and a further 16 per cent had undertaken some tertiary study. But both Australia and New Zealand were well below the US figure of 94 per cent of journalists with degrees (Medsger, 1998: 8), which currently has the most educated ratio of journalists in history.

More than 62 per cent of French journalists have a university degree (compared to 54 per cent of French white-collar workers) and the women tend to be better educated than men, according to a 1988 national survey (McMane, 1998: 196). The French system is highly influential in New Caledonia and French Polynesia, overseas territories with comparatively strong news media industries in the South Pacific context. A 1995 national survey found that

there had been a significant rise in educational qualifications among British journalists with almost half (49 per cent) having a degree (Henningham & Delano, 1998: 149).

Fröhlich and Holtz-Bacha (1993: 13) contend that national systems of journalism training involve a triangular interplay between the role and function that a society ascribes to its journalists; journalism structures such as regulations, unions and councils; and the media system. In their research, they divided Western European nations into four categories ranging between integrated journalism education and training at university level represented by Finland, and Sweden, a model with similarities to the United States, and countries dominated by an on-the-job training philosophy such as Britain. Although traditionally Australia and New Zealand had followed the British approach to cadetships and craft training in the newsroom, both countries have since modified their approach: Australian journalism training and education is now dominated by the university journalism schools, similar to the United States. New Zealand has a dual system of polytechnics offering a trade style national diploma in journalism and universities with journalism and communication studies degrees. The system is moderated by an industry regulatory body, the NZ Journalists Training Organisation (NZJTO). Both Australia and New Zealand, which have high levels of university educated journalists, have played important roles in the establishment of journalism schools and training in the South Pacific through donor funding and staff. France, which also has long-established journalism schools and a high-level of university graduates among journalists, was the catalyst in establishing the degree course at the University of the South Pacific.

Neo-Marxist international political economy, or critical theory, is concerned with the dynamics of global capitalism and thus a crucial discipline in analysing the impact and control or influences through news media ownership and agenda setting in the South Pacific. The ‘critical school’ developed with a rediscovery of Gramsci and his set of useful conceptual tools such as hegemony, civil society and historic bloc (Hettne, 1995: 4). While problem-solving

theory helps to maintain the status quo; critical theory is a means to changing it. Critical political economy takes a line of reasoning that links the constitution of the good society to the extension of citizen rights, broadening political choices and debate as elaborated by the German theorist Jurgen Habermas in his highly influential notion of the ‘public sphere’ (1989). Writing from his own experiences as a journalist in Italy in the early part of the 20th century, Gramsci identified the importance of the media — ‘publishing houses, political newspapers, periodicals of every kind’, describing them as the ‘most dynamic part’ of the ideological structure of society.

Development communication and journalism has been argued for as a ‘fifth theory’ (Maslog, 1992) of the press in addition to the four theories identified by Fred Siebert et al (1956) — authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility and (Soviet) totalitarian. However, the advocacy role sometimes featured in development journalism and more overt community involvement by journalists has often been treated by the media in Australia and New Zealand with suspicion. Yet development journalism is not unlike notions of public journalism finding favour with some media circles in both countries.

Tensions between cultural studies and a ‘realist’ view of journalism based on notions of the public interest, the public good and ethical obligations have been playing out in the media education arena in Australia, and to a lesser extent in New Zealand and the Pacific, in the late 1990s. The place of mass communication theory in journalism curricula has become the centre of what has been billed as ‘media wars’. Some journalism educators resent what they see as ascendancy of cultural theorists in schools of communication studies. According to this view, journalism education is ‘often subverted by the curriculum, the theories and the practices of the academics’ (Breen, 1998: 4). But so far, the debate in the Pacific has not caused the waves that it has in Australia, although postmodernist thinking to the detriment of the Journalism Studies programme influenced restructuring at UPNG.

Little media research has been done in the South Pacific, and even less based on empirical studies. Most research has been done by expatriate academics. Major research has included surveys of the profile and demographics of journalists in Papua New Guinea (Phinney, 1985), the South Pacific region (Masterton, 1989) and a comparison of eight Pacific countries in terms of media freedom (Layton, 1993). Layton argued in her doctoral thesis that a ‘Pacific-style’ of journalism was emerging — an essentially Western approach to media heavily influenced by local cultural customs such as the wantok system in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands (p 404). All three researchers and others noted the youthfulness, lack of experience and lack of qualifications of Pacific journalists (except in Papua New Guinea where Phinney compared the educational standards favourably with Australia). No serious research appears to have been undertaken specifically on journalism and education in the South Pacific until now.

## CHAPTER THREE: Methodology

In Papua New Guinea the typical journalist is male and very much part of the urban elite.

By the standards of his own country he is well travelled, well educated and well paid.

*The Phinney survey in PNG, October 1984<sup>1</sup>*

Both survey and interview data indicate there is a higher commitment on the part of Pacific journalists to a 'nationalist' agenda than found with ... Western journalists, born in part out of a recognition that for all its development in the post-independence period, Pacific media are still limited in diversity when compared with the West.

*The Layton survey in the Pacific, May 1992<sup>2</sup>*

### ***The problem***

ROMY FRÖHLICH and Christina Holtz-Bacha (1993) demonstrated that the heterogeneous structure of journalism education and training in Europe also indicates the heterogeneity of the role and functions ascribed to journalists in various countries. The way journalists are educated influences their global view and self-perception: 'Their perceptions of themselves and their role in society in turn leads to differences in journalistic practice' (p 24). This thesis examines the impact of university education on South Pacific journalism and media. Its objective is to test the hypothesis that tertiary education has a critical influence on how Pacific journalists practise their profession and perceive their political and social role in a developing society faced with the challenges of globalisation (Robertson, 2003). The analysis includes historical and political economy case studies of the region's three main journalism schools, Divine Word University,

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<sup>1</sup> October 1994 survey of Papua New Guinean journalists. See Phinney, Rod (1985). A profile of journalists in Papua New Guinea. *Australian Journalism Review*, 7: p 46.

University of Papua New Guinea and the University of the South Pacific, to determine whether political, media and cultural pressures have imposed a pattern of constraints on journalism education.

### ***The method***

The triangulation method used by Schultz (1998) for her analysis of democracy, accountability and the media in Australia helped structure this analysis, which incorporated quantitative and qualitative methods of random survey, focus interview, participant observation and archival research. With a total of 16 major news organisations in Fiji and Papua New Guinea alone, the research has concentrated on both countries because all three university journalism schools in the South Pacific are situated there and because the news media is generally more developed and sophisticated. For the study, it was assumed that the majority of journalists who have been educated at universities are products of these three institutions and that both countries employ most South Pacific journalists, encouraging efficiencies in data collection and analysis. The Pacific has relatively few journalists (estimated by Layton in 1993 at 273).<sup>3</sup> Both countries predominantly use English as the language of the news media, although there are significant numbers of journalists also working in vernacular media.

Both Fiji and Papua New Guinea have a similar sized news media industry in terms of staff numbers and news outlets, but in PNG newsroom attachments for journalism students had been established for almost 25 years. The future of this system was under question following the planned closure during 1999 of the University of Papua New Guinea Journalism Studies Programme, which had been the pioneering institution for journalism education in the Pacific.

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<sup>2</sup> May 1992 survey of eight Pacific nations. See Layton, Suzanna (1993). *Media Freedom in the Pacific Islands: A Comparative Analysis of Eight Nations and Territories*. Unpublished PhD thesis. St Lucia, Queensland: Department of Journalism, University of Queensland: p 396.

<sup>3</sup> Layton: 61.

However, in early 2000 the UPNG programme was given a reprieve. At Madang, Divine Word University's Department of Communication Arts attempted to expand its courses to absorb an expected overflow of journalism students from UPNG but, being remote from the centre of national news media, had a less developed attachment or internship scheme.

### ***The preliminary survey, 1998/9***

A preliminary (pilot) newsroom training survey was conducted between 14 December 1998 and 28 February 1999 based on total daily news organisation populations with personal visits by me to newsrooms with self-administered questionnaires (*Appendix 4*) to test the hypothesis. Twelve news organisations (six in each country) were surveyed in this way with a 13th company declining to participate.<sup>4</sup> Participating companies were:

#### **Fiji:**

- The Murdoch-owned *Fiji Times* group, including *Pacific Islands Monthly* (although this magazine later closed in 2000);
- The *Daily Post*, which has a Government controlling interest;
- Communications Fiji Ltd private broadcast group (FM96);
- Fiji Broadcasting Corporation (known as Island Networks at the time);
- Associated Media group (*FijiLive* website and *The Review* news magazine); and
- Fiji Television Ltd with one free-to-air and two pay channels.

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<sup>4</sup> Islands Business International, Suva-based publishers of *Islands Business* newsmagazine and other publications declined to participate. According to then editor-in-chief Peter Lomas in a letter dated 10 February 1999: 'The forms you gave were distributed to all the journalists on our staff. It was left entirely to them whether they took part in the survey ... These forms appeared to be for a survey being conducted in Papua New Guinea. Because of this members of our staff showed little further interest.' No other media company in Fiji had such a narrow

**Papua New Guinea:**

- The Murdoch-owned *Post-Courier* daily newspaper;
- The Malaysian logging company Rimbunan Hijau owned *National* daily newspaper;
- Word Publishing, the church-based group publishing both national weekly newspapers *The Independent* and *Wantok*;
- The National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC);
- The private broadcaster PNG FM Pty (NauFM and YumiFM); and
- The EMTV channel, wholly owned by Australia's Channel Nine.

In spite of the cultural and logistical difficulties of conducting a survey of this kind with journalists in the South Pacific, the general response rate for the participating news organisations was relatively high, and certainly compared favourably with previous surveys in the Pacific (*see Table 3.1*). In fact, the response rate (66 per cent with 124 respondents from 188 questionnaires) was almost as satisfying as what was achieved at the later second and more substantive survey conducted for this thesis, which was conducted more than two years later in April/May 2001. Although the second survey's response rate was higher, it had less universal support among media organisations than the pilot survey. The latter survey was hampered by political difficulties in the wake of the May 2000 attempted coup in Fiji, and also by an ill-timed media crisis affecting Papua New Guinea's state-run NBC. Nevertheless, both response rates were comparatively excellent, especially considering the cultural reluctance of Pacific Islanders to respond to questionnaires.

For the preliminary 1998/9 survey, the response rate ranged between 42 per cent at one newspaper in Fiji (*The Fiji Times*) and 100 per cent at a radio broadcaster in Papua New Guinea (Radio NauFM). Overall, the participation rate in this survey was far higher in Papua New

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'interpretation' of the survey. This company, which had approximately five editorial staff at the time, was therefore also excluded from the 2001 survey.

**Table 3.1: Comparison between Pacific (and one Australian) media survey response rates, 1984-2002**

Survey	Phinney 1984* (PNG)	Masterton 1988 (Pacific)	Layton 1992 (Pacific)	Schultz 1992** (Australia)	Robie a.1998/9 (Fiji/PNG)	Robie b.2001 (Fiji/PNG)
Total	97	79	164	247 (39)	124	106
Percentage	62%	25%	60%	41% (80%)	66%	70%

\* Phinney (1984) included PNG radio and print journalists only; Masterton (1988) surveyed news sources and journalists in the USP region (321 forms were distributed by USP but it is uncertain whether they all reached their target); Layton (1992) included eight Pacific countries and territories, American Samoa, Northern Marianas, Fiji, Guam, PNG, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Western Samoa (now Samoa); Robie (a.1998/9) and Robie (b. 2001) both focused on print, online, radio and television journalists in the region's two major media industry countries, Fiji and Papua New Guinea. Although the second 2001 survey total of respondents was smaller (two organisations that took part in the earlier survey did not participate), the percentage of responses was higher. See tables 10.2 and 10.7 for details.

\*\* Schultz (1992) included Australian journalists only, but this was part of a 10-nation Media and Democracy project, which included Britain, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Spain, Sweden, and the United States. This has been included for comparison. The main Australian sample (247) comprised journalists involved in daily news and current affairs production while being compared with a group of investigative journalists (39).

Guinea (76 percent of total staff) than in Fiji (57 per cent). But the final number of 124 journalists out of the total mainstream daily news and current affairs media staff with completed questionnaires was comparable, comprising 59 respondents from Fiji and 65 from Papua New Guinea. Total editorial staff was 103 and 85 respectively. The 12-point questionnaire (*Appendix 4*) asked quantitative questions on media demographics and educational qualifications, questioned respondents on the most preferred form of journalism training, and about perceptions of the 'most crucial role of a news media organisation's relationship with the public and power elite' in a developing Pacific country. It also included qualitative questions about journalism education and training, and the role of the media. Field work for this pilot survey was conducted in December 1998 in Papua New Guinea and February 1999 in Fiji at my own expense.

### ***The main survey, April/May 2001***

A second, more substantive education and training survey of Fiji and Papua New Guinea was conducted between 20 April and 20 May 2001. This was again based on total daily news organisation populations with personal visits by me to newsrooms with self-administered questionnaires to test the hypothesis. A total of 152 questionnaires were distributed to 106

respondents with a response rate of 69.7 per cent. Of these, 63 were from Papua New Guinea (79 per cent response rate) and 43 from Fiji (60 per cent). Thirteen news organisations (seven in Fiji; six in Papua New Guinea) were surveyed in this way with a 14th company declining to participate<sup>5</sup> as political and professional pressures played a far more restrictive role than the earlier survey. The news director of one broadcast company in Fiji declined to allow her staff to participate in the survey<sup>6</sup> while a senior executive took part in the qualitative interviews and two journalists subsequently defied the ban to complete the questionnaires<sup>7</sup>. Another broadcast company in PNG agreed to participate in the survey, but failed to return the questionnaires because of the timing of a political crisis, although senior journalists assisted with the qualitative interviews<sup>8</sup>. Participating companies this time were:

**Fiji:**

- The new daily newspaper, *The Sun* (founded in 1999);
- The *Daily Post* (Government controlling interest);
- Communications Fiji private broadcast group (FM96);
- Fiji Broadcasting Corporation — partially (quantitative and qualitative);
- Pacnews, the regional news cooperative operated by the Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association. This agency had moved to from Port Vila and established its office in Suva since the previous survey, and its staff were primarily Fiji Islands journalists;
- Associated Media group (*FijiLive* website and *The Review* news magazine); and
- Fiji Television with three free-to-air and pay channels.

**Papua New Guinea:**

- The Murdoch-owned *Post-Courier* daily newspaper;
- The Malaysian logging company Rimbunan Hijau owned *National* daily newspaper;

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<sup>5</sup> *The Fiji Times* group.

<sup>6</sup> Vasiti Waqa, Fiji Broadcasting Corporation Ltd, although several of her staff were willing to participate.

<sup>7</sup> Francis Herman, general manager public broadcasting, FBC.

- Word Publishing, the church-based group publishing both national weekly newspapers *The Independent* and *Wantok*;
- The National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) — partially (qualitative only);
- The private broadcaster PNG FM Pty (NauFM and YumiFM);
- FM100 Radio Kalang, previously a subsidiary of the NBC and now owned and operated by Telikom PNG; and
- The EMTV channel, wholly owned by Australia's Channel Nine.

### ***The questionnaire***

The second survey was more comprehensive than the pilot, comprising a 45-point self-administered questionnaire with questions arranged in three main categories (*Appendix 6*) was: A: Background and demographic profiles (19 questions), B: Attraction to journalism (12 questions), and C: Freedom of the press (12 questions). The questions were based to a degree on the original survey, but were expanded to reflect some of the issues raised in the earlier pilot exercise. However, this second survey drew on some aspects of the questionnaire used for the survey of Australian journalists conducted under the auspices of the international Media and Democracy project supervised in Australia by Professor Julianne Schultz in 1992.<sup>9</sup> This survey was also administered in five other countries, in 'one of the most ambitious cross-national studies of journalists ever undertaken' (Schultz, 1998: 239). Just as Schultz added 35 questions to the Australian survey to ensure that it adequately addressed issues central to her research on democracy, accountability and the media in Australia, my survey included questions

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<sup>8</sup> Joseph Ealedona, news director, National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC).

<sup>9</sup> See Schultz, Julianne (1998), *Reviving the Fourth Estate : Democracy, Accountability and the Media*, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press. Besides Australia, the five other countries that participated in the international survey were Britain, Germany, Italy, Sweden and the United States: 'Six hundred journalists involved in daily news and current affairs production around Australia were sent the questionnaire in June and July 1992, Forty-one percent completed and returned the self-administered 178 question survey. The survey was also sent to 50 opinion leading investigative journalists, producers and editors, who had taken a prominent role in the production of the investigative and watchdog journalism published and broadcast in Australia during the 1980s. Nearly 80 percent of this sample responded' (p 239).

specifically adapted from the Schultz survey and also from a Romano (1998) survey examining normative theories of development journalism in Indonesia.<sup>10</sup> Indonesia was considered to be particularly relevant for this thesis considering that Papua New Guinea shares a border with the Indonesian-ruled province of Papua and that several exiled Papuans have become prominent journalists in PNG.<sup>11</sup>

Fieldwork for the second Pacific media survey began in mid-April 2001, comprising a two-week period in Papua New Guinea with personal visits to newsrooms, a one-week period in Fiji to visit newsrooms and a further period to New Zealand to interview Pacific media personalities.<sup>12</sup> All field trips to newsrooms followed earlier contact with editors or managers and faxed advance information about the survey. The media field trips involved briefing editors and staff, personally administering the questionnaires and follow-up visits a few days later to collect the questionnaires. The fieldwork was funded primarily through a University of the South Pacific Research and Publication Committee grant. Emailed and follow-up interviews continued after the field trip.

This research also included 57 focus and individual interviews with a wide range of journalists, editors, news organisation managers and media advisers or analysts (*Appendix 15*). Most interviews were audiotaped, the rest gathered by email. While these interviews were intended to be open-ended to draw out experiences, a basic question outline paralleling the

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<sup>10</sup> See Romano, Angela (1998), Normative theories of development journalism: State versus practitioner perspectives in Indonesia, *Australian Journalism Review*, 20(2) 60-87: 'Indonesia's New Order Government (1996-1998) commonly characterised Indonesian journalists. A survey of Indonesian journalists [between October 1996 and March 1998] found that although the New Order attempted to establish a coherent press model, suited to local cultures and economic prerogatives, respondents conceived their role in markedly different terms. Eighty per cent were even more critical of Government-imposed restrictions under the guise of "culturally appropriate" values than they were of Western concepts. They described their role models as those brave enough to expose Government faults. Even journalists who approximated the New Order's vision of their nation-building role overwhelmingly rejected the press-as-government partner perspective' (p 60).

<sup>11</sup> Among them Franz-Albert Joku, a prominent journalist in Papua New Guinea for many years, and Harlene Joku, educated at UPNG and who became a specialist environmental reporter on *The Independent* and *The National*.

<sup>12</sup> Particularly New Zealand historian Michael King who was a contemporary of Ross Stevens in the early days of the UPNG journalism school in the 1970s. After the death of Stevens, it was important to get King's recollections of this period. (*See Chapter Seven*).

formal survey questionnaire was used. In some cases, the qualitative interviews were directed in relation to specific information available from the subject.

### ***Archival and other research***

Site visits were made to 25 media organisations and educational institutions (*Appendix 2*) and reference was made to the seven-year-old *Pacific Media Watch* regional online media archive [www.pmw.c2o.org](http://www.pmw.c2o.org)<sup>13</sup>. Information gathered through the survey and interviews was contextualised through archival research at the University of the South Pacific's Pacific Collection, Michael Somare Library (University of Papua New Guinea), Divine Word University Library, National Archives in both Fiji and Papua New Guinea, University of Queensland, University of Technology, Sydney, and Auckland University of Technology. The thesis has also drawn on my own personal experience and archives as a media educator at two of the Pacific's major journalism schools over the past nine years.

Comparisons have been done with other media research highlighting education in the South Pacific over the past two decades, notably that of Phinney, Masterton (1988), Layton and Schultz, and also (to a lesser degree) with Waqavonovono (1981), Devi (1992), Williams (1998), and O'Connell (2001). Earlier research by Richstad in the mid-1970s was also noted.

Phinney is a Canadian journalist who spent 14 months in Papua New Guinea as journalist cadet counsellor with the National Broadcasting Commission, a statutory body based on Australia's ABC, between 1983 and 1984. He conducted his newsroom research in the context that the PNG mass media 'had its roots in an Australian colonial administration and in Australian journalism' (1985: 40).

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<sup>13</sup> Founded at the University of Technology, Sydney, in 1996 and since maintained by researcher Peter Cronau of ABC's *Four Corners* and the author.

### 3: Methodology

If journalism in Papua New Guinea seems to be taking a different course than in other developing countries, it may be that this unique legacy is partly responsible.<sup>14</sup>

In Phinney's survey, a questionnaire was distributed to all PNG-born journalists at the NBC and the country's then four national newspapers — the *Post-Courier*, the *Niugini Nius* (since closed, in 1990), *The Times of Papua New Guinea* (this became *The Independent* and has since closed in mid-2003) and *Wantok* (sister paper at Word Publishing). Expatriates and naturalised citizens were excluded, apart from two Melanesian journalists (one from the Solomon Islands and the other from Papua, or Irian Jaya). The return rate was 66 per cent, with 29 NBC journalists and 13 newspaper journalists responding. The return rate for the NBC was 74 per cent and for newspapers 52 per cent. Of the journalists who responded, 11 (26 per cent) were women.

At the time of the Phinney survey, all four newspapers were taking 'a more or less independent line politically. There are no government or political party newspapers in Papua New Guinea' (1985: 41). By PNG standards, Phinney found that journalists were 'extremely well educated' (p 42):

In a country with a 35 per cent literacy rate, 32 (76 per cent) respondents had some tertiary education. All but three of this group had taken the one-year diploma course in journalism at the University of Papua New Guinea. Two attended the university but did not enter the journalism programme, and one completed a two-year communications programme at a small Catholic college [Divine Word]. Only one journalist had a BA. At the other end of the scale, only two had not completed Grade 10.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Phinney, 1985: 40.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.* 42.

Phinney noted that by comparison, Brisbane journalists surveyed by Hart (1973) 'had received less schooling'. According to Hart, 57 per cent had attended a tertiary institution (14 per cent graduating), while 18 per cent had not completed secondary school (compared to 12 per cent of PNG journalists. He also pointed out an apparent contradiction in his survey: journalists were claiming 'political neutrality' while planning their own election campaign.<sup>16</sup> But he found that as Papua New Guinea entered its second decade of nationhood,

it may not be premature to suggest that the freedom enjoyed by the mass media, and thus by journalists, has become an established, and not easily altered, feature of society. Australia [and New Zealand] journalists have played an important role in this development (p 48).

The main limitation of Phinney's survey is that the sample responses were focused primarily on the state broadcaster — 'because they knew me in my capacity as a trainer with the NBC' (p 41) — and relatively few print journalists working for the independent newspapers were included.

Four years after Phinney, Masterton undertook a regional research project based at the University of the South Pacific studying the regard and respect Pacific Islanders had for their media (1989:46). His survey found that 'universally they believe their news services make too many errors in fact and interpretation, that their stories are incomplete and lacking in background, that they are too often no more than government handouts'. Distributing through USP's extension studies system, Masterton sent out 321 questionnaires — to journalists, media employers, government officials, educators, clerical workers, professionals (including aid specialists) and technical officers — and 79 were returned.

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<sup>16</sup> Phinney explained: 'In recent elections, voters have turned to better educated candidates, and journalists are

The 24.6 per cent response rate was a good rate but uneven. Replies were from the Cook Islands 3; Fiji 14; Kiribati 12; Solomon Islands 18, Tonga 8, Tuvalu 10; Vanuatu 3 and Western Samoa 11. There was no reply from Niue and the Government of Nauru forbade the distribution of questionnaires in that country.<sup>17</sup>

Masterton's survey showed that the social status of journalists in Kiribati, Samoa and the Solomon Islands was marginally above average, but elsewhere it was well below average. Professionals rated journalism quite highly, 'even though they consider journalists' abilities poor'.<sup>18</sup>

Across the board, respondents say both print and radio journalists lack the understanding to report adequately. One Fiji respondent with wide knowledge of journalism in the Pacific wrote on his returned questionnaire: 'Reporters have little general or background knowledge and usually poor or very poor knowledge of current affairs beyond their own country.'

Radio journalists were criticised even more strongly than newspaper reporters for publishing items, which were no more than government handouts: on a 'frequently-never' scale radio's average was on the high side of 'sometimes', print [was] on the low side. Respondents believe there are four major reasons for the low status of journalists and the publications for which they work: their work is of poor quality because they need specific

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always among the most highly educated members of their home village. However, there is no evidence of an exodus from newsroom to Parliament' (1985: 42).

<sup>17</sup> Masterton, Murray (1998). 'Mass' media in the South Pacific, *Media Information Australia*, No 52, May 1989: 'Responses were also coded for occupation, which showed: 14 print journalists, 16 radio journalists, 6 employers of journalists, 16 government officials, 10 educators (at any level), 4 clerical workers (who gave their occupation as such), 10 professionals (including aid specialists) and technical or scientific officers (possibly also aid specialists).'

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*: 47

training, they have insufficient education, and they are paid so poorly that better prepared candidates are reluctant to take up journalism.<sup>19</sup>

The survey also found that ‘without exception a good general education was considered the “most helpful” with a long-term university-type education in journalism close behind. The University of the South Pacific offers the only such course in the region, a five-unit Certificate [in] Journalism.’<sup>20</sup> Masterton pointed out that both journalists and Government officials preferred overseas training to training at home or within the South Pacific region. He added: ‘Cynics might say this is because it means a free overseas journey for them.’ However, media employers and educators believed training at home was more helpful.

Layton’s survey in 1992 focused on a comparison of press freedom between eight selected Pacific nations, including Papua New Guinea,<sup>21</sup> and the method was modelled on Siebert’s analysis of press freedom in England (1952). About 300 survey questionnaires were distributed by hand to ‘media managers’ from 47 organisations and later collected. One hundred and sixty four completed questionnaires were returned with a 60 per cent response rate in what Layton claims to be ‘the second-largest study of its type undertaken in the Third World’.<sup>22</sup> In contrast to Phinney, she found that the number of journalists with tertiary qualifications had dropped slightly to 68 per cent while Fiji had just 16 per cent with degrees or diplomas, ‘a surprising finding considering the presence of the University of the South Pacific in Suva.’<sup>23</sup> Layton set out to test a prediction by Meller (1976) that Pacific Islands journalists would ‘become more

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<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*: 48

<sup>20</sup> The ‘region’ means the then 12 member countries of USP. However, at that time both UPNG and DWU were offering substantially more extensive programmes, including degrees in journalism or communication arts.

<sup>21</sup> Layton’s eight surveyed countries were: American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas islands (CNMI), Fiji, Guam, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Western Samoa. All eight nations identified English as at least one of the national languages. A ninth country originally selected, French Polynesia, was excluded to ‘avoid problems of translation and duplication of study materials’ (p 55). The sample ‘represented each of the English-speaking colonial traditions’ (American, Australian, New Zealand and British) although Tonga was not a colony.

<sup>22</sup> Nayman et al. surveyed 210 Turkish journalists in 1973.

cautious in their reporting as a result of social and cultural pressures’ (1993: 54). In fact, she found the reverse.

As journalists with their Western media values increasingly challenged over cultures where ‘public consensus and respect for leaders are core social norms’, authorities seek to find some other accountability measure, such as ‘the highest standards of professional practice’.<sup>24</sup>

Professionalism per se is also highly valued in the region, due in part to the long period in which entry into the professions was effectively denied to indigenous people. These two forces converge in the often politically expedient calls by government leaders for more professionalism on the part of journalists — calls, it will be remembered, which are rarely backed up by financial assistance to regional journalism education institutions.

The danger is that criticism about the state of the industry will be followed by government-imposed regulatory agencies should media organisations appear complacent, or worse, recalcitrant, about developing their own.<sup>25</sup>

Layton’s study was to a degree an idealised perspective of realities in Pacific media. While she correctly identified moves towards professionalism and a growing trend towards education in the face of political pressures, particularly in the wake of the 1987 Fiji coups, she did not acknowledge the anti-intellectual tendency among some senior Pacific media management and the flawed developments in some regional media institutions. While Layton noted that Pacific Islands journalists are ‘seen to be actively synthesising a “Pacific-style” journalism’ from Western traditions and local cultural networks (such as the ‘wantok’ system in Papua New Guinea), she did not sufficiently elaborate on this.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps this was because her wide-ranging

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<sup>23</sup> Layton, 1995: 137.

<sup>24</sup> Layton, 1993: 397.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*: 404.

sources for the most part privileged media industry lobby groups such as Pacific Islands News Association while not giving sufficient weight to the universities and independent news media where much of the discourse on professional change has been actually taking place.

In the Australian section of the global Media and Democracy project, Schultz drew on support from the Australian Journalists' Association to boost publicity for the survey and establish its authority 'in the eyes of the sample which is instinctively suspicious of the motivations of those asking questions' (Schultz, 1998: 239). Articles about the survey appeared in the association's monthly newspaper, *The Journalist*, and respondents were told that the preliminary results of the research would be published. And this preliminary report was carried in the October 1992 edition of *The Journalist*. Schultz concluded that Australian journalists were 'committed to the ideal of a Fourth Estate', and 'in many ways are well-placed to accept responsibility for it' (p 238).

But they are constrained by their capacity to control the output of their organisations, and by their limited notions of accountability, diversity and the public interest.

### **Study limitations**

Fiji was particularly problematic for this thesis research into newsrooms, at least for the main survey. This was partly because of a defensive attitude among some news media in the wake of the attempted coup by George Speight almost a year earlier, and also more specifically because of an analytical paper<sup>27</sup> presented by me at the Journalism Education Association (JEA)

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<sup>27</sup> Robie, David (2000). Coup coup land: The press and the putsch in Fiji. Paper presented at the JEA conference at Mooloolaba, Queensland, December 5-8:

[www.asiapac.org.fj/cafepacific/resources/aspac/fiji3148a.html](http://www.asiapac.org.fj/cafepacific/resources/aspac/fiji3148a.html)

A later version of this article, with a section also analysing the controversy, was published in the University of Wollongong journal *Asia-Pacific Media Educator*, No 10, January-July, 2001, pp 148-162. Abstract: On May 19, 2000, an insurrection led by failed businessman George Speight and seven renegade members of the elite 1st Meridian Squadron Special Forces engulfed the Fiji Islands in turmoil for three months. Speight and his armed co-

conference in December 2000, which had been a strong critique of the conduct of the Fiji news media before, during and after Speight's putsch. *The Fiji Times*, which faced particular criticism in the paper, refused to cooperate with this second survey, even though it had participated in the earlier one. In a personal email to me in response to the briefing papers about the survey, editor-in-chief Russell Hunter, formerly a chief subeditor with Murdoch's *The Australian*, said:

*The Fiji Times* will have nothing to do with this. We consider the questions slanted in the extreme and we think they are aimed at supporting your preconceived conclusion. Our staff have been advised not to co-operate. We will take part in any genuine attempt to survey the level of skill and experience in the media — but this, in our view, is far from genuine.<sup>28</sup>

Hunter was supported in this move by his managing director, Alan Robinson, an expatriate Australian, and long a critic of university education for journalists. *Fiji Times* journalists were reportedly 'advised' in a newsroom circular not to participate in the survey.<sup>29</sup> An appeal in a personal phone call to Hunter by my supervisor, Professor Stewart Firth, did not succeed in persuading a change of heart by *The Fiji Times* management.<sup>30</sup> In the case of the state-run Fiji Broadcasting Corporation, after a news editor initially accepted the questionnaires on May 11

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conspirators stormed Parliament and seized the Labour-led Mahendra Chaudhry Government, keeping members hostage for 56 days. On Chaudhry's release from captivity, he blamed the media in part for the overthrow of his government. Some sectors of the media were accused of waging a bitter campaign against the Fiji Labour Party-led administration and its roll-back of privatisation. In the early weeks of the insurrection, the media enjoyed an unusually close relationship with Speight and the hostage-takers, raising ethical questions. Dilemmas faced by Fiji and foreign journalists were more complex than during the 1987 military coups. As Fiji faces a fresh general election in August [2001], this article examines the reportage of the Coalition Government's year in office, media issues over coverage of the putsch, and a controversy over the author's analysis presented at a Journalism Education Association (JEA) conference in Australia.

[www.uow.edu.au/crearts/journalism/APME/contents10/Robie.html](http://www.uow.edu.au/crearts/journalism/APME/contents10/Robie.html)

<sup>28</sup> Hunter, Russell (2001). Personal email message to the author, April 18.

<sup>29</sup> Reliably reported to the author by journalists working for *The Fiji Times*, although a copy of the office internal memorandum was not obtained.

<sup>30</sup> In October 2001, a new managing director of *The Fiji Times* was appointed, Tony Yianni. Ironically, Yianni had previously been managing director of the South Pacific Post Pty Ltd, publishers of the *Post-Courier*. He had been

and several staff completed them, the news director, Vasiti Waqa<sup>31</sup>, prevented any of her staff participating or returning the completed questionnaires. The reason Waqa gave was that she ‘did not like [my] paper about the Fiji coup coverage’. A personal appeal to the general manager (public broadcasting), Francis Herman, succeeded in him meeting with his news director, but he did not manage to persuade her to change her mind. However, Herman personally happily cooperated with the research and agreed to give the author a personal interview.<sup>32</sup> Some staff on Fiji Television were also initially reluctant to cooperate, with a news editor saying ‘the boys decided they didn’t want to do it’.<sup>33</sup> However, after the two most senior editorial staff completed questionnaires, others also participated.

In Papua New Guinea, the survey was generally greeted with enthusiasm and three news organisations gave 100 per cent response rates (EMTV, NauFM and Word Publishing). However, there was a problem with the National Broadcasting Corporation. Although the NBC participated and two senior staff were interviewed, when the questionnaires were due to be collected, the corporation was thrown into crisis with the Government sacking then managing director Bosky Tonny. *The National* reported:

The managing director of the Government-owned National Broadcasting Corporation, Bosky Tonny, has been sacked. His removal places a question mark over a multi-million kina re-development programme that is currently underway at the NBC... [following] a politically motivated action.<sup>34</sup>

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an enthusiastic supporter of this survey in Papua New Guinea and gave the author a focus interview for the research on 26 April 2001.

<sup>31</sup> Waqa, Vasiti (2001). Telephone discussion with author, May 15.

<sup>32</sup> Herman was appointed chief executive of Fiji Broadcasting Corporation Ltd in January 2003, replacing Sireli Kini who had been suspended and then dismissed. ‘Francis Herman named to head Fiji broadcaster’ (2003, January 24). *PINA Nius Online*.

[www.pacificislands.cc/pm122001/pinadefault.cfm?pinaid=6950](http://www.pacificislands.cc/pm122001/pinadefault.cfm?pinaid=6950) (Retrieved 24 January 2002).

<sup>33</sup> Mua, Tukaha (2001). Personal discussion with author, May 14.

A medical doctor from Goroka with no broadcasting experience replaced Tonny, who had worked for the NBC for 14 years. Tonny said he had not been given any reason for the abrupt sacking. However,

the radio station's coverage of the events at Murray Barracks, in which soldiers removed high-powered weapons from the armoury and forced the Government to abandon plans to downsize the army, had drawn the ire of Prime Minister Sir Mekere Morauta. (*ibid.*).

The incident was characteristic of pressure on media organisations in the Pacific. In fact, news manager Joseph Ealedona was himself suspended and then sacked by the corporation in an overtly political move. According to the *Post-Courier*:

Ealedona said the suspension was 'political' and had nothing to do with his professional career as a journalist. 'I am treating this as political and have advised my staff to continue working without fear or favour,' he said ...

In his [suspension] advice to Ealedona, [new NBC managing director Dr Kristoffa] Ninkama said that his news director had:

- allowed to air a soldiers' protest on March 21 at Murray Barracks without authority, which threatened national security;
- aired a current affairs programme on the university strike seven days later; and
- aired a live broadcast of the launching of the [PNG] Labour Party on August 1, which was carried again on August 13.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> NBC MD sacked (2001, May 1). *The National*

<sup>35</sup> Radio news director Ealedona suspended (2001, August 29). *Post-Courier*

Four months later, *The National* confirmed that Ealedona had been sacked after a 12-year career with the national broadcaster. Citing a memorandum from the corporation management to Ealedona dated December 10, the newspaper said:

[His] suspension had received widespread criticism from the general public and non-governmental organisations, claiming the Government was interfering with freedom of information and expression.<sup>36</sup>

Corporation staff were demoralised and promises by the news manager to despatch the completed questionnaires to me were not followed up in spite of several faxes, emails and telephone calls over a four-week period. This was in spite of Ealedona and his senior business affairs reporter, Elliott Raphael, having earlier given me interviews.<sup>37</sup> The incident was characteristic of pressure on media organisations in the Pacific. The lack of completed questionnaires from NBC staff was particularly disappointing because the first contemporary Pacific survey of news media organisations (Phinney, 1985) had concentrated on the radio station.

Although the non-participation by *The Fiji Times* staff in the survey was of some concern, given that the newspaper group is the largest single media employer in Fiji, and also arguably the most influential, this is unlikely to have significantly distorted the 2001 survey. This survey's findings on qualifications, mean age and experience and so on were comparable to the pilot study when *The Fiji Times* had been included. Likewise, the lack of empirical data from

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<sup>36</sup> NBC sacks news director Ealedona (2001, December 18). *The National* .

<sup>37</sup> Ironically, when asked about political pressure, Joseph Ealedona said in an interview before his suspension then sacking: 'Fortunately, there isn't so much pressure. Yes, they [government] may accuse us of this and that, but to pressure us not to write this, I don't see that happening often here. In my case, the NBC is a sensitive area. While we have editorial independence, NBC is government-owned. It doesn't happen often, but [there is] just the recent example of the dismissal of the managing director [Bosky Tonny] because the Prime minister wasn't happy over the NBC coverage of the military rebellion. The Government demanded certain things, but we stood our ground and in the end the managing director was dismissed' (Interview with author, 3 May 2001).

the FBC in Fiji and NBC in Papua New Guinea is unlikely to have significantly altered the findings. Although the sample was perhaps slightly skewed with a larger proportion of print journalists than would have been the case if FBC and NBC staff questionnaires had been included.

## CHAPTER FOUR: Pacific media training, aid donors and ethics

Liberty does not mean licence and is limited by ethical standards, but the Press Council's role was to monitor and it resisted attempts to go further. That is the council was concerned to ensure that reasonable standards did not become a denial of the right of the public to know, to have opinions and to publish.

*Anna Solomon, The Independent editor, 1 March 1996<sup>1</sup>*

In parts of the developing world there is an unwritten pact between aid recipients and aid donors in which both appear to benefit in the short term to the detriment of any measurable progress in sustainable development. In Pacific Island nations this is especially true in the case of local radio and television.

*Robert Hooper, Asia-Pacific media educator, 1998<sup>2</sup>*

NEWS media in South Pacific countries, as in many other nations, have faced increasing criticism over professional and ethical standards. The criticism in the region focuses on lack of professional training of journalists, poor education standards, lack of knowledge of the political and social institutions, cultural insensitivities, and a questionable grasp of ethical issues. The media, some argue, is too 'Western' and not the 'Pacific way'. Others, particularly politicians, are keen to introduce regulatory controls to 'rein in' the media (see Kaitani, 2003; Robie, 1998a, 1999b; Iangalio, 1996; Singh, 2002; Vayeshnoi, 1999b). However, the media industry is quick to defend its integrity and, while acknowledging some shortcomings, including a lack of training, insists self-regulation is best.

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<sup>1</sup> Solomon, Anna (1996). The Past and Present Role of the Papua New Guinea Media Council. In Millet, John, *Freedom at the Crossroads: The Media and the Constitution*. Port Moresby: Institute of National Affairs. p 102.

<sup>2</sup> Hooper, Robert (1998). Challenges of Sustainable Broadcasting Training in Contemporary Pacific. *AsiaPacific MediaEducator*, July-December, Issue 5, p 10.

Towards the end of 2002, the press in Fiji faced some particularly nasty vitriol. Senator Mitieli Bulanauca branded local journalists as ‘mad crazy loonies and stupid people’ who needed to be ‘trained, guided and directed’ (Singh, 2002; *Wansolwara Online*, 29 August 2002). He also described media as ‘Satan’s agents’, arguing that editors, publishers, reporters and announcers were racist and naive amateurs. His brand of nastiness followed another Government senator, Reverend Tomasi Kanailagi, a former Methodist Church president, who singled out *The Fiji Times* and Fiji Television as ‘agents of evil’ over an exposé about the practice of tithing and church finances.<sup>3</sup> Although these views had a rather hysterical tone, they echoed rather more measured criticism made a year earlier by media commentators and overseas current affairs programmes of the standard of crime reporting in Fiji at the time of a notorious double murder in which Red Cross executive director John Scott and his partner were hacked to death. Serious ethical dilemmas were also exposed over the coverage of George Speight’s attempted coup in May 2000 (Cass, 2002; Field, 2002; Moala, 2001 127-133; Parkinson, 2000; Robie, 2001: 150-156; Woodley, 2000). While media councils and self-regulation have become a new mantra in the Pacific, there remain questions of credibility. Fiji’s self-regulatory body, the Media Council (Fiji) Ltd, was eager to defend the media against attacks such as the senators’ ‘preposterous’ criticisms (Tarte, 2002; Hussain, 2002) yet it had remained fairly muted on both the Scott murder case reporting and the Speight political crisis.

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<sup>3</sup> According to *Wansolwara* (29 August 2002): ‘Reverend Kanailagi’s anger stemmed from media reports that the church’s finances were not being properly audited. There is also intense debate in Fiji about tithing and the burden it is placing on indigenous Fijians. *The Fiji Times* has written scathing editorials on the issue. Kanailagi said the reports were slanted against indigenous Fijians because most reporters at *The Fiji Times* and *Fiji One* were Indians. A *Fiji Times* photographer was chased away from the church’s annual conference in Suva this month [August]. The church collected over F\$1 million in donations from members during the conference. Kanailagi said reports that the church’s finances had never been audited were an “unforgivable lie”. The media’s aim was to see the church “destroyed and perished” (sic), he said. In an editorial on [27 August 2002], *The Fiji Times* said that making the point that the burden of giving to the church held back the social and economic development of the Fijian community was not an attack on the church. “We sought to distinguish between willing donations and donations on demand. We repeat that the Methodist Church in Fiji places unfair pressure on its flock to hand over money,” said the *Times*.’

In Papua New Guinea, resentment towards news media often reflects that in Fiji, particularly if the news media organisation is perceived to be foreign-owned. The rhetoric towards the PNG press was well reflected in this statement by then Opposition Leader Paias Wingti before he became Prime Minister. It expressed the frequent indignation that many PNG politicians share about the main national daily:

The *Post-Courier* newspaper is hell-bent on a dangerous path of partisan reporting, which in the end will threaten the freedom of the press in Papua New Guinea.

It is obvious that the *Post-Courier* has become the captive of powerful foreign sectional groups, whose only interest is in screwing the best deal out of our resources for themselves.

The present Prime Minister, Rabble Namaliu, is a willing accomplice in this. Namaliu will best be remembered for selling us all down the drain — ably assisted by the foreign-owned and directed *Post-Courier* (cited by Philpott, 1992: 333).

### ***Aid and Pacific media training***

Ironically, 11 years after the University of Papua New Guinea Journalism Programme had become well-established in Port Moresby (*see Chapter Seven*), *Fiji Times* editor Vijendra Kumar lamented the lack of media education or a training kit. He said that ‘at present, there is no institution in the region that provides training in journalism and communications’ (Kumar, 1981: ix). This demonstrated a tardiness about journalism education in Fiji contrasting with Papua New Guinea — by then the *second* PNG journalism school, at Divine Word in Madang, had begun the previous year — that was to persist into the 21st century. Writing a preface for the publication of a pioneering Pacific reporters’ handbook, *Get It Right; Write It Tight* (Yu, 1985), Kumar also noted:

Whatever training that is currently provided is through a loose system run by newspapers or radio stations themselves. Raw cadets are generally left to sink or swim on their own, with the barest of help or guidance from a small corps of already overworked experienced journalists. There is no organised or formal instruction in the skills of the profession (*ibid.*).

Introducing the book, Dr Frederick Yu of the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, made some unflattering comments about the state of education of journalists in the Pacific (Yu, 1985: 3). ‘A reporter must be well informed and well-educated,’ he wrote. This did not necessarily mean many years of formal education — some respected journalists had little more than high school or college education, while some with doctoral training were ‘totally useless in the newsroom’. Nevertheless, more and more journalists around the world were expected or required to gain more formal education, as well as informal. Yu noted the increasing numbers of professional specialists, such as lawyers, doctors and PhDs, entering the media in the United States.

Pacific Island news media set different educational requirements. Some recruit only ‘school leavers’, some require ‘form Four’, and some prefer college students or graduates (*ibid.*).

The book had its genesis some five years earlier, when a group of Pacific newspaper editors and broadcast news executives met in Honolulu in April 1980 to consider training needs for the region’s journalists. In fact, it was probably earlier, from 1974 — just before the UPNG Journalism Programme was founded by the late Ross Stevens with New Zealand aid — when a fledgling network of newspaper editors, publishers and academics (many of them expatriate) elected an executive headed by *Samoa Times* editor Fata Pito Fa’alogo. Its task was ‘spearheading the development’ of the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA), the industry’s

major regional lobby group.<sup>4</sup> One of the group, former *Fiji Times* editor Leonard Usher (later knighted),<sup>5</sup> drafted his ‘no-nonsense’ 11 basic principles for new Pacific reporters:

- *Accuracy*: When in doubt, leave out. Check. Re-check.
- *Promptness*: Working to deadlines.
- *Discipline*: keeping to space limits. Inverted pyramid principle.
- *Clarity*: Rule — one thought to a sentence; one sentence, no passive voice.
- *Enterprise*: Keep eyes and ears open constantly for stories. Get around. Look for leads from an initial factual story.
- *Persistence*: Don’t be discouraged or put off by obstruction or difficulty in making contacts. Keep at it.
- *Courage*: Don’t be influenced by possible unpopularity or disapproval. It is the job of the journalist to get information and publish it.
- *Impartiality*: See both sides of a story.
- *Legality*: Learn thoroughly the provisions of laws governing defamation, contempt of court, sedition, parliamentary privilege and public order.
- *Language mastery*.

Pacific Islands journalists had long realised the region needed a news exchange. In the 1980s, Pacific Islanders knew far more about what was happening in Auckland, Canberra, London, Paris, Wellington and New York than they did about their neighbours across the ocean

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<sup>4</sup> This was in fact a follow-up meeting to the first Pacific Islands editors’ conference held in Suva, Fiji Islands, in 1972. For a comprehensive account of the history of PINA and its work, refer to Ratulele, Nina (1999). Pacific Islands News Association Working in the Pacific Islands. *AsiaPacific MediaEducator*, January-June, Issue 6, pp121-126. This is a largely promotional piece. PINA’s three main objectives are:

- To promote and defend freedom of information and expression in the Pacific Islands.
- To promote and develop Pacific Islands news media professional standards through training and education.
- To promote professional fellowship and cooperation throughout the Pacific Islands news media.

<sup>5</sup> See Firth, Stewart and Daryl Tarte (2001). *20th Century Fiji: people who shaped this nation*. Suva: USP Solutions, The University of the South Pacific, p 155; Usher, Len (1987), *Mainly About Fiji: A Collection of Writings, Broadcasts and Speeches*, Suva, Fiji Islands: Fiji Times Ltd. Usher died aged 96 on 26 August 2003.

(Henshall, 1989; Richstad, 1984, 1981; Seward, 1999: 76; Sorariba, 1995: 39). As Sorariba observed:

From the outset, governments in many Pacific Island nations saw radio as the medium to reach out into communities. And radio's reaching out reputation has survived over the years. Many island leaders still regard radio stations as messengers of those in authority while reluctantly accepting the increasingly autonomous status of broadcasting stations. Such a mentality and practice prevail out of old habits, but the reality is that some Pacific Island countries' national broadcasting services are being turned into political tools of whoever happens to be in power (Sorariba, *ibid*: 41).

In a Pacific Basin Flow of News Study undertaken by the East-West Centre in 1976, journalism Professor Jim Richstad and research associate Tony Nnaemeka found that the prevailing news flow patterns in the region (one-way from the former colonial powers) were seen by many in the Pacific as 'a hindrance to the social and economic development of the area' (Richstad, 1981: 119). The survey pointed to the need for a news agency and the 'development of an Information Region that could lead to more balanced and relevant flow patterns'. The study of a 'constructed week'<sup>6</sup> of foreign news coverage in 27 daily and weekly newspapers in the Pacific (15 from Pacific islands nations and 12 from Pacific rim countries) confirmed a one-way news flow pattern as indicated by Johan Galtung's theoretical concepts (1971) regarding the influence of colonialism. Another significant finding in the Pacific was the concept or pattern of 'news from nowhere' (Richstad & Nnaemeka, 1980).

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<sup>6</sup> The study period was November 1-7, 1976, extended to four weeks in the case of weeklies. According to Richstad (1981: 104): 'In all, 4200 international news items were coded in 124 issues of the 27 newspapers. Coding was by such standard content analysis categories as source of the story, location of the event being reported, subject of the news articles, and space allocation in square centimetres ... News was defined as non-advertising printed matter.'

This concept developed when the data showed that 29.4 per cent of all the international news in Island presses did not have an identifiable or stated source.<sup>7</sup> We found through interviews with editors that many of [them] knew where the stories originated (Richstad, 1981: 110).

Although the idea for a news agency, or at least a news exchange, was pushed several times, regional agreement ‘could not be reached until several years after broadcasting training cooperation had been under way’ under the tutelage of the German NGO Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung funded PACBROAD programme (Seward, 1999: 78). At a PACBROAD editors’ workshop in Suva, run by Hendrik Bussiek in September 1987, participants ‘simply agreed’ that two news editors would stay in Fiji to start work on the news service. This created a *fait accompli* and ensured Pacnews would continue in spite of the post-Rabuka coups turmoil in Fiji. At the same time, public broadcasters decided at a meeting in Tonga to create the Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association (PIBA). Pacnews and the new regional body — a professional association of the state-owned radio networks of 13 independent Pacific island countries<sup>8</sup> along with Australia and New Zealand — were formally launched in 1988.<sup>9</sup> The German donor agency Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) provided funding for fax machines and other technical equipment for Pacnews.

Parallel to the PACNEWS and PIBA developments, other initiatives were also under way sponsored by UNESCO that had important implications for journalism training and education

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<sup>7</sup> According to the Richstad and Nnaemeka survey, a related ‘source’ category was ‘own correspondent’, which in the Island press accounted for 24.6 percent of all foreign news stories. Many of the ‘unstated’ and ‘own correspondent’ articles may, in fact, have been supplied by transnational agencies, been a combination of items from various sources, or been taken without credit from overseas radio services or other publications.

<sup>8</sup> The 13 countries are: Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

<sup>9</sup> The most comprehensive account of PIBA’s history is recounted in Seward, Robert (1999), *Radio Happy Isles: Media and Politics at Play in the Pacific*. Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press. For a detailed history of the Pacnews and the political pressure it faced, forcing the news exchange service to move from Fiji to Auckland, New Zealand, Honiara, Solomon Islands, Port Vila, Vanuatu; and finally back to Suva, see Seward’s chapter, ‘Fax in Exile’, pp 67-101.

in the region. One was a meeting in Suva in November 1989 when media representatives from 20 Pacific countries met officials from UNESCO, the Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU), the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) and several ‘once colonial donor agencies’ to consider a strategy for the introduction of television to the region. Professor Frank Morgan (1999: 215) noted a ‘sad irony’ about the meeting:

Most ironic were the assurances of support from European, North American and international agencies for the technical, financial and creative resources that would be needed to develop local, culturally indigenous television services [in the Pacific]. The capacity to deliver that support had already been destroyed in the fall of the [Berlin] Wall.

Nevertheless, UNESCO played a crucial role in the television sector over the next decade through its regional office in Apia by encouraging empowerment training workshops and funding of independent video production, particularly with women’s programmes and university student productions<sup>10</sup>. An even more important development for the region came two years earlier. At the 1987 conference of PINA in Nuku’alofa, Tonga, UPNG’s Peter Henshall tabled a proposal calling on UNESCO to fund an extra journalism lecturer at PNG’s national university on condition that it provide a commitment (equivalent to a full-time person) to ‘providing short courses throughout the region, extension courses and other training’.

Henshall considered that in a ‘climate of limited resources’ in the Pacific, it made sense for journalism education and training at various institutions in the region to complement each other rather than competing. He suggested the ‘complementarity’ might be geographical, with several institutions each meeting the needs of the countries in a particular area of the Pacific region. Or

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<sup>10</sup> Many of the productions were done in partnership with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) Regional Media Centre in Suva and the monthly regional video magazine *Pacific Way* was developed. On the university side, UNESCO assisted a special series of ‘news spots’ on *Pacific Sustainability* (1999) and *The Culture of Peace* (2001) with the USP Journalism Programme and SPC.

it might be in terms of course content, with one institution concentrating on print while another deals with broadcasting, or one emphasising practical reporting with another stressing communication theory. He hinted at future closer cooperation between UPNG and USP, which at that stage was offering a Certificate in Journalism course in Suva supported by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC).

We are acutely aware of the lack of dialogue between ourselves and the Journalism Programme at USP, for example. Both institutions must share the blame for this lack of liaison. Looking to the future, it would surely serve the region better if the various programmes offered by UPNG and USP were distinct, so the people could choose the one which best met their needs. This can only come about if those of us offering the programmes talk to each other (Henshall, 1988: 38).

### ***UPNG plays host to regional training***

From the early days of journalism training at UPNG, it had accepted students (often working journalists) from other countries in the region. In 1976, the second year of the programme's existence, there were two students from the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Commission (SIBC). The pattern had continued, according to Henshall (*ibid.*: 37): 'Of the 139 diplomates so far [in 1987], 14 have come from the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Of the 27 students currently registered for the diploma and degree programmes, four are from other Pacific Island states.'<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Henshall's report continued: 'One first-year diploma student is from the Solomon Islands Ministry of Education and Training, another from the Vanuatu Department of Agriculture; and a third-year degree student is from Radio Vanuatu. One student who is just completing the diploma is a reporter from the Tonga Broadcasting Commission' (1988: 37).

According to Henshall, the PNG Government's policy was to concentrate its resources on 'developing primary industry rather than social services, including education' (*ibid.*: 38). Within education, the policy was to shift the emphasis from tertiary to primary education. As a result, UPNG's budget was cut by five per cent each year between 1986-88:

Journalism is under no immediate threat, but the prospects for expansion seem very limited (*ibid.*: 38).

But expand it did, after a fashion. Following Henshall's proposal, UNESCO bit the bullet and for three years funded the Pacific Journalism Development and Training (PACJOURN) project, based at UPNG. After all, the proposal had advantages to both UNESCO and PINA. It was cheaper to dovetail the project onto the UPNG Journalism Programme rather than funding a separate teacher to be based as an individual elsewhere. UPNG provided office space and secretarial support, and also provided accommodation as the job was given to Henshall. The second advantage for UNESCO and PINA was that while paying for one person, they would be able to call on the expertise of three staff. As Henshall explained:

If we organise ourselves so that all teaching duties within UPNG, currently undertaken by the two lecturers, are shared by all three lecturers, then the new duties which would come with such an arrangement as outlined in this proposal can also be shared. There would in effect not be two UPNG lecturers and one UNESCO lecturer, but a team of three sharing all the work according to their specialisation and experience (1998: 39).

For three years until 1991, UPNG became the hub for regional industry short-course media training as well as formal journalism education while the university hosted the US\$1 million PACJOURN project. This was a productive and cooperative era (*see Chapter Seven*) for Pacific

journalism education with a series of short courses being conducted in the region. The period climaxed with publication of the three-volume journalism handbook *The News Manual* (Henshall & Ingram, 1992), which became the key training text in the region for a decade. However, the pendulum then swung back to PINA and Suva where an UNESCO-funded Pacific Journalism Training Development Centre was established in Gordon Street, next door to *Islands Business* newsmagazine. From that point on the donor-funded media industry short-course training and formal journalism education offered by the three Pacific universities followed largely separate and contrasting paths.<sup>12</sup> This was accentuated with an ill-fated attempt in 1994 to establish a Fiji Journalism Institute (FJI), funded by UNESCO, the same year that a journalism degree course was introduced at USP. The FJI collapsed under a cloud over funding accountability barely six years later.

### ***FJI officials given marching orders***

In November 2000, the Fiji Journalism Institute was evicted from its office and a scathing *Fiji Times* editorial called for it to ‘clean up the mess’. This ended an embarrassing and controversial saga. The office that had housed the six-year-old institute in Ma’afu Street in Suva was taken over by the Fijian Affairs Board with the permission of the Public Service Commission (Kumar & Bibi, 2000). According to the Ministry of Information, the institute, run

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<sup>12</sup> Several Pacific media educators (i.e. Bartlett, 1990; Cass, 1998; Craddock, 2001; Robie, 2001a, 200a) have written about an uncooperative, even hostile, attitude towards media education at the universities, particularly USP. According to Bartlett: ‘As is often the case in journalism education, the USP Journalism Programme faces the conundrum: Shall we provide fodder for the industry or shall we provide an academic tour around the subject of journalism? Many programmes attempt to provide a bit of both, but the most successful ones undoubtedly are those which place the “fodder” consideration above the academic one, the reason being that if nothing else, the “fodder” approach compounds a relationship with the industry. It creates a dialogue, often sparked during inquiries from papers and radio stations about likely students for recruiting, and so long as there is a dialogue there can be dynamism.

‘Such a dialogue is lacking in the South Pacific: witness the fact that it was this expert who had to suggest to PINA that he be invited to its annual conference; that this expert had to make the proposal that discussion of the USP Journalism Programme be a permanent item on the PINA conference agenda and that that this expert was not allocated funds with which to make the trip to the PINA conference.’

by PINA affiliate Fiji Islands Media Association (FIMA), had not been used for more than year. Although it was an open secret among the media fraternity that the institute had foundered with serious questions over accountability for its donor funding, the media was reluctant to report the story. *The Fiji Times* editorial, one of the rare pieces about the affair, commented:

The people responsible for this shocking state of affairs must be found and taken to task. Journalists have a duty to uncover and highlight misdeeds. It is therefore imperative that their house be put in order first.

According to an article in *Wansolwara* by final year student journalists Salesh Kumar and Nazreen Bibi (2000):

Funding for the institute has been frozen since 1998 due to failure to provide audited reports. For more than 18 months, there have been unsuccessful attempts to call a general meeting or provide audited accounts.

Director of Information Eliko Bomani said the ministry was willing to assist the institute, but FIMA needed to come up with a solution to its financial mess. He added that the journalists were quick to point fingers at others but when their own house was under question [then] they aptly 'sweep everything under the carpet' ( p 8).

Some former executives, including the last training coordinator, Jo Nata — arguably Fiji's finest investigative journalist before his forays into public relations and also one of the country's two first journalism graduates<sup>13</sup> — were reportedly under investigation over alleged

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<sup>13</sup> Josefa Nata and former Ministry of Information journalist Laisa Taga were the first Fiji journalism graduates, gaining media BA degrees at the University of Technology, Sydney, in 1988. Nata was detained on Nukulau Island in Suva harbour after George Speight's attempted coup in May 2000. He was charged with treason and tried along with former politician Timoci Silatolu in November 2002. They were both found guilty on 20 March 2003 and were sentenced in July to life imprisonment. Agence France-Presse's Michael Field reported on March 30

mismanagement of donor funds and the institute. Former FIMA president Asaeli Lave, chief photographer of *The Fiji Times*, was quoted by *Wansolwara* as saying there had been ‘too much politicising’ in the institute. UNESCO’s International programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) had provided a grant of US\$45,000 (F\$100,000) for the institute (*ibid.*). Following failure by the FJI to properly audit the funds and provide sufficient explanation, UNESCO dispatched a consultant to report on the situation. The report found:

- A relatively high student drop-out rate (from 1996 to 1997).
- Lack of an official qualification (accreditation) for the FJI certificate.
- Need for future support from the media industry (cited by Kumar & Bibi, 2000).
- Lack of cooperation between FJI and the regional Journalism Programme at USP.

This last point was rather surprising given that for about two years (1998-99), one of the two USP lecturers, Ingrid Leary, was devoting some of her spare time to provide guest lectures at the institute, particularly on media law. Also, the USP programme had made some headway with the university’s administration in seeking recognition for the FJI certificate as a cross-credit for the foundation course JN101 Introduction to Journalism. The UNESCO rapporteur never consulted the USP Journalism Programme. UNESCO’s regional communications adviser, Tarja Virtanen, told *Wansolwara* a new project had been submitted in 1997, and IPDC approved this in 1998, after it had evaluated the implementation of the institute's objectives.

However,

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(The Fiji treason trial file): ‘Twenty-four hours before arrest at Kalabo School Jo Nata was on the telephone to a reporter from a leading Indian daily delivering a torrent of sexually explicit invitations to her. Strutting around Mussolini-like, Nata, pumped up on the aphrodisiacal qualities of imagined power, he thought the world was his. His delusion was complete last week when he and Timoci Silatolu stood in a bare wooden dock to hear their treason convictions. No family, no girlfriends, no partners and no admiring supporters were there. At most there were 34 people in court: 10 of them policemen. Not one of them was an associate of the two accused; the visionaries of The Cause stood abandoned.’

[203.97.34.63/fiji\\_treason\\_trial\\_file.htm](http://203.97.34.63/fiji_treason_trial_file.htm) (Retrieved 19 April 2003).

After a stint editing *Fiji's Daily Post*, Taga became editor-in-chief of *Islands Business* magazine in 2002.

the director of IPDC suspended the funds because no viable workplan had been submitted by March 2000, with a special emphasis on the sustainability of the institute. This naturally covers aspects related to the budget and finances (*ibid.*).

PINA assisted FIMA in setting up the institute by developing a funding proposal for UNESCO's IPDC. Regional training coordinator Peter Lomas told *Wansolwara*: 'This was designed to help the institute become self-sustainable and organise overseas-based training programmes for the local trainers.' The Media Council took on a role of advising and assisting FIMA to get the project back on track. In spite of the financial debacle, an announcement at a Fiji National Commission for UNESCO seminar on 11 June 2002 confirmed media industry support for Pacific vocational courses, such as the Fiji and Samoan polytechnics, rather than degree courses with critical studies components:

Fiji news media leaders have backed Fiji Institute of Technology becoming the centre for the industry's training in Fiji.

The institute will from early next year begin offering courses in journalism, public relations, advertising/marketing, radio, video, and TV production, photography and multi-media.

[PINA administrator Nina Ratulele] told the symposium PINA and its members are [sic] supporting developing such courses at tertiary institutions like Fiji Institute of Technology and Samoa Polytechnic.

These would complement rather than compete with the journalism degree programmes at Divine Word University (Papua New Guinea), University of Papua New Guinea, and University of the South Pacific (Fiji), she said.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Fiji media back Fiji Institute of Technology as national training centre, *Pina Nius Online* (12 June 2002), [www.pacificislands.cc/pm62002/pinadefault.cfm?pinaid=4723](http://www.pacificislands.cc/pm62002/pinadefault.cfm?pinaid=4723) (16 January 2003): 'Fiji Institute of Technology School of Arts, Culture and Design head Vili Nareki said its new Media Communication programme will feature

Although, FIT management said the institute was taking over the role and assets of the defunct FJI, little information was made available and it was unclear at the start of 2003 whether the FIT course had either staff or a curriculum available. In Apia, the administration gave a much clearer picture of developments at Samoa Polytechnic with the graduation of seven (out of 10 enrolled) students on the institution's first yearlong diploma course.<sup>15</sup> It was announced that a New Zealand-based Samoan, Priscilla Rasmussen, had been appointed to head the school, replacing Moneka Knight, the Australian Youth Ambassador who had established the programme as an Ausaid project. Participants at the programme tend to be working journalists without qualifications while bright scholarship school leavers making a start in journalism were still enrolling at the University of the South Pacific.

### ***Pacific Media Initiative becomes dominant donor project***

At the 20th South Pacific Forum at Tarawa, Kiribati, in 1989, then Deputy Prime Minister Akoka Doi of Papua New Guinea initiated a move to improve media relations among member countries. Doi was concerned that the media often presented a 'biased view' when reporting events in Forum countries. He proposed a regional seminar to consider ways of improving media reporting. While the Forum endorsed freedom of the press, it recognised a need for the media to report accurately. The Forum Secretariat was asked to seek financial support for a seminar (Pacific Media Initiative, 1996: 2).

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at the school's new location in suburban Suva. The school already trains people for the news media in areas such as computing and graphic arts. Mr Nareki told the symposium: "The major role of the school is to provide technical and vocational education and training." He outlined how, with support from the news media, it was now also taking over the role and assets of the former Fiji Institute of Journalism.'

<sup>15</sup> Samoan to head Samoa Polytechnic J-school (2002, December 9) *Pacific Media Watch*. [www.asiapac.org.fj/cafepacific/resources/aspac/samoa3872.html](http://www.asiapac.org.fj/cafepacific/resources/aspac/samoa3872.html) (Retrieved 16 January 2003).

Ausaid provided funding for a workshop organised by the Forum Secretariat in Rarotonga, Cook Islands, in February 1990. Ten Forum member governments were represented, along with media representatives from Australia, Cook Islands, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, PINA and the Pacific Journalists Association<sup>16</sup>. Observers from the University of Queensland, Forum Fisheries Agency, UNESCO and PACBROAD also attended. The preamble of the workshop's final statement, the Rarotonga Media Declaration, noted in part:

A free independent media, reflecting diversity of opinion, is a precondition of pluralist societies and an integral part of national development.

It is noted that most journalists reporting on the region do so responsibly but the activities of some periodically contribute to mistrust and tension in government-media relations.

The 1990 Forum Officials Committee in Vanuatu considered a series of resolutions from the workshop and referred them to member countries for further feedback. Only one government responded and it was left to the Secretariat to 'maintain a liaison and monitoring role on media issues' (cited by PMI, 1996). Five years later, Australia's Minister for Development Cooperation and Pacific Island Affairs, Gordon Bilney, referred to the 'crucial role the media can play in ensuring that governments operate in the interests of the community' when he addressed the annual meeting of PIBA in Melbourne on 23 August 1995. While noting that an informed and responsible media could help expose abuses of power, and make governments

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<sup>16</sup> The Pacific Journalists' Association (PJA) has been an independent organisation that was active between 1989 and 1993 while it received seed funding from the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). It held its first biannual conference in Port Moresby in 1989, followed by Port Vila (1991) and Suva (1993). PJA represented working journalists, artists and photographers in radio, television and the print media. It was established to promote vocational training, media freedom and the formation of professional and industrial networks of media workers throughout the Pacific. It enjoyed the support and ongoing commitment of the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) of Australia and the New Zealand journalists' union. Initial affiliated journalists' groups were: Cook Islands Journalists Association (CIJA), [New Caledonian] Federation du Personnel de l'Information at de l'Audio-Visuel, Fiji Journalists Association (FJA), Papua New Guinea Journalists Association (PNGJA), Pres Klub Bilong Vanuatu, (PKBV) and Tonga Independent News Association (TINA). PJA published a newsletter,

more transparent and accountable, he said that in the Pacific news media was often ill-equipped to do the job. Bilney unveiled a new policy for a regional media training and support programme in the Pacific to be funded by Australia. He told PIBA:

We want to have more detailed discussions shortly with island country representatives to help define a realistic and workable programme which is fully responsive to the priority needs of the region. Such a programme needs to go beyond training programmes in Australia, often in inappropriate working environments, which has largely characterised our previous assistance in this field.

Earlier in 1995, the South Pacific Multilateral Section of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade had commissioned a study into the state of media and communications in the region. The report, 'Building a Future in the Pacific: Communication and Sustainable Development', prepared by Dr Helen Molnar, of Swinburne University of Technology, and Judi Cooper, of Radio Australia, identified several important issues facing Australia aid. The issues included the 'convergence of communication needs and information technology in the Pacific, and the need to encourage a pro-active and independent regional press'. A key concern was for enhanced media training. The Molnar report eventually became a blueprint for Australia's new media aid project, the Pacific Media Initiative (PMI) and she eventually became the project managing contractor three years after it was launched. The PMI was established in January 1996 with an indicative budget of \$A3 million for five years, or about A\$600,000 a year, spread across four components: media in promotion of governance and community development (A\$150,000), management of media and communications

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*Spik Isi*, and was involved in the establishment of the media academic journal, *Pacific Journalism Review* (now published by Auckland University of Technology).

(A\$150,000), video and television production (A\$200,000), and project management (A\$100,000). The first project was an A\$9,000 community publishing project conducted at UPNG in June.

After a series of wide-ranging activities — including courses on business and economic reporting, train-the-trainer in good governance, advanced broadcast journalism, investigative journalism, press councils and press freedom, and women’s documentary production — a mid-term review of the project was commissioned in early 1998. While the reviewers found that PMI had achieved ‘worthwhile results in this initial period and should continue’, it found the Project Advisory Group had been ‘overly cautious’ and

was puzzled by significant departures from the Project Design Document, as in the failure to grant university scholarships or to approve work attachments ... It also recommended that the managing contractor be given a specific brief to identify and develop projects with community and NGO groups ... Similarly, the contractor should be required to pay particular attention to the matter of sustainability of training efforts, verifying that counterpart trainer arrangements are practicable and that subsequent training does, in fact, take place (Pacific Media Initiative, 1998: 1).

In the first 18 months of the project, eighteen activities were funded at a total cost of approximately A\$320,000. Also, a further eight projects were approved for the rest of that year with a total expenditure of A\$494 017. Of the first 26 activities, Fiji and Vanuatu hosted the most — five each — with the Cook Islands hosting four. Solomon Islands followed with three activities while Papua New Guinea and Samoa each had two, and FSM, Marshall Islands and

**Table 4.1: Initial media project spending by AusAID's PMI, 1995-1998**

Year	Number of activities	Expenditure (A\$)
1995/96	1	9,150
1996/97	7	113,712
1997/98	10	200,815
Total	18	323,677

Source: Pacific Media Initiative (PMI) mid-term review document (AusAID), p 21.

Tonga had one. Two regional activities were held and Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu missed out. Although two of the universities have been represented on the PAG (UPNG, then DWU, and USP), they have been largely sidelined by the project even though they are the major journalism education providers in the region. UPNG journalism strand leader Sorariba Nash articulated the frustration with PMI at the start of the project in 1996 when he wrote in a *Uni Tavour* column that in return for the PACJOURN expertise UPNG had shared with other Pacific countries, it had now become 'an aid pariah' (Sorariba, 1996: 4).

Doesn't 21 years of journalism education expertise in the Pacific count? ... The University of Papua New Guinea has produced more than 150 journalism graduates — many of them in prominent positions in the media around the Pacific today ... This flawed [PMI] document was supposedly compiled after 'wide-ranging consultation' with organisations and individuals within Australia and the Pacific region. Although we hear that Papua New Guinea is one of the beneficiaries of this package, none of the individuals or media organisations from this country were consulted (*ibid.*).

At the October 2001 PINA convention in Madang, Papua New Guinea, further concerns were raised about some aspects of the PMI project. According to *Islands Business* editor-in-chief Laisa Taga:

Questions were raised why so much of the money from this project was going back to Australia through Australian consultants and training providers, and why Pacific Islanders were not being involved more. The regional news media leaders said Pacific Islands people must be more involved in management, design and implementation of Pacific Islands news media training (Taga, 2002).

The major beneficiaries from the PMI project, the rival main regional organisations, PINA<sup>17</sup> and PIBA, moved by the end of 2002 to try to reconcile their differences by drafting a merger plan. Ausaid hosted a meeting in Canberra in December to help plan the preliminary design of a new phase of PMI where merger proposals were floated. Justifying the move, PINA president Johnson Honimae, who as general manager of the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC) is also a PIBA member, pointed to twin problems of duplication of training and a growing shortage of available aid funds for the Pacific.

At the moment some members of PINA are also members of PIBA. There seems to have been some duplication ... Also, over the year, aid donors' funds into funding media projects has [sic] dwindled a bit as priorities of aid donors change and the focus goes to other areas of the world.<sup>18</sup> So the funding — we need to work together so that whatever funding we get, our members get the maximum benefit out of it (Dorney, 2002).

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<sup>17</sup> Privately, some journalists cynically referred to PMI as the 'PINA project'.

<sup>18</sup> Acting chairman of the Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association (PIBA), Francis Herman, of the Fiji Broadcasting Corporation, had a similar view: 'We've consulted the executives of PIBA, the elected executives, and I think for a long time a few of us have been wanting a merger between the two major media organisations and that's a logical transition. For a long time, as far back as I can remember — the last decade at least — donor agencies, governments have been saying, "Why don't you guys merge?" It's become very difficult for [funding] two organisations.' So the merger will augur well for us — for Pacific Islands' media in terms of funding' (Dorney, 2002).

### ***The 'train-the-trainers' legacy***

There has been a strongly held view in the region that trainers, including broadcast trainers, should themselves be Pacific Islanders (Hooper, 1998: 16). This has long been the objective of UNESCO's PACTRAINER projects, along with many 'train the trainers' courses funded by agencies such as Ausaid, the British ODA Governance Fund and several United Nations agencies. However, some view many of these workshops as failures, or at least limited successes, and not really suited to the region (*ibid.*; Leary, interview with author, 2003; Thaman, 1996). Critics cite the view that while training-the-trainer-workshops have been going on for years, today 'few indigenous Pacific Islanders serve as trainers anywhere in the Pacific' (Hooper, 1998.: 17). According to USP education professor Konai Helu Thaman, follow-up studies have shown that few participants in such workshops have carried out training in subsequent years. At the time of writing, no product of train-the-trainer workshops had been a staff trainer/educator at any of the three Pacific university-based journalism programmes.

The problem lies as much in the initial selection of trainees as in the poorly planned and coordinated workshops themselves. Participants selected without the requisite social status in their communities rarely have the credibility to serve as trainers; their workshops will not be attended in their home communities. For a variety of reasons, Pacific Islanders will not inform aid donors that they are training the wrong candidates; this is left to the aid donors to determine, with disastrous results. Appropriate selection criteria for candidates from Pacific island cultures is the key to successfully producing trainers who will be effective in their communities (Thaman, 1996).

In the opinion of television producer and former USP media educator Ingrid Leary, greater media industry transparency over training is needed.

Another challenge is the sheer size of the media industry in the Pacific, which like any small community, is fraught with politics. I believe small powerbrokers within this community have sometimes hijacked funds allocated for training to pursue their own agendas, or have at least made decisions not always based on what will best serve journalism education within that community.

While it is important for the industry to make its own decisions regarding funding allocations, it is critical that in future the systems used have more transparency and that as far as possible, funds are spread across several bodies so that no one industry group effectively holds a 'balance of power' when it comes to journalism training decisions. These are issues for well-meaning NGOs, such as Ausaid and the UN organisations, to work through if they want their funds to be used in the most effective manner. (Leary, interview with author, 2003).

### ***Contrasting Pacific self-regulation models***

Two countries in the South Pacific, Fiji and Papua New Guinea, have adopted contrasting media council models to self-regulate the media (see Robie, 2003, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c). Other countries such as Samoa and Tonga are keen to follow the lead (Polu, 2001; Moala, 2000: 62). Projected as promoting media standards and professionalism and a model for the region, the realities of the media councils have raised questions about whether such bodies are self-regulatory mechanisms genuinely working in the public interest in the Pacific or merely defending entrenched media and power relationships, some foreign, from pressure by island governments. There are also questions over whether codes of ethics promoted by the councils are effective as self-regulatory tools for the media.

The Fiji news media and police faced harsh criticism over their treatment of the John Scott double murder case (*see* Panichi, 2001; Tapueluelu, 2001; Singh, 2003). Fiji Red Cross director John Scott had been elevated to international prominence a year earlier for his humanitarian role in supporting the Chaudhry Government hostages following the seizure of Parliament by rogue businessmen George Speight on 19 May 2000 and a group of rebel gunmen. The hostages were held for 56 days at gunpoint. Scott and his long-time partner, Greg Scrivener, were found hacked to death at their Princes Road home in Suva on 1 July 2002. After members of Scrivener's family in New Zealand suggested events may have been linked to Scott's humanitarian role and made allegations that the slain men had been tortured, police were remarkably quick to reject speculation on a political motive. They also made a number of questionable and prejudicial statements about the two men's gay life style while some news coverage was widely condemned as 'sensationalist and homophobic' (Tapueluelu, 2001: 161).

Several international current affairs programmes, including ABC's *Pacific Beat* (Panichi, 2001), and media commentators challenged the ethics and professionalism of both the media and police.<sup>19</sup> Criticism was also levelled over issues such as violations of the legal principles of contempt of court and sub judice. According to James Panichi, 'The coverage has some media observers fearing the relationship between police and reporters has become too close for comfort.' The broadcaster asked that while crime reporters may pride themselves on their close relationship with police sources, 'where should the line be drawn?' *The Fiji Times* admitted in an editorial that the media had gone too far with sensational coverage, adding that the family of Scott had appealed to news organisations to show some 'restraint and sensitivity':

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<sup>19</sup> *Fiji Murders*, a television documentary made by Rebecca Singh, a former Fiji Television news reader, on Television New Zealand's TV2 programme, *Queer Nation*, on 22 May 2003 gives an analytical insight into the issues.

The family's desire is understandable and justified. Parts of the media have been insensitive and less than balanced in their desire to beat their rivals in this most competitive of industries. There is little doubt that the Fiji Media Council's code of ethics — drawn up in consultation with the industry — has been breached. Unverified reports, facts sensationalised beyond recognition and pure hearsay have all been seen in the light of day in Fiji's media. We as an industry can and should do better.<sup>20</sup>

News media coverage of the double murder raised serious questions over ethics, training and professionalism in Fiji, just as when some sectors of the media 'helped to destabilise the Government' in the run-up to the Speight putsch (*see* Field, 2001, 2002; Robie, 2001a: 151). The mood among politicians has fluctuated between those who are cynical about the role of the present Media Council, seeking legislation to control the news media, and others who favour revising and consolidating current legislation in the hope that media practices will 'smarten up'. The reformers seem to be in the ascendancy at present.

### ***Draft Fiji media law and foundations of freedom***

Work on a draft new *Fiji Media Bill* had been going on quietly at the Ministry of Information for more than six years (*see Chapter Five*) and had been dusted off by three governments (originally by the Rabuka Government, followed by Chaudhry's Coalition and most recently by Qarase) without actually being enacted. In its most recent (Qarase) version, the draft law was not completed in time to be tabled at the final parliamentary session in 2002. However, it was made public by Information Minister Simione Kaitani in May 2003 for consultation.

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<sup>20</sup> Editorial in *The Fiji Times* (2001, July 28), cited by Tapueluelu, 'Anna (2001). Reporters and the police — too

Immediately, the draft Media Council of Fiji Bill faced fierce controversy over what the news industry saw as a crude attempt at control (*Appendix 13*). Frequently at the root of Government concerns behind the proposed legislation was bureaucratic frustration (Vayeshnoi, 1999: 7) with the ‘toothless’ Media Council and a perception that it favoured the media companies. Thus ministers have been at pains to restructure by enabling the establishment of a statutory Media Council with more powers. The council itself defends self-regulation and its self-entrenched position.

A key element of this Bill will be [the] setting up of a Media Council. Mr Speaker Sir, the News [sic] Council as it now exists has become no more than a toothless tiger and does not command the respect [or] faith of the community. Set up by the media organisations, it has now become so close to the media organisations that its independence in adjudicating on disputes is now questionable (*ibid.*).

It is widely believed that the draft law is largely based on the Thomson Foundation’s 1996 report, *Future Media Legislation and Regulation for the Republic of the Fiji Islands* (Morgan & Thomas), with some Cabinet additions. Media industry executives studied the report and generally accepted it, and there was apparently nothing included that curtails press freedom. Rather, it seeks to arguably improve the environment for the media to operate ‘freely’ (Singh, 2002). The Thomson Report notes that while ‘responsible governments and politicians should share a common aim — the best interest of their society — their roles are different’:

In a healthy democratic society, the relationship between politicians and a free press is, quite properly, likely to be wary, questioning and sceptical, rather than close, cosy or adulatory (*ibid.* 5).

Although the Fiji Government has frequently claimed that it would not introduce laws infringing media freedom, the public remains sceptical and is also critical about the performance of the journalists and news organisations. According to former *Review* editor and media academic Shailendra Singh in an article provocatively entitled ‘Of croaking toads, liars and ratbags’,<sup>21</sup> the media continues to have a credibility problem.

The litany of complaints against the media cannot always be dismissed out of hand. Concerns about unbalanced and unethical reporting, sensationalism, insensitivity, lack of depth and research in articles and a poor understanding of the issues are too frequent and too numerous.

Another common complaint is that the media is loath to make retractions or correct mistakes. It has even been accused of bringing down a government or two (Singh, *op. cit.*: 6).

Among reasons cited for poor standards in Fiji and elsewhere in the South Pacific is the fact that journalists in Fiji are often young, inexperienced and poorly trained. However, Singh notes that while there is little argument about this, ‘complaints about journalists in Fiji almost mirror those in developed countries where scribes are better trained, more experienced and well paid’. But he argues that there is a broad consensus in Fiji on improving standards because, with the

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<sup>21</sup> The quote is cited in John Hurst and Sally White’s *Ethics and the Australian Media* (1994) and is attributed to 18th century English political journalist William Corbett who likened reporters to a parcel of toads that, when disturbed by a brickbat, ‘turned upon their backs ... showing their nasty white bellies, and all croaking out their alarm, emitting their poisonous matter’.

racial and political make-up of Fiji and three coups, an irresponsible media is ‘capable of wreaking serious damage’. This was indeed a ‘major obstacle’ after Lieutenant-Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka’s military coups in 1987, according to the Thomson Report<sup>22</sup>, with an exodus of senior journalists in the post-coup period. The situation became worse after Speight.

The effects are still felt as a missing half-generation of trained, experienced professionals to fill senior editorial and ‘long-stop’ sub-editorial posts, to act as role models for younger journalists and to provide on-the-job training for new entrants...

We were satisfied that media errors and misjudgements were much more often the result of inexperience than wilful distortion, but that is of limited consolation to their victims.

We encountered on more than one occasion the argument that, if journalists were ill-equipped professionally to exercise the proper freedom of the media, it was not acceptable for them to ‘practise on other people’s lives’ (Morgan & Thomas , 2006: 12).

Many have argued that if freedom is to be meaningful in the modern world, ‘it must include some notion of access to the mass media’ (Martin, 1999: xi). Perhaps the Fiji law drafters could do well to note the Commonwealth document on the issue, *Statement on Freedom of Expression for the Commonwealth (Appendix 14)*. Few would argue with its primary declaration:

Freedom of expression means the freedom to receive and impart ideas, opinions and information without interference, hindrance and intimidation. It belongs to all persons and may be exercised through speaking, writing, publishing and broadcasting, or through physical acts.

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<sup>22</sup> The common name for the Morgan, Kenneth, and John Prescott Thomas (1996) consultancy report, *Future Media Legislation and Regulation for the Republic of the Fiji Islands*. Cardiff: Thomson Foundation.

Freedom of expression is the primary freedom, an essential precondition to the exercise of other freedoms. It is the foundation upon which other rights and freedoms arise (*ibid.*: 685).

Freedom of expression, argues the document, demands the recognition of journalist unions: 'Journalists' unions have an essential role to play protecting journalists and advancing professional standards.' This document has some specific recommendations that are particularly useful in a Pacific context. Referring to journalists as employees, the document says:

Freedom of expression does not belong exclusively to employers and managers. Rather, free expression requires that journalists enjoy substantial independence. The terms of employment of journalists should respect and reflect this requirement (*ibid.*: 690).

Why then are there no effective journalists' unions in the Pacific today, like elsewhere in the world? Teachers, academics, nurses and many other people have professional unions in the Pacific. So journalists arguably should do the same to enhance professionalism and working conditions (Robie, 1999b: 11).

While the Commonwealth document argues press or media councils are a good idea and need to be strengthened and to encourage a trend towards media self-regulation, it adds: 'The tripartite model, structured around the separate and distinct interests of the public, journalists, and media owners or managers is to be preferred' (*ibid.*: 692). No Pacific media council follows the tripartite model. Both the Media Council [Fiji] Ltd and Media Council of PNG contrast in their composition with the Australian and New Zealand models, which include independent journalists (in the case of New Zealand, the journalists union), for example. The fact that the Fiji council is a company rather than a non-profit non-government organisation is

significant. Every news media organisation is directly represented and while there is an equal number of lay members, no independent journalists are members. Nor was the USP Journalism Programme, which as both a publisher and educator in ethics and good practice could provide an independent perspective, a member until mid-2003. In the case of Papua New Guinea, the council for most of its early existence had no lay members or independent journalists or media academics directed involved, but during 2002 it established an independent media standards committee (IMSC) to consider complaints.

***'Very good news for everyone'***

The Fiji News Council was formed in 1994 as an independent self-regulating media body and was renamed as the [Fiji] Media Council in 1998. Currently it has eight industry members (representing Associated Media Ltd, Communications (Fiji) Ltd, Daily Post Company Ltd, Fiji Broadcasting Corporation Ltd, Fiji Times Ltd, Fiji Television Ltd, Islands Business International Ltd and, Sun (Fiji) News Ltd),<sup>23</sup> eight public members and an independent chairman, former Sugar Industry tribunal chairman Daryl Tarte. Seven public members named in June 2003 were Fiji Women's Rights Movement coordinator Virisila Buadromo, former USP lecturer Parul Vera Deoki, tourism consultant Peter Erbsleben, Suva businessman Waqa Ledua, Ba businessmen Dijendra Singh, Telecom Fiji Ltd marketing manager Salote Uluinaceva, and USP Librarian Dr Esther Williams.<sup>24</sup> The council's objectives, as stated on the council's website homepage<sup>25</sup> (including frequent spelling errors), are:

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<sup>23</sup> In May 2003, the USP Journalism Programme became a member of the Fiji Media Council. *See* Bhim, Mosmi (2003, June 3). USP Journalism becomes Fiji Media Council member. *USP Beat*, p 3.

<sup>24</sup> According to Bhim, chairman Daryl Tarte said there were two public member vacancies on the Fiji Media Council in May 2003.

<sup>25</sup> [www.presscouncil.org.au/pcsite/meetings/report.html](http://www.presscouncil.org.au/pcsite/meetings/report.html) (Retrieved 9 January 2003).

ITS [sic] VERY GOOD NEWS FOR EVERYONE

To promote high journalistic standards

To enhance the media's image

To safeguard the Medi's [sic] independence

To uphold freedom of speech and expression

To promote a Code of Ethics and Practice for Journalists and Media organisations

To promote an independent [sic] and effective Complaint [sic] Committee [sic]

Originally the council did not have public members (Robie, 2003, 1999d: 14). However, in 1997 the Thomson Foundation report on future media legislation and regulation for Fiji was submitted to the Fiji Government, then headed by Rabuka. The Thomson Report recommendations included establishing a media council with public members and in 1998 the council recruited public members. One of the significant features of the Media Council in Fiji, especially when compared with its PNG counterpart, has been the reasonably active role of the Complaints Committee (especially in the 1998-2000 period before the Speight upheaval). Tarte also chairs the Complaints Committee. The other two members are businessman Tom Raja and Paula Sotutu. Explaining the committee's role, Tarte wrote:

Some may argue that the Complaints Committee should have more teeth and power to impose fines or other sanctions. However, the council is a voluntary organisation with no legal status. The Complaints Committee judges complaints on the basis of ethics and not law, though these inevitably do overlap. The adjudication takes the form of a reasoned judgement upholding or rejecting the complaints and the media organisations are committed to publishing that adjudication. This is a moral rather than a legal obligation (Tarte, 1997: 4).

During the Speight putsch and the period of tensions over the Chaudhry Coalition Government

on the months leading to the crisis, Tarte (2001) argues that the council helped to provide some stability. During such crises, he believes, the media becomes serious about self-regulation, about well-established practices of accuracy and balance. Failure to do so ‘could bring the wrath and thuggery of mindless rebels down upon them’.

Throughout the terms of the last Labour Government the media was under attack from the Prime Minister and his ministers. I firmly believe that had there not been a strong and respected Media Council in existence, the Government would have introduced draconian legislation to impose greater Government control over the media. Our strategy was to try and work with [the] Government and ensure there was dialogue on controversial issues (*ibid.*).

The council’s new code of ethics, launched by Chaudhry amid controversy and drafted largely from a report drawn up by Thomson Foundation consultant Ken Morgan, was touted as ushering in a new era in Fiji by introducing a basis for complaints. According to Tarte, Chaudhry’s ministers ‘referred to them constantly and made countless complaints’ (*ibid.*).

However, a closer examination of council adjudications reveals a more complex picture (*See Table 4.2*). Of the 17 adjudications by the council since 1997, seven were declined, six were upheld and three were partially upheld. Half (nine) of the adjudicated complaints were filed by cabinet ministers, a Government department or civil servants. Only four private individuals filed four complaints: a lawyer, a journalism educator in a test case<sup>26</sup>, and an occasional correspondent for *The Fiji Times* filing similar complaints two years running.<sup>27</sup> Only

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<sup>26</sup> Complaint No 112 Adjudication — David Robie vs *Islands Business* (1998). Fiji Media Council, October 9.

<sup>27</sup> See Fiji Media Council complaints and decisions (2002). University of the South Pacific Journalism Programme’s *Online Classroom*. [www.usp.ac.fj/journ/docs/ethics/fjmc.html](http://www.usp.ac.fj/journ/docs/ethics/fjmc.html) (Retrieved 7 January 2003).

**Table 4.2: Adjudications by the Fiji Media Council, 1997-2002**

Year	Number of complaints	Settled by mediation	Adjudicated	Complaints upheld	Complaints partially upheld	Complaints dismissed
2002	-	-	1	1	0	0
2001	-	-	1	0	0	1
2000	-	-	5	2	1	2
1999	-	-	6	1	2	3
1998	-	-	3	2	0	1
1997	28	26	1	0	1	0
Total	-	-	17	6	3	7

\* The Fiji News Council changed its name to the Media Council (Fiji) Ltd in 1998. The last published annual report of the council was in December 1997.<sup>28</sup>

Source: Compiled from the [Fiji] Media Council complaints web page (*Pacific Journalism Online*, USP)

the correspondent had partial success with his two complaints, the other two private complaints were dismissed. One opposition political party official, one ruling Fiji Labour Party official, a textile industry body, and a college filed the other complaints.

Between them, three Labour coalition ministers — National Planning Minister Dr Ganesh Chand (five), Assistant Information Minister Lekh Ram Vayeshnoi (one) and Assistant Housing Minister (one) — filed the most complaints (all in 1999 and 2000 before the attempted coup). Although Dr Chand experienced major frustrations with the council, he won one adjudication against *The Fiji Times*, had one partially upheld and lost one against the newspaper, and won two against Fiji Television. In one complaint against Fiji TV, Dr Chand complained against lack of balance, saying the station's reporters had claimed he did not respond to written questions. Fiji TV claimed that it had faxed the questions to him, but the council found that the station had sent the fax to a private number with no fax link. The council ruled:

While there may well have been an intent by Fiji TV to question the minister before running the story there is clear evidence of carelessness in not sending the fax questions to

<sup>28</sup> Fiji News Council (1997). Complaints 1997. In *Fiji News Council Annual Report No 2*, December 31.

the right number. The committee is concerned at the 'thoroughness' of the chief executive's investigation when it was a simple matter to check the telephone book (Complaint 99, 2000: 2).

The highest number of complaints were six in 1999 followed by five the following year. Ironically, while there has been heated debate for the past two years over ethical and professional issues over the coverage of Speight's attempted coup, the council has adjudicated only two complaints on since then, with just one of them related to the political upheaval (and dismissed). *The Fiji Times* faced the most complaints (12), followed by the *Daily Post* (two), Fiji Television (two), and *Islands Business* (one). Four of the complaints involved the failure of newspapers to grant a right of reply for balance, eight were for factual inaccuracy and lack of balance, three for distortion and one misrepresentation by a photograph. The *Daily Post* failed to respond to the council in both complaints against the paper, and it earned a mild rebuke in the most recent adjudication. The council ruled four breaches of the code of ethics, saying it was

most reluctant to make an adjudication on a complaint when only one party makes a presentation and there is no reply from the other. However, in view of the complete disregard by the *Daily Post* for the Media Council process for dealing with what was a legitimate complaint, it had no option [but] to proceed with a hearing. The committee is concerned at the disrespect shown by the *Daily Post* ... (Complaint 118, 2002: 3).

In another complaint in 1998, the *Daily Post* published an apology over a series of ill-informed, politically inspired articles leaked by a media organisation with an agenda.<sup>29</sup> In a six-page

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<sup>29</sup> Apology [to David Robie] (1998, November 30). *Fiji's Daily Post*, p 6. However, the council did not address the part of the complaint that dealt with the two named senior editors responsible.

letter two years later to chairman Daryl Tarte, media lawyer Richard Naidu (2001) advised the council to overhaul its approach to prevent defects and breaches of its own processes. Critiquing a test complaint (112) by me against *Islands Business* magazine for breaching two clauses of the council's code of ethics in a report about the closure of the USP journalism website during the Speight crisis, Naidu found that 'in a nutshell, I very much doubt whether the process followed by the council ... would withstand the most basic scrutiny in terms of fairness or due process'. The council's complaints committee declined to uphold my complaint in breach of its own code of ethics and procedures. The critique also referred to a double standard by the council, saying that while I was 'newsworthy' when I sought to invoke the rights of newsworthy people for redress under council rules, I was told that I am 'a media person who should have settled it [by] a different method!' (*ibid.*: 4). In the year since then, the council only ruled on one complaint, against the *Daily Post*.<sup>30</sup> Naidu concluded:

If the Media Council process is to be credible it must be sound. In a couple of cases where clients have come to me complaining about their treatment at the hands of the media, I have recommended to them that they use the Media Council procedure because it is supposed to be quicker, to get the real problem and (hopefully) to give the complainants a real solution.

If the process [involved in the Robie complaint] is representative of that which the Media Council follows, I would be much slower to counsel my clients that way now (*ibid.*: 6).

In the council's revised Code of Ethics (2002), just one sentence (s14) deals directly with cultural issues, and this stresses chiefly institutions:

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<sup>30</sup> Complaint No 118 Adjudication — Public Service Commission vs *The Daily Post* (2002). Fiji Media Council, February 18.

While free to report and to comment in the public interest on Fijian chiefly institutions, traditions, affairs and other cultural matters, and on those of other racial or ethnic groups, media should take particular care to deal with these subjects with sensitivity and appropriate respect.

### ***PNG media opens up to public scrutiny***

Towards the end of 1995, when Papua New Guinea's Constitutional Review Commission first mooted possible legislation against press freedom, the *Post-Courier* was among the media that greeted the news with more than a degree of pessimism. In a sombre editorial titled PNG HEADED FOR DICTATORSHIP?, the newspaper warned that the move could be the beginning of a drift towards a 'dictatorship style of government' in Papua New Guinea (PNG headed for dictatorship, 1996). Among politicians loyal to the Constitution who were critical of 'unthinking and caring leaders' and those with 'suspicious agendas' was Masket Iangalio (1996: 76), then a shadow Minister for Finance and Planning, who observed:

It is the latter group who see the media as the enemy... Why is it that the media is their enemy? The answer is so very simple. It is because that, imperfect though the media may be, it serves the purpose of exposing to public scrutiny and debate those who do wrong or whose motives are questionable — or those whose egos and obsession with power and image result in bad government.

Papua New Guinea's original Press Council was founded almost a decade earlier, in December 1985, with a former judge, John Kaputin, being appointed chairman. Established and funded by the media organisations for 'achieving a better industry and promoting good relations between the industry and the public' (Solomon, 1996: 102), its composition was three industry representatives from the *Niugini Nius* (now closed), *Post-Courier* and Word Publishing; one representative from the PNG Journalists' Association; and two members from the public plus

the independent chair. The legislative threat led to the Press Council reinventing itself as the Media Council of PNG, including broadcast members for the first time.

Current president Peter John Aitsi (2002) says most of Papua New Guinea's social indicators are declining. He cites a UNICEF report on Papua New Guinea stating: 'The infant mortality rate for children under one has risen from 67 in every 1000 in 1995 to 79 in every 1000 in 1999.' He points out that in the past seven years, most of the country's 19 provincial governments (including Bougainville, which was ravaged by a decade-long war) have ceased to function effectively, 'some not even functioning at all'. Evidence of this is claimed in the suspension of provincial governments and lack of local level planning and infrastructure work.<sup>31</sup> Living standards have declined sharply.

I believe there is still a greater tragedy and that is the rampant destruction of the Government machinery resulting in its inability to carry out its obligation to our people. It is my belief that over the years since independence there has been a continued decline in the ability of our communities to help themselves because the flow of resources to facilitate community self help, has been controlled and handed out by their member of Parliament. So in some areas we have created virtual 'cargo cult' communities where development is tied to their National Parliament representative (*ibid.*).

Aitsi asked what the media could do with this information? The Media Council through its members has committed itself to try to get this information into the hands of the communities so they could be empowered to scrutinise the performance of their elected representative. These factors also lie behind the media council's high-profile campaign against corruption, in partnership with Transparency International and the Ombudsman's Office.

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<sup>31</sup> For a comprehensive contemporary account of the state of government in Papua New Guinea, see Susan Windybank and Mike Manning (2003), PNG on the Brink, *Issue Analysis*. Sydney: The Centre for Independent Studies, No 30, March 12.  
[www.cis.org.au/IssueAnalysis/ia30/ia30.pdf](http://www.cis.org.au/IssueAnalysis/ia30/ia30.pdf) (Retrieved 30 June 2003).

Although the Media Council of Papua New Guinea has been operating in various forms for almost two decades, the formal complaints structure was only established in 2002, eight years after Fiji. Originally, media companies 'came together as a loosely formed group to discuss problem accounts and other issues' including a move by then Communications Minister Martin Thompson to introduce legislation to regulate the media (*ibid.*).

This regulation move by the government became the turning point enabling the Media Council in PNG uniting news media groups. The agreement to work together was reinforced during the 1995 PINA conference in Port Moresby. This event encouraged PNG media to work together to plan, prepare and host other media organisations from around the region. Membership now comprises two national daily newspapers, *PNG Post-Courier* (predominantly owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Ltd) and *The National* (owned by Malaysian timber company Rimbunan Hijau); a weekly national newspaper, *The Independent* (Word Publishing, locally owned ecumenical company); a national free-to-air broadcaster, EMTV (wholly owned by Packer's Channel Nine in Australia); the state-owned National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), which operates a national AM broadcasts and FM broadcasts in some cities; PNGFM, a nationwide FM broadcaster with three stations managed by Communications (Fiji) Ltd; and several smaller broadcasters and publications. Anna Solomon, then acting publisher and general manager of the Word Publishing Group and now retired, became president of the Media Council in 1995.

She is a great person and still an inspiration to the young people in our industry. I believe the changing focus of the council can be greatly attributed to Mrs Solomon's leadership (*Aitsi, op. cit.*).

In 1997, former *Post-Courier* editor Luke Sela was elected president and he continued to strengthen the Media Council's expanding training programme. Three years later Aitsi was elected president. The same year, the council became formally registered and its constitution was adopted. The council then began drafting a code of ethics by researching other codes and

then commissioning a consultant to review the codes for consideration by editors, journalists and media workers. Community groups were also consulted. The final review involved another consultant and meetings with newsrooms. and held meetings with all newsrooms. The lengthy process was followed to ensure that the code had ‘credibility in the eyes of users and the community’ (Aitsi, *op. cit.*), a sharp contrast with Fiji. The Code of Ethics has now been printed and circulated to all newsrooms as well as being incorporated into the journalism and media studies courses at the University of PNG and Divine Word University (*Appendix 11*).

Attempts made by the PNG Government to regulate the media are still a real threat and something that the industry has been actively working against. After two years of consultation, a five-member Independent Media Standards Committee (IMSC) was launched after the 2002 general election. Appointed as inaugural chair is Winifred Kamit, lawyer and president of the PNG Institute of Directors. Others appointed are deputy chair Tas Maketu, secretary-general of Caritas PNG/Churches, Anne Kerepia of the National Council of Women, businessman Richard Kassman of Transparency International, and law academic Dr John Luluaki, of the University of Papua New Guinea. On top of the Code of Ethics and the IMSC, the media council has continued to plan and implement a domestic and international training calendar for media industry staff.

It is our intention to demonstrate to the public, and particularly to the Government, that we are not a ‘power unto our own’ and that we are open to public scrutiny and comment. This openness, we hope, will work against the threat of any possible future move by governments to regulate or control the media of PNG (*ibid.*).

## **Conclusion**

Journalism education (based at the Pacific universities) and industry short-course training have followed different but parallel paths in the region. Aid donors have played important roles in both sectors, albeit often not particularly well coordinated. While journalism education was being established in the region for the first time at the University of Papua New Guinea in 1974-75, media industry executives were meeting to plan a strategy to boost on-the-job training and to defend themselves from growing pressures from post-colonial governments. The industry established the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA), which became the major regional media lobby group. Subsequently, the region's state broadcasters broke away in 1988 to form a rival body, Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association (PIBA), and to establish the region's first news cooperative, Pacnews.

For a brief three-year period between 1988 and 1991, the university journalism education sector and industry training came together with reasonable cooperation under UNESCO's PACJOURN project. During this time, UPNG hosted PACJOURN and its staff of media academics and trainers ran short-courses for the benefit of the media industry. The focus then swung back to Fiji with a new UNESCO project leading to the establishment of the PINA funded Pacific Journalism Training Development Centre. While the UPNG Journalism Programme was funded initially by New Zealand aid, DWU was a private institution funded primarily by the Catholic Church and staffed by volunteers. The degree programme founded at USP in the mid-1990s was funded for four years by the French Government.

In 1994, the Fiji media industry established a vocational training centre, the Fiji Journalism Institute (FJI), with UNESCO and other donor funding assistance along with the Fiji Government, which provided office space. Although this venture collapsed after six years

under a cloud over financial accountability, both the Fiji Media Council and PINA moved to revive the centre through the Fiji Institute of Technology. The Samoa Polytechnic also established a vocational journalism school in 2002. Fiji was the only Pacific country where the media industry established a vocational programme perceived to be competing with an established university-based journalism school.

By the end of the century, Ausaid's A\$3 million Pacific Media Initiative had gained ascendancy among the region's donors and it sought to achieve greater coordination in the region's media training and aid cooperation between agencies. This also led to proposals for the merger of PINA and PIBA. It is critical that in future media training aid has more transparency and funds are spread more evenly across several bodies so that no single industry group effectively holds too much power over journalism training policy. Non-government organisations such as Ausaid and the UN organisations need to tackle this more robustly if they would like their funds to be used more effectively.

Pressures and dilemmas for the news media continue to gain momentum in the South Pacific, often from a cultural as well as a political dimension. While the media in some countries is refreshingly outspoken and courageous; in others there is a worrying trend towards self-censorship. Some media industry observers argue that reclaiming Pacific images and 'envisioning a future without coups, conflicts and contraband' is now more urgent than ever (Thaman, 2001: 8). This is due to a perception that the dominant news media in the Pacific is 'Western', with eurocentric and north-based conceptual models paramount. However, these models have failed to seriously take Pacific and indigenous cultures and their worldviews into account. Yet Pacific news media has played a crucial role in exposing corruption and abuse of

political power or office, and in some cases leading to redress. It is vital that no political or social institution has absolute authority over it. There is also the hegemony of news media organisations themselves at stake.

The conflict between media and its critics in the South Pacific may be summarised, in general, as having two major schools of thought. From one perspective, while there is acknowledgement that there are shortcomings in the professional expertise of some media and journalists, the solution lies in a régime of self-regulation and self-help strategies. A second perspective argues that self-regulation has manifestly failed and that it is no longer acceptable for the media to be ‘judge and jury at their own trial’ (Morgan & Thomas, 1996: 18).

Efforts by both the Media Council (Fiji) Ltd and the Media Council of Papua New Guinea have produced mixed results and have contrasted in style. Although the [Fiji] Media Council has been long established, it closely follows Western models and has adopted a ‘top down’ code of ethics while excluding representation of independent journalists. In effect, it is more of a ‘closed shop’ and less independent of the hegemonic power of local media organisations than its counterparts in Australia and New Zealand. The complaints process also appears flawed and lacking credibility, considering a big fall off in adjudications. On the other hand, while the [PNG] Media Council has been slow to open up the ‘club’ to lay representation, it has been more innovative in training and with its independent complaints tribunal in an attempt not to be seen as ‘power unto our own’. It has also been more culturally responsive to grassroots community concerns and working journalists themselves in drafting a home-grown ‘bottom up’ code of ethics. Codes that are ‘owned’ by journalists themselves are more likely to be observed.

Other Pacific nations considering media councils ought to allow more time to weigh up the merits of the contrasting models. They ought to also consider the tripartite model as suggested

for the Commonwealth. Both the Fiji and PNG media council models have been effective in defending press and broadcasting freedom in the face of government pressures, but in terms of a credible cultural and public rights safeguard the jury is still out.

## CHAPTER FIVE: Papua New Guinea news media profile

In 1985, crime in Port Moresby reached a peak. Armed robberies, rapes and pack rapes were the order of the day ... But instead of our leaders screaming blue murder, calling for the downfall of the foreign media and a ban on reporters, they should use their energy to reverse such bad publicity.

*Luke Sela, former Post-Courier editor, 1990<sup>1</sup>*

Ownership means control. Because media comes in various forms, it can have such a powerful influence and impact on people that our national sovereignty and cultural autonomy are at stake. For this reason, it is now a Government policy for Papua New Guineans to have effective control over all types of media at every level, local, regional and national.

*Reverend Oria Gemo, Assistant Secretary of Information and Communication, 1994<sup>2</sup>*



**Map 5.1:** Papua New Guinea *Source: Lonely Planet*

<sup>1</sup> Sela, Luke (1990). Pacific reporting: Fact or fiction?, *NZ Journalism Review*, Spring, Issue 3, p 30.

<sup>2</sup> Gemo. Oria (1994). PNG's new information order (in waiting). *Pacific Journalism Review*. 1 (1): p 45.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA is the eastern half of New Guinea island, a bridge between the South Pacific and Asia. Its territory is 461,691 square kilometres and the country has a population of just over 5 million,<sup>3</sup> more than the combined populations of all other member nations of the regional political grouping, the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF). It has:

- two national daily newspapers;
- two national weekly newspapers;
- one provincial biweekly newspaper;
- one national television station broadcasting via satellite to the rest of the nation (and 12 other stations from the Asia-Pacific region received through satellite-cable);
- a national public radio network which includes a shortwave service and a network of nineteen provincial stations; and
- two FM private radio systems (Robie, 1995a: 246-8).

The major print media in the South Pacific in the four key mass communication countries or territories in the region — Fiji, French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Papua New Guinea — have been ‘largely dominated by foreign ownership’. (Robie, 1995b: 32). Global media magnate Rupert Murdoch, of course, has been the best-known player. Less known, but also very powerful and influential, is the French media baron Robert Hersant. Owner of the conservative French national daily *Le Figaro* and several large regional French newspapers, the Hersant group expanded its empire into the French overseas territories and departments: in the Caribbean, first with Martinique, Guadeloupe, and French Guyana, and then into the Pacific with New Caledonia and French Polynesia. Hersant’s California-based Pacific Presse

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<sup>3</sup> 5,028,000. Source: Population and Development Indicators for Asia and the Pacific, 2002. United Nations Population Division (2002). *World Population Prospects: The 2000 Revision*. (UN publication). [www.unescap.org/pop/data\\_sheet/2002/tab1.htm](http://www.unescap.org/pop/data_sheet/2002/tab1.htm) (Retrieved 30 June 2003). 2000 Population Census of Papua New Guinea Census website not updated: [www.nso.gov.pg/census.html](http://www.nso.gov.pg/census.html) (Retrieved 30 June 2003).

Communication group owns television and press interests of the US, West Coast, and all the French-language dailies in the Pacific. The group is also said to have come close to publishing an English-language daily in Fiji after the 1987 military coups when an associated company made a bid for the publishing press and plant abandoned by the closed *Fiji Sun*.

### **Broadcasting — growing diversity**

The state-owned National Broadcasting Corporation in Papua New Guinea has two AM networks, Karai (national) and Kundu (provincial); one FM commercial station, Kalang, and the NBC broadcasts in English, Tok Pisin and other languages. Nau FM, operated by PNG FM Pty Ltd, was originally 80 per cent PNG owned with the 20 per cent balance held by Communications (Fiji) Ltd, which now owns the station. (Robie, 1995a: 25-27) The provincial network normally comprises 19 stations — one for each province — but NBC has been plagued in recent years by severe lack of funding and administrative problems. Consequently, several of the provincial stations are currently not operating (Sorariba, 1995 35-46).

Until 1995, the NBC enjoyed a broadcasting monopoly in Papua New Guinea. However, that year a private broadcaster, NauFM (PNG FM Pty Ltd), began broadcasting with an emphasis on a commercial format aimed at younger, upwardly mobile Papua New Guineans. In 1997, it began broadcasting with a second vernacular station, the Tok Pisin language YumiFM. In 2000, the NBC's FM station, Radio Kalang, was taken over by the national communications corporation, Telikom, to pay off outstanding debts, and now operates as a separate broadcaster, Kalang Advertising Pty Ltd. Another departure from the state radio broadcasting monopoly happened the previous year in 1999 with 98.5FM Campus Radio, a community based radio station operating from the University of Papua New Guinea.<sup>4</sup> It has a limited licence to

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<sup>4</sup> *The National* (1999), 'Campus radio to go on air', May 27.

broadcast for a radius of 10 km in the capital of Port Moresby. The station was broadcasting on 98.5 mh, a frequency not being used by the NBC. In May 2003, UPNG announced plans for a \$40,000 digital upgrade for the station.<sup>5</sup>

### ***The press — and the ‘listening’ paper***

No state-ownership of the press exists in Papua New Guinea, apart from a small Government monthly publication called *Hiri Nius*, which is not currently publishing. Instead, Government news has been carried in a weekly insert in one of the two national daily newspapers, *The National*.

The weekly *Independent* (formerly *The Times of Papua New Guinea*) is PNG-owned through Word Publishing Co Pty Ltd. This in turn is wholly owned by Media Holdings Pty Ltd (shareholders are the following mainstream churches: Roman Catholic, 60 per cent; Evangelical Lutheran, 20 per cent; United, 10 per cent; Anglican, 10 per cent). It is English-language and its circulation is 9000 and its sister weekly paper, *Wantok Niuspepa*, is the only Tok Pisin national newspaper. As its name suggests, *The Independent* is a vigorously independent publication that has a reputation for investigative journalism and probing behind the news. But in June 2003, Word Publishing suddenly announced closure of the newspaper after 23 years of publication.<sup>6</sup>

*Wantok* (with a circulation between 15,000 and 18,000) is regarded as having the best rural penetration in a country where 85 per cent of the population live a subsistence lifestyle in

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<sup>5</sup> Digital upgrade for UPNG's campus radio. (2003, May 11). *Pacific Media Watch*. [www.pmw.c2o.org/2003/png4048.html](http://www.pmw.c2o.org/2003/png4048.html) (Retrieved 30 June 2003).

<sup>6</sup> The Independent weekly to close after 23 years. (2003, June 2). *Pacific Media Watch*. [www.pmw.c2o.org/2003/png4074.html](http://www.pmw.c2o.org/2003/png4074.html) (Retrieved 30 June 2003)

PNG Media Council chairman Peter Aitsi issued a statement on 2 June 2003 lamenting the loss of *The Independent*, saying that it would leave a vacuum: '*The Independent* played a role whereby the reporters would look at the issues with greater depth ...[O]bviously a daily publication doesn't allow for that focus on specific issues and the development of the following of news issues and the level of investigation that it needs to bring the facts of items to the surface.'

villages. It is also said to be ‘one of the most listened to newspapers in the world. Those who can read at gatherings’ read it to a crowd (Bulum & Kolma, 1992: 15).

### ***News agencies — a need for more information***

Papua New Guinea currently has no national news agency. According to one national news content analysis in 1989 advocating the need for a national news agency, news from all 19 provinces combined ‘accounts for only about one-quarter of all news; the exceptions to this being *Wantok*, for which about one-half of the news comes from the provinces, and EM TV, for which only six per cent of the news comes from the provinces’ (Henshall, 1989: 57). At the same time, anything between one-third and one-half of all news comes from the National Capital District. The report cited came to the conclusion that news about the provinces was not being published because it was not available. It argued:

[T]he greatest need to improve Papua New Guinea’s news gathering and dissemination network is a comprehensive provincial reporting system. This is the primary justification for the establishment, as soon as possible, of a Papua New Guinea national news agency. (*ibid.*: 59).

However, since that report was completed, Government response about setting up a national news agency has been muted. Also, the provincial news-gathering resources of the national print and broadcast media have improved in recent years.

### ***Foreign-owned mass media***

EM TV, or Media Niugini Pty Ltd, is wholly owned by Australia’s Channel Nine after minority Papua New Guinea shareholders withdrew some years ago. It has a broadcast footprint from the

kingdom of Tonga in the east to the Philippines, broadcasts via Indonesia's B2P satellite and has an estimated audience of up to 500,000.

Papua New Guinea is the one country in the Pacific where Australia has established long-term television influence after a period of competition with New Zealand in the mid-1980s. The Nine Network, owned by Kerry Packer's Publishing and Broadcasting Ltd (PBL), consolidated its hold on EM TV while Fiji 'represented the jewel in the crown' (Wilson, 1994: 78) of Television New Zealand's Pacific strategy when its joint business plan with the Fiji Development Bank was accepted by the Government of Sitiveni Rabuka<sup>7</sup> in May 1994. TVNZ, one of the largest buyers of English-language programs in the world because it buys for two channels, had developed its modest Pacific Service operating in six countries by the early 1990s. However, as Wilson points out, an ongoing rivalry between Australian and New Zealand broadcasters continues for access to markets in the region (Wilson, 1994: 78).

Australian Associated Press is the major supplier of news within the South Pacific and is also the largest 'news gatherer' in the region. Until 1996, the agency maintained two news bureaux in the region — Port Moresby to cover Papua New Guinea, and Suva to cover the rest of the Pacific. However, the Suva office has been closed as an economic measure. AAP is a major shareholder in Reuters and provides much Pacific news on a share basis. Most daily newspapers in the South Pacific take a world newsfeed from AAP. But *The National* in Port Moresby also takes a direct service from Agence France-Presse and thus has significantly better news coverage of the ASEAN nations than any other newspaper in the region.

Of the two daily newspapers, the *Post-Courier* is the longest-established and has the largest circulation (it peaked at 41,000 in 1993)<sup>8</sup> in the Pacific. It is owned by global media

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<sup>7</sup> Lieutenant-Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka led two military coups in Fiji in May and September 1987 to depose the democratically elected government of Dr Timoci Bavadra. He was elected Prime Minister in 1992 under a racially weighted constitution favouring the indigenous Fijian people.

<sup>8</sup> Australia's Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) figures, July-December 1993. The circulation is smaller since the publication of *The National*., but is still more than 30,000.

magnate Rupert Murdoch's News Ltd through a subsidiary South Pacific Post Pty Ltd with a majority 62.5 per cent shareholding. Papua New Guinean private shareholders — including through bodies such as the Post Office Savings Fund (POSF), PEA, and Defence Forces Retirement Fund — own 29.33 per cent; Australian minority shareholders 7.17 per cent. However, on its editorial page, the newspaper proudly defends its record as 'the voice of PNG'.

We were there when the nation took its bold steps towards independence. Since that time, we have fearlessly recorded the nation's progress. We unashamedly support the constitutional rights of Papua New Guineans and will fight to the last drop of ink to protect them. We are accountable to the people of Papua New Guinea first and foremost. We support good government by the people who place the national interest ahead of personal interests. We pledge our support to the continuing development of the nation for the common good of all Papua New Guineans.<sup>9</sup>

The rival daily, *The National*, is Malaysian-owned through South Pacific Star Pty Ltd, which is 51 per cent owned by Monarch Investments, a subsidiary of the logging company Rimbunan Hijau. It has a circulation of 23,400 (Robie 1995b: 31; *The National* 1997: 1)

No legal rules and procedures designed to ensure public access to the mass media as such exist. However, the Papua New Guinea Constitution provides strong safeguards for the principles of free expression and press freedom. Since independence in 1975, there has been a tradition of an open and free press and Opposition politicians are given access to the mass

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<sup>9</sup> Excerpt from the corporate imprint on the editorial page of the *Post-Courier*, which also states: 'The [Australian] Audit Bureau of Circulations, which is internationally recognised and accredited as the only true measure of paid newspaper circulations, audits [the] *Post-Courier*. *Post-Courier's* current Mon-Fri average circulation is 26,836 sold per day (ABC July-Dec 2000) which is higher than all other PNG newspapers combined and the *Post-Courier's* circulation is 31.5 per cent higher than the other daily [*The National*]. *Papua New Guinea Magazine* is also audited with a 23,874 average gross per month. (ABC Jul-Dec 2000).

media in the same manner as all sectors of society. No rules concerning foreign exchange control and import licensing affect the freedom of the mass media, as they do elsewhere in the Pacific such as Samoa. The allocation of newsprint does not affect the mass media. The media pay the same duties for imports as other industries in the country and news executives do not report any special problems. The cost of newsprint is around K70 to K80 a tonne.

### ***Constitutional protection for the media***

Papua New Guinea has a Constitution that sets out the constitutional rights of its citizens and non-citizens who are within the country's boundaries. It was drawn up before independence in 1975 as a result of research and reviews by the Constitutional Planning Commission (CPC) and is thus often dubbed a 'home grown constitution'. Under Section 46 of the Papua New Guinea Constitution, the right of 'freedom of expression' extends to every person, whether citizen or non-citizen. But this provision clearly states that a law imposing restrictions can limit the right. For example, Section 38 is a general provision permitting restrictions over issues such as public safety or health.

Section 46(1) provides that: 'Every person has the right to freedom of expression and publication except to the extent that the exercise of that right is regulated or restricted by a law ...' Section 46 (2) provides that freedom of expression and publication include:

- (a) Freedom to hold opinions, to receive and communicate ideas and information, whether to the public generally or to a person or class of persons; and
- (b) Freedom of the Press and other mass communications media.

According to a National Court judge, Justice Teresa Doherty, no Government has arbitrarily breached this section:

To the best of my knowledge there has not been a restriction comparable to the English provision of issuing ‘D Notices’ which permits the Government to issue a form of restriction on publication of particular matters that it considers could be detrimental to the realm. That particular process has been the subject of criticism in European countries. Perhaps the best-known recent case about restricting publication was the *Spy Catcher* trial in Australia when the Government of the United Kingdom tried to prevent publication of a book by a former public servant, Peter Wright (Doherty, 1996: 33).

Before independence in Papua New Guinea, the *Commonwealth Crimes Act* made it illegal for public servants to reveal official secrets. But this was limited legislation when compared to the *Official Secrets Act* of 1911 in Britain, which regulates publication in that country. Papua New Guinea passed an amendment to *Criminal Code* in 1989, which made it an offence against the administration of law, justice and public authority to disclose ‘secrets’. But again, this legislation is fairly limited as it criminalises only the revelation of information acquired officially about fortifications, defence and so on. (*ibid.*).

One of the drafters of the Constitution, Bougainville regional Member of Parliament John Momis, explained the background to Papua New Guinea’s constitutional freedom of expression rights. He said that the CPC had noted that one of the great principles on which democracy rests is the right to differ on any topic of discussion, be it social, economic, political, cultural or religious (Momis, 1996: 61-62). People view any issue in different ways, he said. The CPC believed firmly that it should have the right to express its own views, within very broad limits, on any particular matter and that in principle every citizen should be free to criticise the policies of the Government of the day. Specifically on the media, he said:

The media has a particular responsibility in this regard, as unless those who wish to express independent opinions are reported in the media, their effectiveness is likely to be much reduced, and the opportunity for meaningful debate on important public issues may be lost. The formation and expression of public opinion is vital to the kind of participatory democracy we believed our people wanted (*ibid.*: 62).

In general, the application of the constitutional provision for freedom of expression has been respected. However, there have been several controversial breaches in recent years, mostly involving broadcast media, and also threats of legal intervention. In 1987, the then Communications Minister Gabriel Ramoi tabled a draft *Mass Media Tribunal Bill* 'intended to control the entire operations of all forms of mass media in Papua New Guinea' (Robie, 1995a: 80; Sorariba, 1996: 103). When introducing the bill in Parliament, Ramoi said that 'the Government of Papua New Guinea has inherited a system of mass media that is fragmented, uncoordinated and, very largely, unregulated'. Ramoi then indicated that the Bill would provide for the following:

1. All media would need to be licensed in order to operate.
2. Licences would be issued only after proper inquiry, at which the view of the community, the churches, commerce, industry and the unions is heard.
3. All news media would be required to observe the same set of standards in their operations.
4. There would be a code of fairness, guaranteeing citizens fair treatment at the hands of the media, including the right of reply.
5. Licenses would have to be renewed after a fixed period but there would be a presumption that a licensee would be entitled to renewal unless there were serious breaches of the standards and/or the law.

A widespread community and media perception that the Government would use the proposed law to withdraw licences from news organisations that published or broadcast items it did not like led to popular protest and the Bill was shelved. The ex-minister himself later served a two-year jail sentence for misappropriating public funds. On 21 October 1992, the East New Britain provincial government premier, angered by media reports regarding the lack of evacuation plans in times of volcanic eruption in his province, threatened to reintroduce the *Mass Media Tribunal Bill* if he won the national seat in Parliament (Sorariba, 1996: 100).

At the end of 1996, three new draft media laws which resulted from the Constitutional Review Commission's controversial recommendations also drew strong protests. The proposed laws were seen as thinly disguised measures that would have a draconian effect on freedom of expression. For example, Section 28 of the proposed *National Information and Communication Authority Bill*, read in part: 'Where the authority considers that it would be in the interest of the public to do so, the authority may .... suspend for such period ..... or revoke the certificate'.<sup>10</sup> A media owner who operates without a certificate faced possible imprisonment for up to four years.<sup>11</sup>

The Media Commission Bill stated in Section 12: 'For the purpose of exercising its powers and functions, the commission may make such orders, give such directions and do such other things as it sees it fit.' This meant that the commission could direct or order a journalist, writer, announcer, compere or presenter to write or say something. Failure to comply with such order or direction could bring a fine up to K2000. Section 28 made it mandatory for the commission to withdraw a certificate of registration from a journalist, writer, announcer, compere or presenter whom the commission found to be 'guilty of a serious offence which is detrimental to the interest of the public ...'

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<sup>10</sup> Millett, John (1996, December 6) 'Media Bill linked to sword of Damocles,' *Post-Courier*; cited on *Pacific Media Watch* website [www.pactok.net.au/docs/pmw/](http://www.pactok.net.au/docs/pmw/) (Retrieved 30 June 2003).

Such provisions contradicted the CRC's first recommendation to the National Parliament that 'existing legislation on the media provides sufficient rules in controlling the behaviour of the media industry and the Government should not consider proposing any new restrictive laws'. The CRC's final recommendation was that licensing would be introduced only if self-regulation failed.<sup>12</sup> According to the late journalism academic Peter Henshall, before pressures to curb free media expression over Bougainville and other issues, the Papua New Guinea news media were fairly open, apart from legal restrictions common in other democracies. He said:

The Press in Papua New Guinea is not free of the demands of the law on defamation, contempt, blasphemy, obscenity and sedition. It is not free of commercial pressure from advertisers. And it is not free of the bias and prejudice of its various owners, editors and writers. However, I think when we say 'free press' or that there is 'media freedom', we probably mean: free of direct official or Government control and censorship. (Sorariba, 1996.: 102).

The Dorney affair, in September 1984, was among examples involving the curbing of freedom of expression in Papua New Guinea. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation's resident correspondent, Sean Dorney, was expelled from the country by the Government in retaliation for an interview with the OPM (Free Papua Movement) leader James Nyaro, on PNG soil, by the investigative programme *Four Corners*. This retaliation was made in spite of lack of responsibility for the programme. Dorney, married to a Papua New Guinean, was eventually allowed to return to the country three years later.

For the first time, Papua New Guinea was included in the censorship updates of *Index on Censorship* over the controversial death of Swedish journalist and filmmaker Per-Ove Carlsson.

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<sup>11</sup> For contextual background on these legal moves, see the video broadcast on EM TV and Fiji Television by the author (1996d), *Fri Pres: Media Freedom in the Pacific*, Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea.

Carlsson was found dead with his throat cut on 29 April 1992 in the township of Kiunga in Western province. The death was officially reported as suicide, but speculation remained widespread among his family and media circles in Sweden and Papua New Guinea that he was murdered to prevent his uncompleted film from becoming public.

On 6 April 1994, the Government banned the National Broadcasting Corporation from reporting on a New Guinea Islands Region leaders summit because it believed a debate was likely about possible secession in response to the Bougainville Civil War. The NBC chairman, Sir Alkan Tololo, said he had no choice but to comply with the order from Communications Minister Martin Thompson, and the ban immediately prompted strong protest about ‘attempts to interfere with media freedoms’.<sup>13</sup>

The Bougainville conflict has frequently figured in restrictions on free expression. The 1990 Amnesty International report included Papua New Guinea for the first time with reports that sympathisers of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) were detained without charge or trial by the PNG military. Again in the 1991 Amnesty International Report, Papua New Guinea was cited over allegations of torture and extrajudicial executions of nine suspected BRA sympathisers by the PNG Defence Force. Government pressure attempted to discourage reporting. However, some Papua New Guinea journalists see the Bougainville conflict and crime as examples of ‘fly-by-night’ international reporting. Among these has been veteran journalist Luke Sela, who was editor of the *Post-Courier* for some 14 years:

Take the current Bougainville crisis. Many reporters, mainly Australian, have visited the island and reported on the issue. When news of expatriates emerged, one particular reporter wrote that the threats by militants against Australians were because of Australia’s donation of four helicopters to the PNG Government. This is a complete nonsense.

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<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

In 1985 crime in Port Moresby reached a peak. Armed robberies, rapes and pack rapes were the order of the day. Among the many rape victims were a New Zealand mother and her retarded daughter, as well as two or three Australian women. There were banner headlines in the press and lead stories on radio and television. But the same media outlets failed to report that the criminals did not discriminate when carrying out their hideous and violent crimes. Today Papua New Guinean women are still being raped and armed robberies are still being committed. But as far as the Australian and New Zealand media are concerned they are not worth mentioning.

As a working journalist, I can understand the prominence given to the examples above: the stories are angled for home consumption. But instead of our leaders screaming blue murder, calling for the downfall of the foreign media and a ban on reporters, they should use their energy to reverse such bad publicity (Sela, 1990: 30).

Echoing Henshall's call for a national news agency, Sela added that one way to start would be for politicians and civil servants to 'encourage and finance their own reporters into starting a news service that must report the facts as they happen here' (*ibid.*).

### ***Judicial proceedings and contempt of court***

Under Section 37 (12) and (13) of the Constitution, public hearings of court cases are mandatory unless they conflict with the interests of national security. Section 37 (13) says a law can be passed which provides for the closing of a court if it is for:

- (i) public welfare or in the interests of justice,
- (ii) the welfare of people under voting age, or
- (iii) the protection of private lives.

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<sup>13</sup> NBC barred from reporting summit. (1994, April 7). *Post-Courier*.

A law can also provide for the closing of a court in the interest of defence, public safety or public order. So far this section has never been invoked. Two pre-independence laws provide for court closure. The *Child Welfare Act* applies to cases involving the affiliation of children of unmarried mothers. It also applies where people under the age of 16 are charged with a criminal offence, leading them to Children's Court. The *Adoption Act* allows hearings in judges' chambers. There is no legislation in Papua New Guinea similar to that in the United States or New Zealand where courts are closed when the victim of a crime is a young person or where the case deals with the private lives of people.

Papua New Guinea also has no written law allowing the court to be closed if, for example, a young child is the victim of sexual abuse. However, some judges, considering the age of the young people, have closed the court until they finished giving evidence. According to Justice Doherty, concern has been aired on a need to have greater privacy, especially for young people who are crime victims. (Doherty: 28) Similarly, as yet no law prohibits the media from publishing the names and details of people who are victims of certain kinds of crime.

There is no written law or cases about the reporting of court proceedings. However, judicial commentators suggest it is likely that a court might, on occasion, restrict publicity because the court has an inherent power to regulate its own proceedings to ensure justice. Justice Doherty cites two cases of this nature that happened in her personal experience:

One, as a lawyer, when the judge directed the Press not to report the security system of a bank being described in a robbery case and the second, as a judge, when a defendant kept giving more and more intimate defamatory details about his family in an incest case, on the basis that the family had a right too — the right to privacy (*ibid.*: 29).

News reports of court cases are protected by absolute privilege, provided they are fair, accurate, and published contemporaneously. Although there is a *Contempt of Court Act*, there are no known cases in Papua New Guinea where the news media have been charged under this law. However, it is clear, based on the experience of neighbouring countries with similar legal systems, that the courts can charge newspaper editors, reporters and owners for contempt of court. Considering overseas cases, these would fall into the following categories:

- (i) reporting in the media when the court directed there was to be none;
- (ii) reporting of cases heard in private — (so they were not ‘public’);
- (iii) misreporting the proceedings in a way ‘prejudicial to the course of the trial’.

According to Justice Doherty, writers of contempt laws say any news article that is ‘a fair and substantially accurate report if published contemporaneously and in good faith should not amount to contempt regardless of the risk of prejudice to current or future proceedings’. (*ibid.*)

One reason that no journalist has been cited for contempt is the absence of a jury system, and judges seem to have been lenient. Journalism academic Sorariba Nash warns that a potential for contempt has ‘always been a common fault of young reporters’. (Sorariba, 1996: 76). He adds:

Fortunately, the courts in Papua New Guinea have been lenient about this so far — but they will not always be so. Journalists should learn the basic rules of reporting courts if they want to avoid going into the dock to answer a contempt charge (*ibid.*).

Statements made by police about crimes are often in contempt of court. Basic to Papua New Guinea’s legal system is the assumption that people are innocent until proven guilty. However, following an arrest, police often tell journalists that the person is guilty. The Papua New Guinean laws do not recognise any sort of legal privilege for journalists, such as so-called

shield laws, or provisions for journalists who are called as witnesses in judicial proceedings. To date, there have been no court cases where reporters have been ordered to reveal their sources of information and were cited for contempt when they refused to do so (Doherty: 33).

Section 44 of the Constitution provides freedom from arbitrary search and entry, which applies to everybody, including news media and their newsrooms. Thus, no person shall be subjected to search of his or her personal property or entry of his or her premises except to the extent that the exercise of that right is regulated or restricted by law. The *Search Act* is the relevant law under this section. It includes a unique provision for a search of a village and makes it clear that there cannot be arbitrary search of a person's house or a workplace without a warrant or some form of court-sanctioned permission. This provision is common to most countries that have freedom from arbitrary search.

However, there has been strong criticism of police actions that have breached this constitutional right, and the courts have seen increasing numbers of claims for compensation against the state under section 57 over police raids on villages. In the Highlands, for example, it has sometimes been a police tactic to attack and burn villages with a tribal or clan link to suspected criminals.

Since the June 1997 general election, EM TV has broadcast live parliamentary debates. Previously, sittings of the legislature had been broadcast live by the NBC when issues were of national interest. By law, fair and accurate reports of Parliament are protected by qualified privilege. This includes reports on the contents of official Parliamentary papers and reports, as well as debates in the chamber. In addition, other types of reports protected by qualified privilege are fair and accurate reports of

- court cases which are not published contemporaneously;
- public inquiries; and

- meetings of local authorities and trustees of boards if discussions are a matter of public concern.

### **State security issues**

The news media in Papua New Guinea have come under increasing scrutiny over security issues. According to civil rights lawyer and a former journalist, Powes Parkop, this issue became particularly obvious after the start of the Bougainville Civil War in 1988 (Parkop, 1995: 133). He observed:

The declaration of the State of Emergency in 1988 to 1990 restricted freedom of the press to move and report on the situation in Bougainville. Since the illegal blockade in 1990, the press has been almost silent or otherwise controlled. The only 'legal' journalists who were allowed into Bougainville were those who accompanied the security forces on patrol either on land, sea or in the air. Some were even required to wear uniforms, as in the case of Abby Yadi of the *Post-Courier*<sup>14</sup> (Parkop, 133-134).

The Pacific's first 'embedded' journalists perhaps. In the context of the Bougainville conflict, an *Internal Security Act* was rushed through Parliament by the Government in mid-1993. This law sought to define and provide for the crime and punishment of 'terrorism' and related offences. Regarded as been targeted at the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA) guerillas, there was also widespread speculation that the law could be invoked against non-government organisation activists or even journalists interviewing and publishing statements by proscribed groups or individuals. Penalties under the Act range from severe fines and long-term jail

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<sup>14</sup> Brief accounts of PNG Defence Force and military police harassment of Abby Yadi while on assignment in Rabaul and on a military aircraft appear in *Attacks on the Press 1992: A Comprehensive Worldwide Survey*, New York: Committee to Protect Journalists, pp. 162-163.

sentences to what can be best described as an imposition of ‘internal exile’. Among disturbing aspects of the Act that Parkop identified are:

1. *A shift of emphasis from crimes of commission to crimes of status:* The law criminalises not the commission of the act but the status of the person, whether or not he or she belongs to or supports a certain organisation. Hence, one can say that the Act signifies a departure from social control towards overt political control.

2. *A shift in power from the judiciary and the normal process of criminal justice to executive power:* Some judicial powers are invested in the National Executive Council [NEC, as the cabinet is known] rather than the judiciary where they would normally belong. It is the NEC, for example, which can declare an organisation to be a terrorist group. Right of appeal is not to the judiciary but to the NEC whose decision can only be overturned by an absolute majority in Parliament. The Act thus gives wide powers to the Government which could be used against political opponents and legitimate critics.

3. *A wide definition of terrorism* which includes not just the actual use of violence for political purposes, as in the case of the BRA, but also the use or potential use, likely use, or suspected use of violence against public safety. Such provisions enable the NEC to use the Act against almost anybody or group — including the so-called *raskols*.<sup>15</sup> The law can be enforced against foreigners whom the Government regards as involved in or likely to be involved in ‘terrorist’ activities. (Parkop: 134-135)

The *Internal Security Act 1993* represented a growing trend in legislation designed to eliminate the law and order problem in Papua New Guinea through the normalisation of emergency powers. However, as Parkop argued, while the Act was not intended to directly restrict the freedom of the press, there were several ways in which the law did this. For example, it

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<sup>15</sup> *Raskols* is a Tok Pisin word literally meaning ‘rascals’ and is the term used loosely to describe all criminals or delinquents.

specifically restricted certain rights and freedoms in the Constitution that were ‘fundamental to a free and independent press’. In particular, it provided for restriction of:

- freedom of expression;
- freedom of thought, conscience and religion;
- freedom of movement;
- freedom of assembly and association;
- right of privacy;
- freedom from arbitrary search; and
- freedom of information.

The Act provided several mechanisms that directly or indirectly restricted such rights and freedom and therefore the right and independence of the press. It also made provisions under which journalists could find themselves committing offences. For example, under Section 6, journalists could breach the Act if they attended meetings of proscribed organisations, or interviewed their members.

However, after widespread national and international condemnation the Government became reluctant to invoke its provisions, especially against the news media. On one occasion in early 1996, protesters against human rights violations in Indonesia demonstrated outside the Indonesian Embassy in Port Moresby. A group of protesters was reportedly arrested under the Act.

The legislation has been strongly condemned by the news media and other prominent citizens, and there is little evidence that news organisations have applied self-censorship over these issues. A charge of criminal defamation under this legislation can be brought against a journalist if ‘the words, pictures or gestures he uses provoke riots, mob violence or other breaches of the public peace’.

Under the *Criminal Code*, sedition in Papua New Guinea is defined as an intention ‘to bring the Queen or Head of State into hatred or contempt, or to excite disaffection against the Queen and Head of State, the National Government or the Constitution, the Parliament or the administration of justice’ (Sorariba: 71-72). It is also defined as the intention to ‘excite the inhabitants of Papua New Guinea to attempt to procure the alteration of any matter in PNG as by law established otherwise than by lawful means; raise discontent or disaffection among the inhabitants of PNG’.

In other words, sedition is defined as words or actions calculated to cause people to act unconstitutionally. Today, it is not so much the content of the argument, which constitutes sedition as the way it is presented. The law in Papua New Guinea would probably not act against a ‘genuinely held opinion, as long as it is expressed in moderate language’ (*ibid.*).

In continuing fallout from the Sandline affair in early 1997, the former commander of the PNG Defence Force, Brigadier-General Jerry Singirok, was prosecuted for sedition over a live broadcast he made in Radio Kalang’s studio denouncing the Government plan to hire mercenaries to intervene in the Bougainville Civil War. His speech led to widespread protests and eventually to the ousting of Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan and several other cabinet ministers in the June general election. Whether any journalists or editors would face sedition for widely reporting Singirok’s words remains a challenge to the news media.

Reporting about bodies such as the National Intelligence Organisation (NIO) are vigorous and journalists enjoy a fairly wide-ranging freedom to report security operations, as was seen in the reporting of the Sandline mercenary affair. The aborted operation planned against rebels on the secessionist, copper mine island of Bougainville was known as Operation Oyster, and it was foiled by Operation Rausim Kwik, which was ordered by military commander Brigadier-General Singirok.

Before independence in Papua New Guinea, the *Commonwealth Crimes Act* made it illegal for public servants to reveal official secrets. But this was limited legislation when compared to the *Official Secrets Act* of 1911 in Britain, which regulates publication in that country. Papua New Guinea passed an amendment to *Criminal Code* in 1989, which made it an offence against the administration of law, justice and public authority to disclose ‘secrets’. But again, this is fairly limited legislation, as it only criminalises the revelation of information acquired officially about fortifications, defences and so on (Doherty: 33).

A Freedom of Information Committee was established in 1997, with the support of Transparency International, to draft a *Freedom of Information Act* which will incorporate some ‘official secrets’ measures and whistleblowers legislation. Section 86 of the *Criminal Code* makes it a crime for a person employed by the Public Service to publish facts that come into his knowledge by virtue of his office if he has a duty to keep them a secret. A person employed by the Public Service is very widely defined and would include members of Parliament, members of a provincial assembly, and employees of the State Services.

### ***Journalists as employees***

Two laws provide for the rights of trade unions in Papua New Guinea — the *Industrial Relations Act* and the *Industrial Organisations Act*. The former law:

- provides for the formation of effective, accountable unions as well as effective and accountable employer organisations;
- stipulates procedures for the orderly conduct of relations between the workers and employer; and
- provides a framework for unions, and the right for workers to negotiate collective agreements with employers.

The *Industrial Organisations Act* provides for the effective organisation of unions.

There are 72 registered trade unions in Papua New Guinea, of which 25 are public sector unions and 47 in the private sector. Currently, the total estimated figure for national union membership is about 100,000 in an estimated labour force of 1.54 million. Trade unions mainly negotiate for better pay and improvements in working conditions and terms of employment, and they take up industrial disputes or grievances with employers. Unions can negotiate directly with the employer on terms and conditions, pay, or even industrial disputes, and they can lodge claims that may eventually become awards or agreements.

If claims are not settled with the employer, they can be taken to the Arbitration Tribunal for a ruling. The main ways for settling disputes are:

- direct negotiations between employer and union,
- through the Public Service Commission,
- through the Arbitration Tribunal, and
- through the courts.

In spite of the general conditions and protections for unions in Papua New Guinea, journalists and news media employees have been relatively poorly served. In fact, say former PNG Journalists' Association president Frank Senge Kolma and secretary Ambie Bulum, 'media people (journalists, photographers and artists) in Papua New Guinea, particularly the private sector mainstream, for a long time have been denied industrial rights — proper terms and conditions of employment and better pay' (Bulum & Kolma, 1992: 12). They add:

There are and have been threats from the employers as well as political threats to the profession and industry. So far, there has been very little or nothing done to address these issues. However, most of the concerned have toiled for the love of the job, to gain experience and knowledge. A few hang onto their jobs because they might not seek employment elsewhere. (*ibid.*)

According to Bulum and Kolma, the main industrial issues affecting these people include the following:

a. *Terms and conditions for employment:* Terms and conditions are largely the prerogative of their employers. Mostly, the terms and conditions of employment are unsatisfactory, frustrating or ‘do not assist media people at all’. This contributes to a high level of mobility between news organisations and a drain of journalists away from the profession. Freelance journalists have no specific terms and conditions of employment within Papua New Guinea. It is the prerogative of the media organisation to decide the terms on which journalism, photographs or artwork are bought, and the level of pay they command.

b. *Salary classification/grading system:* There is a lack of a uniform grading or classification of salary system for journalists and other media workers. Generally media people in the private sector are classified equivalent to a range, from clerk class four (about K5,155 to K5,560 a year) to clerk class ten (K13,005 to K13,470 a year). Staff within these ranges often must wait for a long time before getting a pay rise, and the raises are often little. There are also generally little in the way of social benefits such as medical, superannuation or pension schemes. Media personnel in the mining and petroleum sector are well paid and have better accommodation. Journalists in the public service are generally paid from clerk class six to clerk class ten (about K7,000 to K14,000 a year).

c. *Employment rights:* There have been suspensions or layoffs of journalists and media staff ‘without due regard to the principle of natural justice’ (*Ibid.*: 14). Staff are sacked any time it suits the employer — particularly in the private sector. Anomalies in salary/wages and working conditions are common.

d. *Disciplinary procedures:* There are no standard disciplinary procedures. The private sector news media employers discipline at their own discretion. Bulum and Kolma state:

Denial of rights of media persons to join and/or organise union activities and denial of these personnel to participate in union activities — collective bargaining and so on is evident in the Papua New Guinea media industry. These people can hardly get time off to attend to union activities...

Sometimes there are threats to terminate employees if involved in union activities.

e. *Working hours*: There are no standard working hours. Private sector media employers operate from 8 am to 5 pm, while the public sector hours are 7.45 am to 4.06 pm. Private sector employees frequently do not get paid overtime for work after 5pm, while public employees do receive overtime pay.

The Papua New Guinea Journalists' Association (PNGJA) was reformed after a media freedom conference, funded by the International Federation of Journalists, was held in Port Moresby in 1989. But, as organisers admitted, 'the idea was remote because for the most part the development of the media in Papua New Guinea has been quite smooth' (*ibid.*: 15). Organising a trade union to protect professional and industrial rights was not a high priority at the time. Bulum and Kolma write:

The media has never really suffered the repression that media in less fortunate countries have. Papua New Guinea media and media practices have developed vibrant, active, aggressive and responsible standards with the normal market force and cultural restrictions (*ibid.*).

The PNGJA has had a chequered history, it has been revived at times of major threats to media freedom and journalists. Most recently, a new executive was formed at a meeting on 9 November 1996 in response to the draft Micah legislation curbing the news media. Prominent

*Post-Courier* journalist Neville Togarewa was elected president (Robie, 1998: 119). However, this effort again failed and in early 2001 a group of journalists on *The National* headed by Colin Taimbari once more tried to revive the PNGJA.

### ***Social values and groups***

Section 55 of the Constitution, which addresses the equality of citizens, clearly states that all citizens have the same rights, privileges, obligations and duties, irrespective of race, tribe, place of origin, political opinion, colour, creed, religion or sex. Subsection 2 permits the making of laws encouraging special advancement of women, children and young people, and people from under-privileged or less advanced groups or residents of less-advanced areas.

A Human Rights Commission is in the process of being set up. But there is no legislation specifically dealing with hate propaganda.

Papua New Guinea has a diverse linguistic base with 867 languages, but there are three major language groups: Tok Pisin, Hiri Motu and English. There is only one mainstream newspaper, *Wantok* (Tok Pisin), published in a vernacular language, although there is considerable vernacular radio broadcasting on the NBC network and YumiFM (Tok Pisin). No legislation restricts public or private use of languages.

### ***Pornography and obscenity***

There is growing sensitivity towards pornography and obscenity issues, but no specific law against pornography. The Censorship Board sets policy and has banned some news programs. Notably, *60 Minutes* for a while after it broadcast an interview with Madonna in 1992 that the Board regarded as 'obscene'. According to Justice Doherty:

No doubt the time will come when we may be faced with the situation recently ruled on in the United States courts where an attempt to pass legislation to restrict pornographic and other information about children on the Internet which could be misused by paedophiles was held to be contrary to their constitutional right of freedom of expression and was not passed (Doherty, 33).

The *Criminal Code's* sections 228 and 229 deal specifically with obscenity. However, apart from stating the circumstances under which obscenity becomes an offence, the *Criminal Code* offers little guidance on what makes a publication obscene, except that it 'tends to corrupt morals'. Unlike defamation, anyone can initiate a prosecution for obscenity.

Papua New Guinea is predominantly a Christian country, but many people, especially in rural areas, follow traditional religions. Under Papua New Guinean common law (as derived from English common law), blasphemy is a crime. It is defined under the *Defamation Act* as any statement or writing that 'denies the truth of the Christian religion or of the Bible, or the Book of Common Prayer, or the existence of God'. No journalist in Papua New Guinea has been prosecuted under this provision.

### ***Private rights***

The *Defamation Act 1973* defines and regulates civil and criminal defamation in Papua New Guinea. It gives the following definition for 'defamatory matter':

- (1) An imputation concerning a person, or a member of his family, whether living or dead, by which:
  - (a) the reputation of that person is likely to be injured; or
  - (b) he is likely to be injured in his profession or trade; or

(c) other persons are likely to be induced to shun, avoid, ridicule or despise him, is a defamatory imputation.

(2) An imputation may be expressed directly or by insinuation or irony.

(3) The question whether any matter is or is not defamatory, or is or is not capable of bearing a defamatory meaning, is a question of law.

Truth is a defence, providing that the publication is in the public interest. Other defences are fair comment, and a qualified defence of excuse, providing the published or broadcast material is in good faith. Gaggling writs (or injunctions) can also be used to silence news media or journalists communicating on controversial issues.

As in many other Commonwealth countries, absolute protection is granted for Parliament and official reports, and qualified protection covers reporting of the courts, public meetings, local authorities or statutory boards, and inquiries. In defamation cases, the defences of fair comment and truth, along with qualified defences of excuse and good faith, apply. There have been relatively few defamation cases involving the news media in Papua New Guinea, and until 1995 no judge had awarded more than K10,000 in damages. However, in the last few years there have been some cases involving large sums of money.

In 1993, the Malaysian logging company Rimbunan Hijau sued popular Radio Kalang talkback host Roger Hau'ofa for alleging, on air, that the company had been behind death threats against then Forests Minister Tim Neville. The case was settled out-of-court when the NBC agreed to publish full-page apologies in the national press (*see* Robie, 1999: 510). In February 1995, an American missionary couple sued two national politicians, a reporter, a national daily newspaper and the state seeking damages totalling K320,000. The case stemmed from a newspaper article quoting sex allegations by a minister and an MP over deportation moves made against the couple. The following month, the then Commerce and Industry

Minister David Mai sued *The National*, seeking K1 million in damages over allegations about a housing scandal (*ibid.*).

Section 49 of the Constitution, right of privacy, creates a right of privacy regarding private and family life, communications and personal papers, except to the extent regulated by law. 'There is no law specially implementing this particular right, although income tax legislation does give a wider power to the Income Tax Commissioner to demand papers and statements' (Doherty, *op. cit.*). Also, leaders are subject to the Leadership Code and must give information to the Ombudsman. This section is similar to Article 8 of the European Convention.

### ***Public accountability***

The original Press Council of Papua New Guinea was founded in December 1975 by John Kaputin, a former National Court judge, who was appointed chairman. At the time, the council's main purposes were described as dealing with 'complaints against newspapers and periodicals published in Papua New Guinea, and resisting encroachment on the freedom of the Press'. (Press Council of PNG, 1985: 3) In a paper on its activities, the council explained that it set about serving these purposes in two ways::

- (i) it is a guardian of the freedom of the Press, an essential element of democracy.
- (ii) it is a forum to which anyone may take complaints against the Press (*Ibid.*).

In the first category, the Council helps the Press to protect the basic right of the people to know, reflecting the liberty of publication won in centuries of struggle against governments and groups wishing to deny such rights. These rights includes the right of an editor to publish or not to publish, to publish without fear or favour, to comment freely, and, if necessary, strongly and with conviction, in editorial or leader columns.

In the second category, the council also seeks the maintenance of ethical standards by the press, as set out in the Statement of Principles listed below. It explains:

Liberty does not mean licence, and it is limited by ethical standards, but the council monitors and resists attempts to go further; reasonable standards must not become denial of the right to know, to have opinions and to publish (*ibid.*).

The Press Council's authority rested solely on the willingness of publishers and editors to respect the Council's views, to adhere voluntarily to ethical standards, and to admit mistakes publicly. The Council seeks no other authority. Although over the years, there were many complaints about the Press from politicians, and a handful from the public, formal complaints were not really directed to the Press Council and no adjudications were carried out.

After a 'Media at the Crossroads' accountability seminar in February 1996, organised by news media organisations in response to planned legislation, the Press Council was revived, but it merged with an electronic news organisations' 'media board' which had been established to monitor the advertising industry to form the Media Council of Papua New Guinea. This new body has redrafted currently its constitution and establishing a new media accountability and complaints process. But its core values are based on the old Press Council constitution. Membership of the council comprises people appointed by:

the constituent bodies (such as associations of journalists, of which there is one member, and publishers, of which there are at least three);

nominees, appointed on the nomination of the chairperson to represent the public; and  
the chairperson.

A new complaints procedure has been drafted by the Media Council in recent years and this was adopted with the Independent Media Standards Committee (IMSC) in April 2003. At the launching in Port Moresby, Australian Press Council chairman Ken McKinnon, said the press in PNG had continued to be 'thorough, sceptical, careful but nevertheless fearless' in trying to

fulfil their fundamental responsibilities to readers. While the media had frequently come under criticism from the public, the establishment of the IMSC signalled the determination of the media to build in balance, to 'get it right'.<sup>16</sup> Under the old Press Council system, the council provided a brochure with information about its complaints procedure and the daily and weekly press published information about where to lodge a complaint. Traditionally, complaints have been treated as 'being against publications, not against persons' (*ibid.*). Complainants have been expected to be to 'explain and support the complaint', and answer questions about its background. It has not been essential, as with some other press councils, to complain first to the publication, but this step was recommended as it often led to early resolutions.

Complaints should be lodged within four months of publication of the material on which the complaint is based, but the council may waive this requirement in special cases. Many complaints are dealt with in the early stages of investigation to the satisfaction of the complainants. If a complaint is not settled, an adjudication is made by the council. In potential legal situations:

The council may decline to proceed with a complaint if its nature or the way in which it is presented are such that it should not be considered. If it appears from the facts of a complaint that the complainant may have a legal remedy, the council may require the complainant to waive his or legal rights in a form acceptable to the council before proceeding further. This is because the council does not wish to compete with the courts, and because parties cannot be expected to provide the information and cooperation on which the council depends if this may prejudice their position in legal proceedings. A complainant unwilling to waive legal rights may arrange for council consideration after legal proceedings are completed (*ibid.*).

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<sup>16</sup> See Iorere, Denys (2003, April 29). Independent Media Standards Committee launched. *Pacific Media Watch*. [www.asiapac.org.fj/cafepacific/resources/aspac/png4035.html](http://www.asiapac.org.fj/cafepacific/resources/aspac/png4035.html) (Retrieved 30 June 2003).

Adjudications are communicated to the parties and are usually distributed to the press for general publication, unless the council considers that the circumstances require more limited distribution.

Two major sets of rules of conduct govern the professional activities of journalists in Papua New Guinea. One is the Journalists Association of Papua New Guinea eight-point *Code of Ethics* and the other is a *Code of Conduct* adopted by the publishers which was incorporated by the Press Council's constitution. The old council's statement of principles developed to help both the public and Press included the following code:

THE FREEDOM of the Press to publish is the freedom of the people to be informed.

THIS IS THE justification for upholding Press freedom as an essential feature of democratic society.

THAT FREEDOM is more fundamentally important because of the obligations it entails towards the people, rather than because of the rights it gives to the Press.

RECOGNISING that, the Press Council of Papua New Guinea, in dealing with complaints that newspapers have failed to observe proper standards of journalism, will treat the public interest as the first and dominant consideration.

WITH NO wish to attempt the task of reducing to a precise and exhaustive formula the principles by which newspapers must govern themselves if they are faithfully to discharge their responsibilities to the people, the council states that its consideration of complaints will take into account the following general propositions:

1. Readers of a newspaper are entitled to have both news and comment present to them with complete good faith, and therefore — with scrupulous honesty and fairness in both statement and omission; and with due respect for private rights and sensibilities.

2. Accordingly, a newspaper is under a strong obligation to take all steps reasonably available to it to ensure the truth and exactness of its statements.
3. Rumour and unconfirmed reports, if published at all, should be identified as such, and they should not be published if it is unfair to do so.
4. News obtained by dishonest or unfair means, or the publication of which would involve a breach of confidence, should not be published.
5. A newspaper is justified in strongly advocating its own views on controversial topics provided that in doing so it treats its readers fairly by:
  - Making fact and opinion clearly distinguishable.
  - Not misstating or suppressing facts relevant to conclusions it encourages readers to accept.
  - Not distorting or unfairly colouring news, either in text or headlines.
  - Making clear whose are any opinions expressed.
6. Billboards and posters advertising a newspaper must not mislead the public.
7. A newspaper has a wide discretion in matters of taste, but that does not justify lapses of taste so gross as to bring the freedom of the Press into disrepute.
8. The publication in a newspaper of matter disparaging or belittling persons or groups in the community by reference to their sex, race, nationality, religion, colour or country of origin is a serious breach of ethical standards.
9. A newspaper should not, in headlines or otherwise, state the race, nationality or religious or political views of a person suspected of a crime, or arrested, charged or convicted, unless the fact is relevant.
10. If matter detrimental to the reputation or interests of an individual, corporation, organisation or group or class of people is published, opportunity for prompt and appropriately prominent

reply at reasonable length should be given by the newspaper concerned, wherever fairness so requires.

11. Published information which is found to be harmfully inaccurate should be made the subject of such prompt and appropriately prominent retraction, correction or explanation (and in proper cases apology) as will neutralise so far as possible the impression created by the inaccurate matter.

12. The council approves and draws special attention to the PNG Journalists [Association] Code of Ethics (*Ibid.*: 8).

The PNG Journalists' Association code was established at independence from Australia in 1975 at a time when expatriate journalists dominated the media industry. It is closely based on the *Australian Journalists Association Code of Ethics* in 1944 which has been substantially amended twice since then (in 1984 and a draft 1995 code which was in turn amended before being adopted in 1999). In the two decades since the PNG code was adopted, there has been little debate on whether improvements or changes are needed. The PNG Journalists' Association Code of Ethics (at least until 2002) described a reporter's responsibilities as follows:

1. To report and interpret the news with scrupulous honesty.
2. Not to suppress essential fact, and not to distort the truth by omission or wrongful emphasis.
3. To respect confidences in all circumstances.
4. To observe at all times the fraternity of their profession, and never to take unfair advantage of fellow journalists.
5. Never to accept any form of bribe, nor to permit personal interest to influence their sense of justice.
6. To use only honest methods to obtain news, pictures and documents.

7. To reveal their identity as representatives of the Press, or of radio or television services before obtaining personal interview for publication.
8. Always to maintain, through their conduct, full public confidence in their integrity and dignity of their calling (Robie, 1995a: 209).

### ***Ombudsman Commission — monitoring ‘fundamental rights’***

No news media organisation has in-house ombudsmen to monitor fairness or public complaints. However, there is a healthy relationship between the news media and the Ombudsman Commission, which monitors integrity in national politics and public affairs. The commission was established at independence in 1975 to ‘protect the fundamental rights and freedoms of the people and to ensure the quality of leadership’,<sup>17</sup> as is indicated in the following extract from its 1987 annual report:

The rationale for establishing the commission was indicated in the opening chapter on underlying principles governing the Papua New Guinea Constitution:

Papua New Guinea must be a free society. Our recommendations include a new Charter of Human Rights.

We have tried to achieve, both in this chapter and throughout our proposals a careful balance between the rights of the individual and the interest of the community. Apart from basic political and economic rights we have paid particular attention, for example, to the necessity to ensure effective and equal access to the service provided by the Government, including those institutions associated with the judicial process; and we have provided for an Ombudsman Commission to deal with unfair administrative practices.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Solomon, Anna (1997). Public perception of the Ombudsman Commission’ Paper presented at the Accountability and Transparency seminar organised by the Ombudsman Commission, May.

Discussing the relationship between the commission and the news media of Papua New Guinea, then Chief Ombudsman Simon Pentanu said:

At a time when the Constitutional Review Commission's media legislation was being tossed around ... we saw some excellent reporting and analysis on the pitfalls of the legislation on media restrictions. If all of the debate on the media legislation at the time can be summed up in one sentence it might be: that a democratic society cannot allow the Government of the day to determine who should be a journalist or who should not be a journalist, through a licensing scheme.<sup>19</sup>

Pentanu cited two major examples of the cooperation between the commission and the media. In the case of a report into a major foreign business controversy in 1996 over the privatised water supply to the national capital of Port Moresby, the commission took the leading role in exposing malpractices. But when the report was released, the media played a vital role in disseminating the findings. In the case of the Sandline mercenary affair in 1997, the 'media went in first, writing, rewriting, printing and reprinting a story that was unfolding in a new way every day'.<sup>20</sup>

As elsewhere in the world, there is growing debate about the role of internet and the media and information in Papua New Guinea. Although the country was the first in the South Pacific to adopt a National Policy on Information and Communication<sup>21</sup>, this has largely been shelved and there were no guidelines developed for the Internet and the media. While the news media have been quick to recognise the 'need for investment in telecommunications and information

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<sup>18</sup> Ombudsman Commission, *Annual Report*, 1987.

<sup>19</sup> Pentanu, Simon (1997), Introduction. Presented at Accountability and Transparency seminar organised by the Ombudsman Commission, May, p 2.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*: 3.

<sup>21</sup> Thompson, Martin, the late PNG Minister of Communication, *National Policy on Information and Communication*, 1994. ISBN 9980 85 154 6.

technology in the South Pacific' (Robie, 1996d), there are strong community moves to introduce regulation or some form of censorship:

The first and foremost issue of the country is to legislate on electronic information, especially information transmitted across international borders. ['Harmful' effects of the Internet] can only be minimised and controlled if, in the first place, the Government has passed laws to control the making and the use of electronic information.<sup>22</sup>

In May 1997, Telikom of Papua New Guinea launched the Tiare gateway to the internet, but both Papua New Guinea's national daily newspapers had already created newspaper websites during 1996. *The National* was the first to introduce a news website in August 1996 [www.wr.com.au/national](http://www.wr.com.au/national) followed by the *Post-Courier* in December [www.datec.com.pg/postcour/postcour.nsf](http://www.datec.com.pg/postcour/postcour.nsf) *The National* was the early leader in new media technology in the South Pacific:

The web site, the first daily news one in the region, was the innovative brainchild of the general manager, S. F. Yong. A cyberspace buff, and enthused by the lively web site of his old paper in Malaysia, *The Star*, he was convinced it could be done in Papua New Guinea too.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Kwasam, Nathan (1997). *The Internet as an Information Source for Papua New Guinea: Benefits and Issues*. South Pacific Centre for Communication and Information in Development, University of Papua New Guinea.

<sup>23</sup> Robie, David (1997d). *Hotwired media: How PNG news organisations are facing the challenge of cyberspace*. Paper presented at the Waigani Seminar Information and the Nation, August 27-29, 1997. In *Pacific Journalism Review*, November 1997.

## **Conclusion**

Papua New Guinea's vigorous print media is dominated by foreign ownership with both daily newspapers owned from abroad — the *Post-Courier* by Murdoch's News Corporation interests and *The National* by Rimbunan Hijau of Malaysia, but with significant Papua New Guinean minority shareholdings. Broadcast media is also foreign-dominated with Australia's Channel Nine wholly owning the country's sole television station, EM TV, and Communications Fiji Ltd controlling the PNGFM Pty Ltd private radio group. However, an independent publishing group, Word Publishing, owned by a consortium of churches publishes *The Independent* and *Wantok*, giving a significant alternative local voice, particularly on educational, environmental and social justice issues.

Under Section 46, Papua New Guinea's 1975 'home grown' Constitution guarantees 'freedom of expression' to everybody, whether citizen or non-citizen. But this provision also states that the right can be limited by a law imposing restrictions. In spite of frequent threats against news media by politicians and parliamentarians, however, this right has never been breached by the equivalent of Britain's 'D Notices' for example. The news media has generally enjoyed vigorous freedom of expression with robust and outspoken letters to the editor columns. Public criticism has blunted attempts to enact draft legislation aimed gagging the media such as the *Mass Media Tribunal Bill 1987* that provided for draconian measures against publishers and journalists.

Absolute protection is granted for Parliament and official reports, and qualified protection covers reporting of the courts, public meetings, local authorities or statutory boards, and inquiries. In defamation cases, the defences of fair comment and truth, along with qualified defences of excuse and good faith, apply. But there have been relatively few defamation cases involving the news media in Papua New Guinea, and until 1995 no judge had awarded more than K10,000 in damages. However, there have been higher damages cases since then.

## 5: Papua New Guinea news media profile

After the start of the 10-year Bougainville Civil War in 1988, the news media in Papua New Guinea came under increasing scrutiny over security issues. The declaration of the State of Emergency between 1988 and 1990 restricted freedom of the press to move and report on the situation in Bougainville. The only 'legal' journalists who were allowed into Bougainville were those who accompanied security forces on patrol and some were required to wear uniforms.

While no news media organisation has in-house ombudsmen to monitor fairness or public complaints, there is a healthy relationship between the news media and the Ombudsman Commission, which monitors integrity in national politics and public affairs. The Papua New Guinea Media Council has also taken an increasingly important role in monitoring press freedom and the public accountability and responsibility of news organisations. In 2002, it launched a media campaign against corruption.

Papua New Guinea has played a leading innovative role in initiatives using the internet for news media publication in the Pacific. The development was given a boost at the time of the Sandline mercenary crisis in 1997. There has also been a growing debate about the role of internet and the media and information in Papua New Guinea. Although the country was the first in the South Pacific to adopt a National Policy on Information and Communication, this has largely been shelved and there were no guidelines developed for the internet and the media. Both the *Post-Courier* and *The National* have strongly developed online strategies as part of their news operations. The *Post-Courier*, for example, has email in every bureau office in Lae, Mt Hagen and Rabaul. As a result, this paper's regional offices had doubled their staff by 2001. However, former publisher Tony Yianni is not satisfied that the PNG media is making sufficient use of the internet:

We haven't been using the internet enough. We should be interacting with our readers a lot more on a daily basis. The internet is not a threat to newspapers.

## *5: Papua New Guinea news media profile*

All I can do is give an example: if a story broke at lunchtime today that the Prime Minister was assassinated, it would be on our website that minute. It is just part of the newspaper...

At the end of the day, if you want to know the facts, you either go to the *Post-Courier* or *The National* website, or buy the paper. People don't believe it unless they can hold it up in their hands and read it. It's like a contract (Yianni, interview with author, 2001).

## CHAPTER SIX: Fiji news media profile

There is a whole lot of [political] pressure. For instance, in this newspaper we believe in plurality, we believe in equal access for everyone in what Fiji has to offer. Recently our editorials have been along those lines — and then we had the [politicians] calling us and asking who is the Indian who wrote that editorial.

*Wainikiti Waqa-Bogidrau, Fiji Sun editor, 2001<sup>1</sup>*

While responsible governments and politicians and a responsible press should share a common aim — the best interests of their society — their roles are different. In a healthy democratic society, the relationship between politicians and a free press is, quite properly, likely to be wary, questioning and sceptical, rather than close, cosy and adulatory.

*Thomson Report on Future Media Legislation [for Fiji], 1996*



**Map 6.1: The Fiji Islands**  
Source: Fiji Visitors Bureau

<sup>1</sup> Wainikiti Waqa-Bogidrau, audiotaped interview with author, Suva, 17 May 2001.

THE FIJI ISLANDS are at the cultural crossroads of the South Pacific where the Polynesian and Melanesian peoples and way of life have blended into a merged identity. The archipelago in the South-West Pacific has 322 islands and atolls with only about a third actually populated. The largest pair, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, make up 87 per cent of the total land area of 18,330 square kilometres. The country's population of 840,000<sup>2</sup> comprises a complex mix of indigenous Fijians (52 per cent), Indo-Fijian (46 per cent) — mostly descendants of Indian indentured labourers brought into the country by British colonial authorities in the late 19th century to work sugar plantations. Other cultures include Rotuman and other Polynesians, European and Chinese. The population of its capital, Suva, and where most of the country's news media is located, is more than 70,000.<sup>3</sup> It is a vital member of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) and hosts the Forum's secretariat and a number of United Nations and other international agencies. Fiji has:

- three national daily newspapers (including Sunday editions);
- one national bimonthly newspaper;
- one regional monthly news magazine;
- one national television station broadcasting one free-to-air channel and two pay subscription channels;
- a national public radio network which includes AM and FM services and a station broadcasting in English, Fijian and Hindi; and
- a private radio network which operates FM stations broadcasting in English, Fijian and Hindi;

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<sup>2</sup> 840,000. Source: Population and Development Indicators for Asia and the Pacific, 2002. United Nations Population Division (2002). *World Population Prospects: The 2000 Revision*. (UN publication). [www.unescap.org/pop/data\\_sheet/2002/tab1.htm](http://www.unescap.org/pop/data_sheet/2002/tab1.htm) (Retrieved 30 June 2003).

- two vernacular weekly newspapers;
- a community television broadcaster (based near Nadi) and several Christian broadcasters;
- and
- a regional news agency, previously based in Vanuatu (Robie, 2001a: 148-149; 1995a: 227-9).

### ***The press — ‘first in the world today’***

Fiji has a highly developed media industry compared with most other Pacific countries. The largest of the three daily newspapers, *The Fiji Times*, billing itself as ‘the first newspaper published in the world today’, was founded at Levuka in 1869 and became part of Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation group in 1987. It provides wide coverage of Fiji affairs and several pages of regional and international news. Its circulation was reportedly up to 55,000 during the 2000 political crisis, but is usually around 32,000 week days.<sup>4</sup> Like *The Fiji Times*, the two daily rivals, *Daily Post* and *The Sun*, publish in tabloid format. Both newspapers are regarded as being editorially more sympathetic to the Indo-Fijian community than the conservative *Fiji Times*. The Fiji Government has a controlling 44 per cent interest in the struggling *Daily Post* although it has generally maintained an independent editorial policy.<sup>5</sup> *The Sun*, launched in September 1999, is owned by a consortium of Indo-Fijian importers, C J Patel and Co Ltd and Vinod Patel and Co Ltd. It is the flagship company of Fiji’s indigenous government, Fijian Holdings Ltd. The two smaller dailies do not have independently audited

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<sup>3</sup> The capital’s population is considerably greater when the densely populated Nausori corridor between the city and Nausori International Airport is taken into account.

<sup>4</sup> Cited in Robie, David (2003), *The Speight spectre: ‘Free and fair’ elections as a Pacific development journalism challenge*. *AsiaPacific Media Educator*, No 12, pp 200-220.

<sup>5</sup> According to Morgan and Thomas (1996: 6): ‘Among many with whom we spoke there was a perception that the *Daily Post* is, editorially, a pro-Government newspaper. That is in our view a mis-reading. We found that both papers [*The Fiji Times* and *Daily Post*] offered us daily evidence of a robust independence’.

sales, but *The Sun* is believed to sell around 6,000 copies a day while the *Daily Post* is understood to have a growing circulation close to 10,000.<sup>6</sup> As with the newspapers in Papua New Guinea, the Fiji daily press ‘publish substantial political coverage, news and comment and carry vigorous editorials, usually on national or regional matters. They encourage — and, healthily, devote much space to — readers’ letters on current local issues, frequently political, so providing a forum for useful political debate’ (Morgan & Thomas, 1996: 6).

Fiji also has two major monthly or bimonthly news magazine groups *Islands Business*, which emphasises business and economic matters, and *The Review*, a more general news magazine. During the post-Speight economic slump, *The Review* relaunched in February 2003 with a bimonthly newspaper format. Two newspapers published in Hindi, *Shanti Dut*, and Fijian, *Nai Lalakai*, are published by *The Fiji Times* and duplicate some of that paper’s coverage with translations. *The Daily Post* and *The Review* news magazine share a website, FijiLive.com, while *The Fiji Times* is hosted at FM96’s Fiji Village.com website. *The Sun* also published a website for a time.

### **Radio — the most universal media**

Radio is the most universal of Fiji news media, with transmitter coverage reaching almost 100 per cent of the population, even in the interior of the main islands and on the more remote islands. Its audiences are ‘highly news-conscious’ and it is thus an ‘extraordinarily powerful resource’ (*ibid.*). The deregulated commercial market is strong and there is a tendency towards niche-marketing in both programming and advertising. Radio broadcasters are the state-owned Fiji Broadcasting Corporation (FBC), which operates Radio Fiji, and the private

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<sup>6</sup> *The Fiji Times* is the only newspaper in Fiji to have its circulation audited by the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) in Australia.

Communications Fiji Ltd (FM96) radio group. Faced with tough commercial competition, the corporation faced a financial crisis in the mid-1990s and was relaunched as an independent state-owned commercial entity, Island Networks, in 1997. But it later reverted to a state-owned corporation. The Government pays out an annual F\$600,000 grant to the corporation to boost its advertising revenue. FBC operates six radio stations, notably Radio Fiji, Bula FM, and Fijian language and Hindi language stations. Communications Fiji Ltd was established following the then Alliance Government's legislation of 1982 opening the door to commercial broadcasting. The company also now has broadcasting interests in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.<sup>7</sup> Locally, the broadcaster appeals to a younger and more hip multiracial and broad-based audience, operating 24 hours a day stations FM96 (English), Navtarang (Hindi) and Viti FM (Fijian). As Robert Seward (1999: 15) described it: 'There is nothing eclectic, just lots of local emphasis, and the station [FM96] is widely popular'. During 2002, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation appointed a local staff correspondent for its Radio Australia service, Mika Loga, who is based at the FBC.

### ***Television — emerged from rugby***

The history of television in Fiji is 'more chequered' than that of radio and was founded on the basis of an insatiable demand for rugby union coverage at the time of the 1991 World Cup in Britain (*ibid.*: 8):

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<sup>7</sup> Communications Fiji Ltd owns 20 per cent of PNGFM Pty Ltd in Port Moresby, which operates Nau FM and Yumi FM stations, and also has the management contract. According to a Pacific Media Watch dispatch on 16 November 1997, William Parkinson was managing director of PNGFM Pty Ltd. Quoting PNG's *The Independent*, it stated that a second private FM station had been set up in the Solomon Islands — Star FM Ltd. The company was 60 per cent locally owned (Solomon Star Ltd with 40 per cent and two private businessmen with 10 per cent each) and 40 per cent foreign owned (Communications Fiji Ltd with 20 per cent, and PNG FM Pty Ltd with 20 per cent). [www.pmw.c2o.org/docs/no16sol.html](http://www.pmw.c2o.org/docs/no16sol.html) (Retrieved 17 April 2003).

## 6: *Fiji news media profile*

In the 1980s, the Australian Channel Nine was granted the first television broadcasting licence but withdrew after the 1987 coup without going on-air. In 1988, a Government - owned service was proposed, with support from New Zealand, but this failed to materialise because of funding difficulties. A year later, an invitation to tender for a jointly owned but Government-controlled service was issued; but again the project was never realised.

In 1991, Television New Zealand proposed a temporary service to provide coverage, over five weeks, of the Rugby World Cup series, with some supporting programmes. This proved so popular that the service was continued with a Government subsidy as *Fiji One*. A tender offer for a joint venture failed to find any acceptable tender. In May the following year, the Government reached a provisional agreement with TVNZ to provide management support for a state television service. However, this deal was not ratified by the incoming Rabuka Government elected that year. In 1993, a new invitation to tender again failed to lead to a contract. Finally, the Government opted to develop a permanent service built on the continuing success of *Fiji One*. The operating company, Fiji Television Ltd, was initially owned 51 per cent by the Fiji Development Bank (the Fiji Government later consolidated its stakeholding by transferring the 51 per cent share to Yasana Holdings with the 14 provincial administrations becoming beneficiaries). The rest of the shareholding was divided between the public (20 per cent), 14 per cent for local business interests and 15 per cent by TVNZ. According to former Fiji TV chief executive Peter Wilson (1999: 43) when addressing a Commonwealth Broadcasting Association conference in Gibraltar:

Over half the population are subsistence farmers or fishers. The major islands are ruggedly hilly and heavily vegetated. Transmission over mountain, sea and rainforest is expensive, yet *Fiji One*, our predominantly English-language free-to-air channel, covers about 80 per

cent of the population. We also operate a two-channel VHF subscription TV service, Sky Fiji.

### ***Pacnews — an island-hopping news agency***

Pacnews, the news agency operated by the Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association (PIBA), distributes its region-wide service bulletins three times a day, five days a week by email and fax from an office established in a suburban house in Ma'afu Street, Suva. This setting was a long way from when the news cooperative was first set up in a former deputy prime minister's house in Richards Road in 1988. This was the 'first time that contemporaneous, region-wide news had been available to any new organisation in the Pacific' (Seward, 1999: 81). The post-coup political situation in Fiji deteriorated and two German officials of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES) PACBROAD project supporting Pacnews were expelled in May 1990.<sup>8</sup> Pacnews and PIBA took refuge in New Zealand, in an office in the Auckland suburb of Takapuna. Later that year, Pacnews was moved to Honiara, Solomon Islands, while the PIBA and PACBROAD offices were established in Port Vila, Vanuatu. In early 1994, Pacnews also moved to Port Vila before finally shifting back to Suva in 1999. Pacnews also operates a regional news website: [www.pacnews.org](http://www.pacnews.org)

### ***Coups and the political context***

On 15 May 1987, one day after the country's first coup d'état, Lieutenant-Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka's régime ordered *The Fiji Times* and the original *Fiji Sun* to stop publishing indefinitely while armed troops and police occupied the two offices. The next day, May 16, became the first time (apart from once during a cyclone in January 1986) in more than a century that *The Fiji*

*Times* was not published. The military régime began a purge of political critics and opponents by arresting them without charge (Griffen, 1997; Hodge, 1995; Johnson, 1997; Robertson & Tamanisau, 1988; Robie, 1992; 1989). The *Fiji Sun*, jointly owned by the Hongkong-based Sally Aw Sian publishing empire and New Zealand publisher Philip Harkness, eventually closed rather than publish under self-censorship restrictions.<sup>9</sup> Several of Fiji's leading journalists left Fiji in an exodus of talent (Layton, 1993: 401; Masterton, 1989: 121; Robie, 1989: 240-241).

Thirteen years later, on 19 May 2000, an attempted coup led by rogue businessman Speight and seven renegade members of the élite 1st Meridian Squadron special forces engulfed the Fiji Islands in turmoil for the next three months. Speight and his armed co-conspirators stormed Parliament and held the Labour-led Mahendra Chaudhry Government hostage for 56 days. On Chaudhry's release from captivity, he partly blamed the media for the overthrow of his government. Some sectors of the media were accused of waging a bitter campaign against the Fiji Labour Party-led administration and its rollback of privatisation (*see* Field, 2002; Hussain, 2000; Lal & Pretes, 2001; Robertson & Sutherland, 2001; Robie, 2001a). In the early weeks of the insurrection, the media enjoyed an unusually close relationship with Speight, who displayed bizarre and charismatic charm, and the hostage-takers, raising ethical questions (*ibid*; Crisis and Coverage, 2001). Dilemmas faced by Fiji and foreign journalists were more complex than during the 1987 military coups. Editorials by the country's three daily newspapers were arguably critical for disseminating misperceptions about the Speight putsch.

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<sup>8</sup> The 'two Hendriks', Hendrik Bussiek, representative of FES, and Hendrik Kettner, PACBROAD technical coordinator, were served expulsion orders by the Fiji post-coup authorities and forced to abandon PIBA House (Seward, 1999: 89).

<sup>9</sup> The *Fiji Sun* published in 1987 had no connection with the *Sun* launched in 1999, although several of the staff had worked on the earlier title.

Absence of informed analysis strengthened the belief that legislation is easily changed on the whim of a prime minister when this is not the reality. This reinforces the perception that an Indo-Fijian prime minister is a 'dangerous situation' for Fijians (Duncan, 2002: 25).

Even though essentially it was a struggle for power within the indigenous Fijian community, and a conflict between tradition and modernity, the inevitable polarisation of races undermined notions of objectivity. It was apparent to then *Daily Post* editor Jale Moala that many local reporters had become 'swept away by the euphoria of the moment and the tension and the emotion that charged the event' (Moala, 2001: 125) This, he recalled, was true of both indigenous Fijian and Indo-Fijian reporters.

Fear may have also played a role. As a result, the perpetrators of the terrorist action, led by George Speight, received publicity that at the time seemed to legitimise their actions and their existence. Some argued that the situation might not have deteriorated as quickly as it did if the media had played a more responsible role.

But therein lies one of the dilemmas of Pacific Islands political journalism: the extended family system, the tribal and chiefly system and customary obligations may blur the view of the journalist, especially if he or she is indigenous (*ibid.*: 125-126).

For Moala, lack of leadership in some newsrooms was a significant factor. Another prominent journalist, a New Zealander who was the longest serving international news agency reporter during the crisis, Michael Field of Agence France-Presse, cited examples of how the credibility of the press 'faded' because reporters were perceived to be too close to the terrorists (2001: 22). He also contrasted the relaxed approach by local authorities to the hostage-takers and the media with other countries defending a constitutional government.

Speight's role is not entirely clear — he was probably not the coup leader — [but] he quickly became the spokesman for it. This was where all the rules began to fall apart. It was not a 'normal' hostage situation because the media had ready access to the bizarre world of Speight and his gang, which included a veteran if misguided [Fijian] reporter (who at the Pacific Islands Media Association AGM in 1990 complained there were too many women in journalism). In New Zealand, police control all access in hostage situations; in Fiji they just took names and let people come and go ...

At Speight's parliamentary madhouse many of the reporters virtually moved in with the hostage-takers — eating and sleeping there. Quickly their judgement disappeared in a self-inflicted Stockholm syndrome effect; one New Zealand reporter took to stealing bullets from hostage-takers' guns. Other reporters quickly established a first-name tie with Speight, as though they were good buddies (Field, 2002: 235).

However, for some Pacific academics such as humanities professor Konai Helu Thaman (2001), the problem was journalists themselves, both foreign and some local, and their alleged 'distortions' and lack of cultural sensitivity. She complained at a conference in Budapest, Hungary:

The selective way in which both foreign and local media organisations dealt with issues which they considered important under the guise of 'media freedom' was a cause of frustration for some of us who live in Fiji and who understood the complexity of the situation. For example, it was clear to me, watching many newscasts about Fiji in both local and overseas television, that most foreign reporters, and a few local ones, did not realise, let alone understand, that notions of democracy, human rights, freedom of expression or even the law itself, remain empty words among people whose world views were and continue to be framed by a different theory of personhood (Thaman, 2001: 6).

***The move towards media reform***

Since the mid-1990s, three Fiji Governments (led by Rabuka, Chaudhry and then Qarase) have all pledged media reforms, including the introduction of Freedom of Information legislation. Although draft legislation has been drafted and revised at various stages, no Government has yet delivered on the promises. Within the media industry there has been some justifiable nervousness on the part of executives that the legislation may introduce some attempt at control, particularly as at times politicians have hinted at licensing. But there has been little debate on cross-ownership issues. Shortly before the arrival of Thomson Foundation consultants Kenneth Morgan and John Prescott Thomas in Fiji on 15 September 1996 for a two-week visit to research the republic's legislation impacting on the media, the report of the Fiji Constitution Review Commission, *Towards a United Future*, was published.<sup>10</sup> Morgan and Thomas noted:

This wise and well-written document was of inestimable value to us. Though we appreciate that some of its recommendations are controversial — and that is not within either our terms of reference or our competence to comment on such matters — it nevertheless set both a political context and, more importantly, a positive spirit for our own inquiries (Morgan & Thomas, 1996: 5).

Morgan and Thomas concluded that they had approached their mission with 'genuinely open minds' and with no plan to impose 'inappropriate foreign solutions' to Fiji's problems (*ibid.*). certain, unspecified aspects of media legislation in Britain was discarded, as were practices in some South-East Asian countries that were 'sometimes suggested to us as models [but] seemed

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<sup>10</sup> Kenneth Morgan and John Thomas (1996: 5) claimed to have been 'among the first in the Islands to have read [the constitutional report] from cover to cover'. They noted that they had submitted their own report in the spirit of the Constitutional Review.

incompatible with Fiji's Constitution and with stated Government policy'.<sup>11</sup> They were convinced from the outset that what was needed were systems and mechanisms expressly designed for the circumstances in Fiji. And this is what they say they proposed in the report (*ibid.*).

The consultants were surprised at the limited range of local programming in television in Fiji (no more than 10 per cent). They argued that local programmes — particularly if studio-based — could be produced to a high standard very cost-effectively — and could attract big commercial audiences even against tough competition.<sup>12</sup>

In a system where there is no competition at all for television audiences — and in a society as concerned with its identity as is Fiji's — we should expect local programmes to be a success story commercially. But we have to say that Fiji TV's business plan was absolutely clear and specific as to the nature of the programme mix it would provide; and it was on that explicit basis that the Government chose to award them their licence (*ibid.*: 10).

### ***Licensing for the media?***

The terms of reference for Thomson Foundation report was to investigate the 'advisability — and the desirability — of licensing printing operations and requiring all print media publishers to have a Government permit'. Closely related to this issue was a requirement to review the

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<sup>11</sup> Both Morgan and Thomas were concerned about the state of the relationship between the Fiji news media and Government. This concern was reflected in this comment about the political context: 'In his memoirs *As It Seemed to Me*, John Cole, former political editor at the BBC, wrote thus of the relationship between British politicians and the media in the mid-nineties: "Politicians and the media seemed to be on a course of mutual injury, if not destruction. ... Institutionally all was not well. In the words of matrimonial law, here was a relationship in danger of having 'irretrievably broken down'." At the outset, we rather feared that this might be our experience in Fiji.' However, they found a 'good deal of common ground, pragmatic flexibility and good will'. They tried to develop their recommendations by building on these 'positive features'.

<sup>12</sup> In his book, *Radio Happy Isles* (1999: 15), Robert Seward points to the New Zealand model and how its Broadcasting Act 'mandates that minority interests be provided for'. He explains: 'This includes the interests of women, ethnic minorities, the disabled, and the Maori community. A ministerial directive requires that at least six

*Newspaper Registration Act*.<sup>13</sup> . Described as a law to ‘regulate the printing and publishing of newspapers’, its provisions in fact do rather less than that. The law requires only that any person who ‘desires to publish any newspaper’ should register that intention by an affidavit by the proprietors, publisher and printer of the proposed paper, giving their names and addresses. It requires these particulars to be kept up to date by the filing of subsequent affidavits when changes occur and requires them to be printed in the newspaper, identifying where the paper is printed. A register of the affidavits has to be open for public inspection without charge. Failure to register, or printing the newspaper without publishing these particulars, are offences punishable by a fine; proceedings may be taken only in the name of the Director of Public Prosecutions. There are similar provisions to these in other countries, including those in Britain’s *Newspaper Libel and Registration Act 1881*.

As Morgan and Thomas note, such provisions are rarely invoked. The registration procedure applies only to newspapers that are not owned by a company incorporated under the *Companies Act*, which in any case requires such companies to file annual returns. The consultants added:

We found no evidence of concern neither from newspaper and other publishing companies, nor from politicians or others we consulted , that the simple registration required under the Fiji [Companies] Act<sup>14</sup> created any difficulty or inhibited freedom of the press. In our view, such registration is a reasonable provision. It is a right that members of the public should be able to identify those who own a newspaper and those responsible for its publication — if only to know, for example, whom they can sue if a paper defames them,

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per cent of the money administered by the public funding agency NZ on Air goes to Maori broadcasting; NZ on Air provides an even greater percentage.’

<sup>13</sup> Originally enacted on 1 June 1895, this law was amended in 1931, 1966 and 1971.

<sup>14</sup> This refers to the (Fiji) *Newspaper Registration Act 1895*.

or to whom they should look for redress if its content or conduct damages them in any way (*ibid.*: 14).

Morgan and Thomas stated that a simple requirement to *register* a newspaper did not interfere with freedom of the press. They argued that this was quite different from an obligation to obtain a *licence* [their emphasis], from the state or any other authority, to publish a newspaper. But they also sounded a warning:

In our discussions, much concern was expressed that a review of the *Newspapers Registration Act* might lead to its becoming, in effect, a licensing provision. There had apparently been suggestions in recent years, from members of the Government among others, that the Act should be amended to require not only initial registration, and subsequent registration of significant changes in ownership or publishing and printing arrangements, but also an annual review of registration. To do this would, in our view, be tantamount to the licensing of the press (*ibid.*).

This would, argued the consultants, be out of step with democratic practice elsewhere and against the spirit of the proposals to defend freedom of expression made by the Constitution Review Commission. Morgan and Thomas added that registration should be a right as well as a duty: 'It should be a one-off exercise, not refusable at the discretion of Government, ministers or officials and not subject to periodic renewal' (*ibid.*: 15). The Thomson Report recommended that the *Newspapers Registration Act* be retained but with a clause added that specified registration could not be denied or withdrawn.<sup>15</sup> It also recommended that Fiji should not

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<sup>15</sup> Recommendation 4.2.10.

introduce licensing measures for the print media, but should instead rely on self-regulatory means.<sup>16</sup>

We encountered overwhelming resistance to the idea, from many different sources (including politicians), and heard no convincing arguments in its favour. In most democratic societies, the licensing of printing presses disappeared more than two hundred years ago. The only purpose of granting such licenses appears to have the concomitant power to revoke them — and so keep the media compliant and subdued (*ibid.*).

However, in the case of broadcast media, the consultants took a contrasting view. Noting that the international allocation of broadcasting frequencies was determined by worldwide agreements among governments, they said it was ‘reasonable, even essential’, for governments to control domestic allocation.

While, in principle, any citizen may have access to a printing press, access to the airwaves requires a ‘gatekeeper’ — at least in the present state of broadcast technology ... Though digital compression and other developments will soon make a vast multiplicity of outlets technically possible, it appears to us that the frequency spectrum is likely to remain for some time a ‘scarce resource’ in Fiji.<sup>17</sup>

The Thomson Report recommended that television licences be awarded on the basis of competitive tendering with the tender making ‘proper demands’ on the applicant (including

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<sup>16</sup> Recommendation 4.3.4.

<sup>17</sup> The two reasons given for this (Morgan & Thomas, 1996: 15): ‘Because the economy is unlikely to sustain deregulated commercial competition on a very large scale — certainly if there is to be any concern for quality — and because the [Fiji] Government has in any case chosen to establish a television monopoly for 12 years.’

realistic fees).<sup>18</sup> It also urged that the licence be awarded on the judgement of an ad hoc committee comprising a member from each party represented in Parliament and with the final terms of the contract being made explicit in the licence and enforceable through it (*ibid.*: 16).

The terms ought to be expected to include at least the following:

- Commercial ownership
- Frequencies allocated
- Coverage to be achieved
- Technical standards
- Maximum hours of transmission
- Maximum minutes of advertising content an hour
- Minimum percentage of local programming
- Adherence to the Fiji Media Code of Practice

The exclusive licence ‘honeymoon’ appeared to be coming to an end in early 2003. The Thomson Report also commented on the standard of journalism in Fiji, saying that issues of training and quality were a ‘major obstacle’ to the implementation of freedom of the media. Morgan and Thomas said that both politicians and community spokespeople cited examples of ‘poorly researched or insensitive reporting’, adding that ‘we ourselves remarked on some examples of unbalanced writing’ (*ibid.*: 11).

Media managers admitted there were ‘shortcomings in the qualifications and experience’ of some of their staff. They found that all media outlets also appeared ‘commendably willing’ to carry retrospective corrections and to ‘encourage the right of reply through their letters pages, but that does not address the fundamental problem either’ (*ibid.*: 12). The consultants concluded that there was a ‘sharp need for improved and more readily available education and

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<sup>18</sup> Recommendation 4.4.3.4.

training’ of journalists, both in practical journalism skills and in the ethics of journalism. In Fiji, ‘awareness of and a sensitivity to the cultures of its different communities’ was needed along with an understanding of international professional norms and standards.

Part of the difficulty in providing structured education and training in journalism stems from the absence of a correspondingly structured career path. In any society, career advancement in journalism tends to be bound by pyramid structures in each newspaper or broadcasting organisation, with a broad base for recruitment but sharply narrowing promotion opportunities to climb towards the apex. In Fiji, there are simply not enough pyramids — newspapers, periodicals, radio and television stations — to create a general career pattern (*ibid.*: 24).

Morgan and Thomas carried out their interviews and research for their report before the first graduates emerged out of the University of the South Pacific journalism degree programme and when the Fiji Islands Media Association (FIMA) and Fiji Journalism Institute (FJI) entry-level course had been going barely two years. They noted: ‘It is too early to evaluate either but clearly they should be encouraged and supported’. Some publishers — including those from *The Fiji Times*, the *Daily Post* and *The Review* — were ‘proud of the in-house training they told us they give their own journalists’. Morgan and Thomas added:

Such a commitment is welcome and valuable. It cannot alone, however, expose entrants and other young journalists to the desirable experience and interplay of ideas about professional ethics and responsibility, which more broadly based education may give (*ibid.*).

The Thomson Report recommended cooperation between the media industry employers, FIMA, PINA, Fiji Journalists Association, USP and the Fiji Journalism Institute under the umbrella of the Fiji Media Council to develop an integrated approach to structured on-the-job in-house training, backed by part-time or block release courses.<sup>19</sup> The report also recommended that the interested groups also cooperate in funding and promoting seminars, lectures, workshops and publications to advance professionalism among working journalists and editors.

Some editors shared this view as a number of media executives seemed to discover a renewed commitment to training in the late 1990s. Jale Moala, editor of the *Daily Post* at the time of the Speight putsch and the Fiji journalist with perhaps the widest editing experience in the country, regarded funding and competition between training bodies as major problems facing the Fiji media.<sup>20</sup>

Funding is the greatest problem. Even the two universities, UPNG and USP, rely on funding for the existence of their journalism programmes. Outside of these universities, most of the funding comes from UNESCO and Ausaid and organisations like PINA have to compete for this funding. The governments of Britain, United States, Germany and New Zealand also provide funding for journalism training. Some private organisations, mainly the Murdoch-owned *Fiji Times* and *Post Courier* newspapers, can afford their own training programmes and do run in-house training seriously.

In some cases training programmes have tended to compete against each other instead of working as a team. The best example of this was in Fiji where the USP programme and the PINA programme worked apart rather than together. Both programmes would have achieved more if there was cohesion and consultation. In my view, USP should have been providing the main training programme with its certificate, diploma and degree courses.

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<sup>19</sup> Recommendation 4.12..6.

PINA should have been focusing on further training in the workplace. Yet it didn't seem to acknowledge the role played by USP in journalism training in the region, a fact underscored by its part in a move to set up a diploma course at the Fiji National Training Council, an obvious duplicate of training offered at USP (Moala, interview with author, 2003).

Francis Herman, chief executive of the FBC, emphasised that his organisation was now opting for younger journalists who could be 'moulded in our format of news'. For too long, the FBC had been 'used as a training ground' for journalists in Fiji and then the industry newcomers would leave.

It's a long process. But with our news team, if you look at our current news team, there is a bias towards the younger generation. Simply because the older ones come in with very bad habits — the experienced journalists, I am talking about. They think they know everything. It is very difficult for them to adapt to our style that we are developing. And basically an extensive in-house training programme on all facets of society, not just politics, but everything, and then giving them on-the-job training. [It is a matter of] getting them exposed to professional, specialised, or niche areas, like investigative journalism, or specialising in the environment. What we are moving towards is getting more specialists on board, instead of generalists (Herman, interview with author, 2001).

In contrast, the *Sun* consulting editor Wainikiti Waqa-Bogidrau, the highest-educated journalist in Fiji who won USP's Vice-Chancellor's gold medal and Social Sciences gold medal in 2000, lamented the lack of commitment to education by some news organisations. Recalling how

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<sup>20</sup> Jale Moala was at various times editor of *The Fiji Times*, *Islands Business*, *Pacific Islands Monthly* and the *Daily Post*.

Radio Fiji had traditionally been committed to training and education — especially to make their staff voices ‘presentable’ — she said the environment was very different at *The Fiji Times*.

At the *Times*, I found a totally different attitude. They did not encourage education as such.

They believe experience counts more than any training, or degree...

I know, with the benefit of hindsight, that it is good to get trained journalists rather than people fresh out of high school, or just off the street. The advantages of trained journalists is that they are aware of the issues, ethical and otherwise. They have a good understanding of what journalism is all about.

I have noticed this with some of the graduates, especially from USP — it is easier to talk to them. I mean it is easier giving them an outline of a story than with those who haven’t had training, or education. You don’t need a lot of supervision with the graduates. They grasp the ideas quite easily (Waqa-Bogidrau, interview with author, 2001).

Fiji Television political journalist Riyaz Sayed-Khaiyum started his media career as a radio journalist but joined the TV station about a month after the official launch in 1995. He wanted a job as a newsreader but was offered a reporter’s job instead as his eyes were crossed. He regards education as really important, something he and his colleagues missed out on.

In Fiji, to a great extent over the years we relied on people learning on the job. I remember I started off like that. I didn’t have too [much] of the basics of journalism, and I started off learning from others. But education and training is important because you can only learn a certain amount from others who have started off the same way as you have. You reach a certain level and you need the exposure, the international exposure...

Journalism like any other profession is an ever evolving and changing thing. It is not stagnant. And we need to brush up on our skills. You can't really just do that by learning off others when they are in the same position as you are. You have to have ongoing training (Sayed-Khaiyum, interview with author, 2001).

### **Television and local programming**

Another issue raised by the Thomson Report was 'disquiet at the level of "imported" programming on television. The report noted that while Fiji Television was 'adhering scrupulously' to the terms of its licence, the Government was faced with a dilemma: 'It is bound by a legal contract which limits its possible courses of action, yet it is aware of a strong appetite for local programming which is at present unsatisfied' (Morgan & Thomas, 1996: 25). The report also noted that local programmes, 'particularly if studio-based, can be produced to a high standard very cost effectively — and can attract big commercial audiences even against stiff competition'.<sup>21</sup>

In a system where there is no competition at all for television audiences — and in a society as concerned with its identity as is Fiji's — we should expect local programming to be a success story commercially (*ibid.*: 9).

Former Fiji Television chief executive Peter Wilson argued for the benefits of 'monopoly purchasing power' in buying commercial programmes (1998; 45). As an example, he pointed to Fiji TV being fortunate in being able to 'piggyback' on the programme purchasing arrangements of Television New Zealand, one of the larger buyers of English language

programming.<sup>22</sup> Fiji TV also takes advantage of whatever free programming is available, either from unencrypted satellite feeds or from various donor agencies. This is especially suitable for off-peak broadcasting. *Fiji One* has a daytime slot called *eTV* (educational television) based primarily on this material. Wilson noted that 'local production was 'crucial to local relevance, quality of the schedule and commercial success'. But local production was limited by its relatively high cost.

It should be remembered that English is a second or third language to most of the Fiji audience. The *Fiji One* audience loves to relax in the evening with *Shortland Street*, a New Zealand prime-time soap with Pacific Island characters and even an occasional Fiji subplot. They enjoy the fantasy adventure of *Hercules* [and *Xena*] and the creepy thrills of *X Files*. But they are also avid news watchers, keeping *Fiji One News* and BBC World at the top of the ratings. They like international current affairs such as *60 Minutes*, and are interested in *Quantum*, a popular science programme.

They are interested in locally produced chat and magazine shows. They want programming in their native language. They enjoy local documentaries, and a significant minority watch international documentaries. And they adore sport, particularly rugby (Wilson, 1998: 42).

Fiji Television's size is based around its transmission activities and its news department. All of Fiji TV's in-house local production comes from spare capacity within this resource 'shell'. Fiji TV has 55 staff working primarily on Fiji One with about 20 working on Sky TV.<sup>23</sup> In-house

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<sup>21</sup> As an example, the Thomson Report (p 9) cited the case of how a top BBC programme was challenged by a small producer: 'By scheduling dedicated local programmes against *Eastenders*, the BBC's best-rating soap [in 1996], for instance, Westcountry Television in Britain was able to knock the latter out of the top ten in its region.'

<sup>22</sup> Television New Zealand has established a small unit called the Pacific Service, which buys dubs and redistributes programmes on behalf of several Pacific nations. Fiji TV, for example, commissions TVNZ's Pacific Service to purchase programmes on its behalf. While TVNZ takes a commission, the economy of scale means that the cost of programmes delivered to Fiji TV are considerably less than if the network bought programmes directly.

<sup>23</sup> According to figures provided by Fiji Television chief executive Peter Wilson in 1998.

local production for *Fiji One*, according to Wilson, included a live half-hour daily national news bulletin, a weekday children's show, a three times weekly chat show, a weekly music chart show, a weekly indigenous Fijian language chat and magazine show, and outside broadcast coverage of sporting events, civil occasions and major entertainment events. Other local production comprises a magazine programme from a Government video production unit, and 'social development programmes' produced by local independent production houses and funded by development agencies.

However, many of the independent filmmakers and producers are unhappy with what they see as a selective approach by Fiji Television to local production. Among these are award-winning documentary maker, academic and Labour politician Senator 'Atu Emberson-Bain who has had most of her ground-breaking programmes rejected (Robie, 2002a: 150). After Fiji Television refused to show her documentary, *In the Name of Growth*, exposing the exploitation of indigenous women workers by an indigenous owned Pafco (Pacific Fishing Company) tuna canning plant on Ovalau Island, she wrote:

So much for the free (television) media in this country — the debate always focuses on freedom from Government interference. What about freedom from the big (private sector) boys on the block with their vested interests?<sup>24</sup>

While Fiji Television turned down Emberson-Bain's programme on grounds that it was 'not balanced', SBS Television in Australia bought exclusive rights to the programme for four years. The programme was also nominated in the best documentary category at the 21st Hawai'i International Film Festival.

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<sup>24</sup> 'Atu Emberson-Bain, personal communication to the author, 26 September 2001.

Fiji Television's exclusive licence, which expired in May 2000 — the month of Speight's attempted coup — was not renewed for ten years by the Commerce Commission (two years of the new 12 year period had already lapsed).<sup>25</sup> However, Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase indicated he was not happy with the decision, saying his Government would have the final say. Commission chairman Thomas Raju made the decision public on 15 April 2003 after wide public consultation, saying there was 'no justification' to reintroduce the exclusive licence. Qarase told a press conference that there needed to be special reasons for Fiji Television to be given an exclusive licence. While he did not elaborate, he was apparently referring to his Government's blueprint aimed at increasing indigenous Fijian participation in business. The licence decision appeared to open the door for the non-profit Nadi-based Community Television to broadcast to Suva.

### ***The Monasavu affair — warpaint and harmony***

In July 1998, Fiji Television was put under pressure from politicians and even its own board over coverage of the Monasavu land rights protests in the highlands of Viti Levu (Monasavu Warriors, 1998). The Monasavu Dam and catchment, whose generator supplies 80 per cent of electricity to the entire nation of Fiji, but at the time the landowners' village had no power. A long standing grievance spilled over into the public domain with a demand by the landowners for F\$35 million in compensation for the national exploitation of the resource. At one stage during the protests on the road access to the dam, a group of landowners 'daubed themselves in warpaint and threatened to "kill" for their rights in a rather theatrical gesture' (Robie, 1999c: 30).

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<sup>25</sup> Fiji TV boss quiet over rejection of exclusivity licence (2003, April 16). *Wansolwara Online*. [www.usp.ac.fj/journ/docs/news/wansolnews/2003/2003April/wansol1604032.html](http://www.usp.ac.fj/journ/docs/news/wansolnews/2003/2003April/wansol1604032.html) (Retrieved 19 April 2003).

Government politicians, however, took the incident very seriously, prompting Fiji Television's managing director Walter Thompson to protest to the chairman, Laisenia Qarase. He cited a reaction by Senator Irene Jai Narayan's family to the coverage, saying he was sure such comment was 'not an isolated case':

The images of warriors in warpaint, armed with bamboo spears, with statements of people being injured or killed is not a balanced presentation of the situation. Progress has been made, albeit painfully slowly, which is in sharp contrast to the impression being conveyed TV news reports. I believe this borders on being irresponsible and inflammatory.

We are now entering a particularly sensitive time, with the new Constitution coming into force on 27 July 1998 and the General Elections due early in 1999. I believe the reporting policy and practice of Fiji TV must be modified to avoid aggravating situations, which can have a serious impact on the peace, harmony and good governance of our country.<sup>26</sup>

In a 30-page defence of Fiji Television's editorial policies in general, and coverage of the Monasavu protests in particular, Wilson wrote: 'The issues raised by Mr Thompson are central to the operation of a free and independent media in a democratic society. They raise important and ethical issues of journalism'.<sup>27</sup> He added that key questions included 'what is news?' and 'should challenging stories be suppressed in the interests of "harmony"?'

Wilson provided a content analysis comparing Fiji Television's news coverage with similar news services in Australia and New Zealand. The analysis demonstrated that *Fiji One News* had a higher 'neutral' and 'good' news content (92 per cent) than *One Network News* (NZ; 85 per cent) and Channel Nine News (Australia; 78 per cent) (*Table 6:1*). He also listed typical news

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<sup>26</sup> Letter of complaint by Walter Thompson to Fiji Television chairman Laisenia Qarase, 16 July 1998.

**Table 6.1: Content analysis of Fiji, New Zealand and Australian national news bulletins: Survey of news items, 30 July to 26 August 1998.**

Stories	Fiji One News		One Network News (NZ)		Channel Nine News (Australia)	
	No.	% (of local news)	No	% (of local news)	No	% (of local news)
'Good news'	21	8%	17	4%	4	1%
Crime	228	6%	33	14%	145	18%
Protest	11	1%	44	1%	2	4%
Neutral local	249	84%	114	81%	169	77%
Overseas news	3	-	39	-	8	-
Sports	163	-	76	-	72	-
Neutral and good	-	92%	-	85%	-	78%

Source: Appendix 2, 'News policy and practice', Fiji TV board paper, 31 August 1998.

typical news values of a libertarian media model such as *impact*, *proximity*, *prominence*, *timeliness*, *conflict*, *currency* and the *unusual*. He quoted from John Hurst and Sally White (1994): 'To erase conflict from news would be to rip out its guts'. Then he continued:

The Monasavu story fitted virtually all of the above criteria of newsworthiness. I have consulted with the head of the journalism school at the University of the South Pacific, the director of the New Zealand School of Broadcasting and the current Television New Zealand managing editor of news and current affairs. They were unanimously of the view that the story had to be carried if *Fiji One News* had any credibility as a news source. The Government and the bureaucracy generally adopted the policy of trying to limit the story by ignoring the media. The army and police were generally more forthcoming. The protesters showed quite sophisticated use of political theatre and at times wished to engage the media to communicate their side of the story. Government criticised coverage of the story by all media.

The key concern apparently being expressed by critics of the television coverage is that they were upset by the images of conflict inherent in the 'traditional warriors' threatening

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<sup>27</sup> Paper to the Fiji Television board, 'News policy and practice,' by chief executive Peter Wilson, 31 August 1998.

to kill anyone who came against them. As well as being personally upsetting to some, they considered it could incite other people to threats or acts of violence.

Another concern that has been expressed is that television coverage gave the protesters a platform to express their grievances which, in the opinion of the critics, they should not have been allowed to do.

Virtually every news professional in the free world would argue that such a story should be carried. The reasons lie in the role of the media previously described.

The loss of Monasavu would affect virtually everyone on Viti Levu. The conflict was serious. The issues of land rights and compensation are key matters of ongoing public interest for Fiji. As the story [unfolded], it [appeared] that the landowners had some legitimate concerns.<sup>28</sup>

This is a typical example of the continual pressure that Fiji Television has faced from politicians and bureaucrats. It is pressure that the station staff has generally resisted. Ironically, the Monasavu landowners came to prominence again when they seized the access road to the dam and electricity-generating plant in the wake of George Speight's attempted coup on 19 May 2003. Nine days later a mob of supporters of Speight marched on the Fiji Television offices and ransacked the premises in protest over a *Close-Up* current affairs programme featuring media personalities highly critical of the rebellion. Fiji Television was unable to broadcast again for almost 48 hours. A student journalist at the University of the South Pacific transcribed the controversial programme shortly before martial law was declared.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Controversial *Close-Up* (2001), *Pacific Journalism Review*, 7(1): 39-45. Compiled by Alison Ofotalau. Fiji Television's *Close-Up* programme on 28 May 2000 featured an outspoken media analysis of the insurrection. This is a transcript of the discussion chaired by reporter Riyaz Sayed-Khaiyum and featuring political columnist Jone Dakuvula and Communications Fiji Ltd managing director William Parkinson. [www.journalism.uts.edu.au/archive/fiji\\_coup/0529FijiTVDestroyed.html](http://www.journalism.uts.edu.au/archive/fiji_coup/0529FijiTVDestroyed.html) (Retrieved 30 June 2003).

### ***Non-statutory regulation of the media***

Among other recommendations by the Thomson Report <sup>30</sup> was the formation of a Fiji Media Council wholly funded by media industry members. This was expected to be fashioned out of the News Council that had been established due to the ‘apparent ineffectiveness’ of the former Press Council. The report also recommended<sup>31</sup> that the council include a matching number (to media industry members) of lay people ‘broadly representative of the wider community in terms of ethnic and religious identity, age, gender, geographical representation and occupational, educational and social background’.

In our experience, such ‘consumer panels’ are invaluable as a sounding board for public opinion, as constructive critics and as advocates for the media in the real world outside the newsroom and the studio. Nor — again in our experience — when there has been disagreement has it ever expressed itself as a straight divide between ‘the media and the rest’. We believe that such a body would do much to demonstrate the media’s readiness to consider and to reflect a wide variety of opinions and to make them answerable in a more open forum than at present (Morgan & Thomas, 1996: 18).

Perhaps one of the most important recommendations<sup>32</sup> of this sector of the report was a call for the core content for Fiji’s various codes of ethics and programme standards<sup>33</sup> to be combined into a single code to which all members could subscribe. In January 1998, the Thomson Report recommendations were accepted in principle and the Media Council embarked on developing a General Media Code of Ethics and Practice. The report also praised the work of Media Council

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<sup>30</sup> Recommendation 4.6.1.

<sup>31</sup> Recommendation 4.6.5.

<sup>32</sup> Recommendation 4.7.2.

chairman Daryl Tarte, who ‘is universally respected for his integrity’, and his two fellow Complaints Committee lay members, Commerce Commission chairman Thomas Raju and social policy advocate Paula Sotutu. However, as already argued in Chapter Four, there were serious flaws over the activities of the Media Council and by 2000 the complaints process had appeared to have lost some credibility (Naidu, 2001; Vayeshnoi, 1999).

In a series of speeches outlining a critique of the Fiji media, then Assistant Information Minister Lekh Ram Vayeshnoi argued for a ‘responsible’ news industry. One speech, in particular, articulated the stand of the Labour-led coalition Government that some media organisations had made ‘little effort to rise above their political agendas’. He highlighted what he claimed to be a ‘few myths’ commonly held by the media (Robie, 1999d: 6):

*Myth one: That the media is an entity that is above all else in society and has the duty — no, the right — to pass judgement on those it feels inclined to.*

No one component of society can be given such all-encompassing powers. Why then does the media think they are above everyone else? They are becoming nothing more than practicers [sic] of autocracy and despotism.

*Myth two: That the media is beyond approach and censure.*

A media organisation that believes this will soon find it has placed itself beyond the reach of the population it purports to serve — rather like the previous [Rabuka] Government.

*Myth three: That the media knows what is best for everyone else.*

Again, this is an autocratic view and does not sit well in a pluralistic society.

*Myth four: That the media represents the society and that they are therefore the forums for the dissemination of public policy and information.*

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<sup>33</sup> Such disparate codes included the News Council Code of Ethics, the Fiji Islands Media Association (FIMA) Code of Ethics, Fiji Television’s more detailed Code of Programme Standards, and guidelines used by other media outlets and professional organisations.

If the media truly believes this, may I ask them how many of their organisations, particularly the news departments, are a true reflection of our society. Are the decision-makers in these departments an accurate reflection of the ethnic, cultural, religious, economic and political diversity that exists in our society?

*Myth five: That the media has the mandate from the public to be their mouthpiece.*

But I don't know how the media can take this view. Even contributions to their open columns — which should be the voice of their readership — are doctored, censored and in some cases ignored altogether.

*Myth six: That the prerogative rests with the media — and the media alone — [over] not only what is covered, but the manner in which it is covered.*

The term editorial prerogative is used to excuse the media from having to explain their decisions and choice of news, or how they cover it (Vayeshnoi, 1999: 3-5).

Vayeshnoi added that the media had a responsibility to ensure that a 'high degree of professionalism' was employed in ensuring that the public was accurately informed and that it had a right of reply. Similar sentiments were expressed by politicians over the next three years, culminating with the extreme views of two Government senators who accused the media of being 'agents of evil' and 'mad, crazy loonies'.<sup>34</sup> Daryl Tarte gave a Media Council perspective on the latter attacks in a face-to-face interview with Bernadette Hussain of *The Fiji Times*, saying such vitriolic criticism was an abuse of parliamentary privilege:

I don't know whether [they are] referring to only Fiji Television and *The Fiji Times*, or the media in general, but that is still very sad that they should speak like that. Nobody, no member of civil society, can accept that kind of statement from anybody. Now, if these

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<sup>34</sup> Senators Rev Tomasi Kainalagi and Mitieli Bulanauca.

senators have some genuine complaint against the media, they've got various methods of recourse (Hussain, 2002: 7).

The senators, Tarte indicated as an example, could take legal action against a media organisation and test their allegations. Or they could make their statements outside the House — 'if they had the courage and evidence to do so' — and perhaps the media organisation would sue them. Or they could file a complaint with the Media Council 'if it was genuine'.

Except for *The Fiji Times*, all the media organisations are locally owned. All the editors and journalists are Fiji citizens and there are only three expatriates in the media industry, so we have a largely local media...

I am not for the moment saying that the media is perfect. In fact, it will always be an imperfect kind of organisation. Some media organisations do very well, others don't and a lot of it is due to the quality of journalists. I think a lot of media organisations will accept that their quality of journalists could be much better. We've lost a lot of good journalists over the years but there are various training institutions in Fiji now such as the University of the South Pacific (*ibid.*).

*The Review* and *Daily Post* publisher Yashwant Gaunder also laments the loss of journalists. He blames this on a harsher economic climate in Fiji and the fact that money rather than 'passion for journalism' drives today's journalists.

About two or three years ago *The Review* was renowned for investigative journalism. We did quite a bit of it. But again it comes down to economics and we don't have the money. We had some good journalists, but they have left. And we just can't afford it at the moment...

## 6: Fiji news media profile

Media, I believe, has to take a lot of the blame for [conflict situations] because the media perpetuates it and reports some of the politicians saying the wrong thing. People always say they believe what they read in the newspapers. They may not believe what they hear on the radio, or see on TV. I don't know if this is true in the rest of the world, but in Fiji I have found that everybody believes in the power of the printed word. This is one reason why *The Fiji Times* is quite powerful — as Mahendra Chaudhry found out to his disadvantage (Gauder, interview with author, 2001).

Over time, argued former *Review* editor Shailendra Singh in an article profiling the state of the news media reform, allegations of misconduct damaged the media's integrity and credibility in the eyes of the public (Singh, 2002: 6). By not taking heed of the grievances about standards, the media in Fiji could 'become its own worst enemy'.

One area Government is clearly sceptical about is self-regulation through the Fiji Media Council, as recommended by the [Thomson] report. Even the authors admitted that a system allowing the media to be judge and jury at its own trial was far from perfect.

It was, however, strongly against Government regulation, seeing this as the greater evil. The authors had hoped that the Fiji Media Council, with a matching membership of lay people and media owners, and with a common code of practice, would help raise standards. In its nearly seven years of existence, the council ... has attended to more than 120 complaints. But whether it has lived up to the expectations of the Thomson Report is a point of contention.

The media feels the council is doing a fine enough job. The Government is in disagreement (*ibid.*).

The media's shortcomings, adds Singh, only strengthens the cause of those calling for censorship, including the Government.

### ***Foreshadowing a new media system***

The Thomson Report also recommended that a new *Media Act*<sup>35</sup> be passed incorporating the principles of self-regulation based on the Media Council and its code, and overhauling archaic and redundant legislation. For example, the colonial era *Press Correction Act 1949* had only been invoked once and the case was unsuccessful. According to the consultants, 'it differs from such Acts in many other countries in that it appears to apply not to any complainant against publication by the press of a significant inaccuracy but only to what appear as false or distorted statements *in the opinion of the Minister of Information* [their italics]' (Morgan & Thomas, 1996: 20). The consultants recommended repeal.<sup>36</sup>

While the *Defamation Act* in principle provides justice in defamation and libel cases in Fiji, in reality such cases can take 'an unconscionable time to come to court' and often 'reopen old wounds'. The consultants believe that in many cases the Media Council and the complaints procedure could provide swift redress, but recommended the law be left in place as a last resort.<sup>37</sup>

Another law with similar effect for media is the *Fair Trading Decree 1992*, which prescribes standards for the dissemination of news, information and comment. This is essentially a law for the protection of consumers and for protecting businesses against unfair practices. As the consultants explained the implications of this post-coup decree:

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<sup>35</sup> Recommendation 4.9.1.

<sup>36</sup> Recommendation 4.9.2.

<sup>37</sup> Recommendation 4.9.3.

It would apparently give redress to a company whose business was damaged by unfair comment in the media; it would give consumer redress against misleading advertising; and it would, in certain circumstances, protect the publisher of a misleading advertisement which was carried in good faith ... It provides, in a sense, the same recourse to law for commercial damage as does the *Defamation Act* for libel (*ibid.*: 21).

The Thomson Report recommended<sup>38</sup> that this decree remain in force but be considered further when their other recommendations are ‘in place and proven’. The consultants had little patience for the *Official Secrets Act*, which they described as ‘arguably one of the least enviable gifts of the British colonial legacy. In fact, they pointed out, the law was in the British *Official Secrets Act 1911*, applied to Fiji as an imperial Act.

In the United Kingdom, the Act remained in force basically unamended until 1989 — frequently criticised, largely discredited and a byword for the folly of overriding parliamentary checks by hustling measures through in an atmosphere of panic (*ibid.*).

Nemani Delabaitiki, a former editor of the original *Fiji Sun* and now a journalist in New Zealand, ran foul of Fiji’s *Official Secrets Act* by becoming the first (and so far only) journalist to be charged under this law. He was prosecuted in 1986 over an exposé about the Fiji military, but he was acquitted. The chief magistrate ‘ruled that the prosecution had failed to prove Delaibatiki knew when receiving a leaked confidential report that it was in contravention of the Act’ (Robie, 1989: 240). Delaibatiki later reflected with some strong criticism of the law.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Recommendation 4.9.4

<sup>39</sup> According to Nemani Delaibatiki in Robie, David (1989), *Blood on their Banner: Nationalist Struggles in the South Pacific*, London: Zed Books (p 240). ‘In the past the Fiji news media has enjoyed a good measure of press freedom compared with other Third World countries where there has been turmoil. We have faced threats. The [Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara] Government has wanted to exert some control ... The *Official Secrets Act* is outdated — it has been on the statute books since 1920 — and it was the first time it had been invoked by the Government. But

The Thomson Report pointed to the findings of the Fiji Constitution Review Commission<sup>40</sup> that stated the underlying policy ‘assumes that official information is Government property, which should not be given to anyone without specific reason and authorisation’. Until then, noted the consultants, any official information remain an ‘official secret’. Criminal of disciplinary sanctions applied for any information ‘wrongfully’ communicated. The consultants said they agreed with the Constitution Review Commission’s conclusion<sup>41</sup> that there were compelling reasons for reversing the thrust of present laws away from the protection of official secrets and towards providing access for official information. The Thomson Report recommended that the *Official Secrets Act* be replaced by an *Official Information Act* similar to one proposed by the Constitutional Review Commission<sup>42</sup> after consultation with the public and the media. By 1998, a draft *Freedom of Information Bill* was being circulated for public submissions that endorsed the principle that official information ‘should be made available unless there is good reason for withholding it’. Although there has been some debate about whether Fiji journalists should have a ‘shield’ law protecting from being forced to disclose confidential sources of information, the report recommended no change in this respect to the *Commissions of Inquiry Act*.

Journalism academic Shailendra Singh asked about the fate of the draft media legislation in his Fourth Estate column in *Wansolwara* in November 2002, noting that work on the draft *Fiji Media Bill* and *Freedom of Information Bill* had been ‘going on quietly but fervently’ for some time at the Information Ministry.

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the case raised the awareness of the Government over how far the Fiji press can go in reporting events of public interest. Home Affairs security was tightened, special locks put on doors and screening introduced.

‘During the election campaign, Ratu Mara made a veiled threat at a Lami meeting against the press. But, of course, [Dr Timoci Bavadra’s Labour-led] Coalition won [in April 1987] and everybody looked forward to open government. Then the Army took over by force.’

<sup>40</sup> Section 15.209.

<sup>41</sup> Section 15.211.

<sup>42</sup> Recommendation 4.10.11.

The race is on to have it ready in time for the February [2003] session. The Bill could change the way the media operates in Fiji - for better or for worse. The Bill, we are told, will be largely based on the Thomson Report [which] has been seen and fully endorsed by the media.

There is nothing in its recommendations that impinges on media freedom. On the contrary, it seeks to improve the conditions for the media to function freely.

Government, on its part, has given repeated assurances that it will not bring in laws that will curtail the media's freedom. However, the media and the Government have a different view of what constitutes media freedom, or even news for that matter (Singh, 2002: 6).

But most media critics were proven wrong. In a World Press Freedom Day workshop in Suva on 3 May 2003, Information Minister Simione Kaitani made public a controversial *Media Council of Fiji Bill* that immediately drew widespread condemnation from the news industry and civil society groups as 'draconian' and 'unconstitutional'.<sup>43</sup> Lawyer and media commentator Richard Naidu said the Bill was 'not so much sinister as plain amateurish' without achieving any real control over the media.<sup>44</sup> University of the South Pacific journalism coordinator Dev Nadkarni described the Bill as stirring 'a veritable hornet's nest', saying the Government should drop it if it did not want to face a 'public relations nightmare'. He added:

Ever since the draft of the proposed bill was made public in early May, the Fiji media has left no stone unturned in campaigning against the Bill condemning it to be draconian, un-libertarian and a thinly disguised bid by the Government to gain control over the basic freedom of expression.

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<sup>43</sup> For an index of responses and submissions on the draft Bill, see *Pacific Media Watch*: [www.pmw.c2o.org/2003/fijidraftmediasubs.html](http://www.pmw.c2o.org/2003/fijidraftmediasubs.html) (Retrieved 30 June 2003).

<sup>44</sup> Naidu, Richard (2003, June). Not so much sinister as plain amateurish. *The Review*. Republished in *Pacific Journalism Review*. August. 9 (1).

Editorials, news reports, letters to the editor, radio broadcasts, sound-bytes from opinion leaders and television news spots have been choc-a-block with anti-bill views on a daily basis.<sup>45</sup>

Some stakeholders consulted by the Information Ministry strongly opposed the Bill. Among reasons cited were the haste to introduce the draft legislation in Parliament with less than a month allowed for public submissions, and a claim that the Bill was based on the Thomson Report. But the Government was forced to withdraw this embarrassing claim. In a submission, *The Fiji Times* said control and regulation were ‘inappropriate’ for Fiji, adding that the newspaper was committed to improving training and journalism standards as a way forward. ‘If Government is prepared to drop this draft entirely, it does not mean the media of Fiji is the only winner. Everyone wins,’ the paper said.<sup>46</sup>

Among important public concerns were the draft Bill empowering the Government to select all council members, provision for an appeal process, and a provision for fines of up to F\$2,000 for people failing to reveal information to the council (*see Appendix 13*). This was seen as potentially comprising journalists’ traditional relationship with sources. However, the Attorney General, Qoriniasi Bale, bitterly condemned the Fiji media, accusing it of working against the Government by ‘playing along with the prophets of doom’ in spreading negative news about the country. Brushing aside speculation that the Bill would be shelved, Bale said that Government would persist with enacting the legislation.

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<sup>45</sup> Nadkarni, Dev (2003, June). Proposed Media Bill Stirring Hornet’s Nest. *Islands Business*. [www.pacificislands.cc/pm62003/pmdefault.php?urlarticleid=0043](http://www.pacificislands.cc/pm62003/pmdefault.php?urlarticleid=0043) (Retrieved 30 June 2003).

<sup>46</sup> Fiji Times urges Government to drop media bill. (2003, June 1). *Pacific Media Watch*. [www.pmw.c2o.org/2003/fiji4071.html](http://www.pmw.c2o.org/2003/fiji4071.html) (Retrieved 30 June 2003).

## **Conclusion**

Fiji has a highly developed media industry compared with most other Pacific countries with one of the regions biggest and most influential newspapers, *The Fiji Times*, among its three dailies, a strong radio broadcasting industry and also a vibrant television company, Fiji Television Ltd. Long criticised for its lack of support for local production, Fiji TV appeared in early 2003 about to lose its exclusive licence. The region's main cooperative news agency, Pacnews, is also based in Suva after being forced to leave the country two years after Sitiveni Rabuka's military coups. The political coups and upheaval in 1987 and again in 2000 had a traumatic impact on the media industry with a loss of skilled journalists and dilemmas over professional independence and ethics. Although essentially it was a struggle for power within the indigenous Fijian community along with a conflict between tradition and modernity, the inevitable polarisation of races undermined notions of objectivity and professionalism.

Several editors and senior practitioners in the media industry are concerned at a lack of commitment for training and education while a debate continues over better public accountability models for the news organisations. The self-regulatory Fiji Media Council is now well established in spite of moves by the Government to impose some form of regulation. The landmark Thomson Report in 1996 made a series of far-reaching recommendations for legislative reform for the news industry, notably a proposed *Fiji Media Act* overhauling the country's ad hoc laws impacting on media organisations and a *Freedom of Information Act*. The report also called for stronger commitment to journalism education and training. However, three Governments — led by Sitiveni Rabuka, Mahendra Chaudhry and Laisenia Qarase — failed to deliver. For six years, the draft media legislation never quite made it to Parliament, fuelling industry scepticism about the intention of the reforms. When a draft Bill was made public in May 2003, it was bitterly opposed by the media industry as 'draconian'.

## CHAPTER SEVEN: A ‘Melanesian style of media’

The intervention by the New Zealand Government to host the Journalism Programme at UPNG laid the foundation for future work [in the Pacific] that is continuing. It started with one man and with New Zealand seed money. Now ... people who are in high places at the university don't think that journalism is important.

*Joseph Sukwianomb, former Vice-Chancellor of UPNG, 2001<sup>1</sup>*

Ross Stevens had considerable charisma, as well as having considerable integrity. He made a huge impact on everybody .... . He just had a kind of naturally authoritative and diplomatic manner. I have got absolutely no doubt that one of the reasons things moved with such momentum was that he had absolutely the right set of qualities for doing that job.

*Michael King, NZ historian and former UPNG lecturer, 2001<sup>2</sup>*

WHEN a pilot training project for Papua New Guinean journalists in New Zealand ended as a failure, or even ‘disaster’, (Henshall, 1997: 97; King, 2001) on the eve of PNG independence, the NZ Government responded to its local advisers and came up with an alternative plan. According to the late British journalism educator Peter Henshall, an experiment of sending 12 PNG journalists to New Zealand's Wellington Polytechnic in 1974 had the odds stacked against it anyway:

It proved too difficult for the students to make the necessary adjustments<sup>3</sup> to the very

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Sukwianomb, audiotaped interview with author, Port Moresby, 3 May 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Michael King, audiotaped interview with author, Opoutere, NZ, 23 June 2001.

<sup>3</sup> According to New Zealand historian Michael King (interview with author, 23 June 2001), who taught the students: ‘It was pretty disastrous for two reasons, as I remember:

- Some of the students had very poor English language skills, which meant that they weren't even able to take in the content of the lectures, let alone get started on exercises and stories in English.

difficult culture and climate, and at the same time cope with the demands of a course designed for people for whom English is not their first language (Henshall, *op cit.*).

Following this disappointment, a decision was made to bring a journalism trainer to Papua New Guinea, 'so that students could learn in the environment in which they would eventually make their living' (Ingram, 1986: 3). Journalism education and training was introduced at the University of Papua New Guinea at the beginning of 1975, when the New Zealand Government agreed to fund a one-year Diploma in Journalism course for an initial two-year period. New Zealand also provided the founding lecturer, journalist Ross Stevens,<sup>4</sup> who later became one of Television New Zealand's leading investigative journalists.

### **Ross Stevens — bringing journalism alive**

At the time, most journalists in Papua New Guinea were still expatriates. Training was a haphazard affair, with the handful of local reporters being trained in-house by the two principal employers of the period — the Office of Information and the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). Approaching independence and the rapid expansion worldwide of the communications sector meant that PNG 'faced a serious shortfall in media personnel, in both quantity and quality' (*ibid.*). Stevens was based at UPNG as this was regarded as the only institution in the country capable of supplying necessary academic and training facilities to support the new journalism programme. Another early lecturer was Michael King, who later

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- The other problem arose out of being relocated without any sort of preparation. They had huge problems just dealing with day to day problems and some of them got into quite serious difficulties. One of the girls got pregnant, and a lot of the boys got into fights.'

<sup>4</sup> Ross Stevens died from cancer, aged 50, in July 1997 at the peak of his career with the TVNZ current affairs programme *Assignment*. Ironically, another leading journalism educator UPNG, Peter Henshall, a key figure in the mid and late 1980s, died shortly after leaving Papua New Guinea. He collapsed on a British tennis court at the age of 42.

became one of New Zealand's finest author-historians. He believes that the idealism of the era stirred remarkable commitment about the potential for journalism to contribute to participatory democracy, 'and that's really why everyone was aiming as high as they were' (King, interview with author, 2001). Former Vice-Chancellor Joseph Sukwianomb, who was a student leader at the time, recalls the heady independence days as a period when a weekly radio programme, *University on Air*, and newspaper, *Uni Tavour*, were launched, and 'journalism really came alive' (Sukwianomb, interview with author, 2001).

Ross Stevens moved things, he organised programmes and set things up ... Ross is remembered now by many journalists working in media organisations, including John Somare, Joshua Kalinoe, these were initial students who were also my friends. I remember the years 1975, 1976, 1977 ... these were very productive when journalism really came alive. Every Friday we were huddled around the radio [on NBC] to listen to a programme that was put together by the students (*ibid.*).

Initially, the course ran for longer than the academic year, 'spilling over into the Lahara sessions at either side of Christmas'. (Ingram, 1986: 3) Student journalists were given

basic training in the techniques of recognising, finding and writing news, reinforced with short attachments with media organisations while most of their fellow students were on holiday (*ibid.*).

The approach was regarded as having worked 'reasonably well', although from the start there was recognition that this programme was not enough. Although successful students emerged after a year able to carry out the basic functions required of a journalist, they were still 'immature and largely unskilled in any of the more advanced areas of journalism' (*ibid.*), such

as specialist and feature writing, subediting and radio news production. For some time, the media industry lobbied to try to persuade the PNG Government and the university that better training was worth supporting and paying for. The New Zealand Government extended funding for the scheme by one year, until 1978, and then the PNG Government took over financial responsibility through its budgetary grant to UPNG. In the first three years of the school, some 44 journalists undertook the course, several of whom had been in the profession for some time but who had had no formal training. Michael King taught some 22<sup>5</sup> journalism students in the first Lahara session at the start of 1976. He described them as 'bright and energetic' and wrote back to his family:

I get up sixish in the mornings, coolest part of the day, to do the bulk of my preparation and marking. Classes begin at 8 am. Everybody dresses casually (shorts, T-shirts and jandals) which is a relief. The teaching day runs through to 4 pm. We're giving the group lectures on the principles of journalism, followed by immediate relevant exercises which we sub, correct, grade and get back to the class as quickly as possible. We also get them to report any functions that turn out to be on around the university or in town, and we invite people into the class for interviews and press conferences. This week there was an assembly of the Pacific Conference of Churches with over 100 delegates from all over the region. We generated some good work on the back of this and I brought Bishop Finau from Tonga into the class.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Email communication to the author by Michael King on 22 June 2001, quoting from a letter to his family on 3 January 1976, which said: 'We have twenty two students, twenty Papua New Guineans and two Solomon Islanders [who were actually from Rennell].'

<sup>6</sup> Email communication to the author by Michael King on 22 June 2001, quoting from a letter to his family on 16 January 1976, which also said: 'The numbers are up to twenty three now. They're a bright and energetic bunch, with a mixture of German, Catholic, Biblical and Melanesian names (Ottos, Piuses, Gideons, Tangalabos). Their English is proficient on the whole and they're eager for work. It's fun teaching them.'

Sorariba Nash, a renowned short story author and current leader of the journalism strand at UPNG, was one of the original students. He recalls that the school laid a foundation for journalism training, not only in Papua New Guinea, but also throughout the South Pacific.

I am very proud of the school. In 1975, the New Zealand Government established it as the pioneering journalism school in the Pacific. Not only did the school bring together Papua New Guineans, but all sorts of people from the rest of the region. I remember there was somebody from Kiribati, the Solomon Islands, Samoa, many of our colleagues out there now working in big positions in Government and the private sector — they all benefited from this school. I see it as an independence gift. It was the best gift because the school has survived all these years and produced so many journalists (Sorariba, interview with author, 2001).

But the task was not easy. Stevens and his colleagues encountered 'a surprising amount of racism' (King, *op. cit.*) among the old expats, mostly Australian, including some journalists, and needed to work around that without provoking them. They also needed to deal with prejudice against journalism education at a university. At the time, New Zealand had only one journalism course based at a university, the University of Canterbury postgraduate journalism programme, and this was regarded with some scepticism in many media industry circles. Even in Australia, university journalism education was still in its relative infancy.

The whole idea of putting journalism into the context of university education still ran counter to the perceptions of the New Zealand journalism industry at that stage that you best learn about the job on the job. And I would have thought probably among the network of existing working journalists in Papua New Guinea at the time, too. But I'm not really sure about that.

I can remember we got a bit of scoffing from the journos at the *Post-Courier* and the NBC, and these tended to be expatriates, and almost all Australians, and they weren't especially complimentary about:

- training journalists in a university context, and
- about the idea of training indigenous journalists in a university context (*ibid.*).

Sorariba was among many journalists of the era who were grateful for the pioneering efforts by Ross Stevens. To them, the whole concept of journalism when they entered the school was new. 'We didn't know that you had to go to Parliament and face parliamentarians,' recalled Sorariba. 'You had to go to court. You even had to argue with taxi drivers'. Stevens and his practical style that involved a lot of off-campus work, doing interviews, left a lasting impression.<sup>7</sup>

I think it was his character, the leadership that he demonstrated what a journalist should do, that provided a model. It was quite new to us. We come from a cultural background where we are shy, we don't shout at people, we don't talk a lot. The way Ross Stevens took us around Port Moresby during training, during practical work, set the pace, gave us that example as a journalist — and the courage.

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<sup>7</sup> Ross Stevens later returned to Papua New Guinea in July 1985, a decade after establishing the journalism school. He was commissioned by the NZ Coalition for Trade and Development to complete a Pacific-wide survey of United Nations development programme work in the region begun earlier that year by David Robie (*see* Stevens, Ross [1986], *The United Nations Development Programme in Papua New Guinea: Three Case Studies*, NZCTD Pacific and Research Project). Robie's earlier report had covered all the Pacific states excluding Papua New Guinea. Stevens chose three projects — crocodile farming, salvinia eradication, and women in business — to feature in his report. He remarked in his introduction: 'Papua New Guinea was for me and my family, between 1975 and 1981, home. I will always be grateful to the coalition for allowing me to return "home" for those ten busy days and hope the work herein has not suffered overly through the many diversions I had while there through conversations and catching up with old friends. Papua New Guinea is a fascinating and absorbing country — even more so now that its independence is ten years old and the idealism of the mid-seventies has been replaced by the realities of the 1980s.'

Ross ... was more or less our role model, for those of us who attended the school — the first lot. We wanted to be like him. He played a very important role and I am grateful for his presence (Sorariba, *op. cit.*).

Michael King shares the impressions of Sorariba and many others about the vital role that Stevens played in establishing the programme.

Ross Stevens had considerable charisma, as well as having considerable integrity. He made a huge impact on everybody — the students in one direction, but also all the people he had to deal with in officialdom, either in the Office of Information, the NBC, or the university. He just had a kind of naturally authoritative and diplomatic manner. I have got absolutely no doubt that one of the reasons things moved with such momentum was that he had absolutely the right set of qualities for doing that job (King, *op. cit.*).

King regarded 'Ross's stature, commitment and expertise' as an 'enormous factor in the whole thing working' (*ibid.*). He noted that by the time he arrived in Port Moresby after a year that Stevens was already speaking Tok Pisin, and some Motu.

The fact that he had made that effort too, was an indication of how committed he was to the job. It actually gave him a facility to talk to indigenous people across the cultures because of Tok Pisin being the lingua franca, whereas anybody else in his position would have had to reply to an interpreter (*ibid.*).

There were also high and idealistic expectations on the media in this emerging nation. 'Founding father' Sir Michael Somare, Papua New Guinea's first Prime Minister and himself a

former radio journalist, told a seminar on the mass media and human development a month before independence that the role of news organisations was vital in building the nation.

The mass media aims to reflect human development, but its role goes far beyond that. All reporting through the media, however, impartial, is selective. Because it is selective it influences our development, in particular directions ... Many Papua New Guineans have developed a liking for fast cars and tailor-made cigarettes. It is the media of films and advertising which has helped us to develop this liking (Somare, 1975: 4).

Drawing on his broadcasting background, he warned about the damage that could be caused by media not offering a 'correct balance' for the nation.

It is my fear that radio advertising will destroy the balance that will allow human development in Papua New Guinea to be that of future comfort and happiness. I believe that advertising on radio, because it reaches into so many homes, will increase the materialist cult in Papua New Guinea and by its methods destroy many of our spiritual supports (*ibid.*: 5).

### ***Uni Tavor — an independent newspaper tradition***

The training publication *Uni Tavor*, which played an important role in the formation of journalists over the next two decades, was founded during the Stevens era. *Tavor* means 'conch shell' in the Tolai language of the Gazelle Peninsula, East New Britain. The shell was the paper's masthead logo. Journalism student Robert Elowo, who died in a tragic car accident in 1976 while working for NBC's Radio Kundiawa, designed the original version. *Uni* is derived



Figure 7.1: *Uni Tavur* in its 'yellow journalism' phase in 1992.

from the university.<sup>8</sup> *Uni Tavur* was launched on 24 July 1975.<sup>9</sup> The first edition carried news items, including social and sports events. It consisted of four A4 size pages and had a circulation of 200 copies. Over the years that followed, *Uni Tavur* witnessed many changes.

<sup>8</sup> See Waibauru, Jessie (1994). Frog's heads, old ashtrays and politics. *Uni Tavur*, July 22, p 10-11.

<sup>9</sup> Due to an editorial mix-up during one year over volume numbers, the editions of *Uni Tavur* lost their sequence. Thus the newspaper celebrated two decades of publishing a year early in 1994 (Waibauru, 1994: 88). The paper was published every year until 2000 when there was uncertainty over the future of the UPNG Journalism Programme.

Student reporters were assigned to rounds and they needed to cover anything of news value for their readers. Recalled Sukwianomb:

*Uni Tavur* came ... to play a significant role in the university scene in terms of changing ideas ... generally about that period from independence ... the campus was very vibrant, very active. The students were well aware of what was happening. This was the time of student demonstrations and strikes. They were all reported from student angles by student journalists (Sukwianomb, *op. cit.*).

'Whether it was life on campus, life on the borderline, the political scene or anything of national interest, the students sweated to get the paper going,' wrote first-year journalism student Jessie Waibauru in the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary issue<sup>10</sup>. (Waibauru, 1994: 88) In a retrospective survey of *Uni Tavur* over the years, she captured the essence of a lively publication and a snapshot of history. Starting in 1975, reports focused on Sir Michael Somare leading the country to independence on September 16, and the selection and swearing in of the first PNG Governor-General, Sir John Guise.

Letters to the editor caused some laughs. According to one correspondent in 1975: 'I've followed the progress of *Uni Tavur* since its establishment with a great deal of interest. However ... my criticism is directed at the use of phrases such as "other sources", "one informant", "unknown sources", "it is believed", "a source close to *Uni Tavur*" etc ... Your anonymous source is like a man whose wife has run away from him, and who then asks someone else to go and beat up his wife because he's afraid she might bite. He's a "rubbish man", and you'll find his opinions or statements — even if they sound important — are worthless, and of lesser news value too' (*ibid.*: 90).

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<sup>10</sup> 20<sup>th</sup> birthday issue of *Uni Tavur*, 22 July 1994.

In 1978, there were reports about Papua New Guinea moving to support the 'Kanak Liberation Movement' fighting for independence for New Caledonia from France. During the same year, an arts student said that marijuana should be legalised in Papua New Guinea because it was 'not as bad as beer'. In 1979, a second-year student in social work said he had found a frog's head in his plate of food. When the mess manager was asked about it, he reportedly said it was 'an oyster'. In 1981, Student Representative Council (SRC) president Gabriel Ramoi criticised the lecturers' manner of dressing, while a commerce student alleged the Government had wasted millions of kina by recruiting overseas specialists to improve accounting systems.

The following year the library display on smoking caused a smoky nightmare for smokers. The headlines read: YOU CAN'T SCRUB THE SMOKERS ...TRY SOME, SMOKERS TAKE IT REGULARLY ... HAPPY BIRTHDAY SMOKERS and, to top it off, KISSING A SMOKER IS LIKE KISSING AN OLD ASHTRAY. During the same year, in March 1982, UPNG students paid tribute to the late Gabriel Gris, the first Papua New Guinean Vice-Chancellor, who died suddenly. At the time of its 20<sup>th</sup> 'birthday', in 1994, *Uni Tavur* was reporting about the Bougainville conflict and corruption. According to Waibauru:

Twenty years this week sees a different *Uni Tavur* with modern equipment to facilitate the production. The newspaper has improved, not only in size, but also the quality of the reports. There has been a significant change because of desktop publishing. The content has also changed dramatically. It now has advertisements (*ibid.*: 91).

Ross Stevens was among the many whom sent messages of congratulations to *Uni Tavur* to mark its 'two decades old' special issue. His message arrived late so it was published in the edition of 19 August 1994. He appealed to the Papua New Guinean news media to continue

valuing a good tertiary education for the 'most important profession of all. The one that "keeps the bastards honest":<sup>11</sup>

*Uni Tavor* 20 years old? Is it that long since I arrived in Port Moresby? Long since I first felt that hot blast of the Port Moresby noon on my pale Southland cheeks? Twenty years since I met Olive Tau carrying a typewriter on her Hanuabada head; Tabo Epita beside her showing Kavieng air is just as good as carrying an Olympus portable? Does anyone now — in the age of Apple — remember what an Olympus portable is?

And is it really 20 years since I asked Geoff Heard, then carrying the odd title of 'cadet counsellor' to the NBC newsroom, whether he wanted me to teach news writing and news style in a 'Melanesian Way'? (The answer incidentally was No!) (Stevens, 1994: 9).

Another message came from Vice-Chancellor Joseph Sukwianomb, who described two decades of publishing *Uni Tavor* as a 'remarkable feat' for a small newspaper.

When the first copy of the first edition of *Uni Tavor* ran off the press, the pioneers of that historical epoch perhaps did not think that there would be many more copies, and 20 years

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<sup>11</sup> In the article, 'Tales of Olympus days to Apple', *Uni Tavor*, 19 August 1995, p 9, Ross Stevens told of his contacts with journalism graduates since he had been teaching at UPNG, people such as Alfred Sasako (who later became a Minister of State in the Solomon Islands), and Angwi Hriehwazi, who in 2001 became editor of *The National*: He wrote:

'There have been a lot of happy contacts with UPNG journo grads since then.

'Angwi Hriehwazi from the *Post-Courier* with a new name and professional attitude, and lots of shocking stories to tell about Bougainville.

'I covered the Bougainville story last year [1993] when I went to Gizo in the Western Solomons to talk to Kiwi Richard Harty who had been doing some supply chores for the BRA between the Solomons and Bougainville.

'He told us about having to resort to "furry chicken" and "barking beef" in lieu of food not available because of the PNG blockade, and the more serious absence of the anti-malarials which had affected his young daughter's health so badly that he and his wife and child were ultimately forced to flee for medical help across the border.

'The PNG medical blockade was a course of action that gave new meaning to the "Melanesian Way".

'On the same trip I had met a young Bougainvillean journalist — Moresi Tua — who had been caught trying to get back into PNG from the Solomons by a PNG Defence Force patrol boat, and who was still carrying the scars — one across his temple and a deep wound in his back — from the experience.

'All of his companions had been shot dead — he had been left for dead in the sea of blood, unconscious and later revived and got himself to shore.'

to live on ... Survival of a project such as *Uni Tavor* has also symbolised the growth of specialist training for journalists in this country. (Sukwianomb, 1994: 17)

The following year, the real anniversary, saw *Uni Tavor* go tabloid, boost its circulation to 2000, begin printing fortnightly editions on newsprint with the *Post-Courier*, and introduce a liftout investigative reporting section called 'Insight'. The paper went on to win the 1995 Ossie Award from Australia's Journalism Education Association (JEA) for the best regular publication in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific (*Uni Tavor* takes out top award, *Post-Courier*, 1996). The judge, Max Suich, editor-in-chief of Sydney's *The Independent Monthly*, said: 'By far the most impressive was the University of PNG newspaper, which had a level of maturity in its writing, and a concern with national issues, that made it stand head and shoulders above the others.' (*ibid.*). In 1997, the newspaper's student journalists covered the Sandline mercenary crisis.

### ***The Henshall and Ingram era — 'exciting innovation'***

In the four years after UPNG took over responsibility for the journalism programme from the New Zealand Government in 1979, the media industry lobbied for expanded courses. In particular, the NBC was keen for broadcast journalism to be included in the programme. Also, student journalists themselves wanted more university level education. An agreement was reached to expand the programme and an effort was made to seek overseas funding. This attempt failed, however, and in 1983/4 UPNG undertook internal reorganisation to make it possible to employ a second lecturer in journalism and advertised the position. Two innovative lecturers from Britain were recruited, lanky Peter Henshall who was to become an icon of PNG and Pacific journalism education, and David Ingram, who later moved to Sydney to become training manager for SBS Radio. According to Ingram (1986), the university sacrificed a

teaching post in the Language Department to fund a new two-year Diploma in Media Studies and a four-year Bachelor of Journalism degree, which had their first intakes in 1985 and 1986 respectively. Both programmes contained 'exciting innovations' in journalism training for PNG and the Pacific. Ingram remarked in a paper at a national media and development seminar in Port Moresby:

We now offer a full three-point course called Media and the Law in PNG, which we hope prepares our students for the complicated demands the law makes on working journalists. We may have shocked some in the university by offering a three-point, year-long course in shorthand, but employers have long recognised the need for journalists to be able to make fast and accurate notes of what people say. We now send our second-year students out on a semester-long attachment to one of the national media organisations, where their basic skills are tempered in the fires of experience. (*ibid.*: 3).

And to round off the student journalists' abilities, each student chose a six-point advanced course in either Radio Production and Print Media Production, to prepare them for specialist demands within those two media. Television had not yet arrived in Papua New Guinea. The new diploma and degree programmes had slightly different aims to satisfy a number of expressed needs of employers. The diploma course was still primarily to train good 'hard news' journalists who could report competently and effectively on day-to-day events. The degree course aimed to give a smaller number of journalism students a greater depth of education and heightened awareness of their role in society so that they could write more analytically in specialist areas, particularly in such fields as economics, law, politics and science. The degree course also attracted interest from working journalists who had already completed a journalism diploma and wanted to expand their education and improve their journalistic skills. The innovative new programme was not without some opposition. Noted Ingram:

All of this is once again under attack, as the Government and the university quite naturally assess the kina-effectiveness of individual courses and their priority in the manpower needs of the country. By those two criteria alone, journalism training must come high on this nation's list for safeguarding both development and democracy (*ibid.*).

The decade since independence saw impressive strides taken in expanding the media in Papua New Guinea. A National Newspaper Committee was appointed by the Government in 1978 to report on the idea of a new daily newspaper to be published by the Government.<sup>12</sup> In spite of 'having no funding at all', the committee produced its report two years later, concluding that the country needed 'more and better training for journalists' and an 'improvement of news collection networks and access to information' (cited in Henshall, 1989: 51). Seven years later, the Kalo Report<sup>13</sup> recommended that television be introduced 'on the basis of two commercial channels followed as soon as practicable by the public service channel' (*ibid.*: 50).

In 1978, Luke Sela was appointed as the first indigenous editor of the *Post-Courier*. By the mid-1980s, Papua New Guineans were in most of the senior positions in the three English-language and one vernacular national newspapers and the entire news and current affairs division of the NBC was localised. Many national and provincial government press offices were staffed entirely by Papua New Guineans.

Even in the fledgling public relations industry, locals were making inroads. Despite the advances, many of the more technical jobs in journalism, such as production layout and subediting, were still mainly filled by expatriates. And political and industry leaders still sought

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<sup>12</sup> Report of the National Newspaper Committee (PNG Office of Information), September 1980.

<sup>13</sup> The Report of the Board of Inquiry into Broadcasting (including Television) in Papua New Guinea (chairman Sir Kwamalo Kalo, MBE), 1987.

foreign professionals to head their public relations campaigns. Ingram warned about the dangers of local 'head hunting' in a young industry:

In the field of journalism generally, there is still a serious manpower shortage, with employers chasing a limited number of trained Papua New Guinean journalists, attracting them with increased salaries, allowances and perks like private cars. That in itself would be no bad thing, except that in PNG the targets of such 'head hunting' are often very inexperienced young journalists who are being pushed into positions of seniority long before they are ready. They find themselves struggling to fill the shoes of a departed expatriate (who may have been in the profession for 20 or more years) and unable to advance in the manner in which they would like because they have no one upon whom to model themselves. And herein lies the danger. We are putting one of the strongest tools for the fashioning of nationhood and democracy into the hands of young people only partly trained to use it (*ibid.*: 1).

### ***Media, language and 'PiNGLISH'***

This situation highlighted and strengthened the need for journalism education in Papua New Guinea. With illiteracy still a major problem in the country, the role of the NBC in educating and informing citizens was clear. The transistor radio could reach into almost every home in the country, speaking in the vernacular over Kundu Radio and in English, Tok Pisin and Hiri Motu over the Kalang and Karai services. And although most readers of the three national English language newspapers lived in urban areas, the value of the press to the rural population was also important. The importance of the Tok Pisin weekly newspaper *Wantok* was even clearer. According to its church publishers,

by the light of the kerosene lamps all over PNG, it is the most listened-to [sic] paper in the country (*ibid.*: 4).

The success of the provincial radio, *Wantok* and vernacular newsletters raised questions about assumptions on how to communicate with grassroots people. Henshall and Ingram questioned the extent to which the media 'still adheres slavishly' to journalism models from Australia, Britain, New Zealand and the United States. In the context of media education, they also raised the issue of language, noting that

people are now taking more seriously the concept of 'PiNGLISH' — PNG English, a form of English which is adapting all the time to the ways in which Papua New Guineans naturally speak. Although PiNGLISH has its critics, especially in the media, its development is little different to the way in which English has been adapted by North Americans or Australians (*ibid.*).

Teaching journalism at UPNG, lecturers needed to bear in mind these issues of language when assessing student journalists' work. Often there was a narrow line between what might be seen in some countries as bad grammar and what had become part of 'PNG English'. However, according to a British journalism lecturer, Christopher Moore (1995: 66), 'the most formidable problem facing the teacher and student of journalism in PNG is the poor level of fluency in written and spoken English'. He questioned whether 'Correct English' was the best language to be teaching journalism in the country:

Papua New Guineans will never speak English 'correctly'. Why should they? It is not their language (*ibid.*: 71).

Moore believed that PiNGLISH, heavily influenced by Tok Pisin and Motu forms, would prevail, in the same way that Indian-English had emerged in India to become a respectable medium for journalism.

One development seen in the 1980s as being potentially able to help Papua New Guinea break away from its dependence on Western news values and styles was the establishment of a national news agency. Such an agency, along the lines of the Press Association in Britain, Australian Associated Press in Australia, and NZ Press Association in New Zealand, would provide news for all media organisations in PNG. It was even touted as a possible model for the Pacific.<sup>14</sup> Henshall was commissioned by UNESCO to prepare a report on the desirability of a news agency being established in Papua New Guinea. He visited Malaysia to study the operation of Bernama news agency, concluding in his 1989 report:

It is clear that the greatest need to improve Papua New Guinea's news gathering and dissemination network is a comprehensive provincial reporting system. This is the primary justification for the establishment, as soon as possible, of a Papua New Guinea national news agency (Henshall, 1989: 59).

The immediate advantages of such a network of news reporters, in his view, included:

- Bringing all rural area and provincial urban areas 'out of the shadows' to foster greater development;
- Fostering national unity, by increasing mutual knowledge and understanding between communities;

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<sup>14</sup> Ironically, this idea for PNG coincided with the Pacnews radio news cooperative being launched in Fiji. See Seward, Robert (1999), *Radio Happy Isles: Media and Politics at Play in the Pacific*. Honolulu, University of Hawai'i Press). Pacnews, operated by the Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association (PIBA), was begun three years later after a PACBROAD editors' workshop at Suva, 14-18 September 1987.

- Introducing balance into provincial reporting, in place of the claim and counter-claim characterising politicians' press releases;
- Increasing the content of news media which would be relevant to people living in the provinces.

Although there was a great deal of sympathy for the proposal, undoubtedly cost would have been a reason for leaving the report to gather dust. Successive governments did not see it as financially viable. But certainly in the mid-1980s there was considerable awareness of the UPNG journalism programme's role in helping develop a unique style of PNG journalism.

Explained Ingram:

We hope that UPNG is playing its part in this process of attempting to develop a Melanesian style of media. We are currently embarking on a programme of localising journalism training, bearing in mind both the academic demands of the university and the professional demands of the industry (Ingram, *op cit.*: 5).

However, Ingram warned that this might take some time because there were 'few people in PNG yet with the right combination of academic qualifications and working experience to take over'. (*ibid.*) But they would emerge. Henshall was contracted by UNESCO to run the PACJOURN programme for four years, based at UPNG. This programme ran a series of pioneering short courses for Pacific Islands journalists around the region, a role later adopted by the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA) for its members. The Henshall and Ingram era at UPNG reached a climax in 1992 with the publication of *The News Manual*, a three-part training text with illustrations by popular *Grasruts* creator Bob Brown, which became the staple for newsrooms and university courses for the next decade. Also in 1992, Uni Taur flirted with 'yellow journalism' – printing on canary-coloured paper stock.

***Both high achiever and 'Cinderella'***

In spite of its achievements, the UPNG Journalism Programme often continued to be treated as a 'Cinderella by the university for perplexing reasons' (Robie, 1997: 100). The programme appeared to make progress in cycles, but remained under-resourced for its needs. Even in its formative years, it had not been well resourced. Recalled Michael King about his teaching spell in the second year of the course:

Basically, we had classrooms, and it was chalk and talk. The NBC provided radio equipment ... to do radio things, and tape recorders on loan. The *Post-Courier* provided complimentary copies of the paper every day. And that was all we really had.

There was certainly nothing in the way of facilities that one would have expected later, like video and film, or anything of that sort ... I think you could say that we were not conspicuously well resourced at the time, but we didn't particularly notice because it was a very low-tech operation (King, interview with author, 2001).

Broadcast lecturer Chris Moore returned to Britain in 1991 and New Zealander Maurice Kneebone, who had been teaching Practical Reporting and Print Media, left with his family for Australia in September 1992 in the wake of a machete attack and harassment by raskols. 'People from other countries see your country as a place full of criminals,' Kneebone said at his farewell luncheon. 'But you are the most wonderful, peace-loving, easygoing and generous people I have ever come across' <sup>15</sup> The departures left a crippling staff shortage that was partially filled by *Post-Courier* acting news editor Leigh Martin, who was deeply committed and several times helped out the programme.

For then Vice-Chancellor Joseph Sukwianomb, the shortage of resources involved a lack of appreciation by the university administration of the importance of media and journalism

education in a democracy 'in terms of allocation of resources'. (Sukwianomb, interview with author, 2001) The next period of notable advances in the journalism programme was led by the me, a New Zealand journalist having specialised in South Pacific political and social reporting for more than 15 years. With me was one of the founding students, Sorariba Nash, who had returned to UPNG after a journalism career, mostly with the NBC. Sorariba in 1991 became the first indigenous journalism lecturer at a university in the South Pacific, and later gained a masters degree in media at Cardiff University. At the time, the programme sorely needed professional newsrooms, computers, recording studios (a Japanese-funded broadcast studio donated in the 1980s had fallen into disrepair), editing suites, and basic equipment such as a fax machine, tape recorders, video cameras and even telephones. I recalled four years later:

When I first arrived at UPNG at the beginning of 1993, although the programme was then eighteen years old, students were writing in longhand with an abandoned pile of rusting typewriters. The students had not even been provided with a newsroom or a telephone [for newsgathering]. How could they be educated in how to become a journalist when they are not provided with the basic tools? How would physics fare without physics laboratories? Or chemistry? (Robie, 1997: 100).

When journalism students petitioned the UPNG administration in 1995 over the lack of a broadcast newsroom and facilities, two decades after the founding of the programme, Acting Vice-Chancellor Nick Kuman replied in a memo:

With regard to the funding of the journalism programme, you'll recall that it started off as a temporary course funded externally. While budgetary provisions have been made, it is up

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<sup>15</sup> Iparam, Judah, and Brian Tobia (1992, October 5). Journalism school loses lecturer. *Uni Tavur*, p 2.

to the Government to provide funding for the development of journalism according to its own priorities. I am fully in support to build up the South Pacific Centre for Communication and Information in Development (especially journalism) as a 'centre of excellence' in the region but we have to be mindful of the fact that we need Government support for this (Kuman, 1995).

In spite of the lack of facilities, the journalism programme peaked at more than 70 students in 1993-4 with the highest number of degree graduates (*See Table 7.1*)<sup>16</sup>, although attempts were made to reduce this to a more manageable number in following years. Over the next five years, the UPNG journalism programme succeeded in gaining funding that totalled more than K71,000 to upgrade facilities, including a Macintosh desktop publishing newsroom,

**Table 7.1: Journalism graduates at UPNG by qualification and year.**

Year	DJRN* (1975)	DIMS** (1986)	BJRN** (1986)	BSC (Jrn) (1999)	CertIJ§ (1995)	CertPR§ (1995)
1976	15	—	—	—	—	—
1977	16	—	—	—	—	—
1978	11	—	—	—	—	—
1979	12	—	—	—	—	—
1980	5	—	—	—	—	—
1981	10	—	—	—	—	—
1982	2	—	—	—	—	—
1983	1	—	—	—	—	—

<sup>16</sup> Eleven BJourn degree graduates and 12 DIMS diploma graduates for a total of 23 in 1993; and five degree graduates and seven diploma graduates totalling 12 the following year. In 1997, there were seven degree graduates and three diploma graduates, totalling 10. In the first two years of the UPNG journalism programme, 15 graduated with the one-year diploma in 1976, followed by 16 the next year.

7: A 'Melanesian' style of media

1984	6	—	—	—	—	—
1986	—	—	—	—	—	—
1987	—	9	—	—	—	—
1988	—	7	—	—	—	—
1989	—	3	4	—	—	—
1990	—	4	1	—	—	—
1991	—	2	4	—	—	—
1992	—	2	4	—	—	—
1993	—	12	11	—	—	—
1994	—	7	5	—	—	—
1995	—	—	—	—	2	2
1996	—	3	6	—	—	—
1997	—	3	7	—	—	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

Source: UPNG 1998.

\* The original Diploma in Journalism was a one-year qualification introduced in 1975 with the first graduates in 1976. All of the participants on the course were working journalists.

\*\* In 1986, the programme changed to introduce a two-year Diploma in Media Studies and four-year BA Journalism degree.

§ In 1995, a one-semester graduate Certificate in Investigative Journalism and graduate Certificate in Public Relations were introduced.

the establishment of a radio station, and the first newspaper website in the South Pacific (established for *Uni Tavur* in 1995). Donors included the New Zealand High Commission, the Canada Fund, *Post-Courier*, the Communication Assistance Foundation (CAF) of the Netherlands. The *Post-Courier* introduced an annual subsidy of K5,000, initially for equipment such as computers, and later a printing credit for *Uni Tavur*. The daily newspaper also offered similar assistance to Divine Word's *Liklik Diwai* in Madang.

In 1994, as print media lecturer I embarked on a three-pronged plan to turn *Uni Tavur* into a 'highly competitive and professional publication' along the 'community newspaper' model

— in other words, selling advertising space to cover printing and production costs, and distributing the paper free (*see* Robie, 1995, 1997). With the printing support from the *Post-Courier* and as the paper only needed to break even, this lifted some of the financial pressure.

However, it would still be a Herculean task to establish the paper's credentials as a viable advertising medium, especially when all student staff are part-time, including me, a lecturer teaching four or five other courses as well (Robie, 1996: 96).

After establishing a newsroom multi workstation set-up with a graduated access to the desktop system for reporters, subeditors and editors, work began on a design revamp to turn *Uni Tavur* from an A4 newsletter into a tabloid newspaper. In February 1995, the first news tabloid edition with four-colour news pictures on the front page rolled off the *Post-Courier* press. The South Pacific Post Pty Ltd's administrative manager, Luke Sela, launched the new-look *Uni Tavur*. In terms of accountability and guidelines, *Uni Tavur* was at the time the only newspaper in the South Pacific to have an 'editorial charter', a mechanism used increasingly in many countries to establish editorial quality. The paper also observed the Charter of Student Press Rights in accordance with the spirit of the United Nations Convention of Freedom of Information. The newspaper's slogan was 'A conch shell ... the voice of truth and independence'.

In June 1995, *Uni Tavur* won an award for the best community/student newspaper in the PINA Pacific Media Awards in Port Moresby. The paper also won the 1995 Ossie Award for best regular student publication. The programme's regional Pacific profile was enhanced. Courses were also revamped and consolidated, including the establishment of two new



**Figure 7.2:** *Post-Courier* report on the 1995 win by *Uni Tavour* of the JEA Ossie Award for Best Student Publication of any medium. 3 May 1996.

specialist advanced programmes, the graduate Certificate in Investigative Journalism and Certificate in Public Relations. The first batch of about a dozen public relations graduates joined mining companies and other corporate entities at the end of 1995.



Figure 7.3: *Uni Tavor* front page reporting a bank raid on the Waigani campus at the University of Papua New Guinea, 16 May 1997 edition. The masthead conch shell was a revival of the design by Robert Elowo.

Meanwhile, an upheaval within the UPNG administration developed late in 1994, spilling into 1995, which had negative consequences for the journalism programme. Vice-Chancellor Sukwianomb faced growing pressure from the University Council over his leadership style and management decisions. This led to him being ousted as vice-chancellor and a bitter legal conflict with the council. Earlier, at the end of 1994, the journalism programme had been

restructured. Whereas previously it had been part of the Language and Literature Department, it was now merged with the Library Studies Department to form a new body with a mouthful of a title, the South Pacific Centre for Information in Development (SPCenCIID).

A sub-committee of the university drafted a report making wide-ranging allegations against Sukwianomb, notably over large financial losses blamed on 'ineffective leadership' and plans for a postgraduate school. On 5 December 1994, a University Council meeting resolved to ask him to resign, or face being 'terminated'. (Sukwianomb, 1995: iii) There was widespread belief among staff that Sukwianomb was unfairly made a scapegoat for administrative problems at the university, which had accumulated over several years. Sukwianomb filed a rebuttal report and supporting papers which he claimed

clearly demonstrate that the management problems are the accumulative effects of past negligence, if not reluctance to change the structure, policies, processes and procedures [that were] not my creation (*ibid.*: iv).

Nevertheless, Sukwianomb was dismissed and he unsuccessfully sought legal redress and K350,000 in damages for wrongful dismissal. The significance of these events for the journalism programme soon became apparent. After a period during 1995 when Deputy Vice-Chancellor Nick Kuman acted as chief executive of the university, Sukwianomb, who had been a strong supporter of journalism from the days when Stevens founded the programme, was replaced by an élitist expatriate Australian who had distaste for the media. Dr Rodney Hills, a onetime Australian High Commissioner in Tonga and former head of the Ausaid Pacific training school in Sydney, became Vice-Chancellor in early 1996. It emerged as UPNG headed towards major restructuring and cutting of programmes that he believed journalism had no

place in a university.<sup>17</sup> A major news event on campus, known as the Topul Rali affair, steered him on a collision course with the journalism programme.

### ***The Topul Rali affair***

In December 1995, one of UPNG's most prominent academics, Dr Topul Rali, at that time acting Dean of Science, was implicated in a protest against the administrative office of the university over the murder of an anthropology lecturer on campus. Rali was well-known in some Australian and international circles as the first Papua New Guinean to gain a chemistry doctorate and for claims that he had discovered a cure for HIV/AIDS. The dead woman, Janet Kisau, was the second lecturer to be murdered at the university in less than seven months. In addition, two students were murdered during 1995 (one slain by soldiers on campus). None of the murders were fully investigated at the time and nobody was charged (Miise, 1996: 8). The protesters caused an estimated K10,000 worth of damage during the raid and a senior administration staff member was injured.

The affair was hushed up by the administration, but the incoming Vice-Chancellor, Dr Hills, instituted an inquiry into the raid in February 1996. (Academic suspended over office raid, *Uni Tavur*, 1996) Allegations of a media cover-up were published in an anonymous letter in *The National*, one of PNG's two national dailies, which said:

The UPNG community was so terrified that it shut down for the day, and many women did not return to work the next day. Later that afternoon, the drunken 'academic' threatened the lives of the head of the Extension Studies Department and his wife, causing them to leave

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<sup>17</sup> This was explicitly stated by Dr Hills to me and other academic staff during university meetings and in discussions.

Papua New Guinea, and the United States Embassy put out a warning on the danger of visiting PNG.

The name of the man who perpetrated these crimes and blighted the name of PNG is known to all at PNG, but it has been kept secret by the media (campus reporters are said to be his drinking mates). The man has a record of violence and intimidation on campus (News media cover-up alleged, *The National*, 1996).

In March, the University Council voted in an extraordinary meeting to dismiss Dr Rali from his position (Council votes to sack Rali, *Uni Tavur*, 1996). No public statement was ever issued by the administration about the affair and the University Council meeting was conducted in secrecy. *Uni Tavur* vigorously gathered information about the case and published reports, just as it had done on issues affecting the university over the previous two decades. These reports included a full-page background article and a front-page news story about the sacking of Dr Rali (*see* Miise, 1996: p. 8; Johnston, 1996: p. 1; Rali, 1996: 7-8; Robie, 1998b: 114-124). The university administration pressured the newspaper over the stories but was reluctant to do so in public. *Uni Tavur* news reports about the affair sent to Pacnews regional radio news cooperative were removed from the university administration facsimile room and destroyed. As coordinator in charge of the newspaper, I was summoned along with two senior faculty staff members to the Vice-Chancellor's office and the newspaper was accused of 'breach of confidence' and 'defamation'. Also, a campaign of vilification against the newspaper was conducted in some academic quarters. Dr Hills demanded that the newspaper reveal its council sources who had leaked information. However, *Uni Tavur* refused, citing editorial obligations to protect sources, and the public response to publication of the stories was overwhelmingly favourable.

Unemployed and facing charges of illegal possession of firearms and pornographic materials — charges which he denied, Dr Rali commented in an article in the Sydney-based *Campus Review*<sup>18</sup> on the implications of his case for higher education in PNG, saying:

I have always been frontal [sic] in nationalist issues and I happen to be a victim of bad publicity and reversal of the University of PNG staff development programme (Rali, 1996: 7-8).

Rali said he wanted to speak out because of reports in *Campus Review* <sup>19</sup>‘implying that I am a criminal, so my academic and intellectual friends throughout Australia, New Zealand, Europe and the United States will know the full details’.<sup>20</sup> After the next edition of *Uni Tavur* with an editorial ‘declaring such a major incident should not be masked by secrecy ... the public has the right to know’ was published, the university administration was reluctant to speak to reporters.<sup>21</sup> I concluded at the time:

The issues involved in this affair are important, particularly as they coincided with a major debate on freedom of information and the news media in Papua New Guinea. The Government of then Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan sought to bring in legislation to curb the national media. *Uni Tavur* was the only independent newspaper outside the two national dailies, two national weeklies and the provincial fortnightly *Eastern Star*. Its

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<sup>18</sup> This article included Dr Rali’s analysis of the state of UPNG education and national PNG education policy. It was also republished as ‘Ousted academic speaks’, in *Uni Tavur Toktok*, 19 July 1996, pp 5-6.

<sup>19</sup> Under the *Campus Review* headline SECURITY CRISIS AT PNG UNI, on 18 January 1996, the newspaper reported the murder of Janet Kisau and Dr Rali’s alleged role in the attack on the UPNG administration office: ‘The University of Papua New Guinea is in crisis, with the recent murder of a lecturer the most acute example of continuing violence on the Port Moresby campus. Anthropology lecturer Ms Janet Kisau was shot dead in the early hours of 21 December 1995, just hours before she was due to fly to Australia to begin a doctorate at La Trobe University in Melbourne...’

<sup>20</sup> After the departure of Vice-Chancellor Dr Rodney Hills from UPNG, Dr Topul Rali was again employed by the university in 2001.

<sup>21</sup> Editorial: ‘A free student press and its responsibility’ (1996, April 26). *Uni Tavur*, p. 4.

continuing freedom is essential for diversity and plurality of the news media in the country.

(Robie, 1998: 121).

Freedom of the press was invoked<sup>22</sup> and also the university and the wider public had a right to be informed on an issue involving a senior academic with a high national and international profile. Academic freedom was at issue too. Journalism staff considered that they should be free to conduct the journalism education and training in a manner that was keeping within professional standards, and independent of editorial interference by the university administration. But from this point on, the Rali affair was to impact on the journalism programme as the university sought courses, departments, and even a faculty, to close down in an attempt to meet its cost-cutting targets. Former deputy registrar (academic) Benjamin Naing saw this as a catalyst

for how Dr Hills viewed the journalism programme: 'He did not like people to contradict him' (Naing, interview with author, 2001).

### ***From 'closure' to reprieve***

In the second semester of 1997, *Uni Tavor* suspended publication as funds were frozen and restructuring plans for the university began to take greater priority. In the final October edition of the year, students who had petitioned Dr Hills over a shortage of lecturers and equipment

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<sup>22</sup> It may be tempting to make comparisons with issues confronting the student press in Victoria, Australia, during the same year, 1996. These issues included the abolition of student fees for political purposes, enabling administrations to "muzzle" the student press, and attempts to suppress *Rabelais*, the La Trobe university student magazine (Messina, 1996) *Rabelais* appealed against a Chief Censor's decision that it be banned for publishing a guide in 1995 on how to shoplift, and police were considering prosecuting it for publishing a photograph of Premier Jeff Kennett's face framed in the cross-hairs of a gun sight. However, such comparisons would be ill-judged. There are crucial differences. While the Victorian student papers were published by student bodies and staffed by few people with journalism education or training, *Uni Tavor* was published by a university journalism programme and staffed by students who are educated in media ethics and techniques, and aspire to be professional journalists.

went public with their appeal. Having gathered more than 1500 signatures for their petition, Journalism Students Society's president, Jean Yapog, warned in an open letter that the students' studies were being jeopardised by lack of staff and facilities. She said:

Journalism in Papua New Guinea is a growing profession. Unlike the pre-independence years, journalism skills were on-the-job training [sic], However, today journalism is an university undergraduate course. Like the science courses, it needs necessary facilities for hands-on-knowledge before one enters the mainstream... The number of lecturers has gone down from three in the [late] 1980s to two. However, currently David Robie is the only full-time lecturer, with Sorariba Nash on study leave and a part-time tutor who is helping us out. Compared to the Library and Information Studies, which is also under SPCenCIID, they currently have five full-time lecturers, plus two on leave and 47 students (Nuia, 1997: 5).

Dr Hills did not respond to the students, but he did acknowledge a separate appeal by the Papua New Guinea Media Council, replying in a letter with a challenge:

The only way journalism can have such a specialist staff to teach ... would be if the journalism profession and its related companies were to come forward and agree to fund them from sources external to the university (*ibid.*).

Replying from Cardiff University where he was at the time studying for a masters degree in journalism, Sorariba responded that the Hills challenge was hypocritical, saying:

The programme is some two decades old, and for the Vice-Chancellor to say that is just like saying, 'We don't want them'... When the New Zealand Government funded the

programme [in 1975], they [UPNG] should have said then they couldn't afford to fund it and given it to the industry to sustain both funding and the programme (*ibid.*).

There were widespread appeals from journalism schools abroad and media freedom groups too.<sup>23</sup> The university administration appeared intransigent and it seemed only a matter of time before the axe would fall on journalism, but Joseph Sukwianomb, who is now a Government department head, and also chair of the Higher Education Commission, did not believe there was political pressure at the time:

I think it was administrative ignorance on the part of senior management of the university.

It had to do with allocation of resources — they decide who gets what. I think it also had to do with a bit of jealousy within the rank and file of staff at the university. The journalism department was doing very well, and getting the support of the media industry, and also with business houses donating equipment and prizes and so on ...

It had nothing to do with Government influences from outside. It had everything to do with the influence of top management, from the vice-chancellor down, who did not see the importance of journalism training (Sukwianomb, interview with author, 2001).

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<sup>23</sup> Among the international appeals were:

Professor John Henningham, Department of Journalism, University of Queensland: 'The case for a strong and independent media has as its corollary the existence of strong and independent journalism schools. Quality news media organisations around the world have come to recognise that on-the-job training is inadequate, and that contemporary journalists need to be well-educated professionals, with a detailed knowledge of the legal and ethical environments of journalism as well as reporting, interviewing, writing and subediting techniques, investigative skills harnessing emerging technologies, and experience in broadcast as well as print media.' (*Uni Tavour*, 17 October 1997, p 6)

Roger M. Patching, president, Journalism Education Association (JEA), Bathurst, Australia: 'The journalism education fraternity in the region have long admired the work of our colleagues on the UPNG journalism staff and in particular the quality of the work published in *Uni Tavour* ... I urge you most strongly to increase the staffing level in journalism from its current one and lift the suspension of the student-produced newspaper.' (*Uni Tavour*, 17 October 1997, p 7)

In early 1998, rumours invaded the *Uni Tavar* newsroom about the future of the programme following three unsuccessful petitions to the administration the previous year as it became clear the university administration planned to close some departments, and possibly even a faculty. After five years at UPNG, I took up an appointment as coordinator of the University of the South Pacific journalism programme and left Port Moresby in March. Sorariba vowed: 'We'll fight on'.

The University Council claimed the closures were part of cost-cutting measures following severe budget cuts to UPNG. But the action led to academic staff at UPNG criticising what they described as a 'rush decision to axe facilities'. (Nuia, 1997: 5-8). The PNG Media Council also expressed alarm over the strategy adopted by the council to cope with funding crises. Council president Luke Sela said in a statement that the cutting of courses, whether for intending first-year students, or in midstream, would

bleed future generations of the most valuable asset — knowledge ... The closure of the journalism course is a direct attack on media freedom (*ibid.*).

*The National* also expressed concern over the planned closure of the programme. In an editorial, the paper highlighted that many of the country's working journalists in its newsroom were UPNG graduates. Opposition Leader Bernard Narokobi also made a bid to save the programme. He appealed to Dr Hills not to close journalism, but to look for other alternatives. The justification for the closure adopted by Dr Hills and other senior UPNG administrators was that the programme was seen as a 'duplication' of the Divine Word University communication arts courses, even though DWU's diploma course was smaller, it had started seven years after the UPNG programme, and there was no developed degree programme, which had been in

force at UPNG for more than a decade. According to Benjamin Naing, who was involved in the University Council at the time:

It was seen that there might be an overlap between UPNG and DWU and there was no need for two journalism schools to exist in Papua New Guinea. This was due to a misunderstanding on the part of the politicians and bureaucrats of the differences between the two programmes and why they both needed to exist (Naing, interview with author, 2001).

Yet just why UPNG journalism was seen as a duplication of DWU, and not the other way around, remained a mystery. The key factor was probably the conviction held by Dr Hills that journalism education did not belong in a 'traditional' university while DWU conveniently did not have the status of a full national university. It would have a more natural home there, according to Hills. Recalled Naing:

It was a matter of the budget and economics. The university had to make budget cuts and the Central Executive looked for programmes that it could abolish and make savings. There were also personalities involved. [Dr Hills] looked particularly at areas where he did not have a good relationship. This was done on an ad hoc basis (*ibid.*).

Benjamin Naing was disappointed by the way journalism and creative arts appeared to be unfairly targeted by Dr Hills.

I did not appreciate the way council was being misled over the reasons for the cutting out of Creative Arts, Journalism and Library and Information Studies. I asked for justifications in council. I argued that these were all needed as part of the country's human resources

development. Unfortunately, council did not look at issues objectively; it looked at them subjectively. Council swallowed everything Dr Hills told them hook, line and sinker (*ibid.*).

Naing was also concerned at the way standing orders and procedures were apparently 'sidestepped' when it suited. For example, he argued that Dr Hills

breached university statutes and bylaws, and ignored fundamental procedures in making his proposals within Council. Normally proposals for changes were discussed within university committees and with various stakeholders before decisions were made. But he trampled on bylaws. Dr Hills was very persuasive before Council. English was his mother tongue and he could make his proposals sound very constructive. For example, he argued that cutting out the journalism programme would save costs by leaving future journalism education to the Department of Communication Arts at Divine Word. It was never said openly about the personal reasons involved and he failed to justify his arguments (*ibid.*).

Sukwianomb also thought there was no justification. He said the decision had been taken by the 'power brokers' at UPNG with council simply approving it. Journalism 'did not have a strong voice in the faculty board, and from faculty to academic board'. He added:

Certainly the decision initially to close the UPNG programme ... was taken based on wrong information, or information that was twisted, or for the convenience of those who make those decisions ... Rodney Hills [did not come] from an academic, or a university background. That contributed to his limited perception of professional training like journalists, and artists, [and] the Faculty of Creative Arts (Sukwianomb, interview with author, 2001).

For Sorariba, who was left with a struggle to keep the programme going, 1999 was a long, depressing year. From the moment that the University Council decided on January 25 to 'abolish Journalism Studies at UPNG and transfer the students to Divine Word University', he thought the programme's days were numbered. He recalled:

There was a silence when a lot of us involved in this cost-cutting exercise were throwing back and forth arguments: Could you consider this restructure package, we're cutting this, how about taking us back, leave us alone sort of thing (Sorariba, interview with author, 2001).

Associate Professor Frank Morgan, chair of Communication and Media Arts at the University of Newcastle, Australia, and president of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR), joined in the chorus of voices defending the programme with an article (1999) published two weeks later in *The National*, saying:

Ausaid's recent report on Australian aid to PNG calls for the reduction of poverty through sustainable development. That objective is clear and readily agreed. The question, however, is how? And virtually every conceivable answer argues for maintaining UPNG's world-renowned journalism programme, not scrapping it...

Morgan added:

UPNG may well, as *The National* observed [January 27], 'simply be following worldwide practice by choosing the easiest options'. It may also be falling for the confidence trick of economic rationalism that cost reduction improves cost-benefit ratios by reducing them.

Nothing, however, is for nothing. Ultimately, zero cost leads to zero benefit and zero divided by zero divided by zero soars to infinity (Morgan, 1999).

The long wait went on all year, including protests by the campus students, eventually leading to the resignation of Dr Hills in May and his quick departure for Dubai. Finally, the University Council resolved in early 2000 to reverse the earlier decision and the journalism programme was allowed to remain, 'as long as it was restructured as part of the general cost-cutting' (Sorariba, *op. cit.*). Sorariba is sceptical over the role of Divine Word, even when it offered to take UPNG students — an offer that not many took up.

Now a lot of people are talking about Divine Word. But Divine Word just came in yesterday. UPNG is the school that trained the journalists, and set the pace for the media industry (*ibid.*).

Sorariba now seeks to restore UPNG's leading role in the region and regards the cut-backs as not too serious, pointing to the fact that his university had the largest number of journalism degree graduates in the March 2001 graduation — 15. While UPNG lost the Diploma in Media Studies, founded in the Henshall era, the programme has been left with the degree, now known as a Bachelor of Social Sciences (Media Studies) instead of the previous Bachelor of Journalism. The programme also still retains two specialist semester-long courses for experienced media practitioners, Certificate in Public Relations and Certificate in Investigative Journalism. These are listed in a new handbook being published. The need for the journalism school is just as strong 25 years after independence, if not greater now. Sorariba regards lack of funding and ethics as a major challenge for journalism education.

That is what I am afraid of — the corruption culture that is starting to grip Papua New Guinea slowly can even take a lot of young journalists into the pockets of very influential people. This is a challenge we really have to watch out for and work at (*ibid.*).

## **Conclusion**

The University of Papua New Guinea played a crucial pioneering role in the development of journalism education and training, not only for Papua New Guineans but throughout the region. For many years it was the benchmark for tertiary journalism qualifications and reflection on media industry standards. The initiative by the New Zealand Government to set up a journalism school at UPNG in 1975, after a pilot training project for Papua New Guinean journalists in Wellington ended in failure, was a move years ahead of its time. Much of the early success of the programme was due to the inspiration and dedication of the founding lecturer provided by the aid project. Ross Stevens had just the 'kind of naturally authoritative and diplomatic manner' needed to make the school work (King, 2001).

Although the programme lacked facilities and resources and was sometimes treated as a 'Cinderella by the university for perplexing reasons'. (Robie, 1997: 100), it was innovative and vigorous and established an international reputation. Among its achievements were a high profile and award-winning training newspaper, *Uni Tavur*. This became the first student journalism publication in the Pacific to gain an international award. The paper was relaunched as a tabloid printed by the *Post-Courier* in 1995. Success appeared to come in cycles and this was directly related to periods when highly committed staff joined the university. Such periods included Peter Henshall and David Ingram's tenure in the late 1980s and my own contract at UPNG with Sorariba Nash in the mid-1990s. By the end of 1997, when UPNG began restructuring its courses and Journalism Studies programme ceased to have its long-established autonomy, some 174 journalists had graduated with journalism degrees or diplomas, a

remarkable feat. This contribution was then, and remains until today, by far the largest share of qualified journalists produced by any institution for the South Pacific.

However, the era of Dr Rodney Hills as Vice-Chancellor of UPNG was disastrous for journalism education in Papua New Guinea. Faced with the need for drastic budget cost-cutting, Hills sought sectors of the university that could be closed down. Ironically, it was never substantiated that journalism was a cost to the university, especially as it was a programme that had successfully attracted funding grants from outside donors. Hills concluded that UPNG 'duplicated' Divine Word in spite of the fact that UPNG was clearly the leader and also the pioneering university in journalism education. Hills encouraged Divine Word to take UPNG students. But the decision to close Journalism Studies (as part of the SPCenCIID umbrella) in 1998 appeared to stem more from political discontent over the independence of the student journalists and staff than finances. Although, UPNG reinstated the journalism strand in 2001 after Dr Hills' departure from UPNG, the damage had been done. Journalism education at UPNG had lost some of its credibility and the initiative moved to Divine Word and the University of the South Pacific. But the need for the journalism school remains just as important.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: A Tok Pisin newspaper legacy

Father Mihalic was a simple and humble man, yet a workaholic. He was visionary and believed that keeping the little people informed about issues affecting their lives was important to gaining their understanding and support for development throughout the country.

*Post-Courier editorial, 12 December 2001<sup>1</sup>*

Father Mihalic constantly stressed that journalists must never forget ordinary people. They should always focus on development issues [that] affected ordinary people and not just report for the élite.

*Johnson Honimae, president of PINA , 2001<sup>2</sup>*

CATHOLIC missionary Father Frank Mihalic died on 9 December 2001 in California at the age of 85 from complications of pneumonia, far from his beloved Papua New Guinea. Various a newspaper editor, linguist, compiler of the first *Tok Pisin Dictionary* and educator, Mihalic was a ‘champion of the grassroots media’. (Life lessons from Father Mihalic, *Post-Courier*, 2001) He believed in the right of ordinary people in his adopted country to have access to news and information — ‘so essential in the country’s journey towards nationhood’ (*ibid.*). Mihalic put his words into action and ensured that Papua New Guineans would be provided with a newspaper in a language they could read and understand. *Wantok Niuspepa* was the legacy he left behind when he returned to his homeland, the United States. From humble beginnings at Wirui in Wewak, *Wantok* grew into a national newspaper with wide

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<sup>1</sup> Editorial: Life lessons from Father Mihalic. (2001, December 12). *Post-Courier*.

<sup>2</sup> Honimae, Johnson (2001, December 11). Pioneering Journalism Educator, Tok Pisin editor Father Mihalic dies, *PINA Nius Online*.

recognition and acceptance by grassroots people who could not read English. But Mihalic also played a vital role in journalism education.

He believed that the Church had a particularly important role in ensuring the flow of essential information to the grassroots people and vice-versa. Father Mihalic worked hard to ensure the training of young Papua New Guineans in the media and played a pivotal role in their development over many years.

The journalism training programme at the Divine Word University in Madang is the legacy of his vision for training young Papua New Guineans in the ethics of professional and responsible journalism based on strong Christian principles (*ibid.*).

In an editorial eulogy to Mihalic, the *Post-Courier* noted that the missionary's death should not be a time of mourning, but rather a time for celebration. It said that all who had come to know him should 'celebrate the great contribution he has made not only to the life of the Catholic Church but the development of the media, literacy, training and human development' in Papua New Guinea (*ibid.*). Pacific Islands News Association (PINA) president Johnson Honimae said Father Mihalic 'inspired not just Papua New Guinean journalists but those from throughout Melanesia'. (Honimae, 2001) Just five years earlier, at the age of eighty, he had bowed out of education by telling his last group of students:

This is where my teaching career ends. It is much too much for me now. I've been teaching for 52 years and I can't do it anymore (Bola, 1997).

***Divine Word — human, social and religious values***

Divine Word University began life as a humble secondary school in Madang in 1967 (Feehan, 1993: 5). But the groundwork for the educational project really began 11 years earlier when two Society of the Divine Word (SVD)<sup>3</sup> missionaries, Archbishop Adolf Noser and Father Paul McVinney, wanted to spread the society's traditional tertiary educational involvement into Papua New Guinea (*DWU Calendar*, 2001: 6). In 1964, a 99-year lease was taken out with an old rubber plantation on the outskirts of Madang and negotiations for funding began with the Government. However, the negotiations were unsuccessful and the SVD planners were instead forced to establish a Catholic co-educational high school on the plantation. Father Kenneth Feehan, SVD, became project director and then founding headmaster of the Divine Word Secondary School, a position he held for the next 14 years. During this establishment period with a roll of up to 600 students, Feehan shaped the development and philosophy, emphasising 'academic excellence and self-reliance' and the school 'consistently ranked in the top 10 per cent' of Papua New Guinean high schools (*ibid.*). The motto guiding the institution was *Sic currite ut comprehendatis* — 'Run to win', not in a 'ruthless competitive way, but as an honest effort to achieve one's full potential'. Feehan noted in the Silver Jubilee edition of the institution's newsletter *Diwai*:

Divine Word Secondary School was the birthplace, so to speak of a service established by the Society of the Divine Word in 1968 in response to a need — a new missionary activity. In the late 1970s, the 'signs of the time' called for a change and thus evolved Divine Word Institute (Feehan, *ibid.*).

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<sup>3</sup> The Society of the Divine Word (SVD) was founded by Blessed Arnold Janssen in 1875.

The society undertook a feasibility study in 1977 to consider picking up on its original plan of tertiary education. This led to the gradual phasing out of the secondary school and evolution into a university. Two years later, students began enrolling in a four-year diploma programmes in Business and Communication.<sup>4</sup> Divine Word Institute was incorporated by the Divine Word Institute Act 1980. The first batch of pioneering tertiary students graduated in 1982, but it was the following year when Father Mihalic took charge of the Communication Arts Department that the journalism school really started to develop. The institute expanded its academic base by introducing several new programmes over the next 17 years.<sup>5</sup> Religious commitment was expected from the beginning. As the institute's President, Father Jurgen Ommerborn, SVD, expressed the philosophy in 1993:

Christian members of Divine Word Institute are expected to have a love for the Divine Word, Jesus Christ, which shows itself in their desire to grow in their dedication and commitment to the Divine Word and to let themselves be guided in their private as well as professional life by the Divine Word.

Men and women who belong to other religions or to no religion at all are expected to show respect for the way of life, which flows from the school's commitment to the Divine Word.

Commitment to a life lived in the spirit of the Divine Word does mean to render committed service to God and to one's fellow human beings; it includes necessarily the willingness to renounce and sacrifice one's good for the sake of the good of the larger society.

That the graduates of DWI will be men and women who follow this way of life is expected

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<sup>4</sup> Four years after the New Zealand aid-supported journalism programme was introduced at the publicly funded University of Papua New Guinea.

<sup>5</sup> Such as the Diploma in Religious Studies (1984), Certificate in Christian Education (1986), Bachelor degree in Accounting (1988), Certificate in Applied Communication (1989), Bachelor Degree in Development Communication (1990), Diploma in Arts (Papua New Guinea Studies, 1993), and Diploma in Health Administration (1998), Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management (1998). Degrees in Communication Arts and Papua New Guinea studies (1999) and Diploma programmes in Management and Human Resource Management by Extension (2000). A Masters degree in Educational Leadership by Extension was also planned for 2001.

by those who have given their moral and financial support to the institute over the years: Catholic and Protestant church organisations as well as the National Government (Ommerborn, 1993: 2).

Donor organisation support for the fledgling institute was reflected in a letter from a representative of the Dutch inter-church organisation ICCO to former President, Father Kees van der Geest, saying:

The whole Papua New Guinea society will benefit from the quality education you offer at DWI. As you know, I have a keen interest in the attitude building that takes place during students' stay at DWI. We have full confidence on that point and we hope to be kept informed on that aspect of education (cited by Ommerborn: 3).

### ***Father Mihalic — 'do things before boasting'***

Of Croatian descent, Father Frank Mihalic was born on 24 November 1916 as the eldest child in a family of ten children in the township of Renova, Pennsylvania, USA. He grew up in the countryside and later entered an SVD seminary in Techney, becoming ordained as a Catholic priest on 15 August 1944. He first arrived in Papua New Guinea after World War Two to work in the East Sepik as a first aid and community health worker. In a profile of his life eight years before he retired, *The Independent* editor Faye Duega, then a student journalist at DWI, wrote:

He is a pragmatist. Practicality and simplicity count. 'Do things before boasting' says he (Duega, 1989: 3).

Mihalic's first posting in Papua New Guinea was at Marienberg on the Sepik. Within months, he was transferred to Kairiru Island with instructions to establish Saint Xavier's Catechist

Training School, which eventually became Saint Xavier's High School. In late 1953, he contracted tuberculosis and was sent back to the United States where he was confined to bed for about 18 months. During this time, he wrote the first *Tok Pisin Dictionary*, which was published four years later after he had returned to Papua New Guinea and became a parish priest in Enga Province. In 1960, Mihalic was sent to Nemi, Italy, where he became the co-founder and administrative director of the SVD tertiate. Seven years later, the Catholic Bishops Conference asked him to return to Papua New Guinea to publish a Catholic newspaper in Tok Pisin. Without any experience in journalism, he took up the challenge. As Duega described it:

Under the professional eye of Kiwi journalist Ray Goodey, the newspaper called *Wantok* appeared on 5 August 1970 in Wewak<sup>6</sup>. The Wantok organisation [Word Publishing] transferred to Port Moresby at the end of 1976. Within four years Father Mihalic localised his position to [now *The Independent* publisher] Anna Solomon. As he often says, 'A missionary is successful only when he puts himself out of a job' (Duega, *ibid.*).

*Wantok* continued on as an ecumenical Christian paper with a circulation reaching 15,000, becoming 'one of the most influential and unique newspaper publishing operations in the Pacific' (Centurion, 1995: 108). Mihalic's Wantok Publications was developed into Word Publishing Pty Ltd by Father Kevin Walcot, and then run by the late Father Jim Franks. According to media academic Father Diosnel Centurion, the company, which started as an SVD project, became an ecumenical consortium owned by the Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican and

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<sup>6</sup> See Centurion, Diosnel (1995), Religion: The Church and Communication. In Robie, David (ed), *Nius Bilong Pasifik: Mass Media in the Pacific* (pp 106-117), for an account of the development of Pacific ecumenism and the media, and also the evolution of the Pacific Council of Churches: 'Papua New Guinea was aware how far away Fiji was and that it had a large and cohesive group to organise itself as a separate council. So, eventually it formed the Melanesian Council of Churches. In 1981, the MCC decided to cooperate with PCC and today they have a close working relationship.

'The churches in PNG have been in media training through several institutions — Divine Word Institute, Communication and Word Publishing' (p 108).

United churches (*ibid.*). It published several papers: *Wantok*, *The Times of PNG* (later relaunching as *The Independent*), *Business Monthly*, *Sports* and *Rugby League*. The gutsy and educational journalism style then nurtured by Mihalic still plays a major development role in Papua New Guinea. Mihalic revealed some of his insights before he retired to student journalist Chris Bola:

The only thing that would influence a good reporter is the story. If there are lies, it is your job as reporters to highlight them. Reporting in Papua New Guinea and many other countries of the world is a lovely, painful — and usually thankless — area of journalism (Bola, *op cit.*).

Describing Mihalic as a ‘self-confessed workaholic’, Bola also summed up his commitment:

Even after ending my teaching career, I still have got to do something. My greatest satisfaction is working with people. I have an obligation to use my talents to make life better for others (Bola, *ibid.*).

The Diploma in Communication Arts was awarded for the first time on 3 October 1982 to five graduates — Maureen Mopio, David Susame, Benny Bogg, Joy Sahumlal and Martha Waradin. (*Diwai*, 1993: 20). Father Frank Mihalic, at the time roving reporter for Word Publishing, covered the ceremony. Shortly after, Father Kees van der Geest appointed Mihalic head of the Communication Arts Department. It was supposed to be a ‘temporary’ appointment, Mihalic recalled 11 years later:

George Bernard Shaw once philosophised that ‘those who can do, those who can’t, teach’. I always like that saying because it fits me. When I came to DWI, I possessed no academic

qualifications in journalism or its related fields. All I had was 12 years of experience in newspaper editing, news gathering and reporting, proofreading, typesetting, page layout, advertising, distributing [sic], photography and translation (Mihalic, 1993: 30).

Reporting for *Wantok*, *The Times* and *New Nation*, Mihalic met the newly appointed DWI President, Father Van der Geest, a Belgian, over a cup of coffee at Wirui.

Out of the blue he asked me whether I would be willing to come to Madang and take over the Communication Arts Department temporarily because he was having a staffing problem. I told him that might endanger DWI's reputation. I had no degrees, so how could I give them to others? But he took the gamble.

At Word Publishing I had by that time localised all my positions and so I was leaving no gap. In January 1983, I moved to Madang to act as a temporary stopgap. I stayed on 'temporarily' for eight years. By the end of 1990, DWI had accumulated properly degreed [sic] and academically fine-tuned professors for my department, so I yielded to them and retired to Kairiru Island, just off Wewak (Mihalic, *ibid.*).

Mihalic quickly set about restructuring the course, designing a new curriculum that stressed journalism for Print Media and Radio. Making Basic News Writing the core subject, he added Feature Writing, Layout, Scripting for Radio and Advertising. Translation, Photojournalism and Video were added later. Emphasising hands-on training, Mihalic arranged with Sister Mary Hudson, Director of the Communication Institute in Goroka, for students to go there for a month-long workshop on Radio Scripting and Broadcasting. A six-week work experience period with news organisations such as the *Post-Courier*, Word Publishing and the then National Broadcasting Commission (NBC) became a requirement for admission into the second year.

One of the incidents I remember from my DWI days was the time I tried to start off a scholastic year the way writer Sinclair Lewis had done when he was asked to teach journalism at Columbia University in New York City. He began his first class by asking seventy students, 'How many of you want to become writers?' About 40 shot up their hands. He told them, 'Go home and start writing; that is the only way to learn. I'll teach the rest'.

When I said those same words, no one believed me. Everyone stayed; so I still had a class to teach (Mihalic, *ibid.*).

A television producer from San Francisco, United States, ran the first video technique course in September 1985 at the CI in Goroka. She returned the following year and this time conducted the course on the DWI campus. In 1987, then Word Publishing publisher Rowan Callick recruited Father Mihalic to design and implement in-service training for on-the-job journalists in Port Moresby (*Diwai*, 1993: 21). Brother Dan Kelly, SVD, who had trained at Loyola University, Chicago, and had joined the Communication Arts Department in 1986, was appointed to fill Mihalic's post as head the following year. However, Kelly died of a heart attack in November that year. Father Mihalic was recalled to take over the department again.

Over the years at DWI all my instructions in news reporting, feature writing, photography and page layout were strictly hands-on. Pupils learned by doing ... or else. By nature, I am a pragmatist and that is the way I have always operated. Because I believe one learns by doing. I insisted on six weeks of work experience for my certificate students during their Christmas vacation. And it paid off. In my day all serious graduates in Communication Arts held a certificate in one [hand] and the promise of a job in the other (Mihalic, *ibid.*).

Another pet project that Mihalic tried to encourage was teaching all his student journalists translation technique. However, he claimed incorrectly that UPNG and other tertiary institutions in Papua New Guinea did not do that (*ibid.*). It was in fact compulsory at that time for student journalists at UPNG to do literary and practical courses in either Tok Pisin or Hiri Motu — and this included translation techniques. Mihalic argued:

The NBC, the advertising world, all Government departments, to say nothing of newspapers and magazines, need bilingual writers. Unfortunately even educated people do not realise that one may be able to speak two languages fluently and still not be able to translate, especially from script to script. Translation requires special training. Does anyone else out there believe that? To date I have found no evidence of it (Mihalic: 31).

Mihalic also warned against student journalists being seduced by an apparently glamorous career with opportunities to travel and meet important people. ‘The glitter soon rubs off,’ he wrote. ‘Professionals learn to be criticised and maligned, to work under deadline pressure, and to live with their eyes and ears always open for the makings of a human interest story’ (*ibid.*). He believed that students who could master the discipline of news reporting could later successfully turn to any other field of writing. ‘A writer who automatically answers our Who, What, When, Where, Why and How, has a healthy respect for the nuances of verbs, and is stingy with adjectives — that writer will go places.’ In Mihalic’s view, the bottom line in professional journalism was that writing meant ‘rewriting four, five, or six times’ For example, he explained, ‘I have rewritten this story five times’ (*ibid.*).

After years of hard work, Mihalic gained wide recognition, including an honorary Doctor of Philosophy in linguistics from the University of Papua New Guinea. For his contributions in

Tok Pisin, Britain's Queen Elizabeth II decorated him as an Officer of the British Empire (OBE).

### ***Divine Word's road to university status***

A crash 10-month certificate programme, arranged by the Geneva-based World Association for Christian Communication, was designed for busy people such as health, teachers, youth, women and other workers of the churches and government. The course was arranged in workshops to allow on-the-job applicants to attend only those which they needed. The name Certificate in Applied Communication was adopted from a brochure of the University of the Philippines, Los Banos, although the actual course had been adapted to suit Papua New Guinea needs. In 1989, a 'Communication cottage' partly funded by the WACC was completed and then funding was sought for a mini-radio lab. The studio was completed in 1990.

When Father Diosnel Centurion, an SVD missionary and media research academic from Paraguay, joined the Communication Arts staff in 1989, he lobbied for the introduction of a Bachelor degree in Development Communication. He had completed studies and research at UP, Los Banos, Philippines, and worked closely with Dr Crispin Maslog, who had been funded by WACC for a two-week visit to Papua New Guinea to report on the country's communications and its needs. DWI's then academic director Bob deBrouwere (on the staff from CUSO, the Canadian University Service Organisation), finalised the proposed curriculum with Centurion and Sister Vangie, then head of department. Although it was approved and launched in 1990, it was abandoned after the first two graduates in 1993 (Robie, 1997b: 6).

Centurion became head of Communication Arts in 1991 but left for Sydney on a doctorate study programme in 1995. Father Trevor Cullen, an experienced radio journalist with the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC), BBC World Service and Vatican Radio, took over

the job. He had switched to newspapers in 1991 and graduated from City University, London, in 1993 with a Masters degree in International Journalism. In 1994 he moved to Rome to begin work at the Vatican radio and the international news agency, Catholic News Service (CNS) which provides a daily wire service for 170 newspapers in the United States and Europe. Cullen arrived in Port Moresby on 31 October 1995 to begin a two-year contract as press officer for the Catholic Bishops Conference (CBC) of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands and to teach Communications at Bomana Major Seminary. Previously, he had been working at the Vatican in both the press and radio departments.

During my first week in PNG, I received a phone call from the President of Divine Word Institute, Father Jan Czuba, asking if I could help at DWI since they were short of teachers in the Communications Arts department. I contacted the head of CBC and he said he had no problems with this request and my transfer to Madang. In fact, he thought there was a greater need at DWI than at the seminary (Cullen, interview with author, 2002).

So Cullen moved to DWI in December 1995 and began the task of modernising the Communication Arts programme. He signed a two-year contract and started teaching the following month. However, he still continued to work as press officer for the CBC. By April 1996, Cullen was appointed head of the Communications Arts (CA), replacing Father Mihalic who, due to his age, was keen to reduce his workload. The department offered a two-year diploma course and the staff comprised Mihalic and Cullen who taught all the journalism and communication courses. Other teachers taught English literature, English language, politics and economics as a way to 'broaden the knowledge of the students' (*ibid.*). There were two classes: year one and year two with roughly 15-20 in the first year and 10-12 in the second. Some problems were apparent to Cullen:

English was a second or third language for the students. As a result, a number of students struggled to achieve even a basic standard of written English and teaching journalism was frequently reduced to instructing students about how to write simple, clear and grammatically correct sentences. In consultation with the Dean of Studies and other staff members, it was decided to raise the grade for English in the CA department from C grade to B. This came into operation at the end of 1996 and there was no immediate or noticeable fall in applications for the course. I was unable to monitor in a proper and scientific manner whether or not this change helped raise the standard of written English.

Many students were too young or undecided about a career in journalism. I suggested early on (but without support) that journalism should be a post-graduate degree where the students come with a higher level of maturity, knowledge and motivation. There will, however, always be a place for young journalists who decide to leave after receiving their diploma. However there should be available resources to help those who want to achieve higher journalistic qualifications (*ibid.*).

Towards the end of 1997, Cullen argued during an academic staff meeting that the name of the department — Communication Arts — should be changed to Journalism since the main aim and thrust of the course was to educate and train journalists for the media industry. The President shelved the idea saying that the change of name would happen at a later stage. At the end of 1997, Cullen left for the University of Queensland at St Lucia, Brisbane, to pursue doctorate research on media coverage of HIV/AIDS in the Pacific. A British volunteer, Joe Weber succeeded Cullen as head of department in late 1998.

In November 1995, when Father Jan Czuba, a Polish priest known for strong anti-communist views became President of the institute, he immediately began a push to gain

university status. This was achieved less than a year later.<sup>7</sup> At celebrations on 10 August 1996, marking a century of Divine Word missionaries on the mainland of Papua New Guinea, then Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan announced that DWI would be recognised as one of six universities as part of an educational restructuring that would break down the dominance of the country's two main universities, UPNG and the University of Technology in Lae.<sup>8</sup> He declared:

You already have the enabling legislation to offer academic qualifications in the same way as the University of Papua New Guinea and the University of Technology. Nothing now stands in the way for the Divine Word Institute to become a private Catholic University with inter-denominational participation. You are a university (Kaka, 1996: 1).

Sir Julius Chan said Divine Word University would be required to continually update and improve its programmes and the teaching staff needed to be able to respond to changing needs of Papua New Guinean society. While pledging to assist the university's vision of promoting integral human development through education, the Prime Minister challenged the institute to maintain student discipline.

I challenge you, then, to become a university that not only fulfills the country's manpower requirements, but also one that focuses on the moral and ethical issues of our development.

I challenge you and your student body to maintain your sense of self-discipline (*ibid.*).

Czuba said the elevating the institution's status would improve finances and help upgrade programmes, but emphasis would be given to 'character formation'. However, some staff and

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<sup>7</sup> However, it was not fully enacted until three years later, *Divine Word University Act 1999*.

<sup>8</sup> The six universities are Divine Word University, Goroka University, Seventh Day Adventist University (Port Moresby), Vudal University, University of Papua New Guinea (Port Moresby), and University of Technology (Lae).

other academics remained sceptical about the rapid rise to the level of a university. Recalled Cullen:

The quality of teaching at DWU was a problem. This was mainly due to the fact that many teachers were volunteers who offered their services for two to three years for meager financial returns. Therefore it proved difficult to criticise, let alone reprimand, a volunteer who failed to meet academic standards. In fact, there was no credible complaints procedure. Interestingly, the academic qualifications of the teachers were never published during my time at the university. I expect one reason for this was that many of them were probably poorly qualified. This may have changed since my departure. However, as far I know, DWU still relies heavily on volunteer teachers (Cullen, *op. cit.*).

When Czuba became President, he analysed the state of Divine Word to design a new strategy for the development of the university. At a time when the national university, UPNG, was being starved of Government funds and being restructured, Czuba decided an important element of his strategy would be to establish an ‘alliance’ with the state universities.

After two years, I found out that the PNG Government was trying to monitor media. What they did to the University of Papua New Guinea was not acceptable in my way of understanding when they closed three departments, one of them the very important journalism department. I was alarmed at that time so I called a special meeting of our university so that could look at the budget and the resources we had. We drew up a new plan for the development of Communication Arts at Divine Word University and increased the allowance for students for the diploma and for the degree (Czuba, interview with author, 2001).



Figure 8.1: An aftermath story about the kerosene lamp tragedy in *Liklik Diwai*, the DWU students' weekly newsletter, 6 April 2001.

### ***The future — one or two journalism schools?***

From 30 students in the Communication Arts programme, DWI introduced two streams and increased the role to 90 students. The university 'invested a lot of money and new equipment' in the programme (Czuba, 2001). According to Czuba, the aim is to grow to more than 100 to 120 students in the department and to establish formal relationships with other universities overseas. Czuba also looked at UPNG's troubles to establish how his university could help strengthen journalism education in the country.

I believe that for the country to maintain democracy and freedom, the only way is with a free media. And we have to prove that. Divine Word increased resources at the moment you [David Robie] left the University of Papua New Guinea [at the beginning of 1998], because there was no leadership [in journalism after you left] at UPNG and the department was shrinking smaller and smaller. Finally, the Government took the opportunity to close it. In a developing country, one person can make a difference with the shortage of leadership skills. At that moment, when you left the country, things went wrong at UPNG (Czuba, 2001).

When the Papua New Guinea Government made the decision to endorse closure of the journalism programme at UPNG, Czuba had an urgent meeting with his staff and also DWU's University Council to consider how they could fill the gap. The university invested K100,000 in terms of equipment and computers. It also built additional student accommodation costing K320,000. Four extra lecturers were also hired. 'Altogether we invested K600,000 or K700,000,' said Czuba.

At the same time we extended an invitation to students of UPNG to say that they can come to DWU to continue their studies. We designed a special course for them so that they could continue their education because, as you know, courses at UPNG were run in a slightly different way than ours. That makes sense not to have exactly the same courses (Czuba, *ibid.*).

When DWU enrolled students from UPNG, it 'put quite a lot of effort to meet the demands of the students and not disturb their education so we designed courses to follow on to your courses'. Altogether about 16 or 17 students enrolled from UPNG, according to Czuba. One graduated in 1999 with a newly introduced degree and two the following year. Three degree

graduates in 2001 included the first two from Divine Word, and another former UPNG student.

Why had the previous Bachelor degree in Communication Media been dropped?

The previous head of the Communications Arts Department [Father Diosnel Centurion] introduced the bachelor's programme and it was communication and not so much to do with media. And there was no market for such people. My guess is that somebody adopted courses, which were taught at one of the other universities in the Philippines where Divine Word has connections, and they were not needed in the Papua New Guinea context.

Once you [David Robie] left, the leadership collapsed at UPNG, and there was such an urgent need for well-qualified Papua New Guineans before we entered this bachelor's degree. We are still developing the degree because right now we are focusing very strongly on print media (*ibid.*).

Divine Word is now investing in further equipment for electronic media, television and radio training. Czuba believed that the systems would be in place by 2003 and better able to cope with political pressure.

I believe that PNG politicians are not comfortable with the media in Papua New Guinea, which exposes their activities, such as corruption. What PNG politicians wanted to do to allow them to monitor the media was to restrict qualified journalists. So what the politicians did was look at the University of PNG, which is fully sponsored by Government, and they basically refused to allow any money for journalism studies. The simple solution was because the department cannot produce qualified journalists, then it would only be a matter of time when the journalists would die. And 'we would be safe' was most probably the thinking of the politicians of that time.

And because Divine Word is private, and we increased the number of students. I think that's what the politicians wanted to do. And I myself I was against the closing of the

departments of Journalism, and Library Studies, and Creative Arts at UPNG. But I was only a single voice. And I wasn't the one providing funds for UPNG.

I don't know whether it was because of wantokism or what, but I found it very strange that some of the academic staff at UPNG supported some of the politicians in wanting to 'get rid of unnecessary expenses'. It was alarming to find educated Papua New Guineans thinking that way (Czuba, *ibid.*).

According to Czuba, then UPNG Vice-Chancellor Dr Rodney Hills 'had his own agenda'.

I thought he had a hidden vision for UPNG but I don't think he got cooperation from his team. There was too much internal politics at UPNG (*ibid.*).

Twenty of the 60 National Scholarships allocated to UPNG for Diploma journalism students, at K2,700 per student a year, were re-allocated by the Government to DWU. But the rejuvenated DWU still cannot satisfy the demand for journalists in Papua New Guinea. And now that the UPNG programme has been reprieved, Czuba reaffirms the need for two journalism schools in Papua New Guinea. 'There is a need for two, definitely, because one is committed to quality,' he said. 'The other is marginal, but would still help satisfy the market for journalists. Within our programme it is basically impossible to address all the needs that our media in Papua New Guinea currently have.' Czuba held brainstorming sessions with local news organisation heads while designing courses that would meet the needs of the PNG media.

We don't have enough well qualified people to work in the media. The other thing is that Papua New Guinea is at quite a difficult stage of development. People working for different media face difficulties — they don't have basic living quarters, and they don't have easy means to get to work and so on. So there are a lot of factors contributing to a situation

where media do not attract well-qualified people. Their salaries are too low, they don't have the houses, if they want land they cannot afford it, and media have to see that because there is a danger. It is not enough to have qualified people. It is not enough to meet the media needs. The media has to create the environment to attract people to go there to work. The Papua New Guinea media should offer more attractive packages like salary and accommodation to encourage people to work. I cannot imagine people with a degree working for K180 to K220 [a fortnight] and then they cannot afford to rent a flat. Journalists are dedicated and are committed, and they are trained. But is the media ready to employ these people? If so, what are their conditions of employment? And that is what I am a little bit frustrated about. Some of the heads of the media don't see that. Not everyone has wantoks in Port Moresby (Czuba, *ibid.*).

Kevin Pamba, a former UPNG graduate, columnist on *The National*, and now on the academic staff of DWU, also supports the need for two journalism schools in Papua New Guinea. He believes the schools are needed to cater for the rapid growth in the national and provincial media industry.

Yes, there is room for two journalism schools. The media in this country is growing, developing. And the population is growing as well. There is room for two schools to cater for that growth. You may recall that in 1993, when you joined UPNG, there was only one daily newspaper, there was only one commercial radio station, which was state-owned, and the state-owned radio network, NBC, and Channel Nine-owned EMTV. Since then it has rapidly changed. Towards the end of 1993, we had *The National* newspaper starting up. And that opened up opportunities for the media in this country. Then the following year the PNGFM group came on, with the commercial radio station NauFM. Since then there has been a string of commercial radio stations in Port Moresby, Lae, and there is a Christian radio in Mt Hagen. The Seventh Day Adventist Church has recently won a licence for a

television station. That just goes to show the need for more people to be trained for the media (Pamba, interview with author, 2001).

According to Joe Weber, the current head of Communication Arts, university education is particularly important for Papua New Guinean journalists, and throughout the Pacific. The education system generally is 'not one that encourages analytical thinking, not one that encourages people to be critical in any way, which are skills that a journalist needs' (Weber, interview with author, 2001). So the universities need to address this shortfall in the education system. Weber also notes a major problem in the PNG news media industry's ability to retain educated journalists because of the lack of a structured career path and journalists seeing their job as a 'stepping stone to somewhere else'.

Somewhere at the back of my mind, I wonder whether the universities are contributing to this problem in that they are producing increasing numbers of graduates with these skills. And there is a limited number of jobs in the media. Although the media is growing and although there are more jobs than previously, it is still a relatively limited number. And is the fact that we are providing a continuous stream of people with skills helping to reinforce the idea that there will always be journalists? We don't need to pay these people too much. We don't need to worry about retaining them because if they go there are always more people coming out. I don't know what the answer is to that (*ibid.*).

## **Conclusion**

The Papua New Guinean media scene has changed dramatically from the day Father Mihalic launched *Wantok*. Divine Word, particularly through the extraordinary and visionary efforts of the late Father Mihalic, has made a major contribution to a growing sense in the country of the vital role of journalism and skilled communication in developing a sense of nationhood and national identity. Along with evolution of the Communications Art programme, publication of *Wantok*, a unique newspaper in the South Pacific, has become a benchmark of national development and the contribution that good journalism can make to education at grassroots level.

Although Journalism at Divine Word had relatively humble beginnings, compared with the national University of Papua New Guinea, it has had made considerable headway as a media training institution. It also moved decisively at a critical time to protect the future of journalism education in Papua New Guinea by consolidating the Communication Arts Department and enrolling students from UPNG when that course was destined to be scuttled through politics. But while human, social and religious values in Papua New Guinea have strengthened with DWU's contribution, questions remain about the institution's credibility as a genuine university and over education standards when it continues to rely heavily on a volunteer staff system and with a limited research base. These concerns are heightened when the university does not publicly list its academic staff and qualifications in its annual academic calendar.

## CHAPTER NINE: In the shadow of Fiji's coups

The [Journalism] Programme 'publications'— *Wansolwara* and the website [*Pacific Journalism Online*] — can be justified on one purpose only: to support a training function. That is, they provide a trial medium for practical skills training and for simulation work. They should not be regarded as a media outlet for students.

*Vice-Chancellor Esekia Solofa of USP, 2000<sup>1</sup>*

The past six months have seen a major upheaval in Fiji, twice in fact, and of such stuff are the dreams of journalists made. What an opportunity to practise the theory and exercise the training from the classroom! You students will no doubt have stories of what you did during the crisis, and that was perhaps the best training possible.

*New Zealand High Commissioner to Fiji, Tia Barrett, 2000<sup>2</sup>*

'GOOD MORNING, Fiji!' rings out the cheery voice on the University of the South Pacific's student Radio Pasifik, FM88.8. And as a correspondent for *The Chronicle for Higher Education* notes, the playlist 'begins all soft and pittery-pattery, almost calypso-like, as befits a part of the world studded with bone-white beaches, azure seas, and gently swaying palms'. (Cohen, 2002) But then

the Samoan ensemble on the disk player kicks into life with a swirl of aboriginal chants and tribal plainsong, backed with some drum rolls hot enough to rival the late-morning sun beating down outside the studio door at this lush campus in Fiji's capital. 'I love playing

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<sup>1</sup> Esekia Solafa (2000). Personal communication to the USP Journalism Coordinator, June 18.

these kinds of songs for the locals,' grins Victoria Lepou, the DJ, nodding her head in time to the tune while she searches for the next item on her playlist. Ms Lepou is hunting through the station's small but impressive music library — here some old vinyl recordings and cassettes in worn covers, there a stack of well-thumbed compact disks — its mix of offerings as ethnically varied as the institution's students (*ibid.*).

According to New Zealand-based education writer David Cohen, Radio Pasifik 'enjoys a reputation as a musical smorgasbord. To be sure, it's a soulful advertisement, waylit by music, interviews, and commentary, for one of the region's more culturally kaleidoscopic institutions of higher learning' (*ibid.*). Although the station is nominally owned by the USP Students Association, and may be used by any member of the student body, it has tended to be 'mainly the plaything of journalism students' looking to brush up on their presentation skills, including becoming comfortable in front of a microphone and learning to read scripts in newscaster style. Reflecting the eclectic style of the radio station, the Journalism Programme at USP has also had something of a topsy-turvy life. Unlike its Papua New Guinea counterparts, the genesis of journalism at the regional university has developed in two stages, quite distinctly if sharing similar problems. The first period was during the late 1980s with the establishment of an extension study and vocational based Certificate in Journalism programme sponsored by the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC). The later period, the establishment of a double major degree programme, began in 1994 and was founded with French Government aid funds and a founding coordinator from France.

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<sup>2</sup> Barrett, Tia (2000). Journalism and Indigenous Issues. Address by NZ High Commissioner at the USP Journalism Awards, University of the South Pacific, Suva, November 24.  
[www.usp.ac.fj/journ/docs/news/usp29awards00.html](http://www.usp.ac.fj/journ/docs/news/usp29awards00.html) (Retrieved 8 December 2001).

### ***The Murray Masterton era***

Founding lecturer Dr Murray Masterton, co-author of *Now the News in Detail*, almost stumbled into the USP challenge by chance. In early 1984, while he was still teaching at Hartley College of Advanced Education in Adelaide, but about to join Deakin University in Geelong, Victoria, Masterton was asked by the Commonwealth Journalists Association if he would deliver two short in-house programmes for broadcast journalists in Apia, Samoa, and Bikinebeu, Kiribati. He agreed and ran the courses in August that year, after he had moved to Deakin and thanks to that university's support (Masterton, interview with author, 2002).<sup>3</sup> During his time in Samoa, he received a telegram asking if he could stop off for a couple of days before he moved on to the Kiribati course to 'have talks with the USP about a journalism course'. Masterton agreed and changed travel arrangements.

I changed my timetable to do this because it sounded more interesting, but there was a bit of a snag. There was no message for me at Nadi, so I phoned Sir Len Usher,<sup>4</sup> who had originated the whole thing, and flew on to Nausori. He met me but said he had received no message to say I was coming, so nothing had been arranged at the Uni. Nevertheless, we met Marjorie Crocombe, and a couple of others whose names I can't remember, and spoke for a morning about what was needed to get an initial certificate course under way (Masterton, 2002).

Masterton travelled on to Kiribati expecting nothing to happen in a hurry, if at all. But he was wrong.

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<sup>3</sup> Email interview with Dr Murray Masterton, 27 January 2002. Most of this period of the early development of the USP Journalism Programme described in this chapter was drawn from Masterton's recollections as outlined in this interview, and also through his writing on the period.

<sup>4</sup> A former editor of *The Fiji Times* and a founder of PINA, who by then was running his own media consultancy business. Usher died, aged 96, on 26 August 2003.

Less than two years later [1986], while at my desk in Deakin, I was told there was a woman outside who wanted to see me. It was Penelope Schoeffel with an offer I very much hoped to accept. Would I come to Suva for a period of about six weeks and write a journalism programme, or at least the first part of one? This was really where it all began (*ibid.*).

The CFTC agreed to fund a programme for two years,<sup>5</sup> extended to three, but to be reconsidered at the end of that period. And the plan was for the founding lecturer, or perhaps his successor, to 'train an indigenous person, or persons, or find them from the local media and prepare them to take over the course'. However, Masterton was given no help or encouragement by anyone at USP to achieve this latter objective. Masterton and his wife, Rona, arrived in Suva in June 1986 for an 'interesting six weeks' during which he wrote the introductory course for the proposed Certificate in Journalism course. It was to be offered under the Literature and Language Department of the School of Humanities, then headed by Professor Andrew Horn.

We got on well enough personally, since Andrew had a most engaging personality. I'm not so sure our professional association was as well oiled. I wanted to do it my way, which was not always what Andrew thought it ought to be (*ibid.*).

At the end of six weeks, Masterton had written the Introductory course for both print and broadcast journalists (course code LLF31). Even before he left Suva he was invited back to

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<sup>5</sup> At least, this is what Murray Masterton was told. As he explained in the email interview on 27 January 2002: '...my term there [at USP] ended after two years even though I was led to believe it would become three. Deakin okayed my extension, USP told me (in writing) they would apply for an extension of my work permit for another year, and CFTC agreed to extend the funding. Knowing this I took off for a holiday overseas. On my return I was surprised to find that USP had not applied for an extension and that my term was up in a very few months. No one at USP would say why, though I learned later (from a Fijian Government official who was always open and friendly) that when USP said that they intended to apply they were "advised" not to do so. This meant I would not get the extension, presumably because the Rabuka régime thought I was not controlled enough. That part I don't know.'

USP at the end of the year to take the next step in writing the programme, which was a sequential course to be conducted in two areas: print and broadcast. Again, Masterton and his wife spent six weeks in Suva and this time he produced a second book for broadcast journalism (course code LL131) and a reader. During this visit, Masterton was encouraged to apply to be the inaugural teacher of the course, and he was eventually appointed. However, there was a problem with Deakin University, which at first said 'no' because he had already been inaugurating a broadcast journalism course there and it could not find a replacement lecturer.

I believe it was intervention by then USP Vice-Chancellor [Dr Geoffrey Caston], who was a personal friend of Deakin's VC, which made them change their minds. With a couple of weeks' notice, we were again on the way to Suva (*ibid.*).

By then, Fiji's third-ranked military officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Sitiveni Rabuka, had already staged his first military coup in Fiji the previous month, on 14 May 1987. There was a brief moment of uncertainty about the future of the journalism course.

Rabuka had already done his coup stuff and CFTC, always the gentlemen, gave me the opportunity to back down on the grounds that Fiji was too unstable, maybe risky. We decided to go anyway, so my term began there on 4 July 1987 (*ibid.*).

As Masterton recalled later in an article for *Australian Journalism Review*, 'apathy throughout the Pacific about press freedom in Fiji was shaken up by the Rabuka coup' (Masterton, 1989: 116).

Like most of the Australian journalists who were rushed like firemen to Suva to report on the coup and its aftermath, I thought I knew enough about Fiji to know what would happen

in the two years to come. Unlike most of the journalists, I had visited Fiji several times and in the previous year I had made two stays of [six] weeks, each while writing the introductory course for the certificate programme I was about to teach. There seemed no need to decline [the job]. Fiji would soon settle down.

Again, like most of the visiting journalists, I was wrong. Fiji did not settle down — or to be more exact, it did then it didn't, and lately it has become worse instead of better. So it was an interesting and challenging two years to be there (*ibid.*).

Funding for the course at USP was entirely from CFTC, involving joint input from Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The choice of the CFTC staff member was left to USP, but with CFTC approval. In his first semester teaching the Introductory course — designed to cover both print and broadcast journalism — Masterton also had another task. He was to rewrite the print partner to the sequential broadcast journalism course already written, but fortunately not printed.

This proved to be a problem for me, since I quickly learned that my approach did not match the Pacific style of students as well as it should. So I began by re-writing the broadcasting course, even if only changing style and approach, not content. Then I started on the print course (Masterton, interview, 2002).

Difficulties in teaching the course were divided between those within the university and those imposed from outside. The course was something new for students, all of whom were already working as journalists — about half of them involved in some sector of government publicity or information.

They had to come to terms with the fact that lectures took place at a given time and place, and that there was no flexibility of either. I had to come to terms with the fact that employers occasionally (and family matters frequently) kept students from their fixed time lectures, whether at USP (the classes were in teaching rooms in the then Literature and Language wing, where I had my own office) or by radio extension.

Radio extension provided problems of its own. The equipment was not always as reliable as it might have been, and was subject to weather and sunspot conditions, over which no one had any control (*ibid.*).

Masterton also faced a 'never-ending computer problem'.

I had one in my office and bought one of my own. At the beginning of the course no student had a computer, although there were computers in use at *The Fiji Times* and in the radio stations. Copy for use or for assessment arrived in all forms (*ibid.*).

There was also an internal problem at USP for Masterton, although 'not a serious one, in existing staff members not considering journalism a worthwhile addition to the curriculum. They felt the money could have been better spent elsewhere and didn't hesitate to say so, although again it was without rancour and certainly not personal'. In spite of the generous support from CFTC, which paid Masterton's salary and some costs, there was limited funding for travel which restricted the founding lecturer's ability to have personal access to students in other island nations. Masterton used PINA conferences plus what travel funds USP could offer to go the Cook Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu, but he was unable to visit the Melanesian states, Solomon Islands or Vanuatu.

***In the shadow of Rabuka's coups***

Masterton found the post-coup régime in Fiji something of a problem. It became apparent very early in his stay at USP that 'every word of every journalism programme' leaving the campus regional satellite broadcast studio was being monitored by Rabuka's people.

I had several tips, smilingly delivered and apparently without rancour, that I had better be careful [about] what I said. The university had already warned me to sidestep any questions from other islands about what was happening in Fiji, but these warnings from others meant more: that I should tread carefully, in speaking about freedom of the press, for instance. (*ibid.*).

After he left Fiji, Masterton wrote about his experiences and some media freedom dilemmas in *Australian Journalism Review*, concluding that 'across the Pacific there was apathy towards press freedom as we know it long before Fiji's military took away what freedom there was in their country'. He lamented the departure of Fiji's 'most able and probing' journalists, people such as the *Fiji Sun*'s Nemani Delaibatiki who left Suva to join New Zealand's *Waikato Times* (Masterton, 1989: 121).

The newspapers and radio battled on, always claiming publicly that they were not censored, yet even at USP I had evidence to the contrary. Everyone's satellite broadcasts were monitored by the military, but they took particular interest in mine because they were about journalism, and they made no secret about that interest. To be fair, the military government never interfered with my teaching, even when it was on sensitive subjects. But then I was a Commonwealth appointee. Indian lecturers were not so secure.

By chance, the first journalism satellite broadcast after the second coup was on freedom of the press — a broadcast from a nation where the press was militarily closed and the radio

strictly censored. The broadcast went ahead as scheduled, but it was the one time I was truly nervous about being arrested at the microphone (*ibid*: 120).

Evidence of covert censorship came later, recalled Masterton. Students attending a three-week practical workshop in Suva had prepared a publication called *South Pacific Magazine*, which was about to be printed by *The Fiji Times* for distribution in the students' home countries. After delivering the paste-ups personally, Masterton was recalled by managing editor Geoff Hussey a few hours later. Hussey asked him to delete a paragraph in a front-page story about Fiji's strict Methodist Sunday observance laws. A direct quote from Rabuka's book *No Other Way* (Dean & Ritova, 1988) about his desire to 'Christianise the Fiji Indians' had *The Fiji Times* worried that troops might raid the newspaper's printing press.

By Western standards press freedom in Fiji was comatose and is still little revived, although there are now plenty of voices clamouring in its favour. Even if revival is miraculous it will not match what we call a free press for many years to come, if ever, because of the different attitude to the press in Fiji, and in all the islands (*ibid*: 121).

The Journalism Programme received help from Australia, although this was not official. Masterton asked the Pacific Area Newspaper Publishing Association (PANPA) in Sydney for help with paste-up equipment needed for class work and publication preparation.

They sent up a waxer (which cost a bit) and a good supply of wax, steel rules and matt knives. This was before the days of electronic page make-up, so it was state of the art for those times — but not for long (Masterton interview, 2002).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> As an aside, Masterton wrote (email interview, 2002): 'When I found *Te Uekere* in the same sort of trouble in Kiribati, I asked the Australian High Commissioner there for the same sort of thing. He provided the steel rulers and knives, which replaced the cutting of paste-up material with blunt scissors.'

At the end of each year, the print students tried their hand at preparing a real publication. The radio students, with the help recording and editing equipment from the German-funded Pacbroad project and its head Hendrik Bussiek, had the chance to make something in the way of taped programmes for use in their home broadcasting systems.

We had nothing, although the students used basic recorder units to get the hang of making material sound worthwhile on tape (*ibid.*).

The print students typeset their copy on computers, printed it out — headlines and all, and then cut and paste onto ‘page dummies wheedled out of *The Fiji Times*’. The *Times* printed the publications for the students, at least enough copies ‘so that everyone involved got a copy with plenty to give away to anyone interested’. Masterton believed the university was charged for the printing, ‘but it was certainly less than the *Times*’ cost’. The publications were eight pages broadsheet, pink one year and yellow the next.

### ***A matter of ethics***

In his time at USP, Masterton was ‘always intrigued’ by the ethics situation with Pacific journalists.

There was no code of ethics existing on any island and the attitude of students, many of whom were actually working journalists, although with little experience, was that ethics would be a nuisance. They said so in class (*ibid.*).

In keeping with what he thought an academic should do, Masterton tried doing some original research into what islanders thought of their media — print or broadcast — and also into a code of ethics: did the Pacific want or need one? He presented a paper at a PINA conference in Nuku'alofa in 1988, which set out the question: should there be a code of ethics for island journalists? Later published by *PINA Nius* newsletter, the article raised the different cultural and religious beliefs as a possible barrier to a regional code (Masterton, 1988). It said:

There have been questions about possible codes of ethics included in the examination papers for the USP's Introduction to Applied Journalism and Applied Journalism 1 courses. Responses from students, almost all already practising journalists or government information officers, showed that all thought such a code necessary, although there were reservations.

Three out of five considered that because of the small numbers involved in each country that the code should be regional for the whole English-speaking South Pacific area. The other two-fifths, although favouring a code, considered that regional culture differences may be great enough to make a regional code impractical and so favoured individual codes for the journalists of each island nation (*ibid*).

When the Tonga meeting of PINA asked Masterton to take the issue further, he circulated a four-page information folder to all those working as journalists or employing journalists so that they would be familiar with the issues. The final sheet was a questionnaire respondents could fill and return, 'but so few did that it seemed hardly worth the effort' (Masterton interview, 2002).

After he had left Fiji, Masterton paid his own way to the PINA conference in Honiara in 1989 to try to see the issue through. Information sheets were distributed so that participants had plenty of time to consider the issues before the ethics discussion on the final day.

When the matter went to discussion ... it became a shambles. Not because the Islanders didn't have opinions to express (as I found out later, they certainly did), but because all the visitors from Australia and the United States (not Europe, I must admit) spoke up as if they were experts on what should be in a code of ethics and argued for a code that copied their own. The Islanders were too 'polite' to speak against this, even though it totally contradicted the Pacific way of doing things (*ibid.*).

Masterton entered the debate at one stage to ask the 'visitors' to keep their own counsel for a while and listen to what the Pacific journalists had to say. However, he was challenged by an American visitor who claimed that Masterton was 'not a recognised expert on ethics' and that all Masterton wanted to do was 'see the Islanders adopt a code I wanted to write' (*ibid.*). Masterton recalls that the visitor later apologised for his misrepresentations, but that was after the ethics discussion had ended, 'so it was too late to undo any damage. The whole gathering had failed' (*ibid.*).

Not long after the PINA convention in Honiara, Masterton was back at Deakin University conscious of the 'ethics mess' and also of the continuing criticism in Fiji and Australia about the reporting of the coup by 'foreign' journalists.<sup>7</sup>

In other research, a 1988 regional survey<sup>8</sup> on the status of media coordinated from USP, Masterton (1989; 46) concluded that 'Islanders in the English-speaking South Pacific don't think much of the quality of their newspapers and radio news services, nor of the journalists who provide those services'. The news outlets<sup>9</sup> were considered to

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<sup>7</sup> According to Masterton: 'About the only [foreign journalist] not criticised was Jim Shrimpton, then the staff man for AAP-Reuters (as it was then) in Suva and covering the South Pacific. His reports were never questioned by anyone and he deserves that it be known.'

<sup>8</sup> See Chapter Three for more details.

<sup>9</sup> The survey sample was 79 journalists, media managers, government officials, clerical workers and professionals — all respondents from the Cook Islands (3), Fiji (14), Kiribati (12), Solomon Islands (18), Tonga (8), Tuvalu

make too many errors in fact and interpretation, that their stories are incomplete and lacking in background, that they are too often no more than Government handouts. Island newspapers are without exception seen as worse to much worse than those published in Pacific rim countries, and the professional abilities of island journalists are considered low (*ibid.*).

Masterton was quite forthright in pressing for what was needed for the journalism programme, even to the extent of perhaps being considered rather 'pushy for journalism'. Some people in the Department of Literature and Language and in the School of Humanities were uncomfortable with this dynamic energy. But Masterton believed he was acting in the best interests of the developing programme.

I was quite unreserved in pushing for what the university undertook to make available, and protested when they didn't. I know I got a reputation for being pushy for journalism. In my last brush with the [then] newly appointed Head of School, Professor Tupeni Baba, he told me: <sup>10</sup> 'Quit complaining. Just pack up and go home. We don't need your type of journalism here, anyway.' (Masterton interview, 2002).

Foundation coordinator Murray Masterton was followed by the next CFTC contract staff person, Trine Østlyngen, a Norwegian journalist and journalism educator. She consulted closely with Masterton while taking up the post and during her term at USP. However, in the end this period was not entirely successful even though Østlyngen was regarded as an excellent

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(10), Vanuatu (3) and Western Samoa (11). See Masterton, Murray (1989), 'Mass' Media in the South Pacific. *Media Information Australia*, May, No 52, 46-49.

<sup>10</sup> Professor of Education Tupeni Baba had previously been Minister for Education in the Labour Party-led Coalition Government of Dr Timoci Bavadra; he was later Minister of Foreign Affairs in the People's Coalition Government led by Mahendra Chaudhry.

teacher and she did not remain long, serving less than a year. Some consider, given the cultural conservatism of Fiji, especially during that post-coup era (1989), it was too early to have a young woman coordinating the programme.

Bob Bartlett replaced Østlyngen. He too left on a rather disgruntled note after a year as coordinator, rightly signalling that a programme of this kind encounters four major obstacles on which it could founder — inappropriate textbooks; lack of continuity of journalism coordinators; lack of proper direction of CFTC experts by the university administration; and problems with satellite teaching (1990: 2). He was also disappointed by the ‘diminishing returns’ because of an unwillingness by some USP staff to take the programme seriously and also because of the media industry’s tendency to increasingly ‘pay it only lip service’ on the basis of a claim that it did not meet practical training needs. He singled out PINA for particular criticism. In his final report to the CFTC donors, he concluded:

The returns have also been diminished, in this expert’s opinion, by a perception among some USP staff that the Journalism Programme is a vaguely amusing anomaly, a diverting experiment somehow grafted onto the body academic of the School of Humanities.

The two parties — industry [PINA] and the USP — have been steadily drifting apart, witness Radio FM96’s importation of a Canadian broadcaster<sup>11</sup> to conduct in-house training (an exercise which has largely failed) and witness a similar move by *The Fiji Times* in which computer experts were imported to train staff in the use of their new equipment ...

This paucity of commitment to the programme becomes remarkable when it is remembered that PINA was instrumental in the establishment of the programme and that the greatest need for practical journalism training is most often demonstrated in the small island nations such as Tonga, Nauru and Tuvalu (*ibid.*).

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<sup>11</sup> Peter May

In his final analysis:

As is often the case in journalism education, the USP Journalism Programme faces the conundrum: shall we provide fodder for the industry, or shall we provide an academic tour around the subject of journalism? (*ibid.*: 3).

After Bartlett's departure, the Certificate in Journalism programme wound down although the last of an estimated 21 people to gain the certificate was Media Centre audio technician Maraia Lesuma in 1993.<sup>12</sup> Eventually the certificate was to be replaced by a totally different double major BA degree in journalism four years later. But the new programme would again be an integral part of the Department of Literature and Language.

### ***The French connection***

Professor Andrew Horn, then still Head of Literature and Language, played a key role in the next phase of journalism development in the Pacific by securing French Government funding to establish a degree programme. An engaging personality and something of a Francophile (who had a long-standing desire to teach at the Sorbonne and in fact at one stage ran a summer school course there), Horn paved the way for French assistance. He helped negotiate a deal with France and the *École Supérieure de Journalisme de Lille* (ESJ), a leading French college of journalism that offers postgraduate courses in journalism. At the time the French Government had for some time 'sponsored a very low-intensity French language programme at

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<sup>12</sup> In March 1990, the Literature and Language Department decided to undertake a major review of the department's courses. According to a memorandum to the Planning and Development Office by the department's head, Professor Andrew Horn, on 29 December 1993: 'It was also decided that the Certificate programme in Journalism would be phased out, as this was proving exceedingly difficult to conduct effectively. A full degree major was proposed in its stead and steps were initiated to obtain external funding for the project. After a great deal of negotiation undertaken by the department and after lobbying a number of potential donors, the proposal eventually resulted in the French aid scheme which has facilitated the launching of the Journalism BA programme in 1994.'

the off-campus Fiji Centre (in Raiwaqa, Suva), with a young French volunteer who had no contact with any teaching department' (Horn, interview with author, 2002). Horn recalled:

When the Commonwealth, and especially Australia and NZ, suspended projects in Fiji after Rabuka's first coup, France saw the opportunity to develop greater contacts in the Anglophone Pacific and, thus, greatly increase its Fiji activity. Indeed, French PM Pierre Rocard even landed in Nadi to award Rabuka the Legion d'Honneur. It was made known to the university that new French aid for selected projects would be considered. Both USP and the French saw advantage in supporting media education in the region. From this eventually emerged the Journalism diploma and degree (*ibid.*).

Another issue at the time was how to restructure in the department to accommodate both the French language course and journalism.

The USP Senate agreed — quite soundly and belatedly, and much to the distress of then extension director Marjorie Crocombe — that all academic programmes had to come under teaching departments. This brought both the rudimentary journalism offerings and the even more rudimentary French courses within a newly defined Department of Literature and Language (formerly English) and a newly-defined School of Humanities (my much-resisted recommendation to replace the misnomer of the earlier School of Education) (*ibid.*).

By 1992, France agreed to fund the first three years of the journalism programme with substantial development seed funding of F\$200,000.<sup>13</sup> This included funding for the founding

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<sup>13</sup> Figure cited in a memorandum from Head of Department Professor Andrew Horn to then Vice-Chancellor Esekia Solofa, 15 May 1992, which said in part: 'It would be a good idea ... to get a clear sense of the terms of this attachment. (I have been told informally that it would be an appointment of three years, renewable.) It would

coordinator of the programme, François Turmel, a journalist who had spent many years in London with the BBC World Service. Two years later France also partially funded a second lecturer from Australia, print specialist Philip Cass.<sup>14</sup> Finally, it funded a third part-time lecturer, radio specialist Sophie Dutertre, a Melbourne-based French national who had worked for Radio Australia's Pacific Service. Turmel, who took early retirement from the BBC to establish the degree journalism at USP, had been editor of the BBC's French Service and also London correspondent for Radio France Internationale. A holder of the Chevalier de l'Ordre du Merite, Turmel took up his new appointment as senior lecturer at USP in 1993. He toured widely in the South Pacific while writing the initial course curriculum, an eight-course sequential journalism major that gave strong emphasis to all media specialities, print, radio and television. This became a unique characteristic of the USP Journalism Programme, especially when online journalism was added as a fourth speciality five years later.

Philip Cass, an Australian born in Wewak, Papua New Guinea, who had extensive journalism experience in the Pacific, including a stint as chief subeditor of *The Independent* in Port Moresby, joined USP from the University of Central Queensland in 1995. He recalled how he was ill from an 'unpleasant tropical bug' at the time the job was offered to him.

My son actually accepted on my behalf. And I flew off [to Suva] in February. I guess I walked into the thing a bit blind. François Turmel had been there [two years] before to get

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also be useful for us to know what "strings", if any, are attached to the FF 800,000 (= approx. F\$ 200,000) committed to the Journalism Programme.'

<sup>14</sup> According to a memorandum from Professor Horn to Vice-Chancellor Solofa on 3 May 1994 requesting the establishment of a second journalism post: 'On the 28th April, those to whom this memorandum is copied and I met at the University Media Unit to discuss the development of the Journalism Programme and, especially, the staffing of the programme from 1995. It was agreed that it is now necessary to establish a post in Journalism. This post is initially to be funded with the support of the French Government grant to the Journalism Programme, but will eventually become the full responsibility of the university.' The special responsibility of the Media Unit (now Media Centre) was implied in the additional statement about the advertisement for the new post: 'It has also been suggested that a slightly more detailed description of the Media Unit's facilities be included in the second paragraph. This would be very useful indeed, as long as the Staffing Office agrees to the greater length and perhaps the greater cost.'

things under way. I was brought in basically to add the more academic subjects (Cass, interview with author, 2001).

Cass encountered some stress on the programme over funding for both Turmel and himself, and also for the journalism activities. There were uncertainties over both the funding that arrived by a 'circuitous route' at USP through the French Embassy and there were questions over whether the allocated funds were used strictly as a budget for the Journalism Programme.

Certainly my experience was that some months after I was there I was called in [to the Bursary] and informed sorrowfully that all the money that had been allocated for my expenses had been used up and they weren't sure when they would actually be able to pay me. Which was unsettling to say the least, but I was cheerfully informed that they would simply take money from another aid programme to pay me.

I know that François had enormous difficulties with funding, trying to get reimbursement for his expenses — he had enormous difficulties getting people to actually sign off on documents. There was a period when the responsible people in finance kept evading him with various excuses. This was a problem. François used to get quite frustrated. Being the gentleman, he never quite blew his top, but I know that he was quite angry about it...

François told me later on, when we met up in London in 1998, there was a period when he discovered that he simply hadn't been paid for some months (*ibid.*).

France carried on funding the programme, and actually extended its grants régime until the end of 1997. It also provided a further F\$40,000 aid package for five PowerMac computers and photo imaging and desktop publishing software. But the funding crises continued, which were 'very unsettling' for the staff.

[It was] largely due to François' tenacity and his willingness to put his own money into the project continually that kept things going in spite of the financial crises caused by this peculiar system of French payment. I was strongly suspicious that the first two editions of *Wansolwara* came out of François' pocket.

Many people believe — and still do — that the university had misappropriated fairly substantial French aid money that was supposed to have gone to the Journalism Programme and was unwilling to use what was left to reimburse François in a timely manner (*ibid.*).

*Wansolwara* newspaper was created at USP with the encouragement of Philip Cass because there was 'no real outlet for journalism students' work or any way for them to show what they could do, short of actually working for the media or finding a rare work experience slot'.<sup>15</sup> He had started *Felix Culpa*, a successful journalism student newspaper at Central Queensland University in Australia, and he thought that his students could publish in a similar way at USP.

Now, common sense would have dictated that I start the paper with a second or third year group of students who were familiar with desktop publishing, but I felt that what was needed was a group of students who would stay with the paper for a few years and grow with it. I therefore decided that I would give the project to what was then the first year class. They were, thankfully, enthusiastic about the idea and ... gave his blessing to the project and persuaded the French Embassy to fund us.

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<sup>15</sup> Philip Cass (1999). The origins of *Wansolwara*: A personal note, July 31. *Pacific Journalism Online* website. [www.usp.ac.fj/journ/docs/taveta/cass.html](http://www.usp.ac.fj/journ/docs/taveta/cass.html) (Retrieved 13 July 2001).



**Figure 9.1:** First edition of *Wansolwara*, Vol 1 No 1, November 1996.



**Figure 9.2:** Second edition of *Wansolwara*, Vol 2 No 1, April 1997.

We didn't actually have a name for the paper and the suggestion that we call it the *Stanley Weekly* was not met with complete enthusiasm by Mr Simpson.<sup>16</sup> However, it occurred to me that an expression I had heard in Papua New Guinea might be appropriate — *Wansolwara*. 'Wansolwara' expresses the idea that all of us who are born in or live in the Pacific are bound together by the ocean, whether our home is Fiji, Papua New Guinea,

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<sup>16</sup> Stanley Simpson, of Fiji, was the founding editor of *Wansolwara*. After graduation, he joined the Pacific Concerns Resource Centre as assistant director, editing *Pacific News Bulletin*.

Tahiti, the Marianas — or even Australia and New Zealand! USP is home to students and staff from all over the great ocean, so *Wansolwara* seemed a perfect name (Cass interview, 2001).

Cass found that publishing the first edition was not easy. The students were being thrown in at the deep end with everything — writing the stories, taking photos, scanning images, selling ads and organising the printing. However, the students were enthusiastic and determined to get the paper out with the first edition being published in November 1996.

In the end, the first edition came out late, we didn't have many ads and some of the scanned photos produced people who were two inches wide and 12 feet high, but the important thing was that the students had proved that they could do it.

When the paper finally appeared, the reaction was extremely favourable. Our aim had been to strike a balance between campus news and a broader range of stories about issues affecting everybody in the Pacific. In the first issue, for instance, we had a piece on the highly questionable use of skin lightening creams (*ibid.*).

François Turmel gave his 'unqualified support' as did several staff at the USP Media Centre — such as Pat Craddock<sup>17</sup>, who also played a key role in teaching the radio students and with the student-run Radio Pasifik, and Mara Fulmer — who 'put up with us living under their feet'.

Without their tolerance and support, Cass believes, the students would not have got through the post-production phase.

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<sup>17</sup> Pat Craddock, a former Radio New Zealand International manager, made a major contribution to the Journalism Programme over a period of more than six years. He did so in a volunteer capacity in addition to his main job as senior audio producer and sometimes-acting director of the USP Media Centre, often working long hours without compensation. Although he was offered a lecturer's position in March 2000, he declined and later took up a position with Radio Mozambique. He also played an important role with the students' Radio Pasifik.

By 1997 we were in a stronger financial footing, although as usual with newspapers, the advertising [payments] were a long time coming in. We had a better handle on the technology and had begun to tackle some big issues such as the civil war on Bougainville, the role of *fa'fine* in Samoa and the rise in the number of suicides in Fiji.

We had also begun to be noticed by the student community. Our coverage of some very questionable goings on at student functions and financial irregularities in the USP Students Association led to one of our staff, Mithleshni Gurdayal,<sup>18</sup> being threatened — always a sign that our reporting was not only true, but causing embarrassment (*ibid.*).

By the time Cass was preparing to leave for England towards the end of 1997, broadcaster Sophie Dutertre had joined USP and was also roped into the production team.

### ***Media skirmishes with the campus***

In November 1997, the USP Journalism Programme sailed into a storm when I was appointed journalism coordinator and senior lecturer to succeed François Turmel. There was strong opposition to my appointment from a small group of journalists lobbying in support of the Pacific Islands News Association secretariat in Suva, which was totally opposed to me joining USP. A whispering campaign began along with a series of unsigned articles purporting to be 'news stories' planted by PINA officials in the *Daily Post*. The editor at the time was Laisa Taga, a former treasurer of PINA and the confidante of *Islands Business* editor-in-chief Peter Lomas. The main objections against me seemed to be that I:

- was a critic of the Rabuka coups with my book *Blood on their Banner: Nationalist Struggles in the Pacific* (1989);

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<sup>18</sup> Mithleshni Gurdayal joined *Fiji's Daily Post* at the end of 1998 and became a leading political reporter on that publication, attending a Democracy and the Media conference in Cape Town, South Africa, in April 2002.

- had been involved in efforts on behalf of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) to establish 'leftwing' journalist unions in the Pacific;
- had been an outspoken critic of PINA on past occasions, and
- was an expatriate New Zealander.<sup>19</sup>

There was also apparent insecurity on the part of this particular coterie that the USP Journalism Programme might rival PINA's UNESCO Pacific Journalism Development Centre with both an independent public perspective on the profession and practice of journalism in the Pacific, and as a perceived competitor for donor funding.

Several people publicly protested at the smear campaign in the *Daily Post*. Among them was Josefa Nata, then coordinator of the Fiji Journalism Institute, who wrote a complaint to the Fiji News Council appealing for an inquiry into 'what many in the industry believe that the campaign is being engineered by the Islands Business International who [sic] has had a long standing feud with Robie'.<sup>20</sup> His points in the letter included:

More frighteningly [sic] is the insidious manner in which the campaigners against Robie are advocating against freedom of expression in Fiji. This is the sum total of their campaign. It is clear from the tone of the articles that the Fiji Government should intervene and prevent the appointment of Robie by highlighting his opposition to the military coup

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<sup>19</sup> Another, perhaps more Machiavellian factor in the background, was a long-standing feud between *Islands Business* magazine and the author, which stretched back to the coup year in 1987. It became a more public vendetta on the part of the Islands Business International magazine group in 1989 after I wrote an article, 'The muzzling of the Pacific media', published in *New Zealand Monthly Review*, April 1989, which exposed some of the unethical practices in Pacific news media. See Stoner, Harry, (1989). Robie target of vendetta, *New Zealand Journalist*, April; NZ journalist sues magazine for defamation, *Fiji Times*, 24 May 1989; The art of balance: a press perspective, editorial in *Pacific Islands Monthly*, March 1989, p 7. See also A compromised media. In Robie, David (1989). *Blood on their Banner: Nationalist Struggles in the Pacific* (pp 239-241). London: Zed Books, pp 239-241. For details of the unsigned campaign against the author, see Controversial journalist to get USP post? *Sunday Post*, 9 November 1997; Race issue sours dash for USP job, *Daily Post*, 28 November 1997; Kiwi's appointment to spark controversy, *Daily Post*, 6 December 1997; Journalist attacks 1987 coups in Gemini articles, *Daily Post*, 17 December 1997; PM's Office to probe top job at university, *Daily Post*, 20 December 1997.

<sup>20</sup> Letter from Jo Nata, coordinator of the Fiji Journalism Institute, to Daryl Tarte, chair of the Fiji News Council, 18 December 1997.

[in 1987]. Are they are saying that any journalist, or anyone for that matter, who opposed the coup should not be allowed to work in Fiji?<sup>21</sup>

While Fiji News Council chairperson Daryl Tarte conceded that the articles were ‘slanted against Mr Robie’, he declined to accept Nata’s complaint before the council’s adjudication process.<sup>22</sup> Tarte added: ‘I understand the USP have [sic] now made the appointment and will no doubt be applying to the Fiji Government for a work permit’.

I am sure that both the USP and the Government are fully aware of Mr Robie’s background and his considerable strengths as a journalist and these will [be] fairly assessed in terms of the Government's criteria for granting work permits.<sup>23</sup>

In fact, after taking up my position as the new journalism coordinator at USP in March 1998, I did file a letter of complaint to the Fiji News Council.<sup>24</sup> The council avoided taking the complaint to the full Complaints Committee where an adjudication would have been required, but after mediation the new *Daily Post* editor, Jale Moala, published a public apology seven months later, and he admitted to me privately that the newspaper should never have published the articles. But the previous editor, Laisa Taga, was never asked to account for the lack of ethics in her actions.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Letter by the Fiji News Council chairperson, Daryl Tarte, to Jo Nata, coordinator of the Fiji Journalism Institute, on 12 January 1998.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> Letter of complaint to the Fiji Media Council sent by USP journalism coordinator David Robie, 30 April 1998. A copy of the 38-page documented complaint is held in the Pacific Collection of the USP Library.

<sup>25</sup> Apology published in *Fiji's Daily Post*, 30 November 1998: ‘In November and December last year, the *Daily Post* published a series of five unsigned articles misrepresenting New Zealand journalist, author and journalism educator David Robie when he was being appointed coordinator of the Journalism Programme at the University of the South Pacific. The *Daily Post* accepts that the articles were published outside the accepted ethical standards of fairness, accuracy and balance. No attempt was made to interview Mr Robie and many misrepresentations and slurs were published. Following mediation [sic] through the Media Council [renamed by then]. The *Daily Post* apologises for misrepresentations published in the articles.’

Journalism students petitioned the Fiji Government in support of the appointment of both Ingrid Leary, another New Zealand lecturer who had been news director at Fiji Television and who had an honours law degree as well as journalism qualifications, and me. Ironically, the programme had doubled in size with the appointment of us — 32 new enrolments for 1998. The suspense over the future of the programme was captured in a Fiji *Sunday Times* article by Earnest Heatley two weeks after the start of the semester:

The University of the South Pacific prides itself in its unified, regional status and often shies away from outside politics. Yet often, as in recent weeks, its normal academic functions have been disrupted by influences outside the campus. The delay in the issuing of work permits to Ingrid Leary and David Robie, the two expatriate New Zealanders offered lecturing positions at the USP journalism department has kept the fraternity in a state of uncertainty.

The two were appointed at the end of last year for the USP Journalism Studies unit, Robie as course coordinator and Leary [as lecturer]. Both are still awaiting the Fiji Immigration Department's verdict, which might even cripple the newly formed department, just into the first semester and trying to gather momentum.

The Ministry for Home Affairs has reportedly agreed to grant the two expatriates work permits but confirmation on this is [sic] yet to be received from the Immigration Department.

'The university has been advised by the Immigration Department to expect a decision early next week,' a statement from the USP said.

Ms Leary, who arrived in the country last month [February] to take up her appointment, said the university was on the verge of closing the journalism course down, as the delays continued and the classes were disrupted. The hitch in the granting of their permit comes at a time when the department is looking to address 'industry problems' within local media

organisations by increasing the number of tertiary trained journalists. The journalism course began in [1994].

The recent appointments were followed by pressure from the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA) to grant the position[s] to locals despite the USP Selection Board having already made its choice.

Mr Robie is currently lodging a complaint with the Fiji News Council, claiming he is at the end of a smear campaign by certain people.<sup>26</sup> Both Mr Robie and Ms Leary are adamant that the delay in issuing of their permits is a direct result of politicisation from outside bodies. The real tragedy, Mr Robie said, was that students were placed in a difficult position despite paying tuition fees. It has been [as] frustrating for Ms Leary as it has been for the students, some of whom come from regional countries to study.

'I couldn't get paid from the date I arrived and could not [get a] refund [for] my airfares. It has left me in a bad situation financially,' says Ms Leary.

She said [that] ultimately it was the students who had paid up good money for the course who were suffering from the ongoing delays in granting them work permits.

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<sup>26</sup> Robie, David (1998). Target of a smear campaign, *The Sunday Times*, March 1, p 15: 'The events of the past few weeks have been demeaning and damaging for journalism throughout the region and a poor example to neophyte journalists. The irony is that I have been the target of a smear campaign by *The Daily Post* during the selection process with the perpetrators being two people who profess to be champions of journalistic ethics and integrity. They have never let the truth get in the way of their one-sided stories. This campaign of denigration is the subject of a formal complaint to the Fiji News Council, which I am currently preparing. Fiji journalists should question the motive of the two concerned. What are they afraid of? However, I should stress that the editorship of the *Post* recently changed and the new editor, Jale Moala, has been more balanced and professional in the paper's coverage of this affair. In fact, he has been the only journalist in Fiji to actually contact me and seek my side. So much for balance and fairness. In spite of the controversy, it will be one of my priorities to promote a close working relationship between the USP Journalism Programme and the media industry — rather like I have with the news organisations in Papua New Guinea where I am on the Media Council. The close link we have had with the *Post-Courier* helped our *Uni Tavur* win the "best newspaper" category in the Ossie Awards category for Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific. The founding coordinator of the USP course, François Turmel, has done a remarkable job in building the foundations. It is always difficult to set up a new journalism programme, especially a regional one like this. It will be my task to strengthen these foundations and to provide some new directions — such as integrating the publishing and broadcasting production projects more strongly with the programme, and to develop internet publishing. It is also our hope to eventually provide a postgraduate journalism programme at USP — there is a growing need for advanced studies and Pacific media research. I am fortunate to be inheriting an enthusiastic group of students at USP and I look forward to working with them. We have also a talented teaching team in my colleagues — Ingrid Leary and Sophie Dutertre. But the success of any journalism programme such as this depends on strong support from the media industry. I am sure that we will also develop a close relationship with the [Fiji Journalism Institute].'

'The most unfortunate consequence of the fallout surrounding the whole issue has been the students,' says Ms Leary.

Students have already been through a whole semester (two semesters last year) without the three-year Bachelor [of Arts] course having a full time lecturer.

'I think the principle of academic freedom is the cornerstone of a tertiary [institution],' she said.

'It is also vital to the credibility of the students who are qualified [for] the institution,' said Ms Leary.

The former news director at Fiji Television has been a journalist for twelve years, working with *The New Zealand Herald* and trans-Tasman television stations. She has also freelanced around the Pacific and worked on documentary programmes between Fiji and Tonga. Ms Leary practised law for two years in New Zealand after completing an [honours] degree in media law at the University of Otago.

But Mr Robie's appointment in particular has taken centre stage in recent months as pressure that a local fill the [coordinator's] position mounted. He has been the course coordinator of Papua New Guinea, but has accepted a three-year contract at the USP with Ms Leary. Mr Robie, who is a reputed journalist in the region, is expected in the country on March 15.

Ms Leary said [that] with the USP course, graduate students would be better qualified as journalists and have more financial expectations within the workforce.

'This would provide a greater incentive for Fiji journalists to stay in the industry.'

Ms Leary said training would be focused on media law and television journalism, areas [that] she said local journalists were lacking in knowledge. USP journalism students aired their grievances this week on the issue, presenting a petition to the Prime Minister's Office, requesting Mr Robie and Ms Leary be granted work permits. (Heatley, 1998: 14).

In a sidebar article, *The Sunday Times* quoted the students' petition to Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka:

As students we are gravely concerned that the university's academic independence appears to be compromised by outside influences. We understand that David Robie and Ingrid Leary were considered the best qualified and experienced to teach Pacific journalism at the present time by the USP Selection Board.

Through our own investigations, and having looked into their accomplishments ... we support their appointments and have been looking forward to learning from and working with them.<sup>27</sup>

Once the work permit issue was resolved (at least for the time being), Ingrid Leary and I immediately set about consolidating the Journalism Programme and laying the foundations for its development over the next few years. The second semester course Introduction to Journalism II (course code JN102) was redesigned as a dedicated Media Law and Ethics course (course code JN103). I also introduced six-week fulltime professional attachments with news media organisations for the first time in Fiji with a redesigned final semester Journalism Production course (course code JN303). By the end of 1997, before our arrival, the programme had produced six graduates. Over the next four years it turned out a further 49 graduates around the region, eight of them with a new industry based Diploma in Pacific Journalism with ten course credits (*See Tables 9.1, 9.2*). But the opponents of the programme remained in the background, biding their time, and two other political controversies blew up over journalism education in the next three years.

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<sup>27</sup> Students show support for appointed lecturers (1998, March 1). *The Sunday Times*, p 14.

**Table 9.1: Journalism graduates at USP by qualification and year, 1987-2002.**

Year	CIJ* (1987)	BA** (1994)	DPJ*** (1997)	GDPMS§ (2000)	Masters§ (2000)
1987	7	—	—	—	—
1988	7	—	—	—	—
1989	2	—	—	—	—
1990	3	—	—	—	—
1991	1	—	—	—	—
1992	0	—	—	—	—
1993	1	—	—	—	—
1994	—	—	—	—	—
1995	—	—	—	—	—
1996	—	3	—	—	—
1997	—	3	—	—	—
1998	—	11	2	—	—
1999	—	6	3	—	—
2000	—	14	1	0	0
2001	—	10	2	0	0
2002	—	5	2	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

\* The one-year Certificate in Journalism was introduced in 1987. But there is uncertainty over the actual number who gained the certificate. An estimated 14 gained the certificate 1987 and 1988, based on the lecturer's records and other, but USP's Deputy Registrar (academic) Tito Isala noted on 28 May 2002: 'The advice I have received from my staff, who have searched high and low for those who completed [the certificate] in 1987 and 1988, is that there is no record of such a list ... The list of those who supposedly completed the Certificate in Journalism could not be found in these [Academic Committee] minutes.'

\*\* The original BA with a double major including journalism (20 course credits) was introduced in 1994 with the first three graduates in 1996.

\*\*\* In 1997, the programme introduced a two-year Diploma in Pacific Journalism with 10 course credits for the benefit of working journalists.

§ In 2000, Postgraduate Diploma In Pacific Media Studies and Masters in Pacific Media Studies programmes were introduced, but they were hindered by the George Speight-led attempted coup and a staff shortage.

The rapid developments in the Journalism Programme, and also the problems and political sensitivities faced, were acknowledged in an external review of the Department of Literature and Language in 1998/9 by Professor Andrew Pawley of the Australian National University.

He noted:

The Journalism Programme was in crisis in 1997. After the initial four years' funding from the French Government had ended there was no core funding allocated to replace the foundation staff. Funds were then found from School [of Humanities] savings for two appointments. With the arrival early in 1998 of two experienced and accomplished journalists, David Robie (coordinator) and Ingrid Leary, the programme has been salvaged and reinvigorated. However, there is a need for the university to provide core funding for these two positions.<sup>28</sup>

**Table 9.2: BA, certificate and diploma journalism graduates at USP by qualification and country, 1987-2002.**

Country	CIJ* (1987)	BA** (1994)	DPJ *** (1997)	GDPMS§ (2000)	Masters§ (2000)
Fiji	18	35	7	—	—
FSM	—	2	—	—	—
PNG	—	—	1	—	—
Samoa	1	6	—	—	—
Solomon Is	1	4	—	—	—
Tahiti	—	1	—	—	—
Tonga	1	—	1	—	—
USA	—	—	1	—	—
Vanuatu	—	4	—	—	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>10</b>	—	—

Observing a sudden surge in first-year enrolments with an intake in 1998 of 32 new students while there was supposed to be a ceiling of just 20, Pawley remarked: 'This is very high, given that courses are essentially restricted to intending majors and that for technical reasons classes must be kept small.'<sup>29</sup> He pressed for a third fulltime staff member and argued in favour of a postgraduate Diploma in Journalism. On the political climate, he said:

There are certain political tensions inherent in the programme. Journalism is by its very nature a discipline with a high public profile; both lecturers are themselves practising journalists and students in the process of learning their craft are themselves likely to become involved in media debates. Given the sensitive political environment in Fiji, and the programme's dependence on good relations with the Fiji media, both staff and students need to play a fairly cool hand if this extremely important enterprise is to run smoothly.<sup>30</sup>

Although the Journalism Programme quickly established strong links with individual news media organisations, especially with its attachment programme, the ties were developed mainly with the *Daily Post*, which had a controlling Government interest while retaining editorial independence, Fiji Television, and to some degree with Fiji Broadcasting Corporation and Communications Fiji Ltd.<sup>31</sup> But some elements of the media remained a 'closed shop', particularly the Fiji Media Council which was dominated by the influence of the *Islands Business* group and *The Fiji Times*. Both were negative towards tertiary education and graduate journalists, although *Islands Business* had in fact employed graduates from USP but failed to keep them.<sup>32</sup>

*The Fiji Times* was responsible for stirring a second work permit controversy in August 1998 through the 'captive' reporting by one of its controversial, but influential, reporters, Margaret Wise.<sup>33</sup> According to Wise, the Fiji Government had launched an 'investigation' into

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<sup>28</sup> Pawley, Professor Andrew (1999). External Advisor's Report on Visit to USP Campuses at Laucala and Port Vila, October 1998. pp 1-21.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, p 8.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, p 9.

<sup>31</sup> Particularly through the cooperation of FM96's then news director Samantha Magick.

<sup>32</sup> Award-winning USP reporter Nicholas Cornelius (1998-9) and Vasemaca Tuisawau (1999) worked at *Islands Business* then left; Donna Hoerder was offered a job in 2000 after contributing as a freelance for the magazine, but she declined in favour of the job with Air Pacific. By 2001, *The Fiji Times* had not employed any USP graduate and reputedly had the lowest starting salary of any Fiji news media organisation. (see The media industry: Fiji journalists 'underpaid', *Wansolwara*, November 2000, p 7.)

<sup>33</sup> Untrained and with no formal journalism qualifications, Margaret Wise had an affair with Prime Minister Sitiveni Rabuka and was widely regarded as a 'captive' reporter for Rabuka and his Soqosoqo Ni Vakavulewa Ni Taukei (SVT) party and their policies. Later, while acting chief-of-staff of *The Fiji Times*, she brought a paternity

complaints that both Leary and I were breaching our work permit conditions.<sup>34</sup> The inquiry was said to be directed towards revoking our work permits (Robie, 1999a: 115; 2000a: 90). It apparently focused on a report on my independent *Café Pacific* website, a media and politics commentary and current affairs netzine.<sup>35</sup> The article provided an overview of South Pacific news media and criticised the Fiji Government plans to legislate for a statutory Media Council to replace the independent and self-regulated council already in place. Complaints were also said to be against Ingrid Leary over her weekly 'Media Watch' column in the *Daily Post* and tutorials conducted at the Fiji Journalism Institute. *The Fiji Times*' report claimed that we were 'using [our] positions at the USP to lend authority to their work outside it'. Citing an unnamed ministry source, the article said:

'We have copies of articles written by Robie that features [sic] on the website,' the source said. 'Their work permits were granted very reluctantly because of protest by locals earlier this year so they should respect the conditions of the permits.'

He was referring to an article by Mr Robie on August 9 titled 'Pacific press freedom on the rocks'. The first paragraph said that Fiji's 'first genuinely democratic election' since the coups would take place next year.

The article also said that in the appointment of a Media Council, Government was seeking 'ways to muzzle the news media in spite of the new Constitution's guarantee of freedom of

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action against Rabuka, seeking maintenance for her son who was born in 2000 (see 'Skirt journalism' allegations, *Pacific Media Watch*, 12 February 2002, [www.asiapac.org.fj/cafecapacific/resources/aspac/fiji3519.html](http://www.asiapac.org.fj/cafecapacific/resources/aspac/fiji3519.html) (Retrieved 20 December 2002)

<sup>34</sup> Margaret Wise (1998, August 27). Lecturers' work permits queried. *The Fiji Times*, p 3.

<sup>35</sup> The *Café Pacific* website is currently on a New Zealand server, PlaNet, but has a Fiji domain. It is also known as Asia-Pacific Network. It was originally established at the University of Technology, Sydney, as a postgraduate project while the author completed his Masters in Journalism degree in 1996. It is independent of the USP training website, *Pacific Journalism Online*, but is linked to it. The article cited in this controversy, Pacific press freedom on the rocks, 9 August 1998, was also published in *Reportage* media magazine at UTS, and is online at *Café Pacific* at: [www.asiapac.org.fj/cafecapacific/resources/aspac/pacmedia.html](http://www.asiapac.org.fj/cafecapacific/resources/aspac/pacmedia.html) (Retrieved 27 July 2001).

speech and information'. Government had delayed issuing work permits earlier this year following protests from some members of the local media industry.<sup>36</sup>

The following day, Wise again reported similar vague claims against us. This time her report also quoted the Home Affairs Ministry's Permanent Secretary, Emitai Boladuadua, as saying the Government 'would withdraw [our] work permits if [we] were found to have breached the terms under which they were given'.<sup>37</sup> The Secretary said some Government departments and some 'members of the public' had made 'complaints', Wise never interviewed Leary or me.<sup>38</sup> The same day an official statement was issued by the USP Registrar, Sarojini Pillay, stating that we were not in breach of our work permits.<sup>39</sup> Pillay added that our activities were within the normal roles of research and publication carried out by academics. The Head of the Literature and Language Department, Professor Subramani, was also cited as saying that we were doing 'outstanding' work. This statement was widely published and broadcast in the other Fiji news media, but was not published by *The Fiji Times*. In another statement, the president of the USP Staff Association, Dr Ganeshwar Chand, said the journalism lecturers had 'perfect freedom' to carry out research and publish in areas of their expertise.<sup>40</sup>

*The Fiji Times* published a letter by me criticising the newspaper for 'blatant bias'.<sup>41</sup> Ironically, *The Fiji Times* also published an editorial the same day, entitled A DRACONIAN

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<sup>36</sup> Wise, *op. cit.*

<sup>37</sup> Margaret Wise (1998, August 28). Work permits under probe. *The Fiji Times*, p 3.

<sup>38</sup> Margaret Wise was eventually dismissed as chief-of-staff of *The Fiji Times* for what managing director Tony Yianni described as 'grossly unprofessional and utterly unethical' conduct (Times dismisses chief-of-staff', *Daily Post*, 12 September 2002).

<sup>39</sup> University of the South Pacific Information Office (1998). Media statement, August 28.

<sup>40</sup> Chand, Dr Ganeshwar (1998). Open letter from the Association of University of the South Pacific Staff (AUSPS) to the USP Registrar, August 28.

<sup>41</sup> Robie, David (1998). 'Blatant bias', letter to the editor, *The Fiji Times*, August 31: After citing examples of *Fiji Times* bias, the letter said: 'If this is your newspaper's idea of balanced journalism, then heaven help the future of news media in Fiji. Fortunately, all other local media did a far more balanced job. I had already complained to the Fiji Media Council concerning distorted and unethical reporting. Both Ms Leary and I are totally committed to USP's Journalism Programme, and we have worked extremely hard and with dedication over the past six months to initiate many major improvements in journalism education in Fiji and the region, as any students and staff would testify.'

RESPONSE, in support of the lecturers and the principle of academic freedom.<sup>42</sup> It said that when academic research involved journalism 'anything published takes on a more sensitive aspect as far as officialdom is concerned'. The editorial argued that if there had been a breach, 'the threat to withdraw their work permits is far too draconian a response'. Jone Dakuvula, a former press secretary to Prime Minister Rabuka, stressed in a letter to *The Sunday Times* that under the new Fiji Constitution [Section 30(1)]:

Every person has the right to freedom of expression, including: freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas; and freedom of the press and other media.

He added:

Reading from your report, it appears to me that some local news media employees or journalists were involved in these complaints, which seem to be based mainly on these persons' disagreements with either the views of David Robie and Ingrid Leary, or the fact that they have been lawfully employed by USP.

Our new Constitution has been in force for barely one month and here we have some news media people attempting to suppress two well-qualified journalists' freedom of expression, perhaps in the hope that they could be expelled from this country for the 'crime' of writing, publishing and teaching journalism.

Where is the Fiji journalists' much vaunted Code of Ethics?<sup>43</sup>

In a letter published in both *The Fiji Times* and the *Daily Post* on September 1, the Assistant Information Minister, Ratu Josefa Dimuri, confirmed the ministry had 'received complaints

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<sup>42</sup> Editorial: 'A draconian response', (1998, August 31). *The Fiji Times*, p 6. Editor-in-chief Russell Hunter claimed to the author in a faxed message on August 30 that he had planned to write the editorial before he received the letter of complaint.

from both local journalists and regional media organisations who were of the view that their interests were being jeopardised by the involvement of these two people in other areas of work not stipulated in their work permits'.<sup>44</sup> The same day, Information Minister Senator Filipe Bole was reported in the *Daily Post* as having used parliamentary privilege to allege in the Senate the day before that I was serving a 'dual role' in the University of the South Pacific. He claimed that I was feeding my own 'company' in Auckland with information from the internet. Senator Bole added: 'There is a distinct role between being a lecturer and a journalist'.<sup>45</sup> I wrote to the senator the same day, stating I had never earned any income from websites, all my work was education-related at the university, and I had no business interests in Fiji.<sup>46</sup> No acknowledgement was received from the senator.

A *Daily Post* editorial commended the Journalism Programme and us personally for the improvements we had made in a short time. The newspaper's editor, Jale Moala, wrote that in the past, when the USP Journalism Programme had been established with French Government aid funding, 'it was never as good as it should have been':

However, since the appointment of Mr Robie and Ms Leary, things have changed. There is now realistic practical work being done, and students, for the first time, are on attachment to our newsrooms. Now the students are more involved in technological developments, especially with the internet. These things are possible because Mr Robie and Ms Leary bring into the programme a wide mix of practical and theoretical experiences.

Mr Robie is one of the region's most outstanding journalists, who, apart from having written several books, has covered issues in most Pacific Islands. Ms Leary is an

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<sup>43</sup> Dakuvula, Jone (1998). Letter to the editor, *The Sunday Times*, August 30; *Daily Post*, August 31.

<sup>44</sup> Dimuri, Ratu Josefa (1998). Letter to the editor, *Daily Post*, *Fiji Times*, September 1. Dimuri, a former *Fiji Times* journalist, later gained notoriety as a rebel leader on the northern island of Vanua Levu supporting the George Speight-led insurrection in May 2000.

<sup>45</sup> Bole slams Robie (1998, September 1). *Daily Post*.

experienced newspaper and television journalist. Her forte, however, is law, an area crucial to journalism in a developing country like Fiji.<sup>47</sup>

The editorial added:

The saddest thing is the deafening silence from the Pacific Islands News Association and the Fiji Media Council. By failing to support the rights of journalists, like Mr Robie and Ms Leary, whether they be teachers, students or whatever, these organisations are helping to destroy the very freedom of expression they have so often said they protect.<sup>48</sup>

International reaction criticising the pressure on us started to flow with news services and newspapers abroad running news stories on the issue.<sup>49</sup> The Paris-based media freedom group Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) wrote to Senator Bole protesting against the harassment and asking that the lecturers be allowed to work freely without fear of pressure, as the 1997 Constitution allowed.<sup>50</sup> The New Zealand Journalists Training Organisation (NZJTO) executive director, Bill Southworth, a former editor of the original *Fiji Sun* newspaper, said those in the media who were complaining about the work permit issue should 'take the time to read Fiji's new Constitution'.<sup>51</sup> The Commonwealth Fellow in Human Rights Education, Caren Wickliffe, a Ngati Porou lawyer from Aotearoa/New Zealand, said the promotion and protection of Article 19 'is considered fundamental to achieving participatory democracy', adding that she supported

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<sup>46</sup> Robie, David (1998). Letter to Senator Filipe Bole. I have a small publishing company in New Zealand, David Robie Publishing Ltd, which was established in 1984. It has no connection with Fiji. Both ministers, Ratu Josefa Dimuri and Senator Filipe Bole, lost their parliamentary seats in the May 1999 General Election in Fiji.

<sup>47</sup> Editorial: Attack on journalists. (1998, September 1). *Daily Post*. At the time, editor Jale Moala was an MBA candidate at USP and he believed strongly in better education for journalists.

<sup>48</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> See Fiji presses for work ban to muzzle NZ duo. (1998, September 2). *New Zealand Herald*; University backs beleaguered NZ journalists (September 2), *The Evening Post*; 'Barometre: Orageux', *Tahiti-Pacifique*, September.

<sup>50</sup> Letter to Senator Filipe Bole by RSF secretary-general Robert Ménard, 31 August 1998.

<sup>51</sup> Southworth, Bill;. (1998, September 1). Harassment of journalists. Letter to the editor, *Daily Post*.

the programme's 'contribution to the development of media and journalism in the Pacific'.<sup>52</sup> The New Zealand Association of University Staff (NZ AUS) also wrote to both Prime Minister Rabuka and Senator Bole, pointing out Fiji's obligations as a signatory under the Recommendation on the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel (RSHETP) protocol adopted by UNESCO in November 1997.<sup>53</sup>

The Pacific Islands News Association clarified its stand after the criticism in the *Daily Post* editorial, confirming that some of its 'members' had complained to the Fiji Government about the work permits. In spite of the international condemnation, PINA president William Parkinson alleged in a statement distributed to editors around the region that many of the 'complaints relate to breaches of their work permit conditions with regards to outside work for local media organisations'.<sup>54</sup> Parkinson also questioned whether the website content of *Café Pacific* would cover stories in a 'fair and balanced manner' Parkinson could have contacted the lecturers to get their side of the story instead of making prejudicial statements implying they

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<sup>52</sup> Wickliffe, Caren, Letter to *Pacific Journalism Online*, 2 September 1998. [www.usp.ac.fj/journ/docs/talanoa.html](http://www.usp.ac.fj/journ/docs/talanoa.html) (Retrieved 12 May 2002).

<sup>53</sup> The NZ AUS letter to Rabuka and Bole, signed by executive director Rob Crozier, detailed the relevant sections of the RSHETP, and were also sent to *The Fiji Times* and the *Daily Post*. The letter stated in part: 'I am writing on behalf of university staff in New Zealand in defence of David Robie and Ingrid Leary, both of whom have come under attack in recent days. I wish to draw your attention (and that of your Government) to the fact that the issue of academic freedom is involved and we view very seriously attacks on that freedom. I note that the University of the South Pacific recognises the academic freedom rights of the staff concerned.

'I also wish to point out that as a member of UNESCO, Fiji will be a signatory to the Recommendation on the Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel, which was adopted by UNESCO in November 1997. The following clauses of the recommendation are relevant to this situation:

'VI. Rights and freedoms of higher-education on teaching personnel

'25. Access to the higher education academic profession should be based solely on appropriate academic qualifications, competence and experience and be equal for all members of society without any discrimination.

'26. Higher education teaching personnel, like all other groups and individuals, should enjoy those internationally recognised civil, political, social and cultural rights applicable to all citizens. Therefore, all higher-educated teaching personnel should enjoy freedom of thought, conscience, religion, expression, assembly, and association as well as the right to liberty and security of the person and liberty of movement. They should not be hindered or impeded in exercising their civil rights as citizens, including the right to contribute to social change through freely expressing their opinion of state policies and of policies affecting higher education. They should not be subject to arbitrary arrest or detention, or to torture, or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. In cases of gross violation of their rights, higher-education teaching personnel should have the right to appeal to the relevant national, regional or international bodies such as the agencies of the United Nations, and organisations representing higher-education teaching personnel should extend full support in such cases.....'

<sup>54</sup> Parkinson, William (1998). Statement by the PINA president, September 1.

were 'guilty'. He made misleading public statements without acknowledging USP's denial that there had been any breach of work permits.

Finally, Senator Bole made it clear on September 8 that there was no foundation to the allegations when he told reporters no investigation was being carried out.<sup>55</sup> The issue was dropped after a heated two weeks of media debate.

### ***The post-coup website closure***

After restructuring the undergraduate Journalism Programme, an additional ninth course, Special Topics in Journalism (code JN305), was added as an elective to the eight compulsory core courses. The programme also embarked on a postgraduate offering, with both a Postgraduate Diploma in Pacific Media Studies (PGPMS) and a Masters degree in Pacific Media Studies being introduced in 2000. The concept, particularly for the postgraduate qualification, was for 'professional degrees' as offered at some Australian, New Zealand and United States universities. As the programme explained in its course brochure:

An emphasis in this new programme is practical, analytical, critical and professional studies in Asia-Pacific Journalism (course code JN401), Advanced Media Law and Ethics (JN403), Online Policy, Research and Publishing (JN404), and Special Topics in Journalism (JN405) — including subjects such as Media Management, Investigative Journalism and Business Journalism. The programme also makes extensive use of USPNET satellite technology and the internet in association with the UNESCO-supported training website *Pacific Journalism Online* and publications *Wansolwara* and *Spicol Daily* (Robie, 2000b)<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Bole denies query into foreign journos (1998, September 9). *Daily Post*.

<sup>56</sup> Postgraduate Programme in Pacific Media Studies brochure (2000), p 4.

However, just as when the original Certificate course began in Murray Masterton's era, the postgraduate programme was in the shadow of an attempted coup, a putsch. Media industry critics continued to snipe at the programme with *Islands Business* publisher Robert Keith-Reid devoting an entire editorial column in his magazine criticising news of the postgraduate plans. He claimed that 'the trouble with today's academic training for journalists, as the USP effort is starting to show, is that it can produce not journalists but academic anaemics, far removed from the real world'.<sup>57</sup>

[USP] is talking of a full post-graduate programme towards a 'specialist Pacific masters degree in media' and of there being 'a crucial need for more research' into the region's media. The new course will have 'emphasis on investigative journalism, resource development journalism, and advanced economic and political reporting'. By gum, all this for kids who may not be able to competently report the fact of one cat sitting on one mat.<sup>58</sup>

The ill-informed editorial was so full of misrepresentations and factual errors that Pat Craddock<sup>59</sup> and I wrote an open letter to the Fiji media, pointing out that Keith-Reid had never visited the USP programme:<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Keith-Reid, Robert (2000, March). 'We say' editorial: 'The trouble with today's academic training for journalists, as the USP effort is starting to show, is that it can produce not journalists but academic anaemics, far removed from the real world,' *Islands Business*, p 10.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Pat Craddock was highly critical of what he saw as USP management's failure to publicly defend the programme's integrity in the face of increasingly strident attacks from PINA and *Islands Business*, and he eventually turned down a job offer by USP as broadcast lecturer after six years with the Media Centre and as an associate lecturer in journalism. On 9 April 2000, he wrote to the Registrar in a letter rejecting the job offer: 'It is my view that the USP should be defending its own staff and the integrity of the USP. I interpret this USP indifference as showing a lack of principle. I am shocked that the administration [has] failed to publicly answer the inaccurate and pointed criticism of the USP Journalism Programme.

'*Islands Business* is now also attacking me ... You will be aware of the attacks on the USP Journalism Programme in the time of François Turmel on the grounds that it was French supported. When Philip Cass was appointed as journalism lecturer there were attacks upon him. A sustained campaign was taken against the appointment of David Robie and then Ingrid Leary. I am next in line to be attacked. It is a small attack at this moment, but I expect the attacks to grow and continue into the future.

'I am not prepared to defend myself against slander and innuendo by these influential men in Fiji, who wear their unethical but powerful journalistic heads well south of their shoulders ... The attacks are racial or anti-expatriate

Many of our journalism graduates, which *Islands Business* classifies as ‘academic anaemics’, are doing outstanding work for reputable organisations both in Fiji and around the South Pacific region. Almost all graduates have jobs in the region’s news media and some have been promoted rapidly.

Among the graduates are a radio station director and several reporters with the Fiji Broadcasting Corporation; the special projects editor with *The Review* business news magazine; the business editor with *Fiji's Daily Post*; a feature writer with the *Fiji Sun*; a media officer with the Fiji Human Rights Commission; a senior journalist with the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation; a TV reporter with the Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation; a senior reporter on V6AH Radio in the Federated States of Micronesia; and the publications officer for a Fiji-based regional non-government organisation, Pacific Concerns Resource Centre.

One student graduating this year writes a popular film review column for the *Fiji Times* and hosts a daily radio show on FM96 in her spare time from studies. Even the two staff writers listed by *Islands Business* on its imprint page are USP journalism graduates.<sup>61</sup>

On Friday, 19 May 2000, almost to the day of the first military coup in 1987, George Speight, a bankrupt businessman, tore off his balaclava to reveal his identity after seizing Parliament and the elected government at gunpoint. Within minutes of the news of the hostage taking being flashed on Radio Fiji news’ 11am bulletin — scooped by one of the USP final-year students on attachment<sup>62</sup> — Professor Subramani came into my office and said: ‘There’s been another coup’.

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or anti-intellectual or written by men trying to hold on to foreign aid dollars, power and trying to control the whole direction of media education.’

<sup>60</sup> In spite of two public ‘open days’ a year — on World Media Freedom Day on May 3 and the University Open Day in September, at the time of writing in May 2002 Keith-Reid had still not visited the USP Journalism Programme.

<sup>61</sup> Craddock, Pat, and David Robie (2000). Open letter to the Fiji news media, March 19. Published in the *Daily Post*.

<sup>62</sup> Tamani Nair (Fiji)



Figure 9.3: The Speight attempted coup edition of *Wansolwara*, Vol 5 No 2, June 2000.

After quick phone calls to confirm the facts, sketchy as they were at that stage, I met our senior student editors to decide on what we would do. At that stage, it was felt the crisis would be over in a few days and we decided to go all out to cover the events — but with a campus perspective. The rear of the university grounds is close to Parliament. Three months later, the USP student journalists were still covering the crisis.

*Wansolwara* already had a team of reporters down at the protest march in downtown Suva that morning (which later erupted into rioting); the news editors set up radio and television

monitors; reporters were dispatched to Parliament; the television class was cancelled and a crew sent downtown to Suva where they filmed footage of the riots and arson in the capital. As reporters came back with their stories and digital pictures, most of their work was posted on the journalism website, *Pacific Journalism Online*.<sup>63</sup> By the time martial law was declared ten days later, on May 29, the Journalism Programme staff and students had posted 109 stories, dozens of soundbites and scores of digital photographs (*see* Robie, 2001c: 50). Student online editor Christine Gounder wrote about it at the time:

Student journalists chose to be on the job. But it hasn't been easy. They survived threats, bureaucratic attempts to gag their website and newspaper, and a shutdown of the university to deliver the news.

Grabbing the opportunity to hone their skills, the young journalists didn't waste any time rushing to be on the spot at Parliament on May 19 and the looting and arson sites, around the capital, Suva.<sup>64</sup>

On Sunday, May 29, hours after a mob attacked Fiji Television and cut transmission for almost 48 hours, the university pulled the plug on the website, fearing a similar raid on the sprawling Laucala campus (*see* Robie, 2000c). Undaunted, the students were offered an alternative site hosted by the Department of Social Communication and Journalism at the University of Technology, Sydney, and carried on.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> *Pacific Journalism Online* coup web archive:

[www.usp.ac.fj/journ/docs/news/coup74.html](http://www.usp.ac.fj/journ/docs/news/coup74.html) (Retrieved 12 May 2002).

Department of Social Communication and Journalism (hosted USP Fiji coup archive):

[www.journalism.uts.edu.au/archive/coup.html](http://www.journalism.uts.edu.au/archive/coup.html) (Retrieved 12 May 2002).

Looking Glass Design website (in the US, hosting the special *Wansolwara* coup edition);

[www.lookinglassdesign.com/wansolwara/wansol.html](http://www.lookinglassdesign.com/wansolwara/wansol.html) (Retrieved 12 May 2002).

<sup>64</sup> Gounder, Christine (2000, August). Taking a coup in your stride. *CPU News*, London: Commonwealth Press Union, p 7.

<sup>65</sup> Department of Social Communication and Journalism (hosted USP Fiji coup archive):

[www.journalism.uts.edu.au/archive/coup.html](http://www.journalism.uts.edu.au/archive/coup.html) (Retrieved 12 May 2002).

Australian Centre for Independent Journalism director Associate Professor Chris Nash at UTS said: 'The suggestion that journalism staff and students, and indeed any academics, might somehow desist from reporting, commenting and publishing on the current situation is akin to suggesting that doctors and nurses should turn their backs on wounded people in a conflict. It's unconscionable'.<sup>66</sup>

At a meeting three days after the shutdown of the website, sought by the Journalism Programme with the Vice-Chancellor, Esekia Solofa, senior university officials said they wanted 'self-censorship' and for the newspaper *Wansolwara* to be 'postponed'. When told that *Wansolwara* had already gone to press, the authorities wanted distribution of the paper stopped and for the paper to be inspected with a view to removing articles. This was declined by the programme staff. An American graphics designer, Mara Fulmer, who worked with the Media Centre at USP in the mid-1990s, independently hosted the students' gagged newspaper *Wansolwara Online* at her *Looking Glass* website in the US.<sup>67</sup> 'I consider it an honour and privilege to do this for freedom of the press,' said Fulmer. 'The students have worked so hard on this. They have truly earned their journo stripes'<sup>68</sup>

After a series of letters of protest to the university administration from groups and organisations as diverse as Reporters Sans Frontières in Paris, the Commonwealth Journalists' Association, the NZ Journalism Education Association, Queensland University's Journalism Department, PEN New Zealand and the Committee to Protect Journalists in New York, I was sent a letter of 'reprimand' by Vice-Chancellor Solofa — after *Wansolwara* had been distributed in defiance of the attempt to ban it. Solofa wrote:

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<sup>66</sup> Letter by the ACIJ director to the USP Vice-Chancellor (2000, June 13).

<sup>67</sup> Looking Glass Design website (in the US, hosting the special *Wansolwara* coup edition); [www.lookingglassdesign.com/wansolwara/wansol.html](http://www.lookingglassdesign.com/wansolwara/wansol.html) (Retrieved 12 May 2002).

<sup>68</sup> Media ban defied. (2000, September). *Noted*. Wellington: NZ Journalists Training Organisation (NZJTO).

The decision I had taken to close down the Journalism Programme website was a straightforward decision based entirely on one consideration: the safety and security of the property of the university and of the lives of the people engaged in it...

Let me make an important observation, which should cover the criticisms you and others have raised over the closure of the website ...

The USP Journalism Programme is not a media agency, neither is it a news/information outlet. The USP Journalism Programme is an education and training facility for future journalists and others who need journalism knowledge and skills in their work... The current closure of the journalism website has clearly illustrated that our students do not need it to publicise or publish their pieces if that is what their true intention is.<sup>69</sup>

Three senior academic staff immediately protested<sup>70</sup> and the president of the Association of USP Staff (AUSPS), Dr Biman Prasad, called for the letter to be withdrawn, saying it was 'unjustified' and condemning 'self-censorship'. Prasad added: 'Academic freedom is always fundamental to the survival and operation of a university, even more so when there is a crisis and threats to academic freedom' .<sup>71</sup> Prasad later described the incident in a paper about the 'crisis of conscience' for USP academic staff when addressing the annual conference of the New Zealand Association of University Staff (NZAUS) in Wellington:

The staff association was vigilant and took a firm stand on issues that we felt were designed to promote self-censorship. For example, soon after the May 19 coup, the university administration in panic and unilaterally decided to close the journalism programme website. The journalism students were provided with a fabulous opportunity

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<sup>69</sup> Solofa, Esekia (2000). Letter to the Journalism Coordinator, June 22.

<sup>70</sup> Among academics strongly supportive of the USP Journalism Programme at the time were the then Head of the Literature and Language Department, Dr Patrick Griffiths; Professor of Theatre Arts Ian Gaskell; and Associate Professor France Mugler. Professor of Literature Subramani and literature lecturer Larry Thomas were also supportive.

<sup>71</sup> Prasad, Biman (2000). Letter to the USP Vice-Chancellor, July 27.

to practise skills in the real life situation what they were learning in theory. Their reporting on the crisis was appreciated around the world.

The administration's drastic move to shut the website down was rather regrettable from the point of view of both staff and students of journalism. The Association of USP Staff protested vigorously against the closure and it was allowed to continue (Prasad, 2000).

On June 28, the website was allowed to reopen (to enable students to access its resources and *Online Classroom*), providing no further news was posted about the Fiji coup. Almost a month later, on July 25, the 40 academic staff of the School of Humanities' Board of Studies passed an unanimous resolution condemning the administration over the shutdown of the website. Two letters dealing with the political crisis and the role of the university were later forwarded to the Academic Committee. One of the important justifications that the academics gave was that the existence of the journalism website provided important information for their security. The letter defending the website, signed by the acting Head of School, Dr Desma Hughes, said:

We believe [the closure of the journalism website on May 29] was unsound pedagogically ...

It has been stated that the purpose of the journalism programme's productions and publications are as training grounds for prospective journalists from around the region. We consider that the journalism website provided outstanding and excellent training for the journalism students in that it involved reporting and commenting on real issues.

The situation that evolved during the time of the coup can hardly be simulated for the purposes of teaching.

The coup gave our students an ideal opportunity to practise their journalism skills under the supervision of one of the school's professional staff members, especially in the area of

investigative journalism. We therefore find it difficult to understand the rationale behind the decision to suspend the website that deprived our students.<sup>72</sup>

The board's letter said that being informed was a crucial element of personal security. While the university's security needs were understood, the Journalism Programme's 'unique contribution' to the distribution of reliable and objective news and commentary to Pacific people and the world should have been carefully considered.<sup>73</sup>

An ironic footnote to the affair came during the annual Ossie Awards for the best in student journalism in Australia on December 6. Student journalists of USP 'dominated' the awards for their reporting of the Fiji coup.<sup>74</sup> Publication category judge, deputy editor Mike van Niekerk, said the student journalists working on *Pacific Journalism Online* 'rose to the challenge of providing high quality reports of a dramatic international news event on their doorstep.'<sup>75</sup>

They did so in challenging circumstances and by providing these reports on the internet they were one of the few sources of information at critical times of the events taking place.

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<sup>72</sup> Hughes, Desma (2000). Letter to USP Academic Committee, September 11.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.* However, the substantive Head of School and UNESCO Chair in Teacher Education and Culture, Professor Konai Helu Thaman, revealed her influential role in having the website closed in a keynote address at the International Association of Mass Communication Research (IAMCR) Conference, Budapest, 6-10 September 2001: 'The decision by our university management, to which I was party, to temporarily close our journalism website, for security reasons (after the trashing of the Fiji TV headquarters the night before), continues to be a sore point among a handful of expatriate and local staff who saw this as an attempt by the university to curtail freedom of expression. I see their anger as simply the result of their lack of understanding of different ways of seeing the world.'

<sup>74</sup> The annual Ossie Awards for student journalism are organised by the Australian-based Journalism Education Association (JEA). The awards are named after Melbourne journalist Osmar S. White and are funded from his estate through the generosity of his daughter, journalist and author Sally A. White. In 2000, all USP Journalism awards were for its coup coverage. USP Journalism won the Dr Charles Stuart Prize for best overall publication, *Pacific Journalism Online*, while *Wansolwara* won the newspaper category. Highly commended were *Wansolwara* (best overall), Christine Gounder (best television news story), Losana McGowan (best print news story), and Tamani Nair (best radio news story). For an account of the awards, see Pearson, Mark (2001). Ossies recognise promising talent of the future, *PANPA Bulletin*, February, p 19.

<sup>75</sup> Pearson, *op. cit.*

As such, the quality of the writing is of a high standard for students. Taken as a body of work it is very impressive.<sup>76</sup>

At the USP journalism awards the previous month a diplomatic row was unleashed by the chief guest, New Zealand High Commissioner Tia Barrett, who took a modest swipe at the slowness of bringing the coup perpetrators to justice.<sup>77</sup> Barrett also made an important statement about indigenous issues and journalism that riled the military-installed régime:

What is difficult to accept in this dialogue on indigenous rights is the underlying assumption that those rights are pre-eminent over other more fundamental human rights. This just cannot be so, not in today's world ... Nowhere is it written in any holy scripture that because you are indigenous you have first rights over others in their daily rights. You should be respected and highly regarded as an indigenous person, but respect is earned not obtained on demand (Barrett, 2000).

In the end, said Barrett, information would make the difference in the process of cultural change for Pacific Islanders in the face of globalisation to improve people's lives. This is where the journalist plays an important role. He appealed to the coup surviving graduates to always bear in mind the needs of their people and their thirst for knowledge.

### ***The press and the putsch***

A sequel followed at the Journalism Education Association (JEA) conference at Mooloolaba, Queensland, in early December after I presented a paper analysing Fiji (and international) media coverage of the Chaudhry Government's year in office and the Speight coup period

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<sup>76</sup> Quoted by Pearson.

<sup>77</sup> 16 November 2000.

(Robie, 2001a). Perhaps rather provocatively entitled, 'Coups coup land: The press and the putsch in Fiji'<sup>78</sup>, my paper concluded:

When Chaudhry was released from captivity on July 14, he partly blamed the media for the overthrow of his Government. Some sectors of the media were alleged to have waged a bitter campaign against the Coalition Government and its roll-back of privatisation in the year after the Fiji Labour Party-led coalition had been elected in a landslide victory in May 1999. In the early weeks of the insurrection, the media enjoyed an unusually close relationship with Speight and the hostage-takers, raising ethical questions.<sup>79</sup>

I also highlighted the perceived role of the country's largest news organisation, the Murdoch-owned *Fiji Times*:

Critics regard *The Fiji Times*, in particular, as having had a hostile editorial stance towards the Chaudhry Government. In spite of claims that it has treated all governments similarly, the newspaper is viewed by critics as antagonist and arrogant. The focus of news media coverage after the election was to play up conflict. Politics were portrayed as an arena of

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<sup>78</sup> The expression 'coups coup land' in the Fiji context was initiated by Australian journalists and later by New Zealand-based Agence France-Presse correspondent Michael Field and was already in common use, but it did not stir offence until I used it to title my paper. See Field, Michael (2000, June 30), Clueless in coups, coup land, *The Fiji Times*, p 7; (2001, August 8), Farewell to coups coup land, *The Fiji Times*, p 7; (2001, May 19), Return to coups coup land, *The Fiji Times*, p 33. Radio FM96's Vijay Narayan, told the *Sunshine Coast Daily* (2000, December 7) that he found my use of the phrase coups coup land 'offensive ... the words coups-coups made it sound like "cuckoo"'.  
'We found it was our duty, whoever was in government, to report on whatever promises were being made. George Speight was part of the story. We had to have someone there (in the seized Parliament building) to find out what was going on.'

<sup>79</sup> The original JEA paper, Coups coup land: The press and the putsch in Fiji, was posted online at *Café Pacific*: [www.asiapac.org.fj/cafepacific/resources/aspac/fiji3148a.html](http://www.asiapac.org.fj/cafepacific/resources/aspac/fiji3148a.html) (Retrieved 12 May 2002).

An academic refereed version of the paper (shorter and including a section about the media controversy in Fiji over the findings of the paper) was published as an article in *AsiaPacific MediaEducator*, Volume 10, January-June 2001, p 148-162, reference at:

[www.uow.edu.au/crearts/journalism/APME/contents10/Robie.html](http://www.uow.edu.au/crearts/journalism/APME/contents10/Robie.html) (Retrieved 12 May 2002).

Information about the controversy, including interviews on Radio Australia, are at:

[www.asiapac.org.fj/cafepacific/resources/aspac/fiji3148.html](http://www.asiapac.org.fj/cafepacific/resources/aspac/fiji3148.html) (Retrieved 12 May 2002).

conflict between the new multiracial reformist government and the conservative indigenous opposition. Coverage did not improve after the Qarase régime consolidated its hold on power. In contrast with media coverage after the 1987 coups, democratic values were not so vigorously defended.

While the news media was fairly diligent, and at times courageous when reporting hard news developments, and the views of prominent politicians and political parties, during the conflict, it was not so effective at covering civil society's perspectives. Fiji lacks enough critically thinking journalists who can provide in-depth, perceptive and balanced articles and commentaries. Most serious commentaries and analysis during the crisis were provided by non-journalists.<sup>80</sup>

After this paper was presented at Mooloolaba, a *PINA Nius Online* email misrepresenting it was distributed to Pacific newspapers five days later, stirring up a media and political storm.<sup>81</sup> A campaign of bitter personal attacks on me followed on the JEAnet and Penang Commonwealth editors email list-servers over the next two weeks. A two-page article in *Pacific* magazine (absorbing *Islands Business*)<sup>82</sup> presented the furore as a 12-round boxing match fought out on the internet, heavily slanted in favour of *The Fiji Times* and PINA. The magazine cited a formal complaint by the newspaper's expatriate publisher, Alan Robinson, and editor-in-chief, Russell Hunter, alleging manufactured evidence to establish an erroneous conclusion.<sup>83</sup> This was rejected by the university.<sup>84</sup> The magazine did not interview the author or seek a copy of the paper, nor did it canvas views of other media commentators supporting the analysis.

I replied to the attacks in an interview with Myra Mortensen, broadcast on Radio Australia's *Pacific Beat*, saying it was an irony that news organisations claiming to support media freedom

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<sup>80</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> [www.asiapac.org.fj/cafepacific/resources/aspac/fiji3148.html](http://www.asiapac.org.fj/cafepacific/resources/aspac/fiji3148.html) (Retrieved 12 May 2002).

<sup>82</sup> *Pacific* magazine (2001), NZ academic stirs up Pacific storm. (2001, February). *Pacific* magazine, pp 42-43.

<sup>83</sup> Letter from *Fiji Times* publisher Alan Robinson to then Vice-Chancellor Esekia Solofa on 18 December 2000.

<sup>84</sup> Reply to *The Fiji Times* publisher by Vice-Chancellor Esekia Solofa on 20 December 2000.

were trying to gag a journalism academic.<sup>85</sup> *New Zealand Herald* columnist Gordon McLauchlan wrote that the university had courageously upheld academic freedom and firmly opposed this deplorable attempt at censorship by journalists.<sup>86</sup>

Rejecting *The Fiji Times* criticisms and protesting against *Pacific* magazine's misrepresentations, Association of University of the South Pacific Staff (AUSPS) spokesperson Associate Professor Scott MacWilliam said in a letter to the editor: 'AUSPS is concerned that, while *The Fiji Times* and other news organisations purport to support the freedom to express opinions, such opinions are only acceptable if they sustain the same organisations' views of themselves.'<sup>87</sup>

While my main arguments were never published in the Fiji media, other views by foreign journalists who do not live in Fiji but which supported *The Fiji Times*-PINA perspective were.<sup>88</sup> Reprisals were threatened against the USP Journalism Programme (such as blocking internships and a ban on assistance for *Fiji Times* staff studying at USP). But there was no evidence that students suffered from the controversy long-term. USP journalism students had also covered the Fiji coup crisis, winning Ossie Awards for their efforts, and graduates are employed at 15 news organisations across the Pacific (*see* Robie, 2001c).

On the anniversary of the attempted coup, Fiji newspapers were reluctant to debate the shortcomings of crisis coverage. In the only article published examining the media and the coup, *The Sun's* Samisoni Pareti cited two diplomats as supporting the view that coverage was not that bad. However, Mary-Louise O'Callaghan, writing in *The Australian*, had earlier questioned whether the local press should bear some of the responsibility for the political

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<sup>85</sup> Radio Australia (2000, December 21), Myra Mortensen's *Pacific Beat* interview with David Robie: [www.asiapac.org.fj/cafepacific/audio/robiera.rm](http://www.asiapac.org.fj/cafepacific/audio/robiera.rm) (Retrieved 12 May 2002).

<sup>86</sup> McLauchlan, Gordon (2001, February 17-18), 'I'm staying away from Fiji until', *Weekend Herald*, p A23.

<sup>87</sup> MacWilliam, Scott (2001), Getting the facts straight — and more, letter to the editor, *Pacific* magazine, April, p 6.

<sup>88</sup> *The Sun* (2001), Dorney praises Fiji media, March 5, p 3; More praise for media's coverage, March 14, p 5; *Daily Post* (2001), The strange saga of Speight's siege, by Graeme Dobell, April 29.

turmoil that had engulfed the South Pacific.<sup>89</sup> Michael Field remarked in *The Fiji Times*: 'The problem is that in Fiji there are more and more politicians, supported by a cabal in the local media that makes war on other reporters, who say they are not part of this world and wish to be left alone.'<sup>90</sup>

In March 2001, a new Vice-Chancellor, Savenaca Siwatibau, a former Governor of the Reserve Bank of Fiji and previously chairman of the University Council, took over at the helm of the university and this was marked by a more committed and positive approach to journalism education. Throughout 2001, the USP Journalism Programme continued to grow and it relaunched its news website on *Pacific Journalism Online* as *Wansolwara Online*.<sup>91</sup>

More than 30 students were involved in an intensive five-week exercise covering the Fiji General Election during August in both online and print editions (see Robie, 2003). On 18 October 2001, I had a meeting with Siwatibau, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Rajesh Chandra and Head of Literature and Language Pio Manoa in which a pledge was made to upgrade staff and facilities for the Journalism Programme, including agreement in principle to a new \$250,000 building extension to house journalism. In March 2002, two new staff were recruited — broadcast lecturer Steve Sharp, who was completing a doctorate in conflict reporting at Griffith University, Queensland, and who had extensive background in community radio and in radio training in Indonesia; and assistant lecturer Shailendra Singh, former editor of *The Review* news magazine in Fiji who had been on an MBA scholarship with Ausaid's Pacific Media Initiative (PMI) project. They were joined in February 2003 by my successor as coordinator, Dev Nadkarni, an Indian journalist with some 18 years' experience in online media, news management and journalism education.

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<sup>89</sup> O'Callaghan, Mary-Louise (2000, December 7). Paradise exposed, in *The Australian's* Media supplement, pp 6-8; republished in *Pacific Journalism Review* (2001), Paradise exposed: Is the region's Fourth Estate up to it? 7 (1) 10-19.

<sup>90</sup> Field, Michael (2001, May 19). Return to coup coup land. *The Fiji Times*, May 19, p 33.

<sup>91</sup> *Wansolwara Online*: [www.usp.ac.fj/journ/docs/news/index.html](http://www.usp.ac.fj/journ/docs/news/index.html) (Retrieved 12 May 2002).



Figure 9.4: A Wansolwara front page in Vol 7 No 1, April 2002.

Finally, at the end of March, Professor Mark Pearson, Head of Journalism and director of the Centre for New Media Research and Education at Bond University, Queensland, conducted a four-day external review of the USP programme. Along with specific recommendations for the addition of two courses to boost first-year EFTS and facilities, he concluded:

It is clear that the USP Journalism Programme has come of age in so many ways. It has an excellent curriculum, high calibre staff, a developing research profile, and a local media industry interested in developing the relationship. It has also of late had a very supportive

administration at the university, which has recognised the kudos it has brought to the institution and values the impact of having journalism alumni in the regional media. But the programme seems to have reached an important crossroads. It has the potential to blossom now that it is firmly established. However, the lack of space and resources and a sometimes problematic relationship with industry stand to hamper its growth. It is hoped that the university is willing to commit to a resource allocation, which matches the rhetoric of journalism being an 'area of strength' in the university. An appropriate injection of resources at this crucial time should help journalism move to a much stronger fiscal position in coming. At the same time it is hoped the programme itself is willing to build new bridges with industry so that the regional media can further benefit from its success (Pearson, 2002: 14).

### **Conclusion**

From its beginnings in 1987, the USP Journalism Programme, first as an extension studies based certificate course and later as a separate degree course, has had a chequered history. A number of high calibre staff have been employed on the programme through its various stages but they have at times been frustrated in their efforts by a variety of problems concerning donor consistency and continuity over policies, and also a seeming reluctance by the University of the South Pacific administration to fully commit to journalism as a university discipline. A serious shortage of funding, professional facilities and even staff have at times hindered development of journalism education at the regional university over the past 15 years.

The second phase of development funded by the French Government in the mid-1990s to establish the degree programme was separate from the earlier Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC) period, but it was positioned in the same department (Literature and Language) and no doubt benefited from the earlier experience. However, it is questionable

whether the department has been able to capitalise on the earlier development and to learn from mistakes.

Although political issues at times, especially in the wake of Fiji's first two coups, at times clouded the CFTC period, they did not become critical until the degree programme was established. Almost every staff member of the degree journalism programme faced political pressure generated by one sector of the media industry that appeared threatened by the development of vigorous and influential university-based journalism education. At times, this political pressure became strongly overt with demands to review or revoke work permits, attempts to censure the programme, and even demands for the sacking of prominent journalism education staff. Key players in this campaign were personalities in the Suva secretariat of Pacific Islands News Association, who had a vested interest in fostering an image that they were the region's only 'educators'. Nevertheless, in March 2001 a change at the top level of the USP administration ushered in a period of more committed support in terms of facilities and funding from the new Vice-Chancellor, Savenaca Siwatibau<sup>92</sup>, and his colleagues. In spite of the political pressure and harassment from some sectors of the media industry, the programme continued to develop and mature, and by the end of 2002 had produced some 66 degree (and diploma) graduates for the Pacific media industry. Many of the graduates have already become established and influential journalists in Fiji and the South Pacific.

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<sup>92</sup> Vice-Chancellor Savenaca Siwatibau died from lung cancer in Christchurch, New Zealand, on 3 October 2003.

## CHAPTER TEN: The campus and the newsroom

The main role of a newspaper will have to be a watchdog ... We will concentrate on an investigative role ... One of the things we need is specialist writers. We don't have them.

*The National editor Yehiura Hriehwazi, 2001<sup>1</sup>*

I believe there are two views of journalists: there are those who hate them, and there are those who think the world of them. There are those out there who think what we write is the gospel truth, and those who are more sceptical of what we say.

*Fiji Sun editor Wainikiti Waqa-Bogidrau, 2001<sup>2</sup>*

THIS PACIFIC newsroom research grew out of questions about an apparent difference in attitude and recruitment policies between the media industries in both Papua New Guinea and Fiji media over journalism education and training. Both nations have a similar sized news media industry in terms of staff numbers and news outlets, but in Papua New Guinea newsroom attachments for journalism students had been established for almost 25 years. The future of this system was under question following the planned closure during 1999 of the University of Papua New Guinea Journalism Programme, which had been the pioneering institution in journalism education in the South Pacific. However, in early 2000 the UPNG programme was given a reprieve. At Madang, Divine Word University's Department of Communication Arts attempted to expand its courses to absorb an expected overflow of journalism students from UPNG but, being remote from the centre of national news media, had a less developed industry attachment or internship scheme.

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<sup>1</sup> *National* editor Yehiura Hriehwazi, audiotaped interview with author, Port Moresby, 3 May 2001.

<sup>2</sup> *Fiji Sun* editor Wainikiti Waqa-Bogidrau, audiotaped interview with author, Suva, 17 May 2001.

### ***The pilot survey, 1998/9***

A preliminary newsroom training survey was conducted between 14 December 1998 and 28 February 1999 based on total daily news organisation populations with personal visits by the author to newsrooms with self-administered questionnaires (*Appendix 4*) to test the hypothesis. Twelve news organisations (six in each country) were surveyed in this way with a 13th company declining to participate.<sup>3</sup> Participating companies in Fiji were *The Fiji Times* group (including *Pacific Islands Monthly* and the Fijian language weekly *Nai Lalakai*); the Government-controlled *Daily Post*; Communications Fiji Ltd private broadcast group (FM96); Fiji Broadcasting Corporation Ltd (known as Island Networks at the time); Associated Media group (*FijiLive* website and *The Review* news magazine); and Fiji Television Ltd. In Papua New Guinea, the groups were the *Post-Courier*; *The National*; Word Publishing (the church-based group publishing both national weekly newspapers *The Independent* and *Wantok*); the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC); the private broadcaster PNG FM Pty (NauFM and YumiFM); and EMTV.

For the pilot survey in 1998/9, the response rate ranged between a low of 42 per cent at one newspaper in Fiji (*The Fiji Times*) and 100 per cent at a radio broadcaster in Papua New Guinea (Radio NauFM). Overall, the participation rate in this survey was far higher in Papua New Guinea (76 per cent of total staff) than in Fiji (57 per cent). But the final number of 124 journalists out of the total mainstream daily news and current affairs media staff with completed questionnaires was comparable, comprising 59 respondents from Fiji and 65 from Papua New Guinea (*Table 10.1*). Total editorial staff was 103 and 85 respectively. The 12-point questionnaire asked basic questions on media demographics and educational qualifications, questioned respondents on the most preferred form of journalism training, and

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<sup>3</sup> Islands Business International, Suva-based publishers of the *Islands Business* news magazine group declined to participate. This company, which had about five editorial staff at the time, was therefore excluded from the second survey.

about perceptions of the ‘most crucial role of a news media organisation’s relationship with the public and power elite’ in a developing Pacific country. It also included qualitative questions about journalism education and training, and the role of the media.

**Table 10.1: Comparison of response level between Fiji, PNG news media organisations, 1998/9**

Media Group*	Edit. staff	Fiji	%	Edit. staff	PNG	%
1. Associated Media Group (The Review)	10	8	80%	—	—	—
2. Communications Fiji Ltd	15	10	67%	—	—	—
3. Daily Post	16	11	69%	—	—	—
4. Fiji Broadcasting Corp	18	9	50%	—	—	—
5. Fiji Television Ltd	6	5	83%	—	—	—
6. Fiji Times	38	16	42%	—	—	—
7. Media Niugini Ltd (EMTV)	—	—	—	6	4	67%
8. National Broadcasting Corp	—	—	—	17	11	65%
9. PNGFM Ltd	—	—	—	9	9	100%
10. Post-Courier	—	—	—	21	17	81%
11. The National	—	—	—	19	14	74%
12. Word Publishing	—	—	—	13	10	77%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>57%</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>76%</b>

\* The new Fiji *Sun* had not begun publishing when this survey was conducted; Islands Business International, with approximately five journalists on its staff, declined to participate.

The Fiji and Papua New Guinea journalism respondents were both balanced in gender (*Table 10.2*): 51 per cent men and 49 per cent women in Fiji, while Papua New Guinea, surprisingly, had a slight majority of women (52 per cent) over men (48 per cent). This compared with

journalism student balances at the University of Papua New Guinea, where two-thirds were women at the time, and the University of the South Pacific, where the balance was 35 women and 28 men (Robie, 1999f: 181).

**Table 10.2: Comparison of gender and mean age between Fiji, PNG media organisations, 1998/9**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Fiji n=59</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>PNG n=65</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total n=124</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	30	51%	31	48%	61	49%
Female	29	49%	34	52%	63	51%
<b>Mean age</b>	<b>22</b>		<b>29</b>		<b>25.5</b>	

The mean age of journalists in the Fiji survey was 22, ranging between the youngest at 18 and the oldest at 50. There was also a large bulge in the 21-25 age group. In Papua New Guinea, the mean age was 29, ranging between 20 and 50. Also, the ages of PNG journalists were spread more evenly across the range.

Papua New Guinean journalists were found to be the most qualified with 73 per cent having completed formal tertiary qualifications (*Table 10.3*), contrasting with 14 per cent in Fiji. The Fiji figure represented a fall since the previous survey seven years earlier, in 1992, when Layton (1993: 151) found 16 per cent. The new journalism course at the University of the South Pacific began providing graduates for the media workforce in 1996 (28 region-wide, including nine at the end of 1999, and a further 15 the following year). There was also a growing tendency of Fiji journalists to gain degrees abroad. However, these trends were not reflected in this survey's statistics. The Papua New Guinea figure was an increase over the 68 per cent of tertiary qualified journalists recorded by Layton in her 1992 survey. But Phinney's earlier survey in 1984, which focused on the National Broadcasting Commission (Phinney,

1985), showed the figure had been even higher in Papua New Guinea, at 76 per cent (*ibid.*: 42). However, the more recent statistics would include a higher proportion of degrees to undergraduate diplomas as had previously been the case.

When breaking down the tertiary qualifications into actual degrees, Papua New Guinea and Fiji both had one masters degree in the survey; 14 per cent in PNG had degrees (five per cent in Fiji) and 57 per cent in PNG had at least undergraduate diplomas (seven per cent in Fiji).

**Table 10.3: Educational and training qualifications, and mean experience of Fiji, PNG journalists, 1998/9**

Tertiary qualifications	Fiji n=59	%	PNG n=65	%	Total n=124	%
1. Postgraduate degree or diploma	1	2%	1	2%	2	2%
2. Undergraduate degree	3	5%	9	14%	12	10%
3. Undergraduate diploma	4	7%	37	57%	41	34%
<b>Total (1, 2 and 3):</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>46%</b>
4. Polytechnic or media industry certificates*	8	14%	0	0%	8	6%
5. Professional short courses**	15	25%	10	15%	26	21%
<b>No qualification</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>27%</b>
<b>Mean experience (in years)</b>	<b>2.5</b>		<b>5.2</b>		<b>3.9</b>	

\* e.g. FIMA/FIJ certificate, 32-week polytechnic certificates etc.

\*\* Such as organised by PIBA, PINA or their affiliates.

Fiji's strength was shown in industry certificates (14 per cent) whereas Papua New Guinea had none in this category. Also, 25 per cent of journalists in Fiji had completed non-formal short courses while only 17 per cent of journalists in Papua New Guinea had done any. However, while almost half of Fiji's journalists in the sample (47 per cent) had no qualifications at all, barely 12 per cent of PNG journalists fell into this category.

On attitudes to education and training, journalists in Fiji (80 per cent) and Papua New Guinea (89 per cent) were reasonably matched as desiring a combination of both tertiary journalism programmes and in-house cadetships (*Table 10.4*). However, while a higher group of journalists in Papua New Guinea favoured tertiary programmes alone (nine per cent) as against five per cent in Fiji, it was the reverse in Fiji with 15 per cent favouring an in-house cadetship compared with just two per cent in PNG.

Qualitative comments indicated a high level of hostility among some journalists in Fiji towards university journalism courses. On the basis of the questionnaires, none of the respondents with such views actually had tertiary qualifications themselves, and none at that stage appeared to have attended any university course or programme. One young newspaper journalist said prospective journalists should do a degree in something else other than journalism, such as economics.<sup>4</sup> Another said, ‘journalism is a profession that cannot be taught in a classroom’. A third added: ‘I think these days graduates just think if they have the qualifications, that’s it — they are journalists’. A 32-year-old editor said graduates had ‘attitudes which cannot be changed [and] this affects other staff’, but he was not more specific.<sup>5</sup> He urged: ‘Scrap all university journalism courses!’ But some journalists differ. One young staffer at *The Fiji Times* said:

Our journalists are too generalised — they misreport, misquote people, [and are] unbalanced, [give] wrong spellings, and other basic reporting skills are lacking. If we had a combination of [in-house and university] training, maybe the standard of journalism would improve (FT).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Qualitative comments recorded in the author’s 1998/9 newsroom survey. A summary of the preliminary findings was published in Robie, David (1999f), *Pacific newsrooms and the campus: Some comparisons between Fiji and Papua New Guinea*. *Australian Studies in Journalism*, No 8, pp 176-196.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*

The negative attitudes appeared to reflect an insecurity towards graduates as they joined the media workforce and in some cases were promoted rapidly or gained relatively high-paying jobs. One graduate in early 1999 became a features, then business, editor of a daily newspaper within three months of graduating. Another graduate repeated the feat at the same newspaper in 2001. One 20-year-old graduate was recruited as a publications officer for a non-government organisation on a salary band of around F\$30,000 — or roughly four times more than the average starting salary for a journalist on a local media organisation.

**Table 10.4: Fiji, PNG journalists' opinions about their type of education and training, 1998/9**

Preferred choice*	Fiji n=59	%	PNG n=65	%	Total n=124	%
1. Tertiary journalism school	3	5%	6	9%	9	7%
2. In-house cadetship scheme	9	15%	1	2%	10	8%
3. Combination of both	47	80%	58	89%	105	85%

\* Respondents were asked the question: 8. How should journalists be trained? a. In a recognised tertiary journalism programme with a period of compulsory industry attachment with media organisations? b. With an in-house cadetship training scheme? c. A combination of both?

The major education institution represented by journalists with qualifications was the University of Papua New Guinea with 32 graduates in the news media workplace, including several editors, followed by 18 graduates from Divine Word University in Madang, PNG. In Fiji, just four USP graduates were recorded although a new batch of a dozen graduates in the region at the end of 1998 was not reflected in this survey.

Journalists were questioned on their perceptions of their media role to test their understanding of notions of news values in contrast to definitions widely used by politicians, particularly those stressing the need for 'development journalism' (MacBride, 1980; Hester &

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<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*

Wai, 1987; Loo, 1994: 1-10; Romano, 1998: 60-87). A selection of five key words or phrases, drawn from ‘four worlds news theories’ models widely taught in the Pacific,<sup>7</sup> were used as core options along with further open selections (Hester, 1987a: 5-12; 1987b: 57-66; Lule, 1987: 23-46; Robie, 1995a: 5-15; Romano, 1998: 74-78). The keywords or phrases were: *watchdog*, *agent of empowerment*, *nation building*, or *defender of truth*. Journalists in Fiji had a far different view than their counterparts from Papua New Guinea on their perceived media role in the community (Table 10.5). Significantly more journalists in Fiji (63 per cent) than in PNG (46 per cent) favoured the Western ‘watchdog’ model as the preferred role. However, it was clear that Papua New Guinea journalists had a more complex view of their role, which generally included watchdog along with other variations that involved a greater sense of community. More than double the number of journalists in Papua New Guinea (37 per cent) than in Fiji (15 per cent), for example, saw the role of the news media as the ‘defender of truth’.

**Table 10.5: How Fiji, PNG journalists view their professional media role, 1998/9**

Perceived role*	Fiji n=59	%	PNG n=65	%	Total n=124	%
1. Watchdog	37	63%	30	46%	67	54%
2. Agent of empowerment	4	7%	8	12%	12	10%
3. Nation building	10	17%	16	25%	26	21%
4. Defender of the truth	9	15%	24	37%	33	27%
5. Other roles	3	5%	5	8%	9	7%
6. No opinion	7	12%	1	2%	8	6%

\* Respondents were asked the question: 11. *What do you perceive as the most crucial role of a news organisation's relationship with the general public and the power élite in a developing country such as Fiji, or Papua New Guinea?* One choice asked for, but some gave more than one choice. Thus percentages may not tally.

<sup>7</sup> This includes ‘fourth world’, or indigenous minority news values, as typified by Bougainville within the Papua New Guinea state, Guadalcanal dissidents within the Solomon Islands; and Kanak radio stations within New Caledonia.

Also, 12 per cent of PNG journalists saw the public ‘empowerment’ model as important, compared with just seven percent in Fiji. Journalists in PNG (25 per cent) were also more likely to see the media as a ‘nation builder’ than in Fiji (17 per cent).

### ***Comparison with Indonesia***

The findings compared interestingly with a survey in Indonesia (Romano, 1998:75), which shares a common frontier with Papua New Guinea through its disputed province of Papua (formerly Irian Jaya). This contrasted notions of ‘watchdogs and *Pancasila* pussycats’, or variations of the development journalism philosophy based on Indonesia’s *Pancasila* press model. In Romano’s survey, 51 per cent of the sample regarded the watchdog notion as most important, even though this term may not have been used as a preferred description. This was significantly lower than in Fiji, but higher than in the Papua New Guinea survey. However, 22 per cent in the Indonesian sample saw the media’s chief role as an agent of empowerment — double the percentage in Papua New Guinea and triple that of Fiji. In terms of nation building, Papua New Guineans were more likely to see this as their role (25 per cent) than in Indonesia (19 per cent) and Fiji (17 per cent). But Indonesia (8 per cent) compared closely with Fiji (7 per cent) when considering the notion of defender of the truth. This contrasted with PNG (37 per cent). Romano’s survey had an additional category not contained in the two-nation Pacific survey — ‘entertainment’. But of the overall seven per cent who nominated ‘other roles’, none included entertainment as an option, surprisingly as all Fiji and Papua New Guinea newspapers, at least, strongly feature entertainment and lifestyle coverage.

In the qualitative findings, there were marked differences between the Papua New Guinea and Fiji samples.<sup>8</sup> A far higher percentage of Fiji respondents did not provide answers (12 per cent), whereas only two per cent of PNG journalists did not respond. The Fiji non-responses

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<sup>8</sup> See 1998/9 newsroom survey qualitative comments in Robie (1999f: 176-196)

apparently had a correlation with those journalists who had no formal journalism education. Many Papua New Guinea respondents saw a direct relationship between the watchdog and nation-building roles, and this was most marked with journalists working for the national broadcaster NBC. According to one journalist:

Especially in a developing nation, while we act as a watchdog we must also be mindful of our responsibility in nation building. Exposing the truth and investigating the stories must be done without any bias. This is part of nation building, leading a country to be more accountable to its people (NBC).

And another:

One of the most crucial roles of a news media organisation is in nation building. Through many economic and social development stories encouraging people in their country to be self-reliant and productive, the media encourage them to be self-reliant and productive. They encourage them to start grassroots small business activities to improve the country's economy and the standard of living and they support and promote people to love, respect and become responsible citizens of their respective countries. It is through these and many other efforts of the organisation [that] nation building is encouraged to develop a nation (NBC).

But such views were not restricted to the state-run radio. According to a journalist on one of the two leading daily newspapers, the Murdoch-owned *Post-Courier*:

News media organisations in PNG seem to be focused on being watchdogs, reporting on what is happening. But I believe [they] have a wider role and that is to be an agent for

change. Papua New Guinea is a developing country which does not have the financial resources needed for development such as health programmes etc, but established media, including radio, can be used to bring vital information to people to reinforce positive changes (PC).

One journalist on the Malaysian-owned *The National*, one of Papua New Guinea's few to have a postgraduate qualification, said:

As opposed to the 'gutter press', PNG journalism is centred around the philosophy of development journalism, meaning that what is reported must have significance to growth, development and the aspiration of PNG as a sovereign state and its citizens. The powerful elite is right sometimes, so are the people at other times. PNG takes the middle [road] to promote/defend the truth for the betterment and advancement of all. In so doing, PNG media will truly serve its purpose as a defender of truth, a watchdog and an agent of development (N).

Some journalists were acutely aware of the personal responsibility they carried, one saying her role was 'challenging — and we actually make or break the nation [because of] whether we are accurate or not'. Another said: 'I am the teller of the story of life with the elemental things that are important to men and women. I give the information which my audience most needs to get along in their daily existence ... The message I bring is often the glue which holds society together.'

Respondents in Fiji appeared to be less philosophical about their roles. In fact, many, especially those who had no formal foundation in journalism theory, seemed unclear about the alternative notions presented. But many still had a robust view of their role. Said one television journalist:

Corruption tends to be rife in Pacific countries like Fiji and Papua New Guinea. As a watchdog, the role is clearly defined but resources or training, or lack of them, limit the inroads we can make into corruption and the strides needed to be a watchdog in other areas in the public spotlight (FTV).

A national broadcast journalist said:

We best serve the community by disclosing the truth and the mysteries, which are normally kept hidden away. With well-researched written reports, this will foster a more pro-active community, able to contribute more effectively to national development (FBC).

Some journalists in Fiji did share the common concern felt in Papua New Guinea about the wider roles in relation to the watchdog. As another state broadcast journalist said: 'In fact, nation building and watchdog would be the two roles I believe suit the work we do. We can't be just watchdogs of society if we cannot promote prosperity and harmony in society. Negative reporting is not always healthy.' According to a senior reporter on a business magazine renowned for its ferret-like investigations:

Being a watchdog will also mean being a good journalist — one that is willing to take risks in digging things out but this could also mean having good contacts in the upper echelon of any government. I guess being a watchdog will subsequently make a person or an organisation an agent of empowerment and so playing a crucial role in nation building. A watchdog for me personally is a person or organisation which takes on the responsibility of ensuring that the government as a whole, or any individual, or even a non-government

organisation, does not abuse public funds, is not corrupt in any way ... and takes on the role of exposing them to ensure justice (R).

Many respondents felt that while they were monitoring the government and the leaders, they should not forget to be the 'eyes and ears of the people they serve'. It was important that media helped 'weed out incidents which bring hardship to the people'. It was, after all, the media that brought 'culprits to justice'.

### ***The second survey, April/May 2001***

A further, more substantive education and training survey of Fiji and Papua New Guinea was conducted between 20 April and 20 May 2001. This was again based on total daily news organisation populations with personal visits by the author to newsrooms with self-administered questionnaires (*Appendix 6*) to test the hypothesis. In addition to the survey, focus and individual interviews were conducted with a wide range of 57 journalists, editors, news organisation managers and media advisers or analysts (*Appendix 15*). Thirteen news organisations — six in Papua New Guinea and seven in Fiji (one partially) were surveyed in this way with a 14th company declining to participate as political and professional pressures played a far more restrictive role than the earlier survey.<sup>9</sup> Participating companies in Fiji this time were the new daily newspaper, *The Sun*; the government-controlled *Daily Post*; Communications Fiji Ltd private broadcast group (FM96); Fiji Broadcasting Corporation (partially); the regional news service Pacnews;<sup>10</sup> the regional news cooperative operated by the Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association. This agency had moved from Port Vila and established its office in Suva since the previous survey, and its staff were primarily Fiji Islands

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<sup>9</sup> *The Fiji Times*. A total of 15 companies were surveyed over both surveys.

<sup>10</sup> The regional news cooperative operated by the Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association (Pacnews) had moved from Port Vila and established its office in Suva since the previous survey, and its staff were primarily Fiji Islander journalists

journalists; Associated Media group (*FijiLive* website and *The Review* news magazine); and Fiji Television Ltd. In Papua New Guinea, the *Post-Courier*; *The National*; Word Publishing (*The Independent* and *Wantok*);<sup>11</sup> National Broadcasting Corporation (partially); private broadcaster PNG FM Pty (NauFM and YumiFM); FM100 Radio Kalang;<sup>12</sup> and EMTV.

The second survey was more comprehensive than the first with a 45-point questionnaire with questions arranged in three main categories: A: Background and demographic profiles (19 questions), B: Attraction to journalism (12 questions), and C: Freedom of the press (12 questions). The questions were based to a degree on the original survey, but were expanded to reflect some of the issues raised. However, this second survey also drew on some aspects of the questionnaire used for the survey of Australian journalists (*Table 3:1*) conducted under the auspices of the international Media and Democracy project supervised in Australia by Professor Julianne Schultz in 1992.<sup>13</sup> This survey was also administered in five other countries, in ‘one of the most ambitious cross-national studies of journalists ever undertaken’. (Schultz, 1998: 239) Just as Schultz added 35 questions to the Australian survey to ensure that it adequately addressed issues central to her research on democracy, accountability and the media in Australia, my survey included questions specifically adapted from the Schultz survey and also from the Romano survey examining normative theories of development journalism in Indonesia,<sup>14</sup> and the Weaver survey of global journalists (1998).

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<sup>11</sup> Since this survey was completed and analysed, Word Publishing announced the closure of *The Independent* in mid-2003. The Independent weekly to close after 23 years. (2003, June 2). *The National*. [www.pmw.c2o.org/2003/png4074.html](http://www.pmw.c2o.org/2003/png4074.html) (Retrieved 16 June 2003).

<sup>12</sup> Previously a subsidiary of the NBC and now owned and operated by Telikom PNG;

<sup>13</sup> See Schultz, Julianne (1998), *Reviving the Fourth Estate: Democracy, Accountability and the Media*, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press. Besides Australia, the five other countries that participated in the international survey were Britain, Germany, Italy, Sweden and the United States: ‘Six hundred journalists involved in daily news and current affairs production around Australia were sent the questionnaire in June and July 1992. Forty-one per cent completed and returned the self-administered 178 question survey. The survey was also sent to 50 opinion leading investigative journalists, producers and editors, who had taken a prominent role in the production of the investigative and watchdog journalism published and broadcast in Australia during the 1980s. Nearly 80 per cent of this sample responded’ (p 239).

<sup>14</sup> See Romano, Angela (1999), Normative theories of development journalism: State versus practitioner perspectives in Indonesia, *Australian Journalism Review*, 20 (2): 60-87: ‘Indonesia’s New Order Government (1996-1998) commonly characterised Indonesian journalists. A survey of Indonesian journalists [between October

## Responses

While no Fiji news organisation provided a 100 per cent response rate for the first survey in 1998/9, this time two provided responses from all staff members — Associated Media and Pacnews (*Table 10.6*)<sup>15</sup>. Two other organisations, Fiji Television and *The Sun*, had more than 87 per cent responses. The lowest response in Fiji was from Fiji Broadcasting Corporation with just two responses, completed in spite of the hostile approach from the news director.<sup>16</sup> In contrast to *The Fiji Times*, which did not participate (*see Chapter 3*), both the other two national daily newspapers, *Daily Post* (73 per cent) and *The Sun* (87.5 per cent) responded strongly. Four Papua New Guinean news organisations provided 100 per cent response rates — EM TV; PNGFM Pty Ltd, whose sister Communications Fiji group in Suva provided a low return; Radio Kalang FM100; and Word Publishing. The lowest response rate in Papua New Guinea was from the two daily newspapers, the *National* (67 per cent) and *Post-Courier* (63 per cent).

The breakdown of the sample by media organisation (*Table 10.7*) was fairly similar with more than half the respondents in both Papua New Guinea (58 per cent) and Fiji (57 per cent) working on newspapers. The next largest group was radio in Papua New Guinea, which at 22 per cent was almost double the Fiji sample (12 per cent). Television journalists were evenly matched with 16 per cent in Fiji and 13 per cent in PNG. Predictably, Fiji had more magazine employees (five per cent) than PNG (two per cent), but surprisingly, given Port Moresby's more active two daily newspaper websites, *Post-Courier* and the *National*, also had more online journalists (nine per cent) than in the PNG (four per cent) sample.

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1996 and March 1998] found that although the New Order attempted to establish a coherent press model, suited to local cultures and economic prerogatives, respondents conceived their role in markedly different terms. Eighty per cent were even more critical of government-imposed restrictions under the guise of “culturally appropriate” values than they were of Western concepts. They described their role models as those brave enough to expose government faults. Even journalists who approximated the New Order’s vision of their nation-building role overwhelmingly rejected the press-as-government partner perspective.’ (p 60)

<sup>15</sup> At the time of the 1998/9 survey, Pacnews was based in Port Vila, Vanuatu. However, the regional news service moved back to Suva during 1999 and as most of its staff are Fiji journalists, it was included in the second survey.

When asked what category best described the journalists' current tasks, print reporters headed the list in both Fiji (44 per cent) and PNG (33 per cent). The next largest group were those who identified themselves as subeditors or news producers with 21 per cent in PNG and 14 per cent in Fiji. Television reporters ranked third with more in PNG (17 per cent) than in Fiji

**Table 10.6: Comparison of response level between Fiji, PNG news media organisations, 2001**

Media Group*	Edit. staff	Fiji	%	Edit. staff	PNG	%
1. Associated Media Group (The Review)	4	4	100%	—	—	—
2. Communications Fiji Ltd	12	3	25%	—	—	—
3. Daily Post	15	11	73%	—	—	—
4. Fiji Broadcasting Corp	15	2	13%	—	—	—
5. Fiji Television Ltd	8	7	87.5%	—	—	—
6. Pacnews	2	2	100%	—	—	—
7. The Sun	16	14	87.5%	—	—	—
8. Media Niugini Ltd (EMTV)	—	—	—	8	8	100
9. PNGFM Ltd	—	—	—	10	10	100%
10. Post-Courier	—	—	—	24	15	63%
11. Radio Kalang FM100	—	—	—	5	4	80%
12. The National	—	—	—	21	14	67%
13. Word Publishing	—	—	—	12	12	100%
<b>Total:</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>79%</b>

\* The new *Sun* was included in this survey for the first time, as was Pacnews in Fiji; the *Fiji Times* management declined to participate; the news director of FBC declined to allow her staff to participate, although several staff members still completed questionnaires; and participation by PNG's NBC was blocked because of a political crisis affecting the corporation.

<sup>16</sup> Vasiti Waqa (see Chapter Three).

(12 per cent). Fiji (12 per cent) had more executive editors or editorial managers than PNG (five per cent). Editors or broadcast news directors came next and were evenly matched with nine per cent in both Fiji and PNG. More in PNG (six per cent) identified themselves as online journalists than radio (three per cent), which means several reporters considered themselves ‘news producers’ on air. However, it was the reverse in Fiji where seven per cent were radio reporters and just two per cent (one) was an online journalist. Five per cent of the PNG sample was photographers, but no photographer completed the Fiji survey. No editorial cartoonist from either country was identified.

**Table 10.7: Fiji, PNG journalists by type of news organisation, 2001**

Media type*	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
1. Radio	5	12%	14	22%	19	18%
2. Television	7	16%	8	13%	15	14%
3. Newspaper	25	58%	36	57%	61	58%
4. Magazine	2	5%	1	2%	3	3%
Online	4	9%	4	4%	8	8%

\* Respondents were asked to identify their news organisation type in question: A6. *Do you work for one of the following type of news organisations?* This table reflects a lower than actual proportion of radio journalists because of the absence of NBC responses in PNG and limited response from FBC in Fiji. Percentages may not total precisely due to rounding off.

### **Gender and civil status**

Remarkably, given that there were several major changes between the 1998/9 and 2001 samples for the two countries, the gender balance was identical between the two surveys (Tables 10.3 and 10.8). The 2001 survey confirmed the majority of woman journalists in the Papua New Guinea news media with a 52:48 percentage ratio. This also supported a widely held belief among journalists and media executives that women were a majority of the editorial

staff. Fiji again posted a slight male advantage 51:49 in the percentage ratio, the same as the earlier response. The survey also showed that slightly more than half of both Fiji and PNG journalists were single. This was not studied in the 1999/9 survey.

**Table 10.8: Comparison of gender and civil status between Fiji, PNG news media organisations, 2001**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Fiji n=43</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>PNG n=63</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total n=106</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	22	51%	30	48%	52	49%
Female	21	49%	33	52%	54	51%
<b>Civil status</b>						
Married/de facto	18	42%	29	46%	49	44%
Single	25	58%	34	54%	59	56%

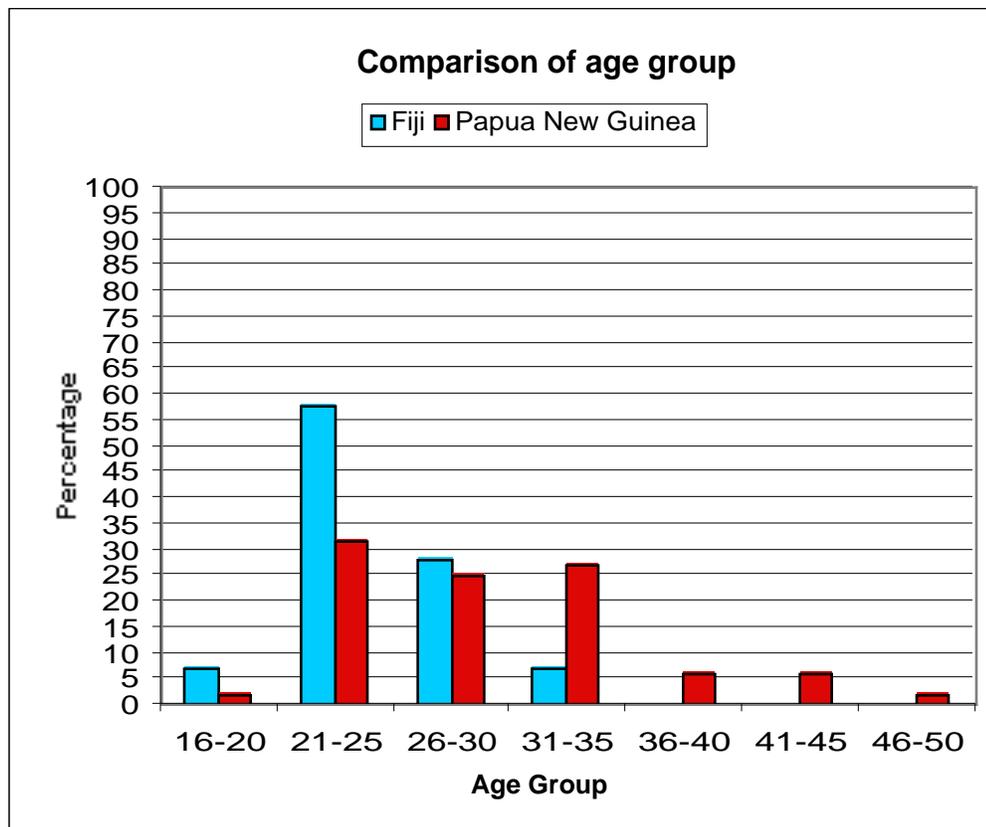
### **Age**

As in 1998/9, the later survey reaffirmed a younger journalist population in Fiji with a mean age of 24.7 compared with 28.9 in Papua New Guinea (*Table 10.9*). While the mean age in PNG remained static, the Fiji figure had climbed to almost 25 from 22 in the earlier survey. But this higher figure probably did not fully reflect the actual youth of journalists in Fiji, which had a large bulge with 56 per cent in the 21 to 25 age bands (*Graph 10.1*). *The Fiji Times*, the largest employer in Fiji, declined to participate in the 2001 survey and in the earlier sample, of the 16 respondents, ten were in the 21-25 age range. Together with five per cent of 20-year-olds or younger in the 2001 survey, the combined under 25 age group of 61 per cent was roughly double that proportion in Papua New Guinea. A block of about 25 per cent of Fiji journalists in the more than 30 age bands boosted the national mean.

**Table 10.9: Age comparison between Fiji, PNG journalists, 2001**

Age group	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
16 - 20	3	7%	1	2%	4	4%
21 - 25	25	58%	20	32%	45	42%
26 - 30	12	28%	16	25%	28	26%
31 - 35	3	7%	17	27%	20	19%
36 - 40	0	0%	4	6%	4	4%
41 - 45	0	0%	4	6%	4	4%
46 - 50	0	0%	1	2%	1	1%
Over 51	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Mean age</b>	<b>24.7</b>		<b>28.9</b>		<b>26.6</b>	

**Graph 10.1: Comparison of age group between Fiji, PNG journalists, 2001**



### ***Cultural identity***

Fijian and Indo-Fijian journalists were split in the survey sample in Fiji, (42 per cent each) with seven per cent Rotuman and the rest being other races. In Papua New Guinea, the cultural identity was assessed on provincial ties and was fairly evenly balanced. The largest group (13 per cent) came from Central Province around the national capital of Port Moresby. East New Britain, East Sepik and Madang provinces all had representative groups of nine per cent, while at the other end of the scale was Enga (the most populous province) and Oro with two percent each. Both West New Britain and NCD were not represented.

### ***Language***

Of the Fiji respondents, mother tongues of the journalists (*Table 10.10*) were evenly matched between Fijian (40 percent) and Hindi (37 per cent), while 19 percent identified English as their first language (the balance of 5 per cent were Rotuman), Surprisingly, nobody identified the Muslim language Urdu as their birth language. Unsurprisingly, in Papua New Guinea even fewer (16 per cent) identified English as their mother tongue. Tok Pisin had 41 per cent speakers and Motu six per cent with 23 percent speaking other provincial languages. However, when it came to the newsroom language that journalists worked with (*Table 10.11*), the profile was very different. Ninety six per cent of the surveyed journalists in Fiji worked in English and 84 per cent in Papua New Guinea with an overall percentage of 89 percent. The balance (16 per cent) in PNG worked in Tok Pisin, largely because of the national vernacular weekly newspaper *Wantok*. In Fiji, only four per cent (evenly matched between Fijian and Hindi) of the journalists surveyed identified themselves as working in vernacular publications or broadcast stations, although the real life percentage total is probably a little higher.

**Table 10.10: Comparison of first language of journalists in Fiji, PNG, 2001**

First language	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
1. English	8	19%	10	16%	18	17%
2. Tok Pisin	0	0%	26	41%	26	25%
3. Motu	0	0%	4	6%	4	4%
4. Fijian	17	40%	0	0	17	16%
5. Hindi	16	37%	0	0	16	15%
6. Rotuman	2	5%	0	0	2	2%
7. Other	0	0%	23	37%	23	22%

\* Respondents were the question: A15. *What is your first language?* Urdu (the main language of the Islamic community in Fiji) was included in the options, but none chose this.

**Table 10.11: Comparison of news language of journalists in Fiji, PNG, 2001**

Media language	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
1. English	41	96%	53	84%	94	89%
2. Tok Pisin	0	0	10	16%	10	9%
3. Motu	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
4. Fijian	1	2%	0	0%	1	1%
5. Hindi	1	2%	0	0	1	1%

\* Respondents were asked the question: A16. *What news media language do you work in?*

### **Experience**

The most experienced journalists in the Fiji sample were those in the 19 to 20-year band (five per cent), but this was well short of Papua New Guinea, which had one person (1.6 per cent) in the 27 to 28 year band (*Table 10.12*). Papua New Guinea also had 10 per cent of the survey

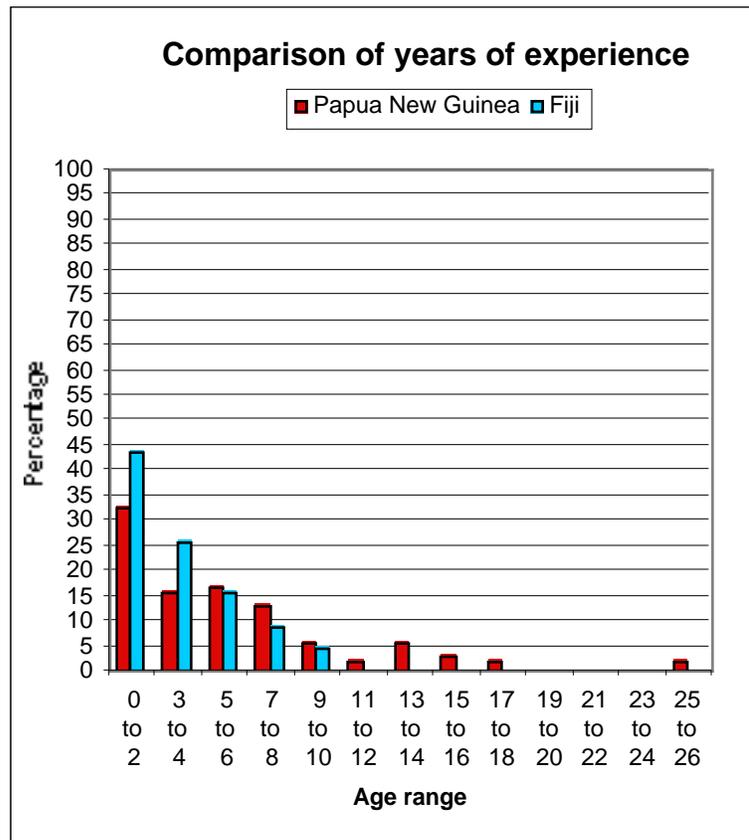
**Table 10.12: Fiji, PNG journalists' experience in news media, 2001**

<b>Number of years*</b>	<b>Fiji n=43</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>PNG n=63</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total n=106</b>	<b>%</b>
0 - 2	19	44%	21	33%	40	38%
3 - 4	11	26%	10	16%	21	20%
5 - 6	7	16%	11	17%	18	17%
7 - 8	4	9%	8	13%	12	11%
9 - 10	2	5%	4	6%	6	6%
11 - 12	0	0%	1	12%	1	1%
13 - 14	0	0%	4	6%	4	4%
15 - 16	0	0%	2	3%	2	42%
17 - 18	0	0%	1	12%	1	1%
19 - 20	0	0%	0	0	2	2%
21 - 22	0	0	0	0	0	0
23 - 24	0	0	0	0	0	0
25 - 26	0	0	1	2%	1	01
More than 27	0	0	0	10%	0	0 %
<b>Mean experience</b>	<b>3.5 years</b>		<b>5.5 years</b>		<b>4.5 years</b>	

\* Respondents were asked the question: A8. Total number of years working in news media organisations (excluding corporate public relations officer, government information officer etc)?

journalists in the 14 to 16-year band (Fiji had an equivalent of two per cent). But for both countries the bulk of the journalists (*Graph 10.2*) had less than two years' experience (Fiji 35 per cent; PNG 33 per cent). Taken overall, more than half (51 per cent) of the journalists employed in Fiji had less than four years' experience, slightly more than PNG (49 per cent). The mean experience of 5.5 years for Papua New Guinean journalists was marginally higher in

**Graph 10.2: Comparison of journalists' years of experience, Fiji, PNG, 2001**



2001 than in 1998-99 (5.2 years) with Fiji also having a rise to 3.5 years from the 2.5 years in the earlier pilot survey.

***Education and training***

It was in the area of educational qualifications and training (*Table 10.13*) that significant statistical differences between the two countries were reflected. As in 1998/9, Papua New Guinean journalists were found to be more highly qualified than their Fiji counterparts. The proportion of PNG journalists with degrees and diplomas climbed from 73 per cent to 81 per cent, almost threefold higher than in Fiji. Yet there had also been some changes in Fiji. While in 1998/9 just 14 per cent of Fiji journalists had a degree or diploma, by 2001 the number had increased by more than a third. This reflected the growing number of graduate journalists

**Table 10.13: Educational and training qualifications of Fiji, PNG journalists, 2001**

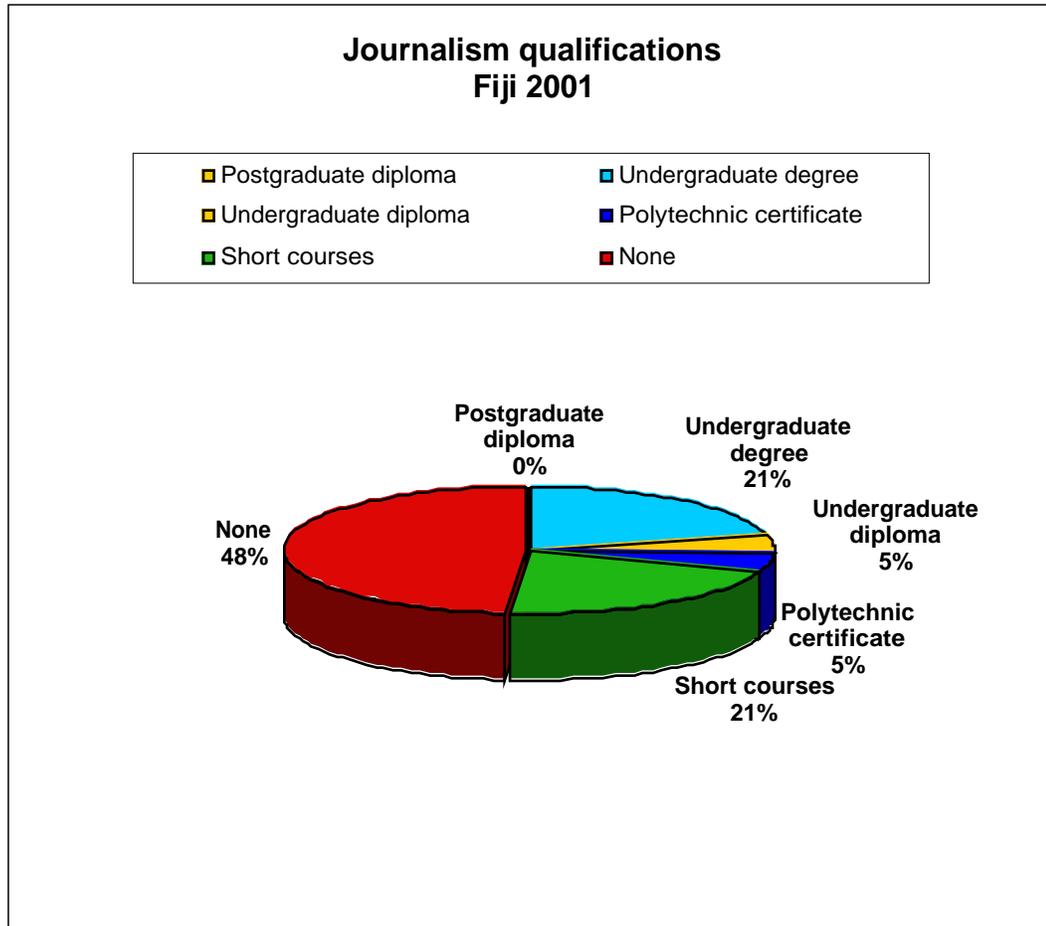
<b>Tertiary qualifications</b>	<b>Fiji n=43</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>PNG n=63</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total n=106</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Postgraduate degree or diploma	0	0%	0	0%	0	0
2. Undergraduate degree	9	21%	19	30%	28	26%
3. Undergraduate diploma	2	5%	32	51%	34	32%
<b>Total (1, 2 and 3):</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>58%</b>
4. Polytechnic or media industry certificates*	2	5%	0	0%	2	2%
5. Professional/industry short courses**	9	21%	3	5%	12	11%
6. No qualification or training	21	49%	9	14%	30	28%
7. No response	0	0%	0	0%	0	0
<b>No qualification or training</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28%</b>

Question: A11: What kind of journalism qualification do you have?

\* e.g. FIMA/FIJ certificate, 32-week polytechnic certificates etc.

\*\* Such as organised by PIBA, PINA or their affiliates.

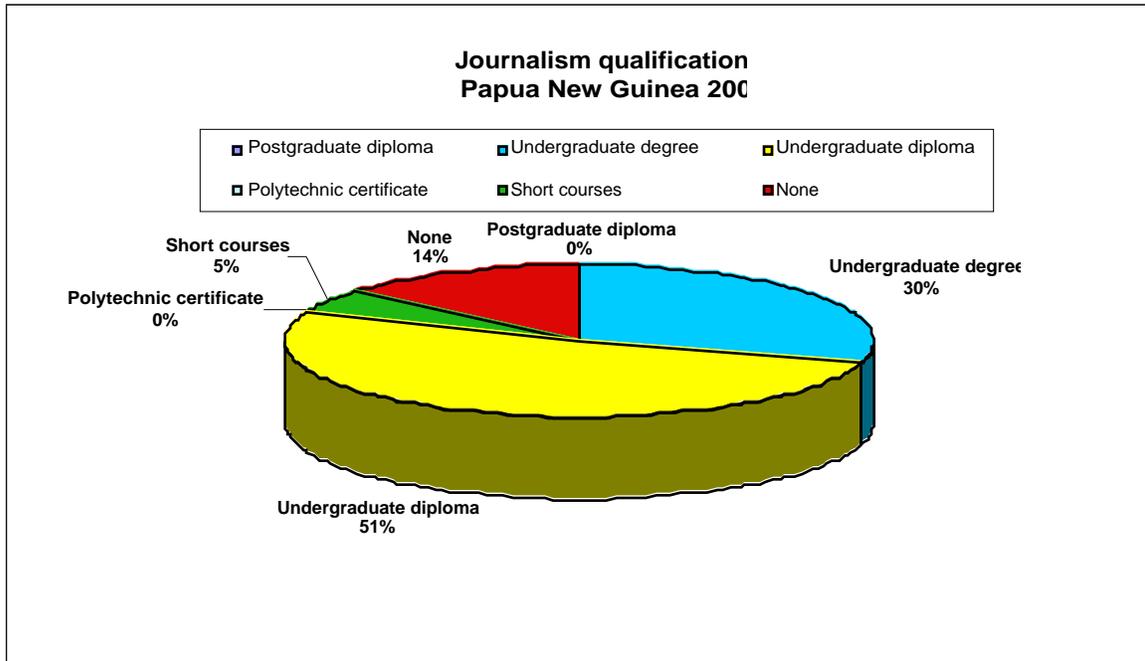
entering the workplace from the University of the South Pacific. Conversely the proportion of journalists without basic training or qualifications climbed slightly in both countries to almost half of all journalists in Fiji (49 per cent) and 14 per cent in Papua New Guinea. However, almost one in four of the Fiji survey respondents indicated they had completed professional and industry short courses such as those offered by PINA, PIBA and Ausaid's Pacific Media Initiative (PMI), while just five per cent of Papua New Guinean respondents had benefitted from such training. Just five per cent of journalists in Fiji indicated that they had completed media industry or polytechnic courses (*Graph 10.3*), such as the 32-week certificate programme run by the now defunct Fiji Journalism Institute, while no PNG journalists had done something similar. They relied on the university journalism schools.

**Graph 10.3: Journalism qualifications in Fiji, 2001**

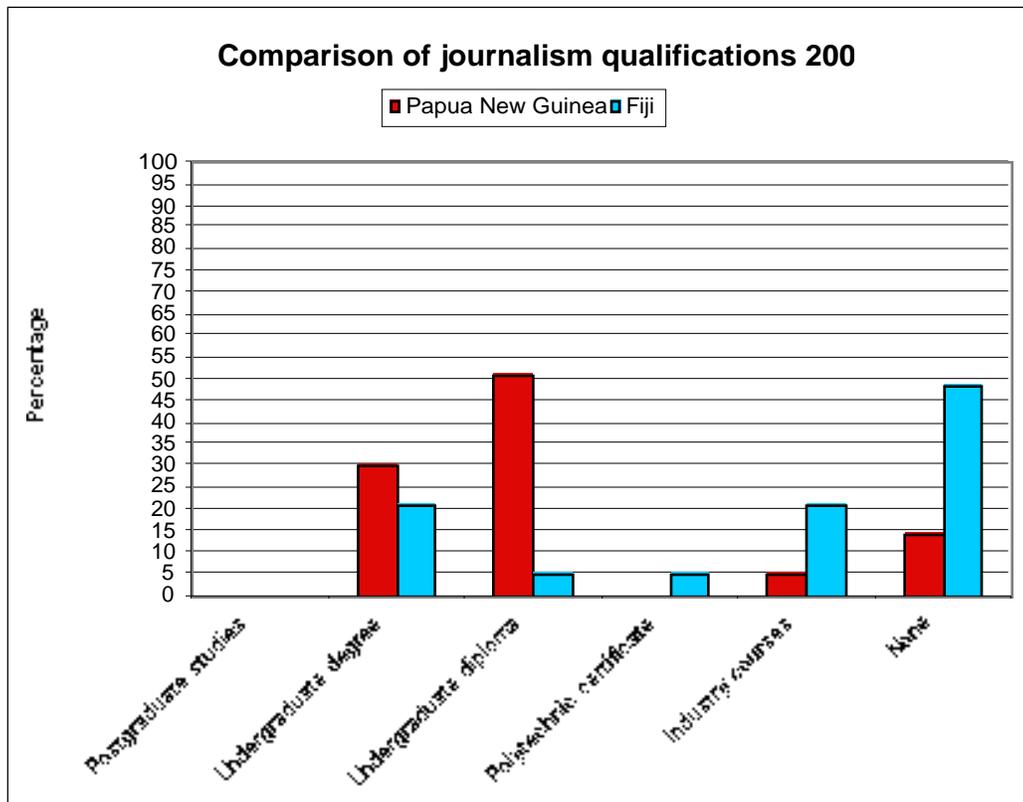
In Fiji, 26 per cent of journalists ‘majored’ in journalism while 53 per cent gave no response.<sup>17</sup> Seventy per cent of Papua New Guinea journalists gained a journalism major with just 17 per cent not responding (*Graphs 10.4, 10.5*). Of those who listed other disciplines as a major in Fiji, they were evenly spread (two per cent each) between history/politics, literature/language, economics, tourism and business/management. The spread of degrees and diplomas was dominated by the University of Papua New Guinea with 49 per cent of journalists as graduates, or 26 per cent overall, almost double the number of graduates from USP (*Graph 10.6*). However, 35 per cent of journalists surveyed in Fiji had a USP degree or diploma. Twenty nine per cent of journalists in PNG had graduated from Divine Word University. Twelve per cent of

<sup>17</sup> The reason that most of these surveyed journalists did not respond is because they did not study journalism.

Graph 10.4: Journalism qualifications in PNG, 2001.



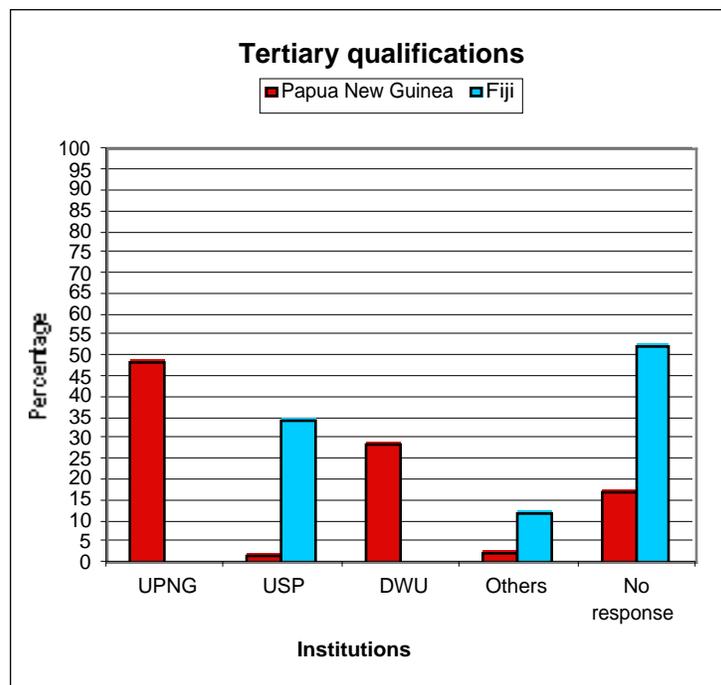
Graph 10.5: Comparison of journalism qualifications in Fiji, PNG, 2001.



Fiji journalists had a tertiary qualification from outside Fiji, while just three per cent in PNG had an outside degree or diploma.

Almost two thirds of Papua New Guinea journalists (62 per cent) favoured starting their career with gaining a journalism degree or diploma with a media organisation attachment (*Table 10.14*). This was almost double the number in Fiji (33 per cent) while most Fiji journalists (54 per cent) preferred a combination of a cadetship and university education. Some school leaver journalists in Fiji supported training on the job (nine per cent), but no journalist in Papua New Guinea supported this approach to recruitment and training.

**Graph 10.6: Comparison of journalism institutions in Fiji, PNG, 2001.**



In Fiji, industry support — as perceived by the respondents — was strongly in favour (30 per cent) of school leavers training in the newsrooms (*Table 10.15*). But in Papua New Guinea almost half of the media employers (46 per cent) looked to the university journalism schools with a media attachment as the best way to recruit journalists, while the next biggest

**Table 10.14: Fiji, PNG journalists' opinions on how their news organisations view education and training, 2001.**

Preferred choice*	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%
1. Recruited as school leavers	4	9%	0	0
2. University journalism education ( <i>no</i> media attachment)	1	2%	2	3%
3. University journalism education ( <i>with</i> media attachment)	14	33%	39	62%
4. Combination of cadetship and university education	23	54%	20	32%
5. No response	1	2%	3	3%

\* Respondents were asked the question: A18. *In your opinion, how should journalists be prepared for their career?* 1. *Recruited as a school leavers and trained on the job*, 2. *Educated at university on a journalism school programme with no media organisation attachment*, 3. *Educated at university on a journalism school programme with no media organisation attachment*, 4. *Combination of cadetship and university training*?

group (37 per cent) supported a combination of cadetship and university education. Only 14 per cent saw Fiji media organisations as supporting journalism school with media attachments. These mixed attitudes were reflected in the fact that one major Fiji news media organisation had never employed a journalism graduate from USP while preferring to hire school leavers.

**Table 10.15: Fiji, PNG journalists' opinions on how their news organisations view education and training, 2001**

Preferred choice*	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%
1. Recruited as school leavers	13	30%	4	6%
2. University journalism education ( <i>no</i> media attachment)	1	2%	0	0%
3. University journalism education ( <i>with</i> media attachment)	6	14%	29	46%
4. Combination of cadetship and university education	20	47%	23	37%
5. No response	3	7%	7	11%

\* Respondents were asked the question: A19. *In your opinion, how does your news organisation believe journalists should be prepared for their career?* 1. *Recruited as a school leaver and trained on the job*, 2. *Educated at university on a journalism school programme with no media organisation attachment*, 3. *Educated at university on a journalism school programme with no media organisation attachment*, 4. *Combination of cadetship and university training*?

A surprisingly significant group from both Papua New Guinea (11 per cent) and Fiji (seven per cent) were uncertain of the views of media organisations on education and training.

### ***Attraction to journalism***

One of the new questions in the 2001 survey was adapted from a category on ‘attraction to journalism’ used in 1994 research with Latin American journalists in Chile, Ecuador and

**Table 10.16: Factors that contribute to making journalism an appealing career for Fiji, PNG journalists, 2001**

<b>Factors*</b>	<b>Fiji n=43</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>PNG n=63</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total n=106</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Possibility to write	10	23%	15	24%	25	24%
2. Engage yourself for ideals and values	8	19%	10	16%	18	17%
3. Little routine	2	5%	1	2%	3	3%
4. Exposing abuses of power, corruption	16	37%	28	44%	44	42%
5. Varied and exciting work	19	44%	16	25%	35	33%
6. Communicating knowledge to the community	23	53%	46	73%	69	65%
7. Getting to know a variety of people	6	14%	7	11%	13	12%
8. Professional freedom of being able to decide tasks, topics	4	6%	10	16%	14	13%
9. Being one of the first people to know what is happening	11	26%	6	10%	17	16%
10. Seeing your name and work in print, or broadcast	0	0%	1	2%	1	1%
11. Working with interesting colleagues	0	0%	2	3	2	2
12. Influencing political decisions	11	26%	15	24%	26	25
13. Working under deadline pressure	4	9%	8	13%	12	11
14. Good future prospects	3	7%	2	3	5	5
15. Good earning prospects	1	2%	0	0	1	1%
16. Prestige of journalism	8	19%	6	10%	14	13%

\* Respondents were asked the question: *B20. Which of these factors do you find the most attractive about journalism?* Multiple choices (three). Percentages calculated in each category.

Mexico by Jurgen Wilke (1998: 439). In Wilke's research, he found that journalists in Mexico were 'more likely to be attracted to journalism than those in Chile by possible political influence, although the direct influence on political decisions plays a lesser role in both countries'. He also found that journalists in Mexico were more engaged for values and ideals than in Chile. In the Pacific sample (*Table 10.16*), journalists (65 per cent) were most likely to want to take up a media career for 'communicating knowledge to the people'. This view was more significant in Papua New Guinea where almost three out of four journalists chose this among three nominated factors.

In Fiji, just over half the participating journalists chose this option. The next most likely reason to become a journalist was 'exposing abuses of power and corruption' with 44 per cent of PNG journalists choosing this factor, slightly ahead of Fiji (37 per cent). Overall, 42 per cent of the journalists wanted to tackle corruption. The third most popular choice (33 per cent) was 'varied and exciting work' with almost twice as many journalists (44 per cent) in Fiji opting for this compared with just 25 per cent in Papua New Guinea. With the fourth choice, 'influencing political decisions', journalists in Fiji (26 per cent) and PNG (25 per cent) were fairly evenly matched. At the other end of the scale, both Fijian and PNG journalists ranked 'good earning prospects' (one per cent) and seeing their bylines in print or broadcast (one per cent) very low.

### ***Values and professionalism***

When asked 'where do you expect to work in five years' time?' (*Table 10.17*), more than half of the sample journalists in both Fiji and PNG (58 per cent overall) chose journalism. However, while 60 per cent of PNG journalists saw themselves staying in journalism, significantly more journalists in Fiji (21 per cent) nominated public relations as their second choice.

In Papua New Guinea, only 13 per cent of journalists chose this option, just behind 'other' choices. On the experience of the first survey, respondents in 2001 were given a wider range of

**Table 10.17: Where Fiji and PNG journalists expect to work in five years, 2001**

Preferred career*	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
1. Journalism	23	53%	38	60%	61	58%
2. Politics	2	5%	1	2%	3	3%
3. Public service	2	5%	0	0%	2	2%
4. Small business	0	0	3	5%	3	3%
5. Other response	2	5%	2	5%	4	4%
6. Public relations	9	21%	8	13%	17	16%
7. Other	3	7%	9	14%	12	11%
8. No response	2	5%	2	3%	4	4%

\* Respondents were asked the question: B21. *Where do you expect to work in five years' time?* Percentages may not total precisely due to rounding off.

choices (Tables 10.6 and 10.18) in the question dealing with how they perceived the role of the news media (12 options instead of six) as a more insightful comparison with the Romano and Schultz surveys. Also, there were multiple choices (three) asked for. In contrast with the earlier survey, about three out of every four respondents in both Fiji (74 per cent) and Papua New Guinea (73 per cent) regarded the media as the 'watchdog of democracy'. This level of support was more than double for any other category, and much higher than in Romano's Indonesia survey (50.8 per cent). However, whereas this question in the pilot survey had been based on the equivalent Romano question, for this survey it was expanded to draw on a question from Wilke (1998: 440)<sup>18</sup>. Fiji and Papua New Guinea were also evenly matched with about one-third support for both 'nation builder' and 'defender of the truth'. However, Papua New

18 Role conceptions of journalists (Table 22.2) question in Wilke (1998: 440): 'In your opinion, how should a journalist conceive his task. As what should one see oneself as a journalist?' Categories were: critics of abuses, communicator of new ideas, watchdog of democracy, population's mouthpiece, someone who helps people, neutral reporter, lawyer of the underprivileged, someone who should entertain, politicians with other means, and educator.

Guinean journalists showed a greater acceptance of a more active role for media in development reflected in their support for media as an ‘agent of empowerment’ for citizens (30 per cent, almost double that of Fiji and higher than Indonesia's 21.5 per cent), ‘educator’ (52 per cent), the people’s ‘voice’/mouthpiece (30 per cent), and communicator of new ideas (six per cent). Journalists in Fiji were more likely to see the media as a ‘neutral, uninvolved reporter of the facts’ (30 per cent against PNG’s 25 per cent). In both countries there was modest support for entertainment (12 per cent for Fiji; 8 per cent for PNG), which was still significantly higher than in Indonesia (1.5 per cent).

Asked whether the phrases ‘Fourth Estate’ and/or ‘watchdog’ applied to the media in Fiji and Papua New Guinea, 70 per cent agreed in both countries. Papua New Guinea journalists

**Table 10.18: How Fiji, PNG journalists view their professional media role, 2001**

Perceived role*	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
1. Watchdog of democracy	32	74%	46	73%	78	74%
2. Agent of empowerment	8	19%	19	30%	27	25%
3. Nation builder	15	35%	21	33%	36	34%
4. Defender of the truth	17	40%	22	35%	39	37%
5. Neutral, uninvolved reporter of facts	13	30%	16	25%	29	27%
6. An entertainer	5	12%	5	8%	10	9%
7. A critic of abuses	9	21%	4	6%	13	12%
8. An educator	18	42%	33	52%	51	48%
9. Communicator of new ideas	2	5%	4	6%	6	6%
10. The people's 'voice'/ mouthpiece	14	33%	19	30%	33	31%
11. Politicians using other means	0	0%	0	0	0	0
12. No response	0	0%	1	2%	1	1%

\* Respondents were asked the question: B22. How as a journalist do you see the media's role? Multiple choices (three) asked for. Percentages calculated in each category.

were the most ‘uncertain’ (11 per cent) while almost a quarter of journalists in Fiji failed to answer the question. When asked about the phrase ‘development journalism’, a significantly larger group (49 per cent) in Papua New Guinea than in Fiji (37 per cent) agreed. Fiji journalists were also more likely to be uncertain in their response (23 per cent) or could not reply (35 per cent), indicating a lack of understanding of the phrase. In qualitative responses, several Fiji journalists thought development journalism was related to the training and resourcing of journalists:

Developing skills of journalists (FM96).

Empowering journalists to fulfill their tasks competently through provision of training, resources and motivation, including remuneration that is fair (R).

When journalists are trained to be better at their jobs and particular skills are honed with the help of the media organisation (FTV).

Papua New Guinean journalists seemed to have a clearer grasp of the concept of development journalism:

Nation building — reporting on developments that take place. Informing people of important aspects of development in PNG (FM100).

To bring about development — social, political, economic improvements through reporting of issues (WP).

Using journalism as a tool in nation building. Reporting on new developments and its effects on the people and the society (NFM).

Bringing about positive changes for the good of ordinary citizens (N).

Development journalism is aggressive — creative (N).

**Table 10.19: How well informed news media audiences are, 2001.**

Perception*	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
1. Well-informed	14	33%	18	29%	32	30%
2. Critical	5	12%	4	6%	9	8%
3. Open	2	4%	7	11%	9	8%
4. Progressive	9	21%	13	21%	22	21%
5. Tolerant	3	7%	4	6%	7	7%
6. Easily influenced	6	14%	10	16%	16	15%
7. Ignorant	1	2%	5	8%	6	6%
8. No response	3	7%	2	3%	5	5%

\* Respondents were asked the question: *B27. How well informed are news media audiences?* Percentages may not total precisely due to rounding off.

Responding to a question about how well informed media audiences were (*Table 10.19*), almost a third in both countries indicated well informed. A further 21 per cent in both countries thought audiences were ‘progressive’ while 16 per cent in PNG and 14 per cent in Fiji believed audiences were ‘easily influenced’. Only two per cent of Fiji journalists considered audiences ‘ignorant’, but eight per cent of PNG journalists found audiences ignorant.

### ***Public perceptions and influence***

Most sample journalists (*Table 10.20*) considered public perceptions of them and their professionalism in the Pacific to be at least satisfactory (32 per cent). But there were significant differences between Fiji and Papua New Guinea. While 29 per cent of PNG journalists believed they had a ‘very good’ image, only seven per cent of their Fiji colleagues shared this view. In the ‘satisfactory’ category, the roles were reversed; 49 per cent of Fiji Islanders were satisfied — more than double the proportion of PNG journalists (21 per cent). Asked did journalists and

**Table 10.20: How the general public perceives Fiji, PNG journalists, 2001**

Perception*	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
1. Very good	3	7%	18	29%	21	20%
2. Good	11	25%	24	38%	34	32%
3. Satisfactory	21	49%	13	21%	9	8%
4. Not particularly good	3	7%	2	3%	5	5%
5. Bad	0	0%	0	0	0%	0
6. No opinion	5	12%	5	8%	10	9%

\* Respondents were asked the question: B28. *How are journalists perceived by the public?* Percentages may not total precisely due to rounding off.

**Table 10.21: How journalists/media are perceived to influence public opinion in Fiji, PNG , 2001**

Influence*	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
1. No influence	0	0	1	2%	1	1%
2. Some influence	8	19%	11	17%	19	18%
3. Moderate influence	6	14%	1	2%	7	7%
4. Considerable influence	18	42%	24	38%	42	40%
5. Major influence	10	23%	24	38%	34	32%
6. No response	1	2%	2	3%	3	2%

\* Respondents were asked the question: B29. *Do you believe journalists/media influence public opinion?* Percentages may not total precisely due to rounding off.

the media influence public opinion (*Table 10.21*), 40 per cent overall concluded ‘considerable influence’ with more journalists in Fiji (42 per cent) than in Papua New Guinea (38 per cent) sharing this view. A further third regarded the media as having ‘major influence’ with far more PNG journalists (38 per cent) having this view than in Fiji (23 per cent). When faced with the question ‘how important’ was the influence (*Table 10.22*), both Fiji and PNG were evenly matched (40 per cent) in responding ‘considerable importance’. However, again more Papua

**Table 10.22: The importance of media influence in forming public opinion in Fiji, PNG , 2001**

Importance*	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
1. No importance	0	0	1	2%	1	1%
2. Some importance	7	16%	5	8%	12	11%
3. Moderate importance	4	9%	4	6%	8	8%
4. Considerable importance	17	40%	25	40%	42	40%
5. Major importance	13	30%	26	41%	39	37%
6. No response	2	5%	2	3%	4	4%

\* Respondents were asked the question: B30. How important is media influence in forming public opinion? Percentages may not total precisely due to rounding off.

New Guineans (41 per cent) than Fiji Islanders (30 per cent) considered in of ‘major importance’.

### **Salaries and job satisfaction**

One of the ironies indicated from the survey (*Table 10.23; Graph 10.7*) is that although Papua New Guinean journalists were generally better educated and with a higher mean experience, they were far more poorly paid than in Fiji. More than two-thirds of PNG journalists (68 per cent) were in the lowest paid bracket of between K5,000 and K10,000<sup>19</sup>. Less than half of the Fiji journalists (44 per cent) were in the lowest range. Significantly more Fiji journalists were also in the two next highest scales of \$10,000 to \$15,000 (23 per cent) and \$15,000 to \$20 000 (21 per cent). In both categories, PNG fared at 18 per cent and 12 per cent respectively. Fiji also had a slightly higher percentage (five per cent) in the top range of \$25,000 to \$30,000. Overall in both countries, three-quarters of all journalists were being paid less than \$15,000,

<sup>19</sup> Respondents gave the answers based on Fiji dollar, or PNG kina bands. The salaries have not been converted into a common scale. Thus PNG salaries, when compared with Fiji, are even lower when considering the currency exchange rate. The exchange rate at 7 February 2003 was 1FID = 1,95 PGK. Universal Currency Converter, 26 April 2003. [www.xe.com/ucc/convert.cgi](http://www.xe.com/ucc/convert.cgi)

**Table 10.23: Fiji, PNG journalists' salary range, 2001**

Dollar equivalent*	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
\$5 000 - \$10 000	20	46%	43	68%	63	59%
\$10 000 - \$15 000	10	23%	9	14%	19	18%
\$15 000 - \$20 000	9	21%	4	6%	13	12%
\$20 000 - \$25 000	2	5%	4	6%	6	6%
\$25 000 - \$30 000	0	0%	2	3%	2	2%
More than \$30 000	2	5%	1	2%	3	3%
<b>Mean salary</b>	<b>\$13 000</b>		<b>\$11 000</b>		<b>\$12 000</b>	

\* Respondents were asked the question: B31. What salary range are you paid per year? They gave answers based on Fiji dollar, or PNG kina bands. Percentages may not total exactly due to rounding off.

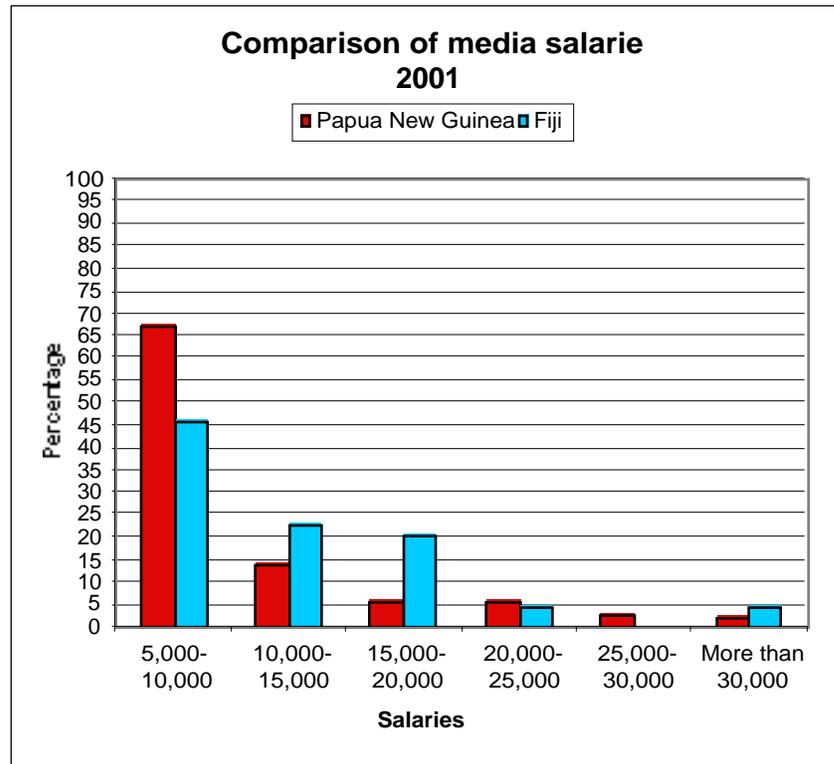
which is a starting salary for some professions such as secondary teaching and the law.<sup>20</sup> Mean salaries in Fiji (\$13,000) were about \$2,000 a year higher than in Papua New Guinea (K11,000) with an overall mean in both countries of \$12,000.

Salaries and working conditions stirred many strong and bitter comments from respondents. One Fiji respondent argued reporters who had gone through journalism school should be paid more than those who did not with a starting salary in the newsroom.

Otherwise what is the point of spending three years in a journalism school when one can just go straight to a news organisation and still receive the same salary as a graduate? The

<sup>20</sup> According a Wansolwara survey, see Yaya, Joe (2002, June). News sells — but journo face 'poverty', p 13, starting pay for Fiji teachers (primary graduates) was \$11,000 a year, while secondary teachers with degree qualifications and teacher training earned \$16,618, or \$14,988 (without training). The starting salary for bank tellers was \$12,000, while graduate nurses were paid \$10,900. Yaya's survey also showed that 'cadet' reporters at *The Fiji Times* were paid \$4,800 a year on three months' probation., then \$5,600. Starting graduates were paid \$8,500. Radio Fiji: Non-graduates started at \$7,800; graduates \$10,000. Fiji TV: New recruits started at \$9,000. FM 96: Cadet reporters started at \$6,000 (review after six months); graduates \$10,000. *Fiji Sun*: No information provided. *Daily Post*: No comment — staff policy. Comparisons at that time with Australia and New Zealand: Australia: (Based on News Ltd award): First-year cadet A\$25,400 a year; graduate cadet A\$32,000; Grade 10

**Graph 10.7: Comparison of Fiji, PNG media salaries, 2001**



graduate is more equipped [sic] and passionate about the job than a person straight out of high school. You don't need to be trained again in the newsroom (FTV).

Recalling his earlier hardships as a cadet, one Fiji news executive wrote:

Reporters work long hours for little pay. In fact, [starting] pay at *The Fiji Times* is still the same for cadet reporters as 12 years ago when I joined — \$5,500. No wonder staff turnover is so high in the industry. The enthusiasm evaporates very quickly because of the low pay and long hours (R).

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journalist A\$81,000. New Zealand: (Based on national minimum journalists' award). First-year cadet NZ\$19,800 a year; graduate cadet NZ\$22,700; Senior Special grade journalist \$53,660.

In Papua New Guinea, one journalist respondent wrote:

One of the problems facing the profession is the salary/wage. I am of the view that journalists in Papua New Guinea are underpaid. It is frustrating to get paid lower than what is expected after you put in a lot of effort into your career. I personally have already decided to take up a job elsewhere. Want [sic] the media companies to improve the salaries of its reporters.

Another respondent, who had no formal journalism training:

Journos who come out with a diploma or degree from UPNG and DWU are really in for big bugs [sic] instead of working their way up from a cadetship. Others who are trained while on-the-job are often criticised by diploma and degree holders (WP).

Some general comments in Papua New Guinea where salaries were lowest included:

Journalists in the Pacific are badly paid. Salary and welfare conditions should be looked into.. Newspaper companies are focused on making money. They have no set guidelines for training journalists or financing projects like investigative reporting (PC).

Journalists in PNG are underpaid. Lifestyle and economic hardship force journalists to move away from the integrity of their profession (WP).

Fiji journalists were considerably more satisfied (61 per cent) with their media career than their colleagues in Papua New Guinea (49 per cent) (*Table 10.24*). Overall, more than half of journalists in both countries (54 per cent) was happy with their job. However, more journalists in Fiji were not satisfied (23 per cent) with their career than in Papua New Guinea (21 per cent). One in four PNG journalists were uncertain.

**Table 10.24: Media career satisfaction in Fiji, PNG , 2001**

Job satisfaction*	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
1. Satisfied	26	61%	31	49%	57	54%
2. Not satisfied	10	23%	13	21%	23	22%
3. Uncertain	6	14%	16	25%	22	21%
4. No response	1	2%	3	5%	4	4%

- Respondents were asked the question: B32. Are you satisfied with your career as a journalist? Percentages may not total precisely due to rounding off.

### ***Freedom of the press***

Journalists in both countries overwhelmingly (81 per cent) supported the ideal of the media being a watchdog (*Table 10.25*) rather than ‘just another business’.<sup>21</sup> The proportion was higher in Fiji where two-thirds of journalists supported the view than in Papua New Guinea (44 per cent). More journalists in Papua New Guinea were not so sure, opting for ‘maybe’ a watchdog. However, when the question centred on the ‘actual situation’ in both countries (*Table 10.26*), both Fiji and PNG journalists became more hesitant. While overall, 81 per cent supported the notion of a watchdog, a quarter of this would only go so far as to say ‘maybe’ and only 21 per cent ‘strongly agreed’. Significantly though, the balance swung in PNG’s favour with more than twice as many journalists (27 per cent) strongly agreeing that the PNG media was a watchdog than in Fiji (12 per cent).

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<sup>21</sup> This question (C33: Do you favour the media as a watchdog, or should it be thought of as just another business?) was adapted from Schultz(1998), D19, p 257. The expression acknowledging the special role of news media in democracy comes from her earlier book (1994), *Not Just Another Business: Journalists, Citizens and the Media*. Sydney: Pluto Press.

**Table 10.25: The media as a watchdog or just another business in Fiji, PNG — as perceived by journalists, 2001.**

	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
1. Strongly agree watchdog	28	65%	28	44%	46	53%
2. Agree watchdog	9	21%	21	33%	30	28%
3. Maybe watchdog	0	0	6	10%	6	6%
4. Neither	0	0%	3	5%	3	3%
5. Maybe another business	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. Just another business	2	5%	1	2%	3	3%
7. Strongly agree just another business	1	2%	0	0	1	1%
8. No response	3	7%	4	6%	7	7%

\* Respondents were asked the question: C33 Do you favour the media as a watchdog, or should it be thought of as just another business? Percentages may not total precisely due to rounding off.

**Table 10.26: The media as a watchdog or just another business in Fiji, PNG — actual situation, 2001.**

	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
1. Strongly agree watchdog	5	12%	17	27%	22	21%
2. Agree watchdog	17	40%	25	40%	42	40%
3. Maybe watchdog	13	30%	8	13%	21	20%
4. Neither	0	0	3	5%	3	3%
5. Maybe another business	4	9%	3	5	7	7
6. Just another business	0	0	1	2%	1	1%
7. Strongly agree just another business	0	0	0	0	0	0
8. No response	4	9%	6	9%	10	9%

\* Respondents were asked the question: C34. What do you think is the actual situation in Fiji/PNG? Percentages may not total precisely due to rounding off.

Most surveyed journalists in Fiji and Papua New Guinea (80 per cent) favoured free expression for the media rather than free expression for the public (*Table 10.27*).<sup>22</sup> Journalists seemed to believe that the media should largely mediate public free expression. Almost half of all PNG journalists strongly favoured media free expression, a higher level than in Fiji (44 per cent) while significantly more Fiji journalists (37 per cent) simply favoured free expression than in PNG (27 per cent). Conversely, PNG (10 per cent) also had a higher proportion supporting free expression for interest groups (the public) than in Fiji (seven per cent).

**Table 10.27: Free expression for the media or for interest groups in Fiji, PNG, 2001.**

Free expression	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
1. Strongly favour free expression for media	19	44%	31	49%	50	47%
2. Favour free expression for media	16	37%	17	27%	33	31%
3. Maybe favour free expression for media	1	2%	1	2%	2	2%
4. Uncertain	0	0%	3	5%	3	3%
5. Maybe favour free expression for interest groups	3	7%	0	0	3	3%
6. Favour free expression for interest groups	1	2%	2	3%	3	3%
7. Strongly favour free expression for interest groups	3	7%	7	11	10	10%
8. No response	1	0%	2	3%	3	2%

\* Respondents were asked the question: C35. *Is free expression for the media or free expression for interest groups closer to your own view of freedom of the press?* Percentages may not total precisely due to rounding off.

<sup>22</sup> This question (C35. *Is free expression for the media or free expression for interest groups closer to your own view of freedom of the press?*) was adapted from Schultz (1998), D21, p. 257.

### **Investigative journalism**

More than four out of five surveyed journalists in Fiji and Papua New Guinea (84 per cent) regard investigative journalism as a ‘very important’ measure of the media’s commitment to its watchdog role (*Table 10.28*). This view was a little stronger in Papua New Guinea (89 per cent) than in Fiji (81 per cent). A further eight per cent of journalists overall considered investigative journalism important. But when it came to how much news organisations encouraged journalists to actually do investigative journalism (*Table 10.29*), little more than than half of the journalists (57 per cent) agreed that this was actually happening. More Fiji journalists (70 per

**Table 10.28: How important investigative journalism is seen as a commitment to its watchdog role in Fiji, PNG , 2001**

	<b>Fiji</b> n=43	<b>%</b>	<b>PNG</b> n=63	<b>%</b>	<b>Total</b> n=106	<b>%</b>
1. Very important	35	81%	56	89%	91	86%
2. Important	5	12%	3	5%	8	8%
3. Maybe important	0	0%	0	0%	0	0
4. Uncertain	0	0%	0	0%	0	0
5. Maybe unimportant	0	0%	2	3%	2	2%
6. Unimportant	0	0%	0	0%	0	0
7. Very unimportant	0	0%	0	0%	0	0
8. No response	3	7%	2	3%	5	5%

\* Respondents were asked the question: C36. *How important is investigative journalism as a measure of the media's commitment to its watchdog role?* Percentages may not total precisely due to rounding off.

cent) thought they were being encouraged than in Papua New Guinea (49 per cent). However, 19 per cent overall said no and a fifth of the journalists were uncertain. When asked how encouragement was actually given, some 37 per cent could not think of a reason (*Table 10.30*). Twice as many from Papua New Guinea (46 per cent) did not respond than in Fiji (23 per cent).

**Table 10.29: Industry encouragement for investigative journalism in Fiji, PNG , 2001.**

Investigative*	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
1. Encouraged	30	70%	31	49%	61	57%
2. Not encouraged	5	12%	15	24%	20	19%
3. Uncertain	7	16%	14	22%	21	20%
4. No response	1	2%	3	5%	4	4%

\* Respondents were asked the question: C37. *Are journalists in your news organisation encouraged to do investigative journalism?* Percentages may not total precisely due to rounding off.

**Table 10.30: How industry encouragement is given for investigative journalism in Fiji, PNG , 2001.**

Investigative*	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
1. Ethos of the organisation	7	16%	9	14%	16	15%
2. Freeing staff from other duties	10	23%	9	14%	19	18%
3. Providing economic and staff support	6	14%	3	5%	9	8%
4. Providing supportive and experienced editors	10	23%	5	8%	15	14%
5. Other, please specify	0	0	8	13%	8	8%
6. No response	10	23%	29	46%	39	37%

\* Respondents were asked the question: C38. *If yes, how is encouragement given for investigative journalism?* Percentages may not total precisely due to rounding off.

The most common example of encouragement was freeing staff (18 per cent) from other duties to carry out investigative journalism. Significantly more Fiji journalists (23 per cent) thought this than in PNG (14 per cent). The second factor was the ethos of the organisation (15 per cent overall) and this evenly supported in both countries. Fourteen per cent overall considered they were being given support from experienced editors. Only eight per cent thought they were provided with economic and staff support.

The major problems for investigative journalism (*Table 10.31*) were seen as insufficient resources (29 per cent) such as lack of staff, money and time. These problems were regarded more seriously in Papua New Guinea (35 per cent) than in Fiji (21 per cent). Concern about commercial pressures (11 per cent overall) were also important. This factor was seen as twice as serious (16 per cent) in Fiji as in Papua New Guinea (eight per cent). Not being the ethos of the news organisation was regarded as the least concern (two per cent). However, there was a remarkably high non response from 45 per cent of the surveyed journalists.

**Table 10.31: How industry encouragement is not given for investigative journalism in Fiji, PNG , 2001**

Investigative*	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
1. Not the ethos of the organisation	2	5%	0	0	2	2%
2. Concern about political pressure	4	9%	0	0	4	4%
3. Concern about commercial pressure	7	16	5	8%	12	11%
4. Irrelevant to role of journalism and media	0	0	0	0	0	0
5. Insufficient resources (staff, money, time)	9	21	22	35%	31	29%
6. Inadequate skills of journalists and editors	3	7	3	5%	6	6%
7. Other, please specify	0	0	3	5%	3	3%
8. No response	18	42%	30	48%	48	45%

\* Respondents were asked the question: C39. *If no, what are the problems?* Percentages may not total precisely due to rounding off.

Feelings were mixed about resources for computer-assisted reporting (CAR) (*Table 10.32*). Half of the journalists thought their news organisation was either very well resourced or was moderately resourced. The highest group in Fiji (28 per cent) thought they were moderately resourced while almost as many (26 per cent) thought their resources were poor. Sixteen per cent of surveyed Papua New Guinean journalists thought they were poorly resourced. Almost two-thirds of the journalists (61 per cent) considered culture to be a very important or important

**Table 10.32: How industry provides for computer-assisted reporting in Fiji, PNG , 2001**

<b>CAR resources*</b>	<b>Fiji n=43</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>PNG n=63</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total n=106</b>	<b>%</b>
1. Very well resourced	9	21%	16	25%	25	24%
2. Moderately well resourced	12	28%	16	25%	28	26%
3. Neutral	4	9%	6	10%	10	9%
4. Partially resourced	6	14%	11	17%	17	16%
5. Poorly resourced	11	26%	10	16%	21	20%
6. No response	1	2%	4	6%	5	5%

\* Respondents were asked the question: C39. *Of no, what are the problems?* Percentages may not total precisely due to rounding off.

obstacle to the investigative role of the media (*Table 10.33*). More Papua New Guinean journalists (33 per cent) thought culture was a very important obstacle than in Fiji (26 per cent). However, more than double the number of Fiji journalists (46 per cent) than in PNG (21 per cent) regarded it as important. Also, more journalists in Fiji (12 per cent) considered it unimportant than in Papua New Guinea (nine per cent).

In qualitative comments, several Fiji journalists said ‘Pacific culture has too many norms and taboos’ (DP) or Fijian journalists were ‘bound by traditions, especially when they are interviewing authority figures’ (FTV). Among other comments:

There are things male reporters can do and be accepted, but not female reporters (DP).

Fear of offending and being accused of not knowing (R).

The ‘vanua’ and ‘kai’ situation in Fiji limits the reporter’s ability to be more critical and unbiased (DP).

Relationships make reporters hesitant to interview high-ranking chiefs of their province (FTV).

**Table 10.33: Culture as a major obstacle to investigative journalism in Fiji, PNG , 2001.**

Major obstacle*	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
1. Very important	11	26%	21	33%	32	30%
2. Important	20	46%	13	21%	33	31%
3. Maybe important	3	7%	10	16%	13	12%
4. Uncertain	3	7%	8	13%	11	10%
5. Maybe unimportant	0	0	0	0	0	0
6. Unimportant	5	12%	6	9%	11	10%
7. Very unimportant	0	0	1	2%	1	1%
8. No response	1	2%	4	6%	5	5%

\* Respondents were asked the question: C41. Do you believe culture is a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media? Percentages may not total precisely due to rounding off.

The chiefly system has to be respected. Society doesn't accept media questioning of the leader/chief: Example: when camera shots are taken of former President Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara. The cameraman cannot stand and film. He must be kneeling down to take the shots. If the cameraman is standing in front of him, it means disrespect (FTV).

Cultural ostracism is something journalists are wary of. criticism of the Fiji President, Ratu Josefa Iloilo, is seen as an insult by western division Fijians as he is their paramount chief (R).

But for more than one Fiji journalist, the issue was one of 'working around' the cultural barrier:

It really depends on how a journalist tackles this issue. If one allows culture or the excuse of culture to rule them, then they are bound to face obstacles. Working around it is a different story. At the end of the day one has to get the facts of the story — culture or no culture (FTV).

In Papua New Guinea, even though culture was said to be less of a problem than in Fiji qualitative comments showed that the ‘wantok’ and ‘bigman’ systems<sup>23</sup> and tribalism could still influence a reporter. Some views:

Wantok/nepotism is the one obstacle (NFM).

[Our] place of origin (village, province, ethnic group) plays an important factor in gaining trust (NFM).

Unable to report the wrongdoings of relatives or wantoks for fear of losing his birthright (WP).

It depends on the issue, but the wantok system stops one from investigating another (N).

Cultural practices of a journalist’s origin influence his or her perceptions (WP).

There’s a ‘code of silence’: You ask questions to a certain point — beyond that is taboo (PC).

Responses over religion as an obstacle for investigative journalism were more evenly spread (*Table 34*). The largest group, almost a third overall was uncertain. A further third thought it was important or maybe important while 23 per cent thought it was unimportant. Religion seemed to be less of a problem in Papua New Guinea where 27 per cent thought it unimportant while a further 35 per cent were uncertain. However, in Fiji 21 per cent thought it was important and the same again were unsure. Among qualitative comments:

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<sup>23</sup> ‘Wantok’, literally Tok Pisin for ‘one talk’, or one language. This refers to kinship and loyalty to fellow clan members. ‘Bigmen’, usually chiefs or leaders, were often protected and encouraged by the Australian colonial authorities and later became very powerful or wealthy. In his book *The Melanesian Way*, Bernard Narokobi (1980) wrote: ‘In a Melanesian village, everyone is related to everyone else. You’re either a brother, an uncle, a grandfather, a son, a daughter, a mother, or a relative by marriage. One of the most essential elements of Melanesian society is its close human relations. Closeness does create tensions, which erupt. But that is like waves that splash and subside ... Giving and taking is an integral part of Melanesian society. Cooperation and mutual support, especially in times of need and crisis, are part of our living experience... The state does not seem to realise that the relatives and wantoks that I, as a taxpayer, support are the same people the state has been established to serve’ (pp 13-14).

**Table 10.34: Religion as a major obstacle to investigative journalism in Fiji, PNG , 2001.**

Major obstacle*	Fiji n=43	%	PNG n=63	%	Total n=106	%
1. Very important	3	7%	0	0	3	3%
2. Important	9	21%	7	11%	16	15%
3. Maybe important	6	14%	10	16%	16	15%
4. Uncertain	9	21%	22	35%	31	29%
5. Maybe unimportant	0	0	2	3%	2	2%
6. Unimportant	7	16%	17	27%	24	23%
7. Very unimportant	4	9%	4	6%	8	8%
8. No response	2	5%	1	2%	3	3%

\* Respondents were asked the question: C43. Do you believe religion is a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media? Percentages may not total precisely due to rounding off.

In Fiji, religion plays an important role in society. Given [that] the church leaders are getting themselves into politics, their influence has spread. In Fijian traditional set-ups whatever the church pastor says is taken to be true, thus the [clergy's] power and influence is strong (P).

Some conservative Christian reporters, when reporting on religious events or political agitation by religious groups [self-censor]. For example, the reporter referring to a pastor as a 'man of God' rather than simply using the person's name (FM96).

The poor style with the Methodist Church is never reported, let alone the sexual prowess of some clergy (DP).

## **Conclusion**

Marked differences were found in the profiles of Fiji and Papua New Guinea journalists, especially in education and professional formation, salaries and in the professional attitudes. In general, Papua New Guinea journalists were better educated, older, more experienced, but more poorly paid. While there were similarities in the core values of journalism between the two countries, Papua New Guinea journalists appeared to have more sophisticated values in their relationship and role within the community, which is likely to be attributed to tertiary education.

**Fiji profile:** The ‘typical’ Fiji journalist<sup>24</sup> is more likely to be male (very marginally), single, under the age of 25, with less than four years experience, a native Fijian speaker but working for English-language media and a school leaver with no formal training or higher education. He probably believes that a combination of a media cadetship and university education is the best way to be trained as a journalist, although unlikely to have had the opportunity to do so. He probably entered journalism keen to communicate knowledge to the community, attracted to varied and exciting work or expecting to expose abuses of power and corruption (order of preference). The Fiji journalist is more likely to be satisfied with his journalism career, expects to maybe still in journalism in five years, or perhaps go into public relations. He believes his professional role primarily to be a watchdog on democracy, but also to be an educator and ‘defender of the truth’ (order of preference). He believes that free expression is about freedom for the media rather than the public. He believes the Fiji media

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<sup>24</sup> While ‘typical’ profiles drawn on survey data averages are a common technique, some researchers, notably Dr Murray Goot, seriously question this approach. In an *Australian Journalism Review* article (2001), Goot challenged what he described as ‘The identikit fallacy ... or the problem with “Phil” and “Jenny”’. According to Goot, the problem lies with a common two-step methodology. The first step (correct) involves ‘identifying the larger (of two) or two largest (if more than two) aggregate frequency with each independent variable’. The second step (incorrect) involves putting these features together as a string: ‘The model is undeniably seductive; many of the best and brightest fall for it. But as a way of getting a handle on the world, the method yields nothing beyond illusion’ (p 121-122).

perform a watchdog on democracy role, but is uncertain about what development journalism means. While he probably strongly supports the notion of investigative journalism as a measure of commitment to being a watchdog on democracy, he is likely to regard culture and religion as major obstacles. Also, he thinks the public has a satisfactory perception of journalists and is probably paid F\$13,000 a year.

**Papua New Guinea profile:** A ‘typical’ Papua New Guinea journalist is more likely to be female (very marginally), single, under the age of 29, with about five years experience, a Tok Pisin speaker but working on English-language media and to have a university diploma or degree in journalism from either the University of Papua New Guinea or Divine Word University. She believes that journalists should receive a university education with a media organisation attachment. She probably entered journalism to communicate knowledge to the community, expose abuses of power and corruption, and varied and exciting work (order of preference). The Papua New Guinea journalist may be unsatisfied or uncertain with her media career, but expects to stay in journalism in five years’ time. She may go into public relations, but is less likely to do so than in Fiji. She probably believes her professional role is to be the watchdog of democracy, an educator and defender of the truth ( order of preference). While she believes that free expression is important for the media, she is more likely to also recognise the importance for the public. Although she probably more strongly believes in the watchdog role of media than in Fiji, she also has an understanding of the role of development journalism and considers that it has relevance to Papua New Guinea. She is strongly committed to the notion of investigative journalism as a measure of media commitment to being a watchdog on democracy, but is less likely to see culture and religion as obstacles than in Fiji. Also, she thinks the public has a very good or good perception of journalists, and she is probably earning K11,000 a year, or about half of what a Fiji journalist earns in real terms when currencies are compared.

It was in the area of educational qualifications and training that significant statistical differences between the two countries were reflected. Papua New Guinean journalists were found to be more highly qualified than their Fiji counterparts. Between 1998-99 and 2001, the proportion of PNG journalists had climbed from 73 per cent in the early survey to 81 percent, almost threefold higher than in Fiji. However, in the same three-year period the number of Fiji journalists with a degree or diploma rose by more than a third from 14 per cent to 26 per cent. This reflected the growing number of graduate journalists entering the workplace from the University of the South Pacific. Conversely the proportion of journalists without basic training or qualifications climbed slightly in both countries to almost half of all journalists in Fiji (49 per cent) and 14 per cent in Papua New Guinea. However, almost one in four Fiji journalists of the survey respondents indicated they had done professional and industry short courses run by regional or donor organisations. Papua New Guinea was less reliant on donor organisations because the country's media organisations were more integrated with the university journalism schools.

One of the ironies of the newsroom survey is that although Papua New Guinean journalists were generally better educated and with a higher mean experience, they were far more poorly paid than in Fiji. Papua New Guinean journalists have a mean salary of K11,000 a year. Although the Fijian mean salary is F\$13,000 a year, the PNG journalist would be paid about half of what a Fiji journalist earns in real terms when their salaries are compared. More than two-thirds of PNG journalists (68 per cent) were in the lowest paid bracket of between \$5,000 and \$10,000. Less than half of the Fiji journalists (44 per cent) were in the lowest range. It is uncertain to what extent non-participation by *The Fiji Times* journalists could have distorted the findings in this category, but probably not by much. The company is the largest employer of journalists in the country and anecdotal evidence in the pilot survey (*Appendix 5*) and in the qualitative interviews (*Appendix 15*) points to a large proportion of lowly paid staff. It was also

the most consistently criticised newspaper in interviews over its recruitment policies. Also, at the time of completing this thesis it was understood that the company had employed no graduate journalists with journalism qualifications.

While many of the demographic and professional values such as support for the ‘watchdog’ ideal were comparable between the two countries, Papua New Guinean journalists often exhibited more positive views on the capacity of the media for ‘nation-building’ and as an educator ‘empowering’ citizens than in Fiji. For example, while almost twice as many journalists in Fiji than in PNG were attracted to the ‘prestige’ of a media career, almost three out of every four PNG journalists regarded ‘communicating knowledge to the community’ as a crucial factor in taking up a media career. One major problem for Fiji indicated in the focus interviews is the issue of self-censorship, as outlined by publisher Yashwant Gaunder.

I think [Fiji] is a free media . But there is a lot of self-censorship by Fiji journalists. It comes back to personal choices. So I think maybe there is some self-censorship in editorial decisions because of particular view of some media organisations. But in my personal experience, I’ve not had any pressure from Government. Even if they criticised us., we went ahead anyway and did what we needed to do. And then there was no action against us. We have been pretty bold in the last ten years (Gaunder, interview with author, 2001).

Papua New Guinean journalists were also more like to choose ‘exposing abuses of power and corruption’ as a reason to embark on a journalism career. More Papua New Guinean journalists regarded investigative journalism (89 per cent) as a measure of the media’s commitment to its watchdog role, but saw culture and religion as less of an obstacle than in Fiji. Nevertheless qualitative comments showed that the ‘wantok’ and ‘bigman’ systems and tribalism could still influence a PNG reporter. As one journalist explained, ‘There’s a ‘code of silence’: You ask questions to a certain point — beyond that is taboo.’ Cultural relationships make reporters

hesitant to interview high-ranking chiefs of their province in Fiji. The chiefly system needs to be respected. Society is reluctant to accept media questioning of the chief, whereas more vigorous questioning of leaders in Papua New Guinea (who are not hereditary) is acceptable.

Reasons for the differences between the two countries as found in the newsroom surveys are explored in the concluding chapter.

## **CHAPTER ELEVEN: Conclusion:**

### **Pacific media education and the future**

BRAZILIAN educator Paulo Freire inspired many development communication and journalism theorists with his ideals articulated in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1977). This pedagogy aimed at 'liberation' by encouraging critical and inquiring thinking, a process that empowers people to understand the causes of social injustice and to act to change their lives for the better. Journalism in many developing countries, notably India and the Philippines, has not been slow to grasp this reality and adopt such principles.

Development journalists are learners as well as teachers who identify with the needs and goals of the people. They are not neutral observers who 'remain unmoved and unchanged' by what they see and write. They are more concerned with the process than the 'spot news or action news' of events. They share the sentiments of the people in social situations and are changed to some degree as well as changing the situation as reporters. They have a moral obligation to their readership and audience.

Development journalism emphasises the 'why' element of investigative journalism. Journalists reporting in this context study and cover the process of socio-economic, cultural, political and educational changes in a developing nation. This is not unlike notions of public journalism in Western countries, or what Professor John C. Merrill (1999) calls 'existential journalism'. Contrasting this concept with the mainstream Western belief in media 'objectivity', Merrill emphasises such ideas as authenticity, freedom with responsibility, and ethical independence (p 32).

What a journalist does in specific cases does not matter as much as the fact that he *does something*. The supreme virtue for existentialist is probably the most old-fashioned of all: *integrity*. And a person cannot have integrity unless he utilises his capacity to choose, to act, to make decisions (*ibid.*: 33).

### **Media ‘gobble-isation’**

Merrill places great emphasis on freedom and self-responsibility. Yet it is the concept of a ‘free press’ that lies at the heart of Western scepticism over development journalism. Merrill challenges whether the free press is really free at all, compromised as it is by an ‘impulse of self-censorship’<sup>1</sup> and a conformist corporate journalism. Merrill’s views could be said to echo Gramscian views observing hegemony in mainstream media through journalistic practices. They offer a theory of journalism as a series of practices implicitly part of the ‘strategic management of information, ideas and therefore, culture’ (Meadows, 1998: 5). Critical political economy is concerned with the dynamics of global capitalism and as part of this the development and control of mega media corporations that reach into the South Pacific. Examples of this are Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation controlling interests in the region’s two largest and most influential English-language newspapers, *The Fiji Times* and the *PNG Post-Courier*, and Packer’s Channel Nine outright ownership of EMTV in Papua New Guinea. Development journalist Kunda Dixit (1997: 7) is harshly critical of what he terms media ‘gobble-isation’ and the Western drive of infotainment as a commodity. In his view it is no coincidence that news businesses have been taken over by conglomerates that also own entertainment empires. Disney, owns ABC, Time-Warner bought CNN. According to Robert W. McChesney and John Nichols, the oligopolistic structures created by media conglomerates

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Wicker in *The Quill* (December 1975), p 16, cited by John C. Merrill in *Existential Journalist* (1966), Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, p 41.

‘make a mockery of the traditional notion of a free press’ (McChesney & Nichols (2002: 26). Dixit argues that the public service role of media is being usurped by businesses for whom the definition of news is simple: news has to sell, otherwise it is not news.

Fewer and fewer people today control the information we get, and they are setting the agenda for the rest of us — how we should behave, what we should buy, which credit card we must use, what we should wear, what movies we can’t afford to miss, what we should eat, what we must smoke. They are telling us Saddam Hussein is a crook, free trade is good, it is OK for five per cent of the world’s population to consume half of its resources (*ibid.*).

### ***On-the-job vs education***

The challenges facing South Pacific media education, as outlined in the Introduction and Chapter Four, involve the production of quality educated journalists who have the capacity to understand and interact with their political and social institutions in a rapidly changing globalised world. Traditionally, with the exception of Papua New Guinea, journalism training in the South Pacific has largely concentrated on either ‘on the job’ learning in the newsroom or through short-term skills-oriented vocational courses funded by foreign donors.

It is vital that journalists have a good analysis of the role of media and its relationship with good governance, freedom of speech, human rights and executive power. Only a ‘genuine understanding of what is at stake can give journalists the will and wisdom not to bow to the considerable pressures’ on South Pacific media freedom by governments, business and corporate power, and by non-government organisations (Leary, interview with author, 2003). Non-partisan forums such as universities rather than sponsored courses that are ‘open to claims of hidden agendas’ offer young journalists the confidence to pursue their stories in the face of

social, cultural, political and religious pressures. Chapters Five and Six reflected these pressures in an outline of the news media structures and legal and ethical frameworks operating in Fiji and Papua New Guinea.

In Papua New Guinea, the University of PNG played a crucial pioneering role in the development of journalism education and training, not only for Papua New Guineans but throughout the region. As demonstrated in Chapter Seven, UPNG for many years was the benchmark for tertiary journalism qualifications and reflection on media industry standards. The initiative by the New Zealand Government to set up a journalism school at UPNG in 1975, after a pilot training project for Papua New Guinean journalists in Wellington ended in failure, was a move years ahead of its time. Much of the early success of the programme was due to the inspiration and dedication of the founding lecturer provided by the aid project, Ross Stevens — he had just the ‘kind of naturally authoritative and diplomatic manner’ needed to make the school work (King, 2001).

Although the Journalism Studies Programme lacked facilities and resources and was sometimes treated as a ‘Cinderella by the university for perplexing reasons’ (Robie, 1997: 100), it was innovative and vigorous and established an international reputation. Among its achievements were a high profile and award-winning training newspaper, *Uni Tavur*. This became the first student journalism publication in the South Pacific to gain an international award in 1995.

By the end of 1997, when UPNG began restructuring its courses and the Journalism Studies ceased to have its traditional autonomy, some 174 journalists from Papua New Guinea had graduated with journalism degrees or diplomas, a remarkable feat. This contribution was then, and remains even today, by far the largest share of qualified journalists produced by any institution for the South Pacific. However, the era of Dr Rodney Hills as Vice-Chancellor of UPNG in 1997-2001 was perceived as disastrous for journalism education in Papua New

Guinea. During a cost-cutting régime, he regarded UPNG journalism as a ‘duplication’ of the smaller and more recent Communication Arts programme at Divine Word University and prepared to scuttle the course. A key factor was probably a conviction held by Dr Hills that journalism education did not belong in a ‘traditional’ university while DWU conveniently did not have the status of a full national university.

The Papua New Guinean media scene has changed dramatically from the day Father Frank Mihalic launched *Wantok Niuspepa*. Chapter Eight analysed DWU’s contribution to a growing sense of the vital role of journalism and skilled communication in developing a sense of nationhood and national identity in PNG, particularly through the extraordinary and visionary efforts of the late Father Mihalic. Along with the evolution of the Communication Arts programme, publication of *Wantok*, a unique newspaper in the South Pacific as a Tok Pisin national weekly, has become an icon of national development and the contribution that good journalism can make to education at grassroots level.

From its early beginnings in 1987, the USP Journalism Programme, first as an extension studies based certificate course and later as a separate degree course, has had a chequered history, as Chapter Nine showed. Several high calibre staff have been employed on the programme through its various stages. But they have at times been frustrated in their efforts by a variety of problems concerning donor consistency and continuity over policies, and also a reluctance by the University of the South Pacific administration, at least in the formative stages, to fully commit to journalism as a university discipline. A serious shortage of funding, professional facilities and even staff has hindered development of journalism education at the regional university over the past 15 years.

Nevertheless a second phase of development funded by the French Government in the mid-1990s to establish the degree programme provided the impetus to establish a credible and dynamic regional Journalism Programme that produced 66 graduates by the end of 2002. Many

of the graduates have already become established and influential journalists in Fiji and the South Pacific.

### ***Political pressures and vested interests***

Political pressures that have dogged USP journalism education, especially in the wake of Fiji's first two coups, became more critical after the degree programme was established and thus became a genuine alternative to school leaver media cadets. Almost every staff member of the degree Journalism Programme faced political pressure generated by one sector of the media industry that appeared threatened by the development of vigorous and influential university-based journalism education. At times, the university and the Government were pressured by demands to review or revoke work permits, attempts to censure the programme, and even calls for the sacking of prominent journalism education staff. Key players in this campaign were personalities in the Suva-based secretariat of Pacific Islands News Association, who had a vested interest in fostering an image that they were the region's only 'educators'.

In the two media industry surveys conducted for this thesis, and analysed in Chapter Ten, marked differences were found in the profiles of Fiji and Papua New Guinea journalists, especially in education and professional formation, salaries and in the professional attitudes. In fact, rather than a 'Pacific-style journalism' as flagged by researchers such as Layton (1993: 392) and Wakavonovono (1981: 22) more than a decade earlier, distinctive Fiji and PNG journalism profiles and approaches have been emerging. In general, Papua New Guinea journalists have been better educated, older, more experienced, but more poorly paid. While there were similarities on the core values of journalism between the two countries, Papua New Guinea journalists appear to have more sophisticated values in their relationship and role with the community, which can be attributed to tertiary education.

It is in the area of educational qualifications and training that significant statistical differences between the two countries are reflected. Surveyed Papua New Guinean journalists have been found to be more highly qualified than their Fiji counterparts. Between 1998-99 and 2001, the proportion of PNG journalists has climbed from 73 per cent in the earlier 1998/9 pilot survey to 81 per cent, almost threefold higher than in Fiji. However, in the same three-year period the number of Fiji journalists with a degree or diploma rose by more than a third from 14 per cent to 26 per cent. This reflects the growing number of graduate journalists entering the workplace from the University of the South Pacific. Conversely, the proportion of journalists *without* basic training or qualifications has climbed slightly in both countries to almost half of all journalists in Fiji (49 per cent) and 14 per cent in Papua New Guinea. However, almost one in four Fiji journalists of the survey respondents indicated they had done professional and industry short courses run by regional or donor organisations. Papua New Guinea was less reliant on donor organisations because the country's media organisations were more integrated with the university journalism schools.

The Chapter Ten conclusions demonstrated, just as Romy Fröhlich and Christina Holtz-Bacha (1993) found in their European news media survey of European media training, how journalists in the South Pacific have been educated influences their global view and self-perception. While the typical Fiji journalist is most likely to be male (marginally), single and under the age of 25, with less than four years' experience, and a native Fijian speaker, he works for English-language media and is a school leaver with no formal training or higher education. On the other hand, a typical Papua New Guinea journalist is most likely to be female (also marginally), single, under the age of 29, with about five years experience, and a Tok Pisin speaker. She is working on English-language media and most likely has a university diploma or degree in journalism from either the University of Papua New Guinea or Divine Word University.

The Fiji journalist usually believes that a combination of a media cadetship and university education is the best way to be trained as a journalist, although he is unlikely to have had the opportunity to do so. While he strongly supports the notion of investigative journalism as a measure of commitment to being a watchdog on democracy, he will probably regard culture and religion as major obstacles. Also, he thinks the public has a ‘satisfactory’ perception of journalists.

However, the Papua New Guinea journalist most likely believes that journalists should receive a university education with a media organisation attachment or internship. She probably entered journalism to communicate knowledge to the community, expose abuses of power and corruption. She may go into public relations, but is less likely to do so than in Fiji. She also has an understanding of the role of development journalism and considers it relevant to Papua New Guinea. She is also less likely to see culture and religion as obstacles such as in Fiji. Also, she thinks the public has a very good or good perception of journalists.

### ***Watchdog role and development journalism***

Other highlights of the main 2001 newsroom survey include:

- Most graduate journalists in Fiji and Papua New Guinea have been produced from the University of PNG (49 per cent in PNG and 29 per cent overall for both countries), followed by Divine Word University (17 per cent overall) and USP (15 per cent). However, USP graduates are spread throughout other Pacific countries not surveyed in this research.
- An even larger gulf between the countries was demonstrated in the earlier pilot survey of 1998/9. Fiji journalists then had a mean age of 22, seven years younger than in Papua New Guinea (29) while mean experience in Fiji was two-and-a-half years contrasting

with PNG journalists having more than double the experience at just over five years. The improvement in Fiji is attributed to the increasing numbers of older and educated journalism graduates from USP joining the industry.

- Main factors contributing to making journalism an appealing career are communicating knowledge to the community (73 per cent), exposing corruption (44 per cent), and varied and exciting work (25 per cent) in Papua New Guinea. In Fiji they are communicating knowledge to the community (53 per cent), exciting work (44 per cent) and exposing corruption (37 per cent).<sup>2</sup>
- Sixty one per cent of Fiji journalists are satisfied with their journalism career in contrast to just 49 per cent in PNG. The number who said they were dissatisfied was about the same in both countries (23 per cent in Fiji; 21 per cent in PNG).
- Yet Fiji journalists are more likely to leave journalism, mostly to public relations. Sixty per cent of Papua New Guinean journalists expect to stay within journalism in five years' time, while just over half of Fiji journalists surveyed (53 per cent) see themselves remaining in the profession.
- Both Fiji (74 per cent) and PNG (73 per cent) journalists regard their main professional role as a watchdog on democracy. Papua New Guinean journalists also regard the educator role (52 per cent as important, followed by defender of the truth (35 per cent) and nation-builder (33 per cent). Less than half of Fiji journalists (42 per cent) see the educator role as important, followed by defender of the truth (40 per cent) and nation-builder (35 per cent). This contrasts with the Romano (1998: 75) survey of Indonesian journalists who had less support for the watchdog role (51 per cent), followed by agent of empowerment (22 per cent), nation-builder (19 per cent) and defender of the truth (8 per

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<sup>2</sup> Multiple choices so the percentages do not necessarily balance.

cent). Thirty per cent of PNG journalists favour agent of empowerment, almost double the support for this category in Fiji (19 per cent).

- Forty nine per cent of PNG journalists regard the phrase ‘development journalism’ as applicable to their media — in contrast to Fiji where only 39 per cent shared this view. Also, Fiji journalists recorded high uncertain (23 per cent) and no response (35 per cent) categories. This was borne out by the high proportion of Fiji journalists whose qualitative question responses demonstrated a lack of understanding of the term (*see Appendix 9*), probably a reflection of the higher level of journalism education in Papua New Guinea.
- Sixty five per cent of Fiji journalists strongly agreed with the ideal that media is a watchdog rather than just another business compared with 44 per cent in PNG. This also compares with the Schultz (1998: 257) survey of Australian journalists, which showed 60 per cent of newsroom journalists and 68 per cent of investigative reporters as strongly agreeing.
- However, when asked to consider the *actual* situation in their country, only 12 per cent of Fiji journalists strongly agreed in contrast to 27 per cent in Papua New Guinea. (A further 40 per cent in each country agreed). The Schultz survey showed only nine per cent of Australian journalists strongly agreeing, and just five per cent of investigative journalists strongly agreeing.
- Forty nine per cent of PNG journalists strongly favoured free expression for the media and 44 per cent in Fiji. In the Schultz survey, 37 per cent of Australian journalists strongly favoured free expression of media and 19 per cent of investigative journalists. Twenty one per cent of Australian investigative journalists supported free expression for public interest groups.
- Eighty nine per cent of journalists in Papua New Guinea and 81 per cent in Fiji saw investigative journalism as a very important demonstration of commitment to the

watchdog role. In the Schultz survey (p 258), 72 per cent of Australian journalists and 85 per cent of investigative journalists agreed with this view.

- However, insufficient resources such as lack of staff, money and time were regarded as major problems for investigative journalism in the Pacific. These problems were seen as more serious in Papua New Guinea (35 per cent) than in Fiji (21 per cent).
- Commercial pressures were twice as likely to be seen as a serious barrier for investigative journalism in Fiji (16 per cent) than in Papua New Guinea (eight per cent).

### ***Low salaries a serious threat to autonomy***

Across the board in Fiji and Papua New Guinea — and elsewhere in the Pacific — salary structures are ‘pretty appalling’, as PNG Prime Minister Sir Michael Somare’s daughter Dulciana Somare describes it, reflecting the views of more than two-thirds of the 57 journalists and media executives or policy makers interviewed for this thesis. One of the ironies is that although Papua New Guinean journalists are generally better educated and with a higher mean experience, they are far more poorly paid than in Fiji. According to the 2001 survey, the mean salary scale for Fiji journalists is F\$13,000 a year while the median for PNG journalists is a mere K11,000 a year.<sup>3</sup>

Salaries for journalists are woeful to say the least. Raw ‘journalists’ are hired straight out of school and in turn paid extremely low wages for the hours they work. This in turn, leads to sub-standard journalism, which in turn leads to a misinformed, frustrated public. Media organisations jump on the bandwagon and offer inconsequential salary increases to lure staff who have had a trickle of experience from other media organisations, leading to staff

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<sup>3</sup> Although such a comparison can be misleading, it is interesting to note that the mean salary for a PNG journalist is less than half what a Fiji journalist earns in real terms (F\$5,900) when currencies are compared. Converted by Universal Currency Converter, 26 April 2003. [www.xe.com/ucc/convert.cgi](http://www.xe.com/ucc/convert.cgi): 11 000.00 PGK = 5881.53 FJD.

swapping and the proverbial revolving door syndrome so common to newsrooms in Fiji. From a professional perspective, it also means journalists are starting all over again in usually a different medium, ie. print journalists becoming radio journalists overnight, still minus the experience (Singh, interview with author, 2003).

This state of affairs raises concerns about how independent the media really is with such low wage structures, or how at risk the media may be to the influence of so-called ‘envelope journalism’<sup>4</sup> inducements by unscrupulous politicians, as in Indonesia, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea or the Solomon Islands, for example (Angiki, 2002; Fernandez, 1992: 173-185; Philemon, 1999: 72-73; Romano, 2000: 157-171; Tanner & McCarthy, 2001: 112-128; Togolo, 1999: 108-111). Ingrid Leary notes: ‘Pay rates are very poor. That’s the number one problem for journalism in the Pacific, and could ultimately spell the end for freedom of expression and human rights in the region’ (Leary, interview with author, 2003). According to former leading Fiji newspaper editor Jale Moala, ‘pay is the greatest obstacle to developing journalism in the region’ (Moala, interview with author, 2003). Dulciana Somare is a journalist who until recently worked with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation bureau in Port Moresby. In her view:

If you’re working for an absolutely meagre wage that’s not going to get you through much, your opinions are going to be able to be changed or swayed with a bit of influence. Somebody is going to be able to persuade you basically, with a bit of cash or some sort of incentive ...

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<sup>4</sup> The ‘envelope journalism’ culture, a play on the notion of development journalism, is one in which sources offer money or other gifts to journalists. It involves a complex web of social, economic and institutional conditions that perpetuate the cultures of gift-giving, bribery and graft in some countries. This culture is explored comprehensively in Romano, Angela (2000). ‘Bribes, gifts and graft in Indonesian journalism,’ *Media International Australia*, No 94, pp. 157-171. There are some parallels with the South Pacific.

Processes are not followed by public servants because somebody has a bigger need and will take a shortcut. And I don't think we can exclude journalists. In the case of the Skate Tapes<sup>5</sup> revelation about journalists being allegedly paid, we had the opportunity of one incident being taped. I think it would be pretty embarrassing if other incidents were taped. I think it is rife (Somare, interview with author, 2001).

Along with journalists and the media industry, rising corruption is also causing unease among the educators. 'Lack of funding is a real problem,' argues University of Papua New Guinea's media academic Sorariba Nash. 'And ethics. I am starting to sense this massive corruption coming' into society (Sorariba, interview with author, 2001). He believes there has been a dramatic rise in junkets and freebies being used as an inducement to win over journalists.

Further research is needed to explore this issue. Certainly the main newsroom survey for this thesis confirmed the 'appalling' state of salaries for journalists. More than two-thirds of PNG journalists (68 per cent) were in the lowest paid bracket of between \$5,000 and \$10,000. 'I was staggered to find how poorly paid a lot of them were,' noted the ABC's former correspondent in Port Moresby, Richard Dinnen. 'I [found] people doing jobs that in Australia would earn A\$80,000 to A\$100,000 a year were getting less than K20,000 a year in Papua New Guinea to exercise exceptionally high responsibility' (Dinnen, interview with author, 2001).

Journalism tutor and *National* columnist Kevin Pamba noted there was no structure in salary

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<sup>5</sup> See Philemon, Oseah (1999). Media ethics and responsibility. In *A Fragile Freedom: Challenges facing the Media in Papua New Guinea* (pp 72-73). Madang: Divine Word University Press: On 28 November 1997, a *Post-Courier* front-page headline read: SKATE DENIES BRIBES CLAIM. The news story referred to the infamous Mujo Sefa tapes, which were broadcast by the ABC, detailing alleged bribery and corruption claims against then Prime Minister Bill Skate by his former adviser Mujo Sefa. The story included allegations that Skate had authorised K27, 000 in bribes to be paid to four of his ministers and 12 backbenchers. One tape, broadcast by ABC, showed a scene in Sefa's office with then Internal Affairs Minister Thomas Pelika discussing a payment to be made to somebody in the media. The tape showed Pelika taking an envelope 'supposedly containing K2,000 and putting it in his pocket'. The previous day the *Post-Courier* published details in which it was alleged some K27,000 was to have been given to the minister to 'pay off collaborators in the media'.

and working conditions for journalists at most PNG news organisations. Relating an experience at one media organisation over a job offer when he graduated in 1995:

I asked them about health cover, accommodation and other things. The next thing I got was that they told me that I could always get out of the newsroom — so I did [and joined a rival daily newspaper] (Pamba, interview with author, 2001).

In Fiji, less than half of the journalists (44 per cent) were in the lowest range, according to the survey. Yet it is uncertain to what extent non-participation by *The Fiji Times* journalists could have distorted findings in this category. The company is the largest employer of journalists in the country and anecdotal evidence points to a large proportion of lowly paid staff. Also, at the time of completing this thesis it was understood that the company had employed no graduate journalists with journalism qualifications. But Moala believes there is a career path for those who work hard. ‘Salaries are comparable to the civil service,’ he said, ‘which may not really be a good gauge for comparison because the workload, and now increasingly qualifications, are not the same (Moala, *ibid*).

### ***Engaging the Fourth Estate ideal***

While many of the demographic and professional values such as support for the ‘watchdog’ ideal were comparable between the two countries, Papua New Guinean journalists often volunteered more positive views on the capacity of the media for ‘nation-building’ and as an ‘educator’ empowering citizens than in Fiji. For example, while almost twice as many journalists in Fiji than in PNG were attracted to the ‘prestige’ of a media career, almost three out of every four PNG journalists regarded ‘communicating knowledge to the community’ as a crucial factor in taking up a media career. Papua New Guinean journalists were also more like

to choose ‘exposing abuses of power and corruption’ as a reason to embark on a journalism career. More Papua New Guinean journalists regarded investigative journalism (89 per cent) as a measure of the media’s commitment to its watchdog role, but saw culture and religion as less of an obstacle than in Fiji. Constitutional researcher Jone Dakuvula is concerned about this gap in Fiji:

We do not have investigative journalists in Fiji. This is vital if we are to enhance the watchdog role. Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF) has tried to contribute to this role through [researched] articles, letters and press statements that contain information [the media] has not known, or that challenges the present Government’s version of certain events (Dakuvula, interview with author, 2003).

However, too often the information is converted into a ‘report’ by a journalist under his or her byline, or simply not published at all. Dixit notes that while there is a vibrant and successful alternative press in most Western countries critically examining globalisation and its impact on societies, communities and institutions, it is less evident in developing countries such as in the South Pacific (1997: 163; 1995, 116-118). He does not see development journalism as an answer. ‘In a final analysis,’ he argues, ‘there can be only two kinds of journalism: good journalism and bad journalism.’

And in a sense, all journalism is (or should be) about ‘development’. By qualifying this new journalism with an adjective like ‘alternative’, we run the risk of consigning it to marginality. Nor are labels like ‘counter-journalism’, ‘new journalism’, ‘advocacy’, ‘civic’, ‘public’ or ‘people-centred journalism’ or any use. Let’s not call it anything, let’s just do it well (1997, *op. cit.*)

The philosophy of print journalism and broadcasting and ethical issues such as independence, fairness, and coverage of difficult issues such as political corruption were at times beyond the comprehension of some Pacific journalists surveyed during this research, especially among journalists in Fiji who have had little or no tertiary education. Many are solely concerned with practical skills and a job at the end of the day. They give little thought to the wider social responsibilities of media in a developing society. Few journalists adequately background or research stories, or provide the context that is needed to make sense of a news or current affairs development. Investigative journalism is rare. During the Speight attempted coup in 2000, for example, there was little in-depth reporting of the Fiji state-owned mahogany harvesting issue, although this was a critical factor in the political upheaval in Fiji. What was published in Fiji was largely republication or rehashing of reports compiled by investigative journalists in foreign media.

A major change needs to happen to alter the mind-set among some news media organisations that are reluctant to invest in human resource development and to recognise the importance of education. Perhaps, too, the public needs to take a more demanding and critical role about media standards and the need for education: ‘The public should take part in the training of journalists,’ suggests Fiji non-government organisation lobbyist and publisher Stanley Simpson. ‘We have journalism education institutions, we have in-house training, but we cannot just rely on this [alone] because we need an active public to respond to the media’ (Simpson, interview with author, 2001).

According to Schultz (p 98), the central paradox of the news media as a political institution that measures its success by the criteria of profit and audience numbers is ‘highlighted by the five elements central to the rhetorical and philosophical justification of the Fourth Estate’. She identified the elements as political purpose and independence; commercial priorities; the importance of public opinion; the diversity of information and viewpoints presented; and the

degree of accountability. South Pacific news media managements need a fundamental rethink on their approach to journalism education and training. While developed countries in the region are arguably addressing the central democratic paradox identified by Schultz, many Pacific news organisations are instead turning back the clock and adopting in-house vocational ‘training’ rather than supporting formal journalism education.

Media managements, particularly in Fiji where they could emulate Papua New Guinea, need to shed their haphazard attitude and adopt real commitment to professional journalism education provided by the Pacific universities. Political in-fighting in the media industry and less of a ‘closed shop’ attitude is crucial. Journalists with a quality all-round education with strong exposure to disciplines such as business, economics, geography, government, history/politics, human rights, language (English for mainstream media) and literature, and sociology would be a sound investment. Too many newsrooms have general reporters without the skills to do specialised coverage. Problem solving along with critical and analytical skills, strong features of the university journalism courses, is also important. As well as having a ‘nose for news’, a good journalist needs to be inquisitive and questioning, be able to analyse situations and read between the lines. A healthy interest in public administration, community affairs and the environment is also valuable.

Development journalism is not well understood in the South Pacific, even though most media often adopt such an approach without realising. It means a form of journalism contributing to the progress of a country — economic and social development, education and cultural. Journalists need to identify key issues and explore their relationship to the poor, middle class and rich sectors of the nation. It also means a lot more community reporting in the villages — far from the faxed and emailed press releases of the Pacific urban newsrooms. University education has the capacity to provide the analytical skills to successfully report real development.

For the future of journalism in the region, the universities face an increasing challenge in identifying and addressing the media industry's real needs and equipping a new generation of journalists with a sound education. Pacific journalists need to be provided with the philosophy, socio-political, historical and contextual knowledge to match the technical skills of being effective communicators and political mediators in their developing societies. And managements must develop fair and equitable salary structures for career journalists if they hope to keep staff who have the training and the skills.

From one perspective, while the shortcomings of professional expertise of some Pacific media and journalists is acknowledged, the solution is seen as self-regulation and more donor-funded training. In fact, there is little evidence that more than two decades of short course training funded by donor agencies has made as significant a contribution to raising journalism standards in the region as the university education sector. Some powerbrokers in the media industry have at times hijacked training funds for their own agendas. The contrasting perspective, supported by the research in this thesis, argues that self-regulation has manifestly failed and that it is no longer acceptable for the media to be 'judge and jury at their own trial'. Education for journalists and a professional ethos are a vital part of empowering the media. Educated journalists are likely to offer fresh and sustainable solutions.

**Journalism Education  
in the South Pacific,  
1975-2003:  
Politics, Policy  
and Practice**

**Volume 2: Appendix and interviews**

***David Robie***

*A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy*

*Department of History/Politics  
The University of the South Pacific*

*December, 2003*

*© David Robie 2003*

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## Appendix 1: IN-COUNTRY FIELD WORK TRAVEL ITINERARIES

### Pilot survey: December 1998-February 1999:

#### 1998:

*Wednesday, December 8: Suva-Port Moresby* (to survey Papua New Guinea news media organisations, completed during December-January)

#### 1999:

*Wednesday, January 6: Port Moresby-Brisbane-Suva* (to survey Fiji news media organisations, completed over January-February).

### Main survey: April-May 2001:

#### 2001:

*Monday, April 23: Auckland-Brisbane-Port Moresby* (to survey Papua New Guinea news media organisations and conduct interviews).

*Thursday, April 26: Port Moresby-Madang* (to visit Divine Word University, DWU Library and conduct interviews).

*Sunday, April 29: Madang-Port Moresby* (to survey Papua New Guinea news media organisations, conduct interviews and to visit University of Papua New Guinea).

*Monday, April 30: Port Moresby-Brisbane.*

*Tuesday, May 1: Brisbane-Auckland* (processing PNG materials).

*Sunday, May, 13: Auckland-Nadi-Suva* (to survey Fiji news media organisations and conduct interviews).

*Friday, May 25: Suva-Nadi-Auckland* (processing Fiji materials).

*Note: This field trip was undertaken while the author was based in Auckland on sabbatical from the University of the South Pacific. However, he was usually based in Suva and much ongoing field work was done on location.*

## Appendix 2: ORGANISATIONS SURVEYED

### Fiji Islands:

**1. Associated Media Ltd:** *The Review* (monthly) and FijiLive (website)

GPO Box 12095

Suva

Tel: (679) 330 5916

Fax: (679) 330 5256

[www.fijilive.com](http://www.fijilive.com)

**2. Communications Fiji Ltd:** FM96, Navatarang, Viti FM

Waimanu Rd

Private Mail Bag

Suva

Tel: (679) 331 4766

Fax: (679) 330 3748

[www.fijivillage.com](http://www.fijivillage.com)

**3. Fiji Broadcasting Corporation Ltd:** Radio Fiji, Bula FM

Broadcast House

PO Box 334

Suva

Tel: (679) 331 4333

Fax: (679) 331 3606

**4. Fiji Daily Post Ltd:** *Daily Post* (daily)

PO Box 7010

Valelevu

Nasinu

Tel: (679) 339 5955

Fax: (679) 330 4455

[www.fijilive.com](http://www.fijilive.com)

**5. Fiji Television Ltd:** Fiji One (free-to-air) and Sky TV (pay television)

GPO Box 2225

Suva

Tel: (679) 321 1719

Fax: (679) 330 0176

**6. Fiji Times Ltd:** *The Fiji Times* (daily, pilot survey only); *Nai Lalakai* (weekly); *Shanti Dut* (weekly)

177 Victoria Pde

PO Box 1167

Suva

Tel: (679) 330 4111

Fax: (679) 330 1521

**7. Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association:** Pacnews (main survey only, previously based in Vanuatu)

Private Mail Bag

GPO

Suva

Tel: (679) 331 5522

Fax (679) 331 5379

[www.pacnews.org](http://www.pacnews.org)

**8. Sun (Fiji) News Ltd:** *Fiji Sun* (daily, main survey only)

12 Amra St

Walu Bay

Suva

Tel: (679) 330 7555

Fax: (679) 331 1455

## **Papua New Guinea:**

**1. Kalang Communications Pty Ltd**

Telikom PNG

Boroko

[kalang@tiare.net.pg](mailto:kalang@tiare.net.pg)

**2. Media Niugini Pty Ltd:** EM TV

Garden City Building

Boroko

PO Box 443

Boroko, NCD

Tel: (675) 325 7322

Fax: (675) 325 4450

**3. National Broadcasting Corporation Ltd**

PO Box 1359

Boroko, NCD

Tel: (675) 325 3341

**4. Pacific Star Pty Ltd:** *The National* (daily)

Waigani Drive

PO Box 6817

Boroko, NCD

Tel: (675) 324 6888

Fax: (675) 324 6767

[www.thenational.com.pg](http://www.thenational.com.pg)

**5. PNG FM Pty Ltd:** Nau FM; Yumi FM

PO Box 774

Port Moresby, NCD

Tel: (675) 320 1996

Fax: (675) 320 1995

...

**6. South Pacific Post Pty Ltd: PNG Post Courier (daily)**

Lawes Rd  
PO Box 85  
Port Moresby, NCD  
Tel: (675) 321 2787  
Fax: (675) 321 2721  
[www.postcourier.com.pg](http://www.postcourier.com.pg)

**7. Word Publishing Company Pty Ltd: The Independent; Wantok Niuspepa**

Spring Garden Rd  
Hohola  
PO Box 1982  
Boroko, NCD  
Tel: (675) 325 2500  
Fax: (675) 325 2579  
[www.niugini.com/independent](http://www.niugini.com/independent)

**Universities:**

**1. Divine Word University (PNG)**

Chief executive: President Fr Jan Czuba  
Catholic institution  
1,040 students  
Faculty staff: 95  
(about 300 on distance education programmes)  
Campus at Madang  
PO Box 483  
Madang  
Madang Province  
Papua New Guinea  
[Info@dwu.ac.pg](mailto:Info@dwu.ac.pg)  
[www.dwu.ac.pg](http://www.dwu.ac.pg)

**2. University of PNG**

Chief executive: Vice-Chancellor Professor Les Eastcott  
5,000 students  
Faculty staff: 200  
Campuses at Waigani, Taurama (medicine)  
PO Box 320  
University PO  
National Capital District  
Papua New Guinea  
[Regoff@upng.ac.pg](mailto:Regoff@upng.ac.pg)  
[www.upng.ac.pg](http://www.upng.ac.pg)

**3. University of the South Pacific**

Chief executive: Vice-Chancellor Savenaca Siwatibau

15,000 students

(about 50 per cent on distance education programmes)

(about 300 on distance education programmes)

Campuses at Laucala, Fiji; Samoa and Vanuatu

Private Bag

Laucala Bay

Suva

Fiji Islands

Papua New Guinea

Tel: (679) 331 3900

Fax: (679) 330 1305

[Fraser\\_w@usp.ac.fj](mailto:Fraser_w@usp.ac.fj)

[www.usp.ac.fj](http://www.usp.ac.fj)

**Appendix 3: FINAL RESEARCH REPORT, USP, 9 JUNE 2002**



The University of the South Pacific  
Journalism Programme  
Department of Literature and Language

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**FINAL RESEARCH REPORT**

---

**TITLE OF PROJECT:** Newsrooms Survey of the Fiji Islands and Papua New Guinea

**PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER:** David Robie

**RESEARCH SUPPORT STAFF:** Delia Robie

**DURATION OF PROJECT:** April-June 2001 (some work in December/January 2002)

**CODE NUMBER OF PROJECT:** 3/3/9/3

**TOTAL FUNDS AWARDED:** \$3338.00

**TOTAL FUNDS SPENT:** \$3231.57 *credit balance:* \$106.43

**DATE FUNDS AWARDED:** 22 November 2000

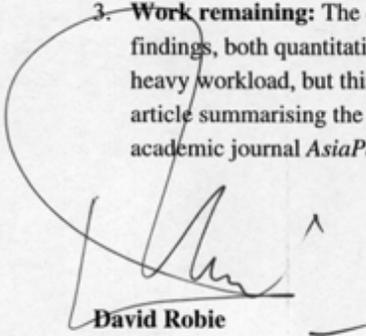
**ESTIMATED DATE OF COMPLETION:** June 2002 (in association with PhD research)

1. **Original objectives:** To examine the attitudes of professional journalists in both the Fiji Islands and Papua New Guinea to their news media role in the socio-economic and political context; quantify the experience, qualifications and experience of

journalists; the degree of their exposure to new media technologies; the contrast between radio, television, print and online journalists; profile the journalists; and compare findings with previous surveys. Empirical research methodology based on both quantitative and qualitative samples. This research is part of a wider doctoral thesis, which will analyse journalism educational history, politics, policy and practice in the context of the political economy of the Fiji Islands and Papua New Guinea. The thesis is entitled "Pacific Journalism Education in the South Pacific 1975-2001: Politics, Policy and Practice".

2. **Progress:** A questionnaire of both 45 quantitative and qualitative questionnaires was used with personal visits to 13 news media organisations in the two comparative countries. This researcher completed questionnaires with 106 journalists in newsrooms in both countries (63 in PNG; 43 in Fiji). Some newsrooms provided a 100 percent response rate. The researcher also conducted interviews with some 52 media policy makers, media executives, editors and journalists. The findings of this research are being compared with an earlier survey by this USP researcher in 1998/9 and with other major research in this area, eg a Fourth Estate survey in Australia (Shultz, 1992), a survey of eight Pacific countries by (Layton, 1992), a survey through USP (Masterton, 1988), and a survey in Papua New Guinea (Phinney, 1985). The findings in this new project have largely been tabulated and are being translated into graphic form (*see three summary tables attached*).

3. **Work remaining:** The data has been collated and two draft chapters interpreting the findings, both quantitative and qualitative, have been written. This researcher has a heavy workload, but this should be included as part of a thesis due in February. An article summarising the findings is expected to be published in the communications academic journal *AsiaPacific MediaEducator* during 2003.



David Robie

Literature and Language Department

9 June 2002

# Special Affairs The University Bursary of the South Pacific

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Our Ref: 6163 - 1221  
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Date: 30-MAY-02

Suva, Fiji.  
Telephone: 313900  
Cables: University Suva, Telex: FJ2276  
Fax: (679) 300164

**DAVID ROBIE: NEWSROOM SURVEY - FIJI & PNG**  
**FINANCIAL SUMMARY FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 30TH MAY 2002**

\$ \$

**INCOME**

RESEARCH ALLOCATION (3,338.00)

**TOTAL INCOME** (3,338.00)

**EXPENDITURE**

PER DIEM - DAVID ROBIE 2,743.80

TELEPHONE & FAX CHARGES 289.88

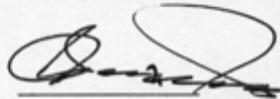
PRINTING & COPYING 120.36

MISCELLANEOUS 77.53

**TOTAL EXPENDITURE** 3,291.57

**BALANCE AS AT 30TH MAY 2002** (106.43)

VOTE CODE: 6163 - 1221 - XXXXX - 00



LEONAITASI TAUKAFI  
ACCOUNTANT (SPECIAL AFFAIRS)



# The University of the South Pacific

Serving the Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu

Committee Secretariat, Suva, Fiji Telephone: (679) 212338 Fax: (679) 312760 Email: kotolisuva\_a@usp.ac.fj

Ref: 3/3/9/3

Date: 22 November 2000

Mr David Robie  
Department of Literature & Language  
SOH

Dear Mr Robie

RE : NEW RESEARCH PROJECT

I am writing to inform you that the Chair of the University Research Committee has approved your research project and the associated budget, the details of which are given below:

Project Title: **"Newsrooms Survey of the Fiji Islands and Papua New Guinea"**  
Budget

Subsistence/Accommodation	\$3238.00
Miscellaneous	\$ 100.00
<b>TOTAL :</b>	<b>\$3338.00</b>

The synopsis of the Research Procedures can be found on the University website, or alternatively copies can be found deposited throughout the University and can be obtained from the following locations:

Library  
Offices of the AA's in the SSED and SOH  
Head of School, SPAS  
The Director of IPS  
Members of the URC  
The Secretariat  
The Secretary, Alafua Campus

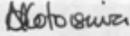
Please contact the Secretariat Office [Ext. 2338] if you have not received a copy of the synopsis, which should be consulted for further details.

You are reminded of the critical importance of proper accounting of research funds as required under the Financial Regulations of the University. You are particularly reminded of the researcher's obligation to reimburse the University of any money granted for research for which the researcher is not able to give proper accounting to the URC.

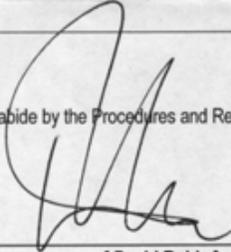
Mr Sanjay Khatri of the Bursary is the officer responsible for the allocation of vote codes and the administration of research funds. He may be contacted on extension 2387 for assistance should this be necessary.

Please sign and return the copy of this letter to Mr Sanjay Khatri of the Bursary if you have consented to take over the project as its Principal Researcher, before funds could be released to you.

Yours sincerely

  
Agnes Kotoisuva [Ms]  
Secretary, University Research Committee

I am willing to abide by the Procedures and Requirements for research as outlined in the attached document.

Signed:   
[ David Robie ]

Date : 12/3/1

cc Chair of SOH Research Committee  
Dr John Hosack, Chair of URC  
Mr Sanjay Khatri, Bursary

AK/utk

## Appendix 4: PILOT SURVEY INSTRUMENT, 1998/9

## SAMPLE PILOT SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (Dec 1998)

Journalism Programme, University of the South Pacific  
PO Box 1168, Suva, Fiji Islands. Fax: (679) 313238

December 1998

## Pacific Journalism Training Survey

1. Journalist respondent's media organisation: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Age: \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Country: PNG or Fiji 4. Gender: M F

5. Total number of years spent working in news media organisations  
(excluding corporate public relations officer, government  
information officer etc) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Year of first joining the staff of a news media organisation \_\_\_\_\_

7. Qualifications/training in journalism: *Circle*

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| (a) Postgraduate degree (eg Masters in Journalism or equiv)    | Y | N |
| (b) Undergraduate degree (eg Bachelor of Journalism, or equiv) | Y | N |
| (c) Undergraduate diploma (eg Diploma in Media Studies)        | Y | N |
| (d) Certificate course (eg Manukau Polytech Cert in Journ)     | Y | N |
| (e) Other (eg short courses)                                   | Y | N |
| (f) None   |   |   |

8. Programme sources:

Indicate institutions where qualifications were gained — also  
indicate year. Summary of short courses:

---



---



---



---



---

9. On the basis of your experience or knowledge, do you believe  
journalists should be trained: *Circle*

- (a) in a recognised tertiary journalism programme with a period  
of compulsory industry attachment with media organisations?
- (b) with an in-house cadetship training scheme? or
- (c) a combination of both?

10. Any further comments clarifying question 9:

---

---

---

---

11. What do you perceive as the most crucial role of a news media organisation's relationship with the general public and the power élite in a developing country such as Fiji, or Papua New Guinea?

*Circle one only*

- (a) Watchdog
- (b) Agent of empowerment
- (c) Nation building
- (d) Defender of the truth
- (e) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

12. Define and clarify your selected role. Any other comments:

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## Appendix 5: PILOT SURVEY FINDINGS SUMMARY, 1998/9

PACIFIC JOURNALISM TRAINING SURVEY (pilot) 1998/99: Survey summary							
		FIJI	%	PNG	%	Total	%
1							
2	Total editorial staff	103		85		188	
3	Total respondents	59		65		124	
4	Response percentage		57		76		66
5							
6	<b>1 &amp; 3: Media organisation, country:</b>						
7	Fiji Times group (Fiji)	16	42	—	—		
8	FM96 Group (Fiji)	10	67	—	—		
9	FBC (Islands Network Corporation) (Fiji)	9	50	—	—		
10	The Review (Associated Media Group) (Fiji)	8	80	—	—		
11	Fiji TV (Fiji)	5	83	—	—		
12	Daily Post (Fiji)	11	69	—	—		
13	EM TV (Nugini Media Pty Ltd) (PNG)	—	—	4	67		
14	The National (PNG)	—	—	14	74		
15	National Broadcasting Corporation (PNG)	—	—	11	65		
16	PNGFM Pty Ltd (PNG)	—	—	9	100		
17	Post-Courier (PNG)	—	—	17	81		
18	Word Publishing Ltd (PNG)	—	—	10	77		
19							
20	<b>2: Age group:</b>						
21	16-20	4	7	1	2	5	4
22	21-25	34	58	17	26	51	41
23	26-30	8	14	18	28	26	21
24	31-35	5	8	15	23	20	16
25	36-40	5	8	4	6	9	7
26	41-45	2	3	7	11	9	7
27	46-50	1	2	3	5	4	3
28	Mean age	22		29		25.5	
29	<b>4: Gender:</b>						
30	1 Male	30	51	31	48	61	49
31	2 Female	29	49	34	52	63	51
32							
33	<b>5 &amp; 6: Total number of years spent working in news media organisations (excluding corporate public relations officer, government information officer etc):</b>						
34	0-2	20	33	21	32	41	33
35	3-4	18	30	10	15	28	23
36	5-6	9	15	8	12	17	14
37	7-8	3	5	6	9	9	7
38	9-10	5	8	4	6	9	7
39	11-12	2	3	3	5	5	4
40	13-14	1	2	1	2	2	2
41	15-16	0	0	0	0	0	0
42	17-18	0	0	4	6	4	3
43	19-20	0	0	3	5	3	2
44	21-22	0	0	2	3	2	2
45	23-24	1	2	1	2	2	2
46	25-26	0	0	1	3	2	2
47	27-28	0	0	0	0	0	0
48	29-30	0	0	0	0	0	0
49	31-32	0	0	1	2	1	1
50	Mean experience	2.5		5.2		3.85	
51							

## PACIFIC JOURNALISM TRAINING SURVEY (pilot) 1998/99: Survey summary

52		FIJI	%	PNG	%	Total	%
53	<b>7: Qualifications/training in Journalism</b>						
54	1 Postgraduate diploma or masters degree	1	2	1	2	2	2
55	2 Undergraduate degree (3 to 4 years)	3	5	9	14	12	10
56	3 Undergraduate diploma (2 years)	4	7	37	57	41	34
57	<b>Total: Tertiary qualifications (55-56)</b>	8	14	47	73	55	46
58	4 Polytechnic or media industry certificate	8	14	0	0	8	6
59	5 Other (eg industry short course certificate - 1 to 2 weeks)	15	25	11	17	26	21
60	6 No qualification	28	47	8	12	33	27
61							
62	<b>8: Programme sources: Indicate institutions where qualifications were gained - also indicate year. Summary of short courses.</b>						
63	1 University of Papua New Guinea	0	0	32	49	32	26
64	2 University of the South Pacific	4	7	0	0	4	3
65	3 Divine Word University	0	0	18	28	18	15
66	4 Fiji Journalism Institute	11	19	0	0	11	9
67	5 PINA	3	5	0	0	3	2
68	6 Auckland Institute of Technology	2	3	0	0	2	1
69	7 Others (inc. polytechnics)	11	19	10	15	21	17
70	8 None	28	47	5	8	33	27
71							
72	<b>9: How do you believe journalists should be trained?</b>						
73	1 Recognised tertiary journalism programme with media organisation attachment	3	5	6	9	9	7
74	2 In-house cadetship training scheme	9	15	1	2	10	8
75	3 Combination of both cadetship and university	47	80	58	89	105	85
76							
77	<b>10: Clarifying comments in reply to 9?</b>						
78	Qualitative answers						
79							
80	<b>11: How do you see the media's role? (first choice)</b>						
81	1 Watchdog	37	63	30	26	67	54
82	2 Agent of empowerment	4	7	8	12	12	10
83	3 Nation building	10	17	16	25	26	21
84	4 Defender of truth	9	15	24	37	33	27
85	5 Others:	3	5	5	8	9	7
86	* Mediator	0		1		5	
87	* Informer	2		2		2	
88	* Educator	1		1		0	
89	* Agent of development	0		0		1	
90	* Bridge between grassroots and power elite	0		1		1	
91	6 No opinion	7	12	1	2	8	6
92							
93	<b>12: Define and clarify your selected role. Any other comment?</b>						
94	Qualitative answers						
95							
96							
97							
98							
99							
100							
101							

## Appendix 6: MAIN SURVEY INSTRUMENT, 2001

SAMPLE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE (April/May 2001)

## PACIFIC JOURNALISM EDUCATION PROFILE

### TWO COUNTRIES QUESTIONNAIRE – FIJI, PNG: 2001

APRIL-MAY 2001

*This questionnaire is for a comparative quantitative and qualitative survey of newsrooms in Fiji and Papua New Guinea being conducted with the Journalism Programme, University of the South Pacific. The identity of the respondent is confidential. It is a follow-up to a 1998-99 survey. Please answer the 45 questions as comprehensively as possible. The statistical and qualitative findings will be published in an academic thesis.*

Journalism Programme, University of the South Pacific, Private Bag, Suva, Fiji Islands. Fax: (679) 313238 Website: [www.usp.ac.fj/journ/](http://www.usp.ac.fj/journ/)

#### PART A: Background and Demographic Profiles

1. Your age
2. Male or Female *Please circle*
3. Country: Fiji or Papua New Guinea *Circle*
4. Married or Single *Circle*
5. Cultural group?
 

1 Ethnic group	PNG	<i>Identify:</i>
2 Province	PNG	<i>Identify:</i>
3 Indo-Fijian	Fiji	
4 Fijian	Fiji	
5 Rotuman	Fiji	
6 Others		
6. Do you work for one of the following types of news organisations? *Circle number:*
  - 1 Radio
  - 2 Television
  - 3 Newspaper
  - 4 Magazine
  - 5 Online publication
7. Name the news organisation:
8. Total number of years working in news media organisations (*excluding corporate public relations officer, government information officer etc*):
9. Year of first joining the staff of a news media organisation:
10. What description would best describe your current tasks? *Circle number:*
  - 1 Executive editor/editorial manager
  - 2 Editor/news director (broadcast)
  - 3 Subeditor/news producer

- 4 Print reporter
- 5 Radio reporter
- 6 Television reporter
- 7 Online reporter
- 8 Photographer/photojournalism
- 9 Cartoonist/editorial graphics

11. What kind of journalism qualification do you have? *Circle number:*

- 1 Postgraduate diploma or masters degree
- 2 Undergraduate degree (3 to 4 years)
- 3 Undergraduate diploma (2 years)
- 4 Polytechnic or media industry certificate (eg FIMA - 32 weeks to one year)
- 5 Professional or industry course certificate (1 to 2 weeks)
- 6 No qualification or training

12. If you hold a tertiary qualification (at a university), did you major in journalism for your degree? *Circle:*

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

13. If *no*, what did you major in?

14. Did you gain your tertiary qualification at: *Circle:*

- 1 A Pacific university?  
If yes, where: UPNG, USP, DWU *Please circle.*
- 2 If *no*, at which university?

15. What is your first language?

16. What is the language you work in with your news media organisation?

17. Is your organisation supportive of journalism education at tertiary level, or other tertiary education?

- 1 Very supportive
- 2 supportive
- 3 Maybe supportive
- 4 Uncertain
- 5 Maybe unsupportive
- 6 Unsupportive
- 7 Very unsupportive

18. In *your* opinion, how should journalists be prepared for their career? *Circle.*

- 1 Recruited as school leavers and trained on the job
- 2 Educated at university on a journalism school programme with *no* media organisation attachment
- 3 Educated at university on a journalism school programme *with* media organisation attachment

4 Combination of cadetship and university training

19. How does your *news media* organisation believe journalists should be prepared for their career? *Circle.*

- 1 Recruited as school leavers and trained on the job
- 2 Educated at university on a journalism school programme with *no* media organisation attachment
- 3 Educated at university on a journalism school programme *with* media organisation attachment
- 4 Combination of cadetship and university training

#### **PART B: Attraction to Journalism**

20. Which of these factors do you find particularly attractive about your career today? *Circle three choices and list order of preference:*

- 1 The possibility to write
- 2 Engage yourself for ideals and values
- 3 Little routine
- 4 Exposing abuses of power, corruption
- 5 Varied and exciting work
- 6 Communicating knowledge to the community
- 7 Getting to know a variety of people
- 8 Professional freedom of being able to decide your own tasks and topics
- 9 Being one of the first people to know what is happening
- 10 Seeing your name and work in print, or broadcast
- 11 Working with interesting colleagues
- 12 Influencing political decisions
- 13 Working under deadline pressure
- 14 Good future prospects
- 15 Good earning prospects
- 16 Prestige of journalism

21. Where do you expect to work in five years' time? *Circle number:*

- 1 Journalism
- 2 Politics
- 3 Public service
- 4 Small business
- 5 Other business
- 6 Public relations
- 7 Other

22. How do you see the media's role as a journalist? *Circle three choices and list order of preference:*

- 1 Watchdog of democracy
- 2 Agent of empowerment (for citizens)
- 3 Nation builder
- 4 Defender of truth
- 5 Neutral, uninvolved reporter of facts
- 6 An entertainer
- 7 A critic of abuses
- 8 An educator

- 9 Communicator of new ideas
- 10 The people's "voice"/mouthpiece
- 11 Politicians using other means
- 12 No opinion

23. What do you understand by the phrases "fourth estate", and/or "watchdog"?

24. Do the phrases apply to the media in Fiji Papua New Guinea? *(Circle)*

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Uncertain

25. What do you understand by the phrase "development journalism"?

26. Does the phrase apply to the media in Fiji Papua New Guinea? *(Circle)*

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Uncertain

27. How well-informed do you think news media audiences are in Fiji Papua New Guinea? (Circle)

- 1 Well informed
- 2 Critical
- 3 Open
- 4 Progressive
- 5 Tolerant
- 6 Easily influenced
- 7 Ignorant

28. How are journalists perceived in Fiji Papua New Guinea? (Circle)

- 1 Very good
- 2 Good
- 3 Satisfactory
- 4 Not particularly good
- 6 Bad
- 7 No opinion

29. Do you believe journalists/media have an influence on public opinion in Fiji Papua New Guinea? (Circle)

- 1 No influence
- 2 Some influence
- 3 Moderate influence
- 4 Considerable influence
- 5 Major influence

30. How important do you think the media influence is in the forming of public opinion in Fiji Papua New Guinea (circle) should be?

- 1 No importance
- 2 Some importance
- 3 Moderate importance
- 4 Considerable importance
- 5 Major importance

31. What salary range are you currently in (per year)? kina or Fijian dollars Please circle :

- 1 \$5000-\$10,000
- 2 \$10,000-\$15,000
- 3 \$15,000-\$20,000
- 4 \$20,000-\$25,000
- 5 \$25,000-\$30,000
- 6 More than \$30,000

32. Are you satisfied with your career as a journalist? Circle:

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Uncertain

## PART C: Freedom of the Press

33. One of the international norms of the media is defining itself as an independent and critical watchdog of government. However, as the media companies exercise considerable commercial and political power some argue that this role has been compromised. Do you personally favour the notion of the media as a *watchdog*, or do you believe it should be thought of as *just another business*?

- 1 Strongly agree *watchdog*
- 2 Agree *watchdog*
- 3 Maybe *watchdog*
- 4 Neither
- 5 Maybe *just another business*
- 6 Agree *just another business*
- 7 Strongly agree *just another business*

34. What do think is the actual situation in Fiji Papua New Guinea (circle) today?

- 1 Strongly agree *watchdog*
- 2 Agree *watchdog*
- 3 Maybe *watchdog*
- 4 Neither
- 5 Maybe *just another business*
- 6 Agree *just another business*
- 7 Strongly agree *just another business*

35. Freedom of the press is a fundamental condition of democracy. Yet, there are differing views on the main purpose of freedom of the press. One view holds that freedom of the press is intended primarily to enable the news media to freely communicate the information and opinions they deem important. An alternative view holds that freedom of the press is intended primarily to enable the many groups in society to freely express the beliefs and values they deem important.

Which view, free expression for the *media* or free expression for *interest groups*, is closer to your own view of freedom of the press?

- 1 Strongly favour free expression for *media*
- 2 Favour free expression for *media*
- 3 Maybe favour expression for *media*
- 4 Uncertain
- 5 Maybe favour expression for *interest groups*
- 6 Favour free expression for *interest groups*
- 7 Strongly favour free expression for *interest groups*

36. How important do you regard investigative journalism as a measure of the media's commitment to its watchdog role? Please circle relevant numbers:

- 1 Very important
- 2 Important
- 3 Maybe important
- 4 Uncertain
- 5 Maybe unimportant
- 6 Unimportant
- 7 Very unimportant

37. Are journalists in your organisation encouraged to do investigative journalism?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Uncertain

38. If yes, how is this encouragement given? *Please circle relevant numbers:*

- 1 Ethos of the organisation
- 2 Freeing them from other duties
- 3 Providing economic and staff support
- 4 Providing supportive and experienced editors
- 5 Other, please specify

39. If no, why not? *Please circle relevant numbers:*

- 1 Not the ethos of the organisation
- 2 Concern about political pressure
- 3 Concern about commercial pressure
- 4 Irrelevant to the role of journalism and the media
- 5 Insufficient resources (staff, money, time)
- 6 Inadequate skills of journalists and editors
- 7 Other, please specify

40. Computer assisted reporting (CAR) is an increasingly vital part of investigative journalism. Do you believe your media organisation is providing enough computer, internet and online database resources available for journalists? *Please circle number:*

- 1 Very well resourced
- 2 Moderately resourced
- 3 Neutral
- 4 Partially resourced
- 5 Poorly resourced

41. Do you believe culture is a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?  
*Please circle number:*

- 1 Very important
- 2 Important
- 3 Maybe important
- 4 Uncertain
- 5 Maybe unimportant
- 6 Unimportant
- 7 Very unimportant

42. If yes, why? Please cite examples and give reasons

43. Do you believe religion is a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?  
Please circle number:

- 1 Very important
- 2 Important
- 3 Maybe important
- 4 Uncertain
- 5 Unimportant
- 7 Very unimportant

44. If yes, why? Please cite examples and give reasons

45. Please make any further relevant comments you wish

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## Appendix 7: MAIN SURVEY FINDINGS SUMMARY, 2001

## PACIFIC JOURNALISM EDUCATION SURVEY 2001: Survey summary

1		FIJI %		PNG %		Total %	
2	Total editorial staff	72		80		152	
3	Total respondents	43		63		106	
4	Response percentage		60		79		69.5
5							
6	<b>Part A: BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES</b>						
7	<b>A1: Age group:</b>						
8	16-20	3	7	1	2	4	4
9	21-25	25	58	20	32	45	42
10	26-30	12	28	16	25	28	26
11	31-35	3	7	17	27	20	19
12	36-40	0	0	4	6	4	4
13	41-45	0	0	4	6	4	4
14	46-50	0	0	1	2	1	1
15	Mean age	24.7		28.9		26.6	
16	<b>A2: Gender:</b>						
17	1 Male	22	51	30	48	52	49
18	2 Female	21	49	33	52	54	51
19							
20	<b>A4: Civil Status</b>						
21	1 Married/De Facto	18	42	29	46	47	44
22	2 Single	25	58	34	54	59	56
23							
24	<b>A5: Cultural Group</b>						
25	1 Central Province (PNG)	-	-	8	13	8	8
26	2 East New Britain Province (PNG)	-	-	6	9	6	6
27	3 East Sepik province (PNG)	-	-	6	9	6	6
28	4 Eastern Highlands province (PNG)	-	-	2	3	2	2
29	5 Enga province (PNG)	-	-	1	2	1	1
30	6 Gulf department (PNG)	-	-	3	5	3	3
31	7 Madang province (PNG)	-	-	6	9	6	6
32	8 Manus province (PNG)	-	-	1	2	1	1
33	9 Milne Bay province (PNG)	-	-	7	7	7	7
34	10 Morobe province	-	-	4	6	4	4
35	11 New Ireland province (PNG)	-	-	1	2	1	1
36	12 North Solomons province (Bougainville/PNG)	-	-	5	8	5	5
37	13 Oro province (PNG)	-	-	1	2	1	1
38	14 Sandaun province (PNG)	-	-	2	3	2	2
39	15 Simbu (Chimbu) province (PNG)	-	-	1	2	1	1
40	16 Southern Highlands province (PNG)	-	-	3	5	3	3
41	17 West New Britain province (PNG)	-	-	0	0	0	0
42	18 Western Highlands province (PNG)	-	-	2	3	2	2
43	19 National Capital - NCD (PNG)	-	-	0	0	0	0
44	20 Indo-Fijian	18	42	-	-	18	17
45	21 Fijian	18	42	-	-	18	17
46	22 Rotuman	3	7	-	-	3	3
47	23 Other	4	9	4	6	4	4
48							
49							
50							
51							
52							
53							

## PACIFIC JOURNALISM EDUCATION SURVEY 2001: Survey summary

54		FIJI %		PNG %		Total %	
55	<b>A6: Type of News Organisation</b>						
56	1 Radio	5	12	14	22	19	18
57	2 Television	7	16	8	13	15	14
58	3 Newspaper	25	58	36	57	61	58
59	4 Magazine	2	5	1	2	3	3
60	5 Online Publication	4	9	4	4	8	8
61							
62	<b>A8: Number of years' experience in news media:</b>						
63	0-2	19	44	21	33	40	38
64	3-4	11	26	10	16	21	20
65	5-6	7	16	11	17	18	17
66	7-8	4	9	8	13	12	11
67	9-10	2	5	4	6	6	6
68	11-12	0	0	1	2	1	1
69	13-14	0	0	4	6	4	4
70	15-16	0	0	2	3	2	2
71	17-18	0	0	1	2	1	1
72	19-20	0	0	0	0	0	0
73	21-22	0	0	0	0	0	0
74	23-24	0	0	0	0	0	0
75	25-26	0	0	1	2	1	1
76	27 plus						
77	Mean experience	3.45		5.5		4.5	
78	<b>A9: First year of joining media organisation</b>						
79	Before 1975	0	0	1	2	1	1
80	1976 - 1980	0	0	1	2	1	1
81	1981 - 1985	0	0	5	8	5	5
82	1986 - 1990	9	21	5	8	14	13
83	1991 - 1995	8	18	19	30	27	25
84	1996 - 2000	22	51	29	46	51	48
85	2001	4	10	3	5	7	6
86							
87	<b>A10: What category best describes your current tasks?</b>						
88	1 Executive editor/Editorial manager	5	12	3	5	8	8
89	2 Editor/News director (broadcast)	4	9	6	9	10	9
90	3 Subeditor/News producer	6	14	13	21	19	18
91	4 Print reporter	19	44	21	33	40	38
92	5 Radio reporter	3	7	2	3	5	5
93	6 Television reporter	5	12	11	17	16	15
94	7 Online reporter	1	2	4	6	5	5
95	8 Photographer/Photojournalist	0	0	3	5	3	3
96	9 Cartoonist/Editorial graphics	0	0	0	0	0	0
97							
98							
99							
100							
101							
102							
103							
104							
105							
106							

## PACIFIC JOURNALISM EDUCATION SURVEY 2001: Survey summary

	FIJI	%	PNG	%	Total	%
107						
108	<b>A11: What kind of journalism qualification do you have?</b>					
109	1	0	0	0	0	0
110	2	9	21	19	30	28
111	3	2	5	32	51	34
112	<b>Total: Tertiary qualifications (109-111)</b>					
113	4	2	5	0	0	2
114	5	9	21	3	5	12
115	6	21	49	9	14	30
116	7	0	0	0	0	0
117						
118	<b>A12: Did you major in journalism?</b>					
119	1	11	26	44	70	55
120	2	9	21	8	13	17
121	3	23	53	11	17	34
122						
123	<b>A13: If no, what discipline did you major in?</b>					
124	1	1	2	0	0	1
125	2	1	2	0	0	1
126	3	1	2	0	0	1
127	4	1	2	0	0	1
128	5	1	2	0	0	1
129	6	3	7	2	3	5
130						
131	<b>A14: Where did you gain your tertiary qualification?</b>					
132	1	0	0	31	49	31
133	2	15	35	1	2	16
134	3	0	0	18	29	18
135	4	5	12	2	3	7
136	* Unitech (Lae, PNG)	0	0	1	0	1
137	* RMIT	2	0	0	0	2
138	* University of Goroka	0	0	1	0	1
139	* FIT (Fiji Institute of Technology)	2	0	0	0	2
140	* Queensland University of Technology	1	0	0	0	1
141	5 Not applicable	23	53	11	17	34
142						
143	<b>A15: What is your first language?</b>					
144	1	8	19	10	16	18
145	2	0	0	26	41	26
146	3	0	0	4	6	4
147	4	17	40	0	0	17
148	5	16	37	0	0	16
149	6	0	0	0	0	0
150	7	2	5	0	0	2
151	8	0	0	23	37	23
152						
153	<b>A16: What news media language do you work in?</b>					
154	1	41	96	53	84	94
155	2	0	0	10	16	10
156	3	0	0	0	0	0
157	4	1	2	0	0	1
158	5	1	2	0	0	1
159						

## PACIFIC JOURNALISM EDUCATION SURVEY 2001: Survey summary

	FIJI	%	PNG	%	Total	%
160						
161	<b>A17: Does your news media organisation support</b>					
162	<b>journalism education at tertiary level?</b>					
163	5	12	16	25	21	20
164	8	19	23	37	31	29
165	14	32	6	10	20	19
166	10	23	10	16	20	19
167	0	0	2	3	2	2
168	2	5	0	0	2	2
169	2	5	4	6	6	6
170						
171						
172	<b>A18: How should journalists be prepared for their career?</b>					
173	<b>(your individual opinion)</b>					
174	4	9	0	0	4	4
175	1	2	2	3	3	3
176	14	33	39	62	53	50
177	23	54	20	32	43	41
178	1	2	2	3	3	3
179						
180	<b>A19: How should journalists be prepared for their career?</b>					
181	<b>(your perceived organisation's opinion)</b>					
182	14	33	4	6	18	17
183	0	0	0	0	0	0
184	6	14	29	46	35	33
185	21	49	23	37	44	42
186	2	5	7	11	9	8
187						
188	<b>PART B: ATTRACTION TO JOURNALISM</b>					
189	<b>B20: Which of these factors do you find most attractive</b>					
190	<b>about journalism? (three choices)</b>					
191	10	23	15	24	25	24
192	8	19	10	16	18	17
193	2	5	1	2	3	3
194	16	37	28	44	44	42
195	19	44	16	25	35	33
196	23	53	46	73	69	65
197	6	14	7	11	13	12
198	4	6	10	16	14	13
199	11	26	6	10	17	16
200	0	0	1	2	1	1
201	0	0	2	3	2	2
202	11	26	15	24	26	25
203	4	9	8	13	12	11
204	3	7	2	3	5	5
205	1	2	0	0	1	1
206	8	19	6	10	14	13
207						
208						
209						
210						
211						
212						

## PACIFIC JOURNALISM EDUCATION SURVEY 2001: Survey summary

	FIJI	%	PNG	%	Total	%
213						
214	<b>B21: Where do you expect to work in five years' time?</b>					
215	23	53	38	60	61	58
216	2	5	1	2	3	3
217	2	5	0	0	2	2
218	0	0	3	5	3	3
219	2	5	2	5	4	4
220	9	21	8	13	17	16
221	3	7	9	14	12	11
222	2	5	2	3	4	4
223						
224	<b>B22: How do you see the media's role? (three choices)</b>					
225	32	74	46	73	78	74
226	8	19	19	30	27	25
227	15	35	21	33	36	34
228	17	40	22	35	39	37
229	13	30	16	25	29	27
230	5	12	5	8	10	9
231	9	21	4	6	13	12
232	18	42	33	52	51	48
233	2	5	4	6	6	6
234	14	33	19	30	33	31
235	0	0	0	0	0	0
236	0	0	1	2	1	1
237	<b>B23: What do you understand by the phrases "fourth estate"</b>					
238	<b>and/or "watchdog"?</b>					
239	Qualitative comments					
240						
241	<b>B24: Do the phrases "fourth estate" and/or "watchdog"</b>					
242	<b>apply to the media in Fiji/ PNG?</b>					
243	30	70	44	70	74	70
244	1	2	0	0	1	1
245	3	7	7	11	10	9
246	9	21	12	19	21	20
247	<b>B25: What do you understand by the phrase "development</b>					
248	<b>journalism"?</b>					
249	Qualitative comments					
250						
251	<b>B26: Does the phrase "development journalism"</b>					
252	<b>apply to the media in Fiji/PNG?</b>					
253	16	37	31	49	47	44
254	2	5	3	5	5	5
255	10	23	12	19	22	21
256	15	35	17	27	32	30
257	<b>B27: How well informed are news media audiences?</b>					
258	14	33	18	29	32	30
259	5	12	4	6	9	8
260	2	4	7	11	9	8
261	9	21	13	21	22	21
262	3	7	4	6	7	7
263	6	14	10	16	16	15
264	1	2	5	8	6	6
265	3	7	2	3	5	5

## PACIFIC JOURNALISM EDUCATION SURVEY 2001: Survey summary

266		FIJI	%	PNG	%	Total	%
267	<b>B28: How are journalists perceived by the public?</b>						
268	1 Very good	3	7	18	29	21	20
269	2 Good	11	25	24	38	34	33
270	3 Satisfactory	21	49	13	21	34	32
271	3 Not particularly good	3	7	2	3	5	5
272	4 Bad	0	0	0	0	0	0
273	5 No opinion	5	12	5	8	10	9
274							
275	<b>B29: Do you believe journalists/media influence</b>						
276	<b>public opinion?</b>						
277	1 No influence	0	0	1	2	1	1
278	2 Some influence	8	19	11	17	19	18
279	3 Moderate influence	6	14	1	2	7	7
280	4 Considerable influence	18	42	24	38	42	40
281	5 Major influence	10	23	24	38	34	32
282	6 No response	1	2	2	3	3	2
283	<b>B30: How important is media influence in forming</b>						
284	<b>public opinion?</b>						
285	1 No importance	0	0	1	2	1	1
286	2 Some importance	7	16	5	8	12	11
287	3 Moderate importance	4	9	4	6	8	8
288	4 Considerable importance	17	40	25	40	42	40
289	5 Major importance	13	30	26	41	39	37
290	6 No response	2	5	2	3	4	4
291							
292	<b>B31: What salary range are you paid per year?</b>						
293	<b>(in Fiji dollars or PNG kina)</b>						
294	\$5 000 - \$10 000	20	46	43	68	63	59
295	\$10 000 - \$15 000	10	23	9	14	19	18
296	\$15 000 - \$20 000	9	21	4	6	13	12
297	\$20 000 - \$25 000	2	5	4	6	6	6
298	\$25 000 - \$30 000	0	0	2	3	2	2
299	More than \$30 000	2	5	1	2	3	3
300	Mean salary	13000		11000		12000	
301	<b>B32: Are you satisfied with your career as a journalist?</b>						
302	1 Yes	26	61	31	49	57	54
303	2 No	10	23	13	21	23	22
304	3 Uncertain	6	14	16	25	22	21
305	4 No response	1	2	3	5	4	4
306							
307	<b>PART C: FREEDOM OF THE PRESS</b>						
308	<b>C33: Do you favour the media as a watchdog, or should it</b>						
309	<b>be thought of as just another business?</b>						
310	1 Strongly agree watchdog	28	65	28	44	56	53
311	2 Agree watchdog	9	21	21	33	30	28
312	3 Maybe watchdog	0	0	6	10	6	6
313	4 Neither	0	0	3	5	3	3
314	5 Maybe another business	0	0	0	0	0	0
315	6 Just another business	2	5	1	2	3	3
316	7 Strongly agree just another business	1	2	0	0	1	1
317	8 No response	3	7	4	6	7	7
318							

## PACIFIC JOURNALISM EDUCATION SURVEY 2001: Survey summary

	FIJI	%	PNG	%	Total	%
319						
320	<b>C34: What do you think is the actual situation in Fiji/PNG?</b>					
321	1	Strongly agree	watchdog	5	12	17
				27	22	21
322	2	Agree	watchdog	17	40	25
				40	42	40
323	3	Maybe	watchdog	13	30	8
				13	21	20
324	4	Nether		0	0	3
				5	3	3
325	5	Maybe	another business	4	9	3
				5	7	7
326	6	Just	another business	0	0	1
				2	1	1
327	7	Strongly	agree just another business	0	0	0
				0	0	0
328	8	No	response	4	9	6
				9	10	9
329						
330	<b>C35: Is free expression for the media or free expression</b>					
331	<b>for interest groups, closer to your own view of freedom</b>					
332	<b>of the press? (*See question notes)</b>					
333	1	Strongly	favour free expression for media	19	44	31
				49	50	47
334	2	Favour	free expression for media	16	37	17
				27	33	31
335	3	Maybe	favour free expression for media	1	2	1
				2	2	2
336	4	Uncertain		0	0	3
				5	3	3
337	5	Maybe	favour free expression for interest groups	3	7	0
				0	3	3
338	6	Favour	free expression for interest groups	1	2	2
				3	3	3
339	7	Strongly	favour free expression for interest groups	3	7	7
				11	10	10
340	8	No	response	0	0	2
				3	2	1
341	<b>C36: How important is investigative journalism as a</b>					
342	<b>measure of the media's commitment to its watchdog role?</b>					
343	1	Very	important	35	81	56
				89	91	86
344	2	Important		5	12	3
				5	8	8
345	3	Maybe	important	0	0	0
				0	0	0
346	4	Uncertain		0	0	0
				0	0	0
347	5	Maybe	unimportant	0	0	2
				3	2	2
348	6	Unimportant		0	0	0
				0	0	0
349	7	Very	unimportant	0	0	0
				0	0	0
350	8	No	response	3	7	2
				3	5	5
351						
352	<b>C37: Are journalists in your news organisation</b>					
353	<b>encouraged to do investigative journalism?</b>					
354	1	Yes		30	70	31
				49	61	57
355	2	No		5	12	15
				24	20	19
356	3	Uncertain		7	16	14
				22	21	20
357	4	No	response	1	2	3
				5	4	4
358						
359	<b>C38: If yes, how is encouragement given for</b>					
360	<b>investigative journalism given?</b>					
361	1	Ethos	of the organisation	7	16	9
				14	16	15
362	2	Freeing	staff from other duties	10	23	9
				14	19	18
363	3	Providing	economic and staff support	6	14	3
				5	9	8
364	4	Providing	supportive and experienced editors	10	23	5
				8	15	14
365	5	Other,	please specify	0	0	8
				13	8	8
366	6	No	response	10	23	29
				46	39	37
367						
368						
369						
370						
371						

## PACIFIC JOURNALISM EDUCATION SURVEY 2001: Survey summary

	FIJI %		PNG %		Total %	
372						
373	<b>C39: If no, what are the problems?</b>					
374	2	5	0	0	2	2
375	4	9	0	0	4	4
376	7	16	5	8	12	11
377	0	0	0	0	0	0
378	9	21	22	35	31	29
379	3	7	3	5	6	6
380	0	0	3	5	3	3
381	18	42	30	48	48	45
382						
383	<b>C40: Is your media organisation providing enough</b>					
384	<b>computer, internet and online database resources for</b>					
385	<b>journalists? (*See question notes)</b>					
386	9	21	16	25	25	24
387	12	28	16	25	28	26
388	4	9	6	10	10	9
389	6	14	11	17	17	16
390	11	26	10	16	21	20
391	1	2	4	6	5	5
392						
393	<b>C41: Do you believe culture is a major obstacle to the</b>					
394	<b>investigative role of the news media?</b>					
395	11	26	21	33	32	30
396	20	46	13	21	33	31
397	3	7	10	16	13	12
398	3	7	8	13	11	10
399	0	0	0	0	0	0
400	5	12	6	9	11	10
401	0	0	1	2	1	1
402	1	2	4	6	5	5
403						
404	<b>C42: If culture is important, why? Please cite examples</b>					
405	<b>and give reasons.</b>					
406	Qualitative comments					
407						
408	<b>C43: Do you believe religion is a major obstacle to the</b>					
409	<b>investigative role of the news media?</b>					
410	3	7	0	0	3	3
411	9	21	7	11	16	15
412	6	14	10	16	16	15
413	9	21	22	35	31	29
414	0	0	2	3	2	2
415	7	16	17	27	24	23
416	4	9	4	6	8	8
417	2	5	1	2	3	3
418						
419	<b>C44: If religion is important, why? Please cite examples</b>					
420	<b>and give reasons.</b>					
421	Qualitative comments					
422						
423	<b>C45: Please make any further relevant comments you wish</b>					
424	Qualitative comments					

## **Appendix 8: PNG SURVEY 2001 QUALITATIVE RESPONSES SUMMARY**

*QB23: What do you understand by the phrases 'Fourth Estate' and/or 'watchdog'?*

### **FM100:**

“An independent body/organisation that reveals/puts to light issues.”

“Closely monitor and bring out corruption.”

“To inform the public the truth.”

“Media is the Fourth Estate.”

“Watchdog — to expose anything for the interest of the public.”

“Watchdog means to promote democracy and honesty.”

### **EMTV:**

“Media Council or Ombudsman Commission.”

“Alerting audience and looking out for issues.”

“Power to oversee something is working right.”

### **NauFM:**

“Watchdog - people’s representative to protect the interest of the people.”

“People long to keep a close look at things happening.”

“Make sure everyone is doing the right task in society.”

“Scrutinising the decisions and actions of the government for equality, fairness and accountability.”

“To bring to the public’s attention issues affecting them.”

“Fourth Estate — the media — to inform the public.”

### **Word Publishing:**

“Watchdog - keeping an eye on things.

“Keeper - protector of citizen’s rights.”

“Watchdog — more like what the Ombudsman Commission does.”

“Ensure that the truth prevails.”

“Being critical of government’s activities.”

“Expose corruption, injustice.”

**The National:**

“Media is the defender of people’s rights.”

“To report what’s happening — praise the good and expose bad decisions.”

“To inform the public.”

“Expose corrupt and illegal practices.”

“Keeps an eye on people, organisations etc to prevent dishonest practices.”

“Agent of the Constitution.”

“Safeguard democracy and the Constitution.”

**Post-Courier:**

“Media as the Fourth Estate’, newspaper as the ‘watchdog’.”

“Protecting the interest of the population.”

“Fourth Estate — the media.”

“To make people in responsible positions accountable for their actions.’

“Exposes corruption; upholds democratic principles.”

“For good governance, addresses human right issues, nation-building.’

“Defend the truth.”

“Watchdog is the media.”

“Protector of media freedom.”

*QB25: What do you understand by the phrase “development journalism”?*

**FM100:**

“Nation building — reporting on developments that take place.”

“Informing people of important aspects of development in PNG.”

“Writing about development taking place in the country.”

“Reporting about development issues. Can assist the Government in developing the country.”

**EMTV:**

“Training journalists to become better reporters.”

“Establishment of more J-schools/training.”

“Maintain journalism schools in the country.”

“Developing reporters’ skills”

“Reporting on development issues at all levels.”

**NauFM:**

“Using journalism as a tool in nation-building.”

“Developing oneself in the world of journalism.”

“Journalists reporting only on issues related to journalism and what affects their society.”

“Reporting solely on new developments and its effects on the people and the society.”

**Word Publishing:**

"Journalism going through different phases."

"Journalism targeted at improving the lifestyle of a group of people."

"No idea."

"Journalists working to develop their community/country."

"Writing on development issues."

"To bring about development — social, political, economic improvements through reporting of issues."

"Reporting issues on economic, environment to educate/help the public understand better."

**The National:**

"Promoting nation-building."

"To report of development issues — eg water supply project."

"Development journalism is still growing and expanding with time, technology etc."

"Phrase too vague."

"Development journalism is more a personal approach of developing oneself."

"Helps bring about development in aspects like religion, culture etc."

"Bringing about positive changes for the good of ordinary citizens."

"Development journalism is aggressive — creative."

**Post-Courier:**

"Developing reporters to be good journos."

"Development of the profession."

"In-depth reporting of events/situations that have an impact on development of individuals, communities, societies and the nation."

"Nation-building."

"Media helping to empower the people to improve their lives."

"Recognising journalists' achievements."

"Educating people to bring about positive change."

"Positive reports on development."

"Coverage is given to issues that affect the growth of the country."

"Advocacy journalism — constructive and positive."

*QC42: If culture is important, why? Please cite examples and give reasons?*

**FM100:**

"The approach in probing questions."

"Not an obstacle."

**EMTV:**

"Lots of respect for leaders/chiefs."

"Sometimes reporters are influenced by certain customs that stop them from reporting."

"Cameraman prevented from taking photos due to cultural regulations (sensitivity)."

"Reporters unable to cover tragedy due to tradition/beliefs (reporter from the area)."

**Nau FM:**

"Certain sensitive info on leaders are somewhat suppressed due to the culture of respect for leaders."

"Wantok/nepotism is the one obstacle."

"Place of origin (village, province, ethnic group) plays an important factor in gaining trust."

**Word Publishing:**

"Friends and relatives — complicated (wantokism)."

"Don't want to offend other people."

"Cultural practices of journo's origin influence his/her perceptions."

"Unable to report the wrongdoings of relative or wantoks for fear of losing his birthright."

"Not all reports are based on culture."

"Gender issues."

**The National:**

"Issues like AIDS.HIIV are hard to discuss due to fear of shame."

"Wantok system and tribalism influence a reporter."

"PNG is a society of different cultures and these do get in the way of investigative journalism."

"It depends on the issue."

"Wantok system stops one from investigating another."

**Post-Courier:**

Culture causes a setback for investigations to be carried out."

"Respect for elders and shyness is very cultural."

"Some cultural issues are taboo."

"Melanesian way of respect for bigamy is strong (cover up as a result)."

"Ethic feeling is strong."

"There's a 'code of silence': You ask questions to a certain point — beyond that is taboo."

*QC44: If religion is important, why? Please cite examples and give reasons?*

**FM100:**

"Not an obstacle."

**EMTV:**

"There's a limit to programmes (religious?) aired."

"Some people are on the [media] board from the religious sector."

**Nau FM:**

"Example: National Census — most people refused to give their name for enrolment. They believe it is against their Christian doctrine."

**Word Publishing:**

"Against certain values, eg: abortion, birth control."

"People of the same denomination protect each other."

**The National:**

"Issues on religion create debate among churches and media trying to be neutral."

**Post-Courier:**

"Churches teach us forgiveness."

"Certain issues are not allowed by churches to be publicly discussed."

"The growth of 'family type' churches gave people an alternative channel for expressing their feelings."

"In PNG church is the biggest landowner."

"Respect for 'bigman' syndrome."

"Could be a change due to the coming of the Islamic religion."

"It should be an incentive."

*QC45: Please make any further relevant comments you wish?*

**FM100:**

"Insufficient number of investigative journalists."

"Journalism schools should give emphasis to investigative journalism."

"News editors must send out their reporters to regional workshops/conferences."

"News editors who attend conferences do not write stories when they come back."

**EMTV:**

"Two journalism schools in Papua New Guinea is enough. More resources and manpower are needed at both."

"More TV stations to provide competition."

"Journalism courses in [high/secondary] schools and cadetships should be encouraged and developed."

**Nau FM:**

"Journalism should be encouraged more in the country to report important issues and agenda."

"Training on online editing needed."

"More investigative training."

"Good pay for journos in the Pacific."

"Media should strongly retain its role as watchdog and also be neutral."

**Word Publishing:**

"Journalists who have a diploma or degree are in for big bucks (bugs - sic) instead of working their way up from a cadetship."

"Journalism in PNG should move away from bias and partiality."

"Lifestyle and economic hardship force journalists to move away from the integrity of their profession."

"Journalists go for PR work because of better pay."

"Journalists in PNG are underpaid."

**The National:**

"Journalists need refresher courses/workshops to keep them sharp."

"Working conditions and salaries need to be improved. Many journalists risk their lives in the course of their duties."

"Many reporters are too lazy to chase up/use every available avenue in writing a story."

"Media orgs should have an investigation section, which is adequately resourced."

"Media orgs should provide good accommodation and salary to maintain good journalists in the newsroom."

"There isn't enough emphasis on investigative journalism at universities."

**Post-Courier:**

"More women journalists needed."

"Journalists in the Pacific are badly paid."

"More on the job training to keep up with the technology."

"Salary and welfare conditions should be looked into."

"Newspaper companies are focused on making money. They have no set guidelines for training journalists or financing projects like investigative reporting."

"Culture is part of society. Religion is the spiritual basis of ethics and morality, which the media is supposed to uphold and in doing so promote better culture in all levels of society. To see both culture and religion as obstacles is to remove terms of references for investigative journalism."

## **Appendix 9: FIJI SURVEY 2001 QUALITATIVE RESPONSES SUMMARY**

*QB23: What do you understand by the phrases 'Fourth Estate' and/or 'watchdog'?*

### **Pacnews:**

"Watchdog for society."

### **FM96:**

"The media is a watchdog of anyone in a position of authority."

"This refers to the media's role in keeping check on the three arms of government. It is the media's job to ensure [that] they follow the laws and that the general public is aware of what the elected officers are doing with their power and the taxpayers' money."

### **FBC:**

"Fourth Estate is a body that is able to watch over government, be critical and ask questions to make the government accountable and transparent."

"Watchdog is being able to observe and report to the public."

### **The Review:**

"'Fourth Estate' is the media, Media is a power."

"Guardian of people's rights."

### **Fiji TV:**

"The government of the day trying to influence media orgs — interference."

"Media is the 'Fourth Estate' — the fourth arm of power within the state."

"Watchdog is the role of the journalists to monitor and analyse the government and civil service to ensure good governance."

"Keeping the government accountable and under scrutiny."

"Reporting the good and bad image of a particular incident."

"Media is seen as the fourth player in society. It acts on behalf of the public and promotes/encourages transparency in the government."

**Daily Post:**

"To inform the public of what's happening in the country."

"Someone on the lookout for things."

"The media to keep tab on things."

"The media's ability to keep those in leadership in check to bring about transparency, integrity and above all good governance and leadership."

"Journalists control the flow of information in the most accurate/balanced presentation. As agenda-setters, journalists should be the front runner in upholding unity in a nation of many ethnic groups."

"Guardian of people's rights."

**Fiji Sun:**

"Contributing to forming public opinion."

"Monitors the government and generates awareness in society for transparency, accountability and good governance."

"Media's role in exposing abuses of power and corruption of leaders."

"The press monitors movements of leaders."

"The need for a more vibrant press in the absence of a strong or any parliamentary opposition."

"Media acts as watchdog for the nation."

"Promoting transparency, accountability and good governance."

*QB25: What do you understand by the phrase "development journalism"?*

**FM96:**

"Developing skills of journalists."

**FBC:**

"Development journalism is being able to prioritise news and seeing and able to judge what should be going out for public consumption."

**The Review:**

"Propagating state policies for a stable society."

"Providing info for people to understand the ways in which a country is progressing in its development, particularly through its decisions by politicians/Parliament."

"Empowering journalists to fulfill their tasks competently through provision of training, resources and motivation, including remuneration that is fair."

**Fiji TV:**

"When journalists are trained to be better at their jobs and particular skills are honed with the help of the media organisation."

"Journalism relating to good governance, use of public funds and distribution of wealth."

"Ability to research and explore the background of areas of interest before reporting them as stories."

"In-depth reporting of development issues that can help build a nation."

"Journalism is everything that has to do with development, and news enough for members of society."

**Daily Post:**

"You develop your skills as you work by getting the experience."

"The ability of the journalist to portray development work as a tool to propel the country."

"Having the means to better the way (improve) we report information to the public."

"To keep up with the latest developments in journalism."

**Fiji Sun:**

"A phase of journalism that is still establishing its mark in society because it is still growing and learning."

"The evolution of the code of ethics and angle of reporting of local media."

"Reporting on activities aimed at developing the nation."

"Positive stories on ways to improve lives."

"Empowering the people who otherwise would have been left behind in the development equation."

*QC42: If culture is important, why? Please cite examples and give reasons?*

**FBC:**

"I think nowadays journalists ignore culture getting in the way of their work. I believe journalists are more confident and determined to get their stories no matter what."

"Reporting on chiefly conflicts can become dodgy, esp. when there is a possibility of violence erupting."

**The Review:**

"Tradition observance sometimes gets in the way of investigative journalism."

"Unable to understand the language."

"Not sure of protocol."

"Fear of offending and being accused of not knowing."

"Cultural pressure on island journalists is greater than it would be in Western societies.

There are clan and tribal loyalties to consider as well as the chiefly system.

"Cultural ostracism is something journalists are wary of. Criticism of the Fiji President, Ratu Josefa Iloilo, is seen as an insult by western division Fijians as he is their paramount chief."

**Fiji TV:**

"Because of the sensitivity involved in culture. For example, in a GCC meeting at times the media is allowed to be inside but at most times not. This will in some way be a major setback for the reporter."

"In the traditional Fijian context there are certain taboos about reporting certain issues or talking in a free and expressive manner to the chiefs."

"Fijian journalists are bound by traditions, especially when they are interviewing authority figures."

"Vanua Tavu relationships make reporters hesitant to interview high-ranking chiefs of their province."

"The chiefly system has to be respected. Society doesn't accept media questioning of the leader/chief: Example, When camera shots are taken of former president Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara. The cameraman cannot stand and film. He must be kneeling down to take the shots. If the cameraman is standing in front of him, it means disrespect."

"It really depends on how a journalist tackles this issue. If one allows culture or the excuse of culture to rule them, then they are bound to face obstacles. Working around it is a different story. At the end of the day one has to get the facts of the story — culture or no culture."

**Daily Post:**

"Pacific culture has too many norms and taboos."

"In the Pacific, there is a living perception that we have to respect the Pacific culture."

"Dress is important in ceremonies — Fijian — Indo-Fijian."

"It is hard to write about the chiefs."

"There are things male reporters can do and be accepted, but not female reporters."

"The 'vanua' and 'kai' situation in Fiji limits the reporter's ability to be more critical and unbiased."

"Culture prohibits journalists from highlighting various important issues that are sensitive."

**Fiji Sun:**

"Different languages in Fiji."

"Certain protocols don't allow 100% transparency."

"It hinders reporter's objectivity."

"Various aspects of issues are withheld because of cultural beliefs and taboos."

"Hinders articles because reporters are seen to be 'untraditional, abrasive'."

"For a Fijian to investigate his/her own high chief, it is breaking cultural values."

*QC44: If religion is important, why? Please cite examples and give reasons?*

**Pacnews:**

"In Fiji, religion plays an important role in society. Given [that] the church leaders are getting themselves into politics, their influence has spread. In Fijian traditional set-ups whatever the church pastor says is taken to be true, thus the [clergy's] power and influence is strong."

**FM96:**

"Some conservative Christian reporters, when reporting on religious events or political agitation by religious groups. For example, the reporter referring to a protester as a "man of God" rather than simply using the person's name."

**FBC:**

"I believe journalists nowadays are more confident and determined to do their work, despite religion and culture [being] in the way."

"Everybody knows everyone in the church and you are sometimes restricted on what you can report on."

**The Review:**

In Fiji, the Methodist Church exerts a great hold/influence over indigenous Fijians. Any criticism of the church is portrayed as "ungodly". Fiji TV and The Fiji Times were accused of working for the devil by Methodist Church president Rev Kanailagi when they questioned his political involvement and support for the SDL.

**Fiji TV:**

"Criticism of the church always attracts a lot of criticism and threats in return.

"Criticism of the culture=criticism of religion=blasphemy."

"Cultural and religious boundaries are to be respected always, Reporters have to take part in traditional ceremonies if they intend to report/film on any of the cultural/religious stories, esp. in the chiefly system"

**Daily Post:**

"In Hindu society, girls are seen as an inferior component of society."

"If a non-Indian or Christian has to cover a Hindu event, he/she must obey Hindu customs, rules and regulations."

"Religious values/beliefs stop journalists from reporting certain stories."

"The poor style with the Methodist Church is never reported, let alone the sexual prowess of some clergy."

**Fiji Sun:**

"News media report only on behaviour of individuals, not necessarily on their beliefs."

"Not an obstacle but should make you more responsible."

*QC45: Please make any further relevant comments you wish?*

**FM96:**

"It is new cadets and a small group of conservative journalists who still use culture as an obstacle to their reporting. Most Fiji Islander reporters are either not restricted by it or they

and their newsroom work around it. This removes the pressure from the reporter and the source or interviewee.

"Sometimes the interviewee takes advantage of the culture excuse to get out of answering the so-called sensitive questions. The sensitive issues answer is merely a delaying or digressing tactic. The general public is not willing to accept this answer anymore as they expect accountability, transparency and straight forward answers from their elected officials, whether they are chiefs or not."

**FBC:**

"I believe journalists in the media who don't have any sort of tertiary education are going on their way to achieve something (some education).

**The Review:**

"On training: Media outlets, especially the profitable ones, should invest in training. They don't spend a cent on training now."

"Remuneration: Reporters work long hours for little pay. In fact, pay at The Fiji Times is still the same for cadet reporters as it was 12 years ago when I joined — F\$5500. No wonder staff turnover is so high in the industry, The enthusiasm evaporates very quickly because of low pay and long hours."

"Media organisations go for quantity rather than quality. Reporters are required to produce three, four, even five, stories daily. No time is given for in-depth investigative writing."

**Fiji TV:**

"Training is the best way to improve the media/journalists in Fiji."

"Give good journalists money incentives."

"Journalists should be paid well and treated like any other professional trade."

"Local journalists do need further training to enhance competency in their work. Although a few have mastered journalistic skills through experience, a strong educational background would help them more."

"I believe that reporters who have gone through formal journalism training should be paid more than those who don't in starting salary. Otherwise what is the point of spending three years in journalism school when one can just go straight to a news organisation and still receive the same salary as a graduate [gets paid]? The graduate is more equipped and passionate about the job than a person straight out of high school is. You don't have to be trained again in the newsroom after you've been to journalism school."

**Daily Post:**

"In Fiji, graduate journalists should be recognised. It seems news organisations do not want graduates."

"Limited resources and low salary."

Journalists and editors should be modern thinkers. Culture and religion should not act as obstacles."

"There is a need for more international exchange programmes."

"There should be regular media workshops to enhance the capabilities of a journalist."

**Fiji Sun:**

"Journalists are underpaid in relation to working hours and commitments on the job."

"Journalism in Fiji has done considerably well in recent years in spite of lack of formal qualifications. [Untrained] reporters have done just as marvellous a job as the qualified ones."

"The 'vanua' often sees the media as a threat of breaking them up so they prefer not to release information."

"Media circles in Fiji should consider a joint venture with tertiary institutions to train journalists."

"University students should do away with 'lecturer-student' mindset — no time for planning process to take place."

"Better pay packages."

## **Appendix 10: MEDIA COUNCIL OF PNG CODE OF ETHICS**

The Media Council of Papua New Guinea

[www.postcourier.com.pg/mediacouncil/media02.htm](http://www.postcourier.com.pg/mediacouncil/media02.htm) (Retrieved 25 May 2003)

### **General Code of Ethics for the News Media**

In order to maintain public trust, freedom of speech and the credibility of the news media, journalists are urged to remain within the following guidelines derived from international standards and with valuable input from a broad cross section of the media in PNG . The word "publish" is used here to mean released to the public by any news media.

#### **1. Accuracy and Balance**

- a) Report and interpret news stories honestly, striving for accuracy, fairness and disclosure of all essential facts. Do not suppress significant available facts or give distorting emphasis.
- b) Do your utmost to provide balanced coverage by providing a fair opportunity for any individual or organizations mentioned in a news story to respond to allegations or criticism before publication. Failing that, you should provide a reasonable opportunity for response after the news item has been published.
- c) Do not allow personal interest, belief, commitment or perceived benefit to sway your accuracy, fairness or journalistic independence. Strive for objectivity.

d) Distinguish clearly between fair comment, conjecture and fact.

## **2. Conflict of Interest**

a) Disclose any conflicts of interest that affect or could be perceived to affect the accuracy, fairness or independence of your report. This includes business reporting where the reporter may have shares or an interest in the welfare of a company or investment mentioned. Never use your journalistic position for personal gain.

b) Do not accept any benefit or gratuity that might be seen as personal gain in conflict with fair and unbiased news coverage at the time or in the future. When assistance is given in covering a news event, such as free accommodation or transportation, it should be revealed in the story content.

c) Cash allowances must never be directly accepted in any circumstances. In PNG it is common during political campaigns for politicians to offer cash allowances to reporters. If they or others seeking coverage wish to provide such assistance to the news media, it must be done openly through the parent media body and should be revealed in the news items produced.

d) Do not allow the purchase or potential purchase of advertising or other commercial considerations undermine or influence your news selection, accuracy, fairness or independence.

e) Advertising or advertiser sponsored material with news value should be clearly distinguishable from editorial material and, where necessary, labeled accordingly.

### **3. Privacy**

a) Publication of information about the private lives or concerns of individuals without their consent is acceptable only if the intrusion relates to legitimate public interest outweighing the normal right to privacy.

b) Prominence in public life does not disqualify individuals from the right to privacy about their personal affairs unless these matters affect their performance or fitness for the public role or office they seek or hold.

c) Avoid identifying innocent relations of persons convicted or accused of crime unless the connection is relevant to the story reported.

### **4. Children and Juveniles**

a) The names of persons under the age of 18 who are charged with crimes or involved in other offences are not to be released. Care must be taken not to release details which might lead to the identification of persons under the age of 18.

b) Discretion should be exercised when interviewing children under the age of 18 about subjects which might have legal or moral consequences, or where such interviews could place them in a detrimental position threatening their safety or well being.

c) Generally children should not be approached or photographed at school without the consent of school authorities.

## **5. Discrimination**

a) Care must be taken to avoid releasing material, statements or references which could adversely affect vulnerable groups or which could promote or encourage hatred, prejudice, discrimination or violence.

b) Do not place unnecessary emphasis on personal characteristics including race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age, sexual orientation, family relationships, religious beliefs, physical or intellectual disability. However where it is relevant to explaining the story or of compelling public interest, you may report information in these areas.

## **6. Taste and Decency**

a) Care should be taken in presentation of content that might distress or offend a significant proportion of the public.

b) Approach cases involving personal grief, shock or tragedy with care and discretion. Suicides should be respected as a private and personal tragedy and not reported unless they involve prominent figures or generated newsworthy consequences.

c) Crimes should not be reported in such a way as might encourage or incite imitation by others.

d) No one should be subjected to undue intimidation or harassment in the pursuit of information.

## **7. Victims of Sexual Offences**

a) Information that either identifies or could reasonably lead to the identification of victims of sexual offences should not be published without their informed consent.

## **8. Purchase of Information**

a) Payments or other benefits should not be provided to anyone allegedly involved in, or convicted of a crime. Payment should not be made to their relatives, friends, neighbors or associates for information about the crime. Rewards for information may be justified in the rare exception where the information is of compelling public interest and can be obtained in no other way.

b) Do your utmost to disclose any direct or indirect payment or benefit supplies for purchase or information, interviews, pictures or stories.

## **9. Subterfuge**

a) Try to always use fair, responsible and honest means in obtaining material. Identify yourself and your employer before obtaining any interview for publication or broadcast. Use of subterfuge (e.g. false identity or covert recordings) should be avoided. It can be justified only in rare circumstances when the material sought should be published because of compelling public interest and cannot be obtained in any other way.

b) The invasion of privacy by use of long lens photography can only be justified when the photograph provides information of compelling public interest.

c) Never exploit a person's vulnerability or ignorance  
of media practice

## **10. Misinformation**

a) Anonymous bomb threats and other serious threats must be reported immediately to the police. Do not publish or broadcast any such threats unless requested to do so by the police or a civilian authority for reasons of public safety. If such a threat causes widespread inconvenience or other consequences affecting the public (with the exception of airline delays), it may be reported.

b) Aim to always attribute information to its source and make sure that source has the authority to speak for the organization or individual they claim to represent. Check press releases from unfamiliar sources, individuals or groups to ensure they truly represent a statement from that individual, group or organisation. This can be crucial in times of elections or national crisis when the generation of misinformation may be a tool used by elements trying to generate propaganda, disruption or instability. When press releases are unsigned, check to ensure they are authentic and endorsed by the issuing body.

c) Material obtained from a single confidential source must be provable or verified by at least one other source to avoid manipulation of the news or public opinion. Consider the possible motives of the initial source and find an alternative attributable source. This

includes instances where the confidential source is someone in authority or well known but who wishes their name withheld.

d) Double-check reports of "probable or impending disruptions" to ensure something is happening. In times of political disruption or insurrection, even reports from authoritative and official bodies, such as the police and military, should be carefully checked.

## **11. Hijacking and other forms of Kidnapping**

a) No information should be published which is likely to endanger the lives of hostages or which might prejudice attempts by law enforcement authorities to deal with a hijacking or kidnapping.

b) Journalists should not become involved in ongoing kidnappings or hijackings in such a way as to become a publicity or safety factor in the incident.

c) Journalists should not continue direct contact with hijackers, kidnappers, or others involved in any ongoing criminal action where lives are in immediate peril without permission from law enforcement authorities.

## **12. Public and Personal Standards**

a) Do not plagiarize.

b) Do your utmost to provide swift and fair correction of errors. Small errors may be corrected with a story designated as a correction, however in cases of serious mis-reporting

or false information, full retraction must firmly identify and retract the false statements of the previous, incorrect report.

c) Journalists are morally obligated to protect their confidential sources and any confidences or agreements they willingly accepted.

## **Broadcasting Code of Practice**

### **1. Taste and Decency**

a) Recognise currently accepted general standards of decency in language with consideration of the context in which the language and behavior occur (including humour, satire and drama), and the timing of transmission and likely audience of the program.

### **2. Impartiality and Balance**

a) Show fairness, impartiality and balance in any programme, series of programmes, or in broadly released programmes when dealing with political matters, current affairs and public controversy.

### **3. Deceptive Practices**

a) Abstain from using any deceptive programme, practice or technique (including transmission of "reconstructions" or library film or recordings) which are not clearly identified as such.

#### **4. Interviews**

- a) Interviews for radio and television must be arranged, conducted and edited fairly and honestly. Potential participants are entitled to know in advance the format, subject and purpose of their interview and whether it will be live or recorded.
  
- b) The presentation and editing of an interview must not distort or misrepresent the views of the person interviewed or give a false impression of dialogue.
  
- c) Pre-recorded interviews must not be presented as live interviews.

#### **5. Violent or Distressing Content**

- a) Violence shown graphically or realistically indicated by sound must be justifiable in its context and intensity as being necessary to the programme.
  
- b) Violence combined with sexuality should not be transmitted in a manner designed to titillate its audience. Explicit detail and prolonged focus on sexuality violent contact must be avoided.
  
- c) Editors, producers and broadcasters of news, current affairs and documentaries should take care in deciding whether the inclusion of graphic detail and intense violent or distressing material is warranted by its relevance and aid to public understanding of the subject.

d) Special consideration must be given to possible transmission of particularly disturbing images including:

- i) Torture or ill-treatment of people or animals
- ii) Close ups of dead or mutilated bodies
- i) Images of people in extreme pain or on the point of death
- ii) Violent or ill treatment of children.

## **6. Warning of Disturbing or Offensive Content**

Warnings should be broadcast before or at the beginning of any programme containing language or pictures which are likely to be disturbing or offensive to normal viewers or listeners considering the time of transmission and the likely audience.

## **7. Dangerous or Anti-Social Detail and Hypnotism**

a) Detailed pictures or information about methods of suicide and hanging, the making of explosive or incendiary devices, or illicit use of drugs or solvents should not be transmitted in a way that might instruct or encourage such action.

b) Refrain from broadcasting any program that: simulates news or events in sound or pictures in such a way as to mislead or alarm its audience.

c) Do not depict the actual process of putting a subject into a hypnotic state or any process designed to induce a hypnotic state in its audience.

## **8. Crime and Disorder**

a) Programmes likely to promote civil; insurrection or encourage crime or public disorder , must not be broadcast.

## **9. Cartoons**

a) Cartoons depicting human characters should not include excessive violence or scenes of gore or torture.

b) Fantasy cartoons featuring fantasy characters or comic story lines should not depict torture or excessive suffering.

## **10. Supplied Material**

When a strong editorial reason warrants the inclusion in any programme of recorded or prepared material supplied by, on behalf of, official bodies, companies or campaigning organizations, its source should be revealed.

## **11. Product Reference and Placement**

Undue prominence should not be given in news, factual or entertainment programs, to commercial products or services. Their appearance or reference to them should be given no more prominence than editorial consideration warrants.

## **12. Competition Fair Dealing**

Ensure that in programmes and promotions providing prizes or rewards there is no collusion between broadcasters and contestants which result in unfair advantage for one contestant over another.

## **Appendix 11: FIJI MEDIA COUNCIL LTD CODE OF ETHICS**

Fiji Media Council Ltd

[www.fijimediacouncil.com/code-of-ethics.html](http://www.fijimediacouncil.com/code-of-ethics.html) (Retrieved 25 May 2003, dated March 2002)

### **The Media Council General Media Code of Ethics and Practice**

#### **1) ACCURACY, BALANCE AND FAIRNESS**

- a)** Newspapers and magazines, radio and television broadcasting organizations, web sites and internet newsletters, and journalists working for them, should report and interpret news and current affairs honestly. They should aim to disclose all known relevant facts and should take care not to publish material, which is inaccurate, misleading or distorted by wrong or improper emphasis or any other factor.
- b)** If a significant inaccuracy, misleading or distorted statement is published it must be corrected promptly with due prominence and, where appropriate, an apology.
- c)** Media must distinguish clearly between the news, comment, conjecture, fact and paid advertising.
- d)** Media organizations are free to be partisan. Each has a duty to be balanced and fair in their treatment of news and current affairs and their dealings with members of the public.
- e)** Editorial comment in any medium must be clearly identified as such and kept physically separate from news reports.
- f)** Media should report fairly the result of any legal action brought against them and have an obligation to publish/broadcast, without diluting the finding, any adjudication by the Media Council on a complaint made against them.

## **2) OPPORTUNITY TO REPLY**

Media have an obligation to give a fair opportunity to reply to any individual or organisation on which the medium itself comments editorially.

## **3) PRIVACY**

**a)** Publication, whether electronic or traditional, or broadcasting, of information, including, pictures, about the private lives or concerns of individuals without their consent is acceptable only if a serious legitimate public interest outweighs their normal right to privacy.

**b)** Publishing such material and/or making inquiries about the private lives or concerns of individuals without consent is only justified where the material concerned ought to be published in the public interest, outweighing the normal right of privacy.

**c)** 'In the public interest' is not synonymous with 'of interest to the public' the public interest relied upon to justify investigation must be the serious and proper public interest and not mere curiosity. Entry into public life does not disqualify individuals from the right to privacy about their private affairs, except where the circumstances of these are likely to affect their performance of, or fitness for, the public roles they hold or seek.

**d)** The overriding public interest relied upon in this and other clauses of the Code may include: Detection or exposure of crime. Protection of public health and safety. Preventing the public from being seriously misled on an important matter by a public statement or action of an individual or institution.

## **4) HARASSMENT AND PURSUIT**

Media must not seek interviews, information or pictures by intimidation or harassment. Nor should the media invade individuals' privacy by deception, eavesdropping or covert technological means (including the taking of pictures in private places by long lens photography).

Information and picture gathering by such methods can be justified only in very rare circumstances where the material sought ought to be published in the public interest and could not be obtained in any other way.

## **5) SUBTERFUGE**

Media organizations should use straightforward means to obtain information and pictures, normally identifying themselves when doing so. Use of subterfuge, false identity or covert recording, can be justified only in rare circumstances when the material sought ought to be published in the public interest and could not be obtained in any other way. (See 3 d)

## **6) DISCRIMINATION**

**a)** The Media should avoid discriminatory or denigratory references to people's gender, race, colour, religion, sexual orientation or preference, physical or mental disability or illness, or age.

**b)** The Media should not refer to a person's gender race, colour, religion, sexual orientation, or physical or mental illness in a prejudicial or pejorative context except where it is strictly relevant to the matter reported or adds significantly to readers', viewers' or listeners' understanding of that matter.

**c)** Media organizations should be sensitive to and particularly careful about the possible effects of discriminatory references to vulnerable minorities in prejudicial or pejorative contexts.

**d)** While media is free to report and comment on all matters of public interest, it is their duty not to publish material in a form likely to promote or encourage racial hatred or discord.

## **7) CHILDREN**

**a)** Generally, media people should not interview or photograph a child under the age of 16 in the absence of, or without the consent of a parent or other adult responsible for the child.

**b)** Generally, children should not be approached by the media, interviewed or photographed at school without the permission of school authorities.

**c)** Publication without consent of material about a child's private life cannot be justified solely by the fame, notoriety or position of his or her parents.

## **8) VICTIMS IN SEXUAL CASES**

**a)** Media people must not identify victims of sexual assaults or publish material likely to contribute to their identification even when free by law to do so.

**b)** Media should not identify children under the age of 16 either as victims or witnesses in cases alleging sexual offences.

**c)** Reports of cases alleging sexual offences against a child may identify an adult concerned, providing they are not related, but must not identify the child, and must not include facts which imply a close relationship between an accused adult and a child victim. Where either party is identifiable, the word "incest" should not be used.

## **9) SEXUAL RELATIONS AND CONDUCT**

When reporting, or portraying, sexual activity and conduct, media organizations should be keenly aware of the danger of publishing material that affronts or offends public decency or the likely audience or readership. Particular regard should be paid to the context of publication and time of transmission.

## **10) CRIME**

Crime and antisocial behaviour, especially involving violence, should not be glamorised or reported, portrayed or detailed in a manner which on reasonable judgement would be likely to encourage or incite or experiment. Media should pay particular regard to the context, time of transmission and probable effect and the likely audience or readership of such items. Special attention should be paid to the likelihood of such material being read, seen or listened to by children.

## **11) PAYMENTS FOR ARTICLES ETC**

**a)** Payments or offers of payment must not be made directly or through agents to people engaged in or convicted of crime for information or articles related to their crimes, or for pictures whose value lies in their association with crime. Nor should such payments or offers be made to associates of persons engaged in or convicted of crime, including their family, friends, neighbours and colleagues.

**b)** No payment or offer of payment should be made directly or indirectly, to any person known to be, or reasonably expected to be, a witness in criminal proceedings, for information or articles in connection with the proceedings until after their conclusion.

**c)** Payment or an offer of payment may be justified in very exceptional circumstances of 11a) or 11b) above, if information which ought to be published in the overriding, public interest cannot be obtained by any other means (see 3 d), page 6)

## **12) INNOCENT RELATIONS**

Media organizations should generally avoid identifying relations of persons convicted or accused of crime unless the connection is directly relevant to the matter reported

## **13) RELIGION**

**a)** While all public institutions are properly subject to scrutiny, inquiry and comment, media organizations should approach and refer to religious bodies in a balanced, fair and sensitive manner, recognising the respect and reverence in which they, their representatives and their beliefs are likely to be held by adherents.

**b)** Journalists and broadcasters should avoid intentionally giving offence to believers of all faiths by casual, gratuitous and expletive references to deities, which are unnecessary or unjustified by the context.

**c)** Recognition of the need for sensitive and balanced treatment of religions and religious affairs is particularly necessary in a society of differing faiths.

## **14) FIJIAN CHIEFLY AND OTHER ETHNIC INSTITUTIONS**

While free to report and to comment in the public interest on Fijian chiefly institutions, traditions, affairs and other cultural matters, and on those of other racial or ethnic groups, media should take particular care to deal with these subjects with sensitivity and appropriate respect.

## **15) STRONG LANGUAGE**

Media should avoid gratuitous use of strong swearwords, obscene or blasphemous language in copy or broadcasts. Publication or broadcasting of these in direct form can be justified only in rare cases when it is essential to readers' or audiences' understanding of the story reported or the dramatic development of a programme. In such cases care must be taken in choosing the context and scheduling of the material concerned to avoid unnecessarily causing offence to its likely readers or audience.

## **16) GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT**

Media organisations should respect personal grief, taking care to make any necessary approaches and inquiries with sensitivity and discretion.

## **17) ADVERTISING**

Advertisements and advertiser-sponsored material must be clearly distinguishable from general editorial and programme matter, where necessary by being clearly labelled in print or on air as 'advertisement', 'advertising feature' etc.

## **18) PERSONAL INTEREST AND INFLUENCES**

**a)** Media people should not allow personal or family interest to influence them in their professional duties. There will be occasions where journalists may be pressured by close associates about a story. At all times the journalist must make their editor, or supervisor, aware of such pressure.

**b)** Media people should not allow themselves to be influenced by any consideration, gift or advantage offered to them, or by advertising or other commercial considerations. At all times the journalist must make their editor/supervisor aware of such an offer.

**c)** There will be occasions where journalists will be asked to cover assignments where the journalist may have a conflict of interest or a personal interest. At all times the journalist must make their editor/supervisor aware of such a conflict.

## **19) FINANCIAL JOURNALISM**

**a)** Media people should not use for their own, or their families' profit, directly or indirectly, financial information received in their professional capacity in advance of its general publication.

**b)** They should not write or broadcast about shares or securities in which they or their families have an interest without disclosing the interest to their editor (or financial editor) and, where appropriate, to their readers or audience.

**c)** They should not buy or sell shares or securities about which they have written recently or which they intend to write about in the near future.

## **20) CONFIDENTIAL AND OTHER SOURCES**

**a)** Journalists of all media have an obligation to protect confidential sources of information, and to respect confidences knowingly and willingly accepted in the course of their occupation.

**b)** Plagiarism is not acceptable. Where material originally prepared by another medium is used, credit should be given to the originator of the item or story.

## **21) TASTE AND DECENCY**

Media should recognise currently accepted general standards of decency and taste in language and behaviour, bearing in mind the context in which the language and behaviour occur (including humour, satire and drama), and, for broadcasters, the timing of transmission and likely audience of the programme.

## **22) IMPARTIALITY AND BALANCE**

Media should endeavour to show fairness at all times, and impartiality and balance in any item or programme, series of items or programmes or in broadly related articles or programmes over a reasonable period of time when presenting news which deals with political matters, current affairs, and controversial questions.

## **23 DECEPTIVE PRACTICES**

Media should abstain from use of any deceptive practice or technique (including transmission or publication of 'reconstructions' or library pictures, film and recordings which are not clearly identifiable as such) which may diminish viewers' and listeners' or readers' confidence in the integrity of media.

## **24 INTERVIEWS**

Interviews for print, electronic media, radio and television must be arranged, conducted, and edited fairly and honestly. Potential interviewees are entitled to know in advance the format, subject and purpose of their interview, whether it will be transmitted live or recorded, when it will be printed, whether it may be edited, and whether only part of it may be used, or it may not be used at all.

They are also entitled to know in advance the identity and roles of other people likely to be interviewed at the same time or on the same subject for the same programme or article.

The presentation and editing of an interview must not distort or misrepresent the views of the interviewee or give a false impression of dialogue or the pretence that a recorded interview is being transmitted live.

## **25) VIOLENCE**

Violence shown graphically or realistically indicated by sound must be justifiable in its context and intensity as being necessary to the programme or article.

Violence combined with sexuality should not be printed or transmitted in a manner designed to titillate its audience.

Explicit detail and prolonged focus on sexually violent contact must be avoided.

## **26) DISTRESSING MATERIAL**

**a)** Editors, producers and broadcasters of news, current affairs and documentary programmes and articles should take particular care in deciding whether the inclusion of graphic detail and intensity of violent or distressful material is warranted by its relevance and add to public understanding, of the subject.

**b)** Special consideration must be given before publication or transmission of particularly disturbing, images including:

- 1)** Torture or ill-treatment of people or animals
- 2)** Close-ups of dead or mutilated bodies
- 3)** Images of people in extreme pain or on the point of death
- 4)** Violence or ill treatment of children.

## **27) WARNING OF DISTURBING OR OFFENSIVE MATERIAL**

Warnings should be published or broadcast before or at the beginning of any article or broadcast containing language or pictures which are likely to be disturbing or offensive to normal readers, viewers or listeners bearing in mind for broadcasters the time of transmission, channel or wavelength and the likely audience.

## **28) DANGEROUS AND ANTI-SOCIAL DETAIL**

Detailed pictures or information about methods of incendiary devices, or illicit use of drugs or solvents should not be transmitted in a way which might encourage or instruct such actions.

## **29) CRIME AND DISORDER**

Programmes or articles likely to promote civil insurrection or encourage crime or public disorder must not be broadcast or published.

### **30) HIJACKING AND KIDNAPPING**

No information should be published or broadcast which is likely to endanger lives in, or prejudice attempts to deal with, a hijack or kidnapping.

### **31) ALARM, HYPNOTISM AND SUBLIMINAL PERCEPTION**

Media will refrain from publishing or broadcasting, except as legitimate entertainment or information, any material which, when considered whole:

- a)** Simulates news or events in print, sound or pictures in such a way as to mislead or alarm its audience
- b)** Depicts the process of putting a subject into a hypnotic state or is designed to induce a hypnotic state in its audience
- c)** Uses 'subliminal perception' or any similar technique to try to convey information by transmission of messages below or near the threshold of normal awareness, or
- d)** In an ostensibly factual programme or article depicts or demonstrates exorcism, psychic or occult practices other than as the subject of a legitimate investigation.

### **32) CARTOONS**

Cartoons, particularly when likely to be seen by children, should not include excessive violence especially when they feature human characters and follow realistic story lines as opposed to obviously fantastic or farcical themes.

### **33) SUPPLIED MATERIAL**

Where a strong editorial reason warrants the inclusion in any article, programme or video or other recorded material supplied by or on behalf of official bodies, commercial companies or campaigning organisations, its source should be clearly labelled in print or on air in sound or vision.

### **34) PRODUCT PLACEMENT AND REFERENCE**

When media choose to place commercial or other products or promotional material on air or in print in a programme or article context, it should be a clear policy that the commercial or other organisation thus identified has no influence on the content of the programme or article unless specifically publicized as such.

### **35) COMPETITION FAIR DEALING**

Media will ensure that in programmes or published competitions there is no collusion between broadcasters or publishers and contestants which results in the favouring of any contestant or contestants over others.

## Appendix 12: THOMSON FOUNDATION REPORT SUMMARY 1996

The Thomson Foundation

[www.fiji.gov.fj/MEDIA\\_BILL/summary\\_findings.shtml](http://www.fiji.gov.fj/MEDIA_BILL/summary_findings.shtml) (Retrieved 25 May 2003)

### **Future Media Legislation and Regulation for the Republic of the Fiji Islands**

#### **Summary of Findings and Recommendations**

1. The conclusions of the Report should be made public, to inform an open debate on the way ahead.
2. The *Newspapers Registration Act* should be retained and a clause added specifying that registration cannot be denied or withdrawn and does not require periodic or discretionary renewal.
3. Licensing measures for the print media should not be introduced.
4. The *Broadcasting Commission Act of 1953* and the *Television Decree of 1992* should be repealed. They should be replaced by a new comprehensive *Broadcasting Act* which makes the following provisions:

- Broadcasting licences (in radio and television) should be awarded on the basis of competitive tendering (with the exception of Radio Fiji)
- Licences should be awarded by the decision of an ad hoc Committee comprising a member from each party represented in Parliament.
- Licensing should continue to be administered by the Telecommunications Regulating Unit of the Ministry of Information
- The Unit should be responsible for monitoring and ensuring compliance with the terms of the licence insofar as they specify quantifiable requirements . Qualitative compliance should be ensured by the proposed new *Media Act* .
- Radio Fiji should be established as a free-standing corporation under that title and its licence should embody the same terms as those of other radio stations. (There should be no further Government capital investment once the present stabilisation programme is completed).
- The Government should make available to all radio stations, against competitive tendering, funding for public service broadcasts which would not otherwise be made commercially. Such funds should be ring-fenced and accounted for separately from commercial output budgets .
- Funds for public service broadcasting should be raised from general taxation, not through a television licence fee
- Access to the channel reserved by the Government for educational purposes should be granted to independent producers to experiment with alternative forms of local programming. Alternatively, access to Fiji TV's transmitter down-time should be negotiated.

5. A new *Media Act* should be enacted to cover the qualitative aspects of content and conduct in both the print and the broadcast media. It should provide for the establishment of an independent body, to be known as the Fiji Media Council, built on the foundations of the existing News Council, to which regulation of these matters should be entrusted.

This independent regulatory system should operate as follows:-

- The Council should be wholly funded by its media industry members.
- It should have an independent Chairman, unconnected with the media industries. The Chairman, with two other lay appointees (not being themselves members of the Council) should constitute the Council's Complaints Committee
- The Council itself should consist of one representative from each of the media outlets in Fiji and a matching number of lay members, appointed to be broadly representative of the communities of Fiji, their interests and concerns.
- Appointment to lay membership of the Council should be exercised by the independent Complaints Committee, consulting widely to ensure an acceptable and representative membership, following a public call for nominations.
- The Complaints Committee, advised by one publisher/broadcaster member of the Council and one representative of working journalists (neither to be entitled to vote), should sit in judgement of complaints against media content or conduct. They should judge complaints on the criteria of a Fiji Media Code of Practice and should be empowered to require offending media outlets to publish their judgements in full and in a specified form.

- The Act should specify standards of content and conduct in general terms but their detailed interpretation should be embodied in the Council's Code of Practice. The Code should be drafted initially by representatives of the media and amended and ratified by the full Council, whereupon all media members should agree to be bound by its provisions. The Code should apply to both editorial and advertising material.
- The Code should specify that, as well as dealing with complaints, the Council should be a safeguard of and advocate for press freedom.

Though the Council should be a voluntary body, we strongly recommend that the media of Fiji unite to ensure that it is fully representative and therefore authoritative.

6. The *Press Corrections Act* should be repealed: its powers and duties would be covered by the new Media Council.

7. The *Defamation Act* should be retained.

8. The relevant provisions of the *Fair Trading Decree* should be retained but re-assessed when the new regulatory mechanisms are in place and proven. (4.9.4)

9. The *Official Secrets Act* should be repealed and replaced by an *Official Information Act*, as recommended in the Constitution Review, after wide-ranging consultation.

10. There should be no extension of the law to deal with unauthorised disclosure and publication of official documents

11. There should be no amendment to the *Commissions of Inquiry Act* to require journalists to disclose their sources, or to provide them with immunity from doing so.
  
12. Foreign ownership of the media should generally be left to market forces for the press and covered by the provisions of the licence for 'scarce resource' broadcasters.
  
13. Cross-media ownership parameters should be regulated by clauses in the new *Broadcasting and Media Acts*.
  
14. The problem of video piracy should be addressed.
  
15. The media should develop an integrated approach to in-house training, backed by external courses. They should co-operate in funding and organising further education and training at all levels.
  
16. Media awareness training should be provided for holders of public office.

## Appendix 13: DRAFT MEDIA COUNCIL OF FIJI BILL 2003

[www.fiji.gov.fj/MEDIA\\_BILL/draft\\_Media\\_Bill.shtml](http://www.fiji.gov.fj/MEDIA_BILL/draft_Media_Bill.shtml) (Retrieved 25 May 2003)

### A BILL

## FOR AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE MEDIA COUNCIL OF FIJI AND TO PROVIDE A CODE OF ETHICS FOR THE MEDIA AND FOR RELATED MATTERS

ENACTED by the Parliament of the Fiji Islands –

Short title and commencement

1. – (1) This Act may be cited as the *Media Council of Fiji Act 2003*.

(2) This Act comes into force on a date appointed by the Minister by notice in the *Gazette*.

Interpretation

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires -

“Appeals Committee” means the Appeals Committee of the Council established under section 13;

“broadcaster” means any person responsible for managing a radio or television network, which has been licensed under a written law to broadcast either community, public service or commercial programs for the public;

“Code” means the Media Code of Ethics and Practice contained in Schedule 2;

“Complaints Committee” means the Complaints Committee of the Council established by section 10;

“Council” means the Media Council of Fiji established by section 3;

“editor” means a news editor or editor-in-chief of a broadcast media;

“media” means agencies and their products, which serve to deliver information, opinion and entertainment to the public and includes radio, television, newspapers, magazines, electronic or other similar medium;

“media outlet” means agencies involved in mass media, communications either through public relations, journalism, news media, radio, television, printed media, audio-visual or other similar medium;

“print media” means newspapers published daily or magazines published regularly;

“publisher” means the editor-in-chief or a senior executive officer performing the functions and duties of the editor-in-chief, of the printed media;

#### Establishment of the Media Council of Fiji

3. – (1) This section establishes the Media Council of Fiji.

(2) The Council –

(a) is a body corporate with perpetual succession;

(b) may sue and be sued;

(c) may acquire, hold or dispose of properties and enter into contracts;

(d) must have a common seal; and

(e) may do all other things, which a legal person can do in connection with its functions.

#### Composition of the Council

4. (1) The Council consists of –

(a) a Chairperson, who is not a publisher, broadcaster or representative of a media outlet and has no direct or indirect connection with a media outlet, to be appointed by the Minister after consulting the media outlets set out in Schedule 1;

(b) representatives from each media outlets specified in Schedule 1; and

(c) an equal number of members appointed by the Minister to be broadly representative of the communities of the Fiji Islands, their interests and concerns.

(2) The Chairperson and members of the Council hold office for up to 3 years and may be re-appointed.

(3) The members of the Council may, at its first meeting in a year, elect one of its members under subsection (1)(c) as the Deputy Chairperson, who shall perform the functions and duties of the Chairperson if the Chairperson is absent for any reason.

(4) If a member of the Council dies or resigns or is otherwise unable to perform as member, the person or body, which appointed the member, may appoint a replacement in the same manner.

(5) The members of the Council under subsection (1)(c) are entitled to allowances and other expenses fixed by the Council.

#### Meetings of the Council

5. (1) The Council meets at such times and places as the Chairman appoints, or as requested by a majority of the members in writing.

(2) Subject to subsection (7), half of the total Council members, with equal number of members under section 4(1)(c), constitute a quorum.

(3) The business of the Council may be translated by circulation of papers, but any decision so arrived at must be confirmed at the next meeting.

(4) Subject to the other provisions of this section, the Council may make rules governing its procedure.

(5) A member of the Council vacates his or her membership if the member is absent from 3 consecutive meetings of the Council without the approval of the Council.

(6) If a member vacates his or her membership under subsection (4), the Chairperson must advise the member, in writing, of the effective date of vacation of membership.

#### Employment of staff

6. (1) The Council may appoint a Secretary and such other staff as it considers necessary for the performance of its functions.

(2) The salaries and emoluments of the staff of the Council are as fixed by the Council.

#### Functions of the Council

7. The functions of the Council are -

(a) to regulate the content or conduct of the print and broadcast media according to the Code;

(b) to safeguard and be an advocate for media freedom;

(c) to investigate complaints against the media through the Complaints Committee;

(d) to advise on media training;

(e) to carry out other functions under this Act or any other written law.

#### Finances of the Council

8. (1) The funds of the Council consist of –

(a) subscriptions from the media;

(b) any other money received by or on behalf of the Council.

(2) The Council may determine the subscriptions from the media and may fix different rates for media outlets, publishers and journalists.

(3) The Council must keep proper books of account, which must be audited annually by an auditor appointed by the Council.

#### Annual Report

9. The Council must produce an annual report and audited statement of its accounts for public information within 3 months of the close of each financial year.

#### Complaints Committee

10. (1) This section establishes the Complaints Committee of the Council to regulate adherence to the Code.

(2) The Complaints Committee consists of –

(a) the Chairman of the Council; and

(b) two other persons appointed by the Council who are not members of the Council.

(3) When adjudicating on a complaint the Complaints Committee may be advised by an independent publisher or broadcaster who is a member of the Council and who represents the relevant medium and a senior journalists, but neither adviser is entitled to vote on decisions of the Committee.

#### Procedure for Complaints

11. (1) The Committee may, on its own volition, also consider matters of public concern relating to any breach of the Code.

(2) The Council may make rules and procedures for the Complaints Committee.

#### Media Code of Ethics and Practice

12. (1) In adjudicating on a complaint, the Complaints Committee must have regard to the Media Code of Ethics and Practice set out in Schedule 2.

(2) A breach of the Code by a publisher, broadcaster, or a media outlet is a prima facie ground for a finding against the publisher, broadcaster or media outlet by the Complaints Committee.

#### Appeals Committee

13. – (1) This section establishes the Appeals Committee of the Council consisting of –

(a) the Deputy Chairperson of the Council/a legal practitioner who is qualified to be a judge, appointed by the Council; and

(b) one representative each from the members of the Council representing the media outlet and the public, appointed by the Council.

(2) The Appeals Committee may hear an appeal from the Complaints Committee and make recommendations to the Council.

(3) The Council may, after receiving the recommendations of the Appeals Committee –

(a) dismiss the appeal;

(b) allow the Appeal and vary the decision or make a new decision.

(4) A person who is aggrieved with the decision of the Complaints Committee may appeal to the Council, and Council must refer the appeal to the Appeals Committee.

(5) If the Council is satisfied that an appeal is frivolous or vexatious, the Council may refuse to refer the appeal to the Appeals Committee, and the Council must advise the appellant and state its reasons.

#### Offences

14. A person who fails to appear before the Complaints Committee or Appeals Committee to produce a relevant document when required by the Committee commits an offence and is liable on conviction to a fine of [\$2,000.]

Regulations

15. – (1) The Minister may, on the advice of the Council, make regulations to give effect to the provisions of this Act.

(2) The Minister may, on the advice of the Council, amend Schedule 1 or 2 by regulations.

Repeal and saving

16. (1) The Press Correction Act (Cap. 107) is repealed.

(2) The Media Council, which existed at the commencement of this Act, is dissolved and any of its assets and liabilities are transferred and vested to the Council established by this Act.

(3) Any complaints pending at the commencement of this continues as if they were made under this Act and are to be disposed of under the provisions of this Act.

**SCHEDULE 1**

(Section 4(1)(b))

**MEDIA OUTLETS REPRESENTATIVES**

**MEDIA OUTLETS NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES**

Newspapers	3
Radio Broadcast	2
Television	1
Journalists	2
Magazines	2
Electronic Media	1
Public Relations	1
Audio Visual	1

## Appendix 14: STATEMENT ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION FOR THE COMMONWEALTH

Source: Martin, Robert (1999). *Speaking Freely: Expression and the Law in the Commonwealth*. Toronto: Faculty of Law, University of Western Ontario, pp 685-692.

# STATEMENT ON FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION FOR THE COMMONWEALTH

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**F**reedom of expression is a universal human right. Freedom of expression is enshrined in many international and regional instruments, most notably the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. Respect for freedom of expression inheres in the Commonwealth as an organization and is implicit in the *Harare Declaration* of 1991, which recognizes democracy, just and honest government, and human rights as fundamental political values of the Commonwealth. The constitutions of many democratic states contain formally entrenched protection for freedom of expression.

While freedom of expression is a universal human right, the diversity of peoples and cultures that make up the Commonwealth must be acknowledged. Uniformity in the implementation and protection of freedom of expression is unnecessary. There is, nonetheless, a core of common principles at the heart of freedom of expression.

Freedom of expression means the freedom to receive and impart ideas, opinions, and information without interference, hindrance, or intimidation. It belongs to all persons and may be exercised through speaking, writing, publishing and broadcasting, or through physical acts.

Freedom of expression is the primary freedom, an essential precondition to the exercise of other freedoms. It is the foundation upon which other rights and freedoms arise.

New technologies as well as developments in older technologies are transforming the practice of freedom of expression.

Freedom of expression is not licence. Freedom of expression may be limited in order to respect other social interests that are of pressing and substantial significance. Persons who exercise freedom of expression are under an obligation to do so responsibly and in a manner consistent with established ethical notions.

The principles that follow constitute a basis for the recognition of freedom of expression in a democratic legal system.

## **A. OWNERSHIP AND REGULATION OF THE MASS MEDIA**

There should be pluralism in the ownership and diversity in the content of the mass media. Pluralism will make it possible for a variety of voices to be heard.

While technology, especially in broadcasting, is changing rapidly, there should be separate legal regimes for the print and broadcasting media that reflect their different characteristics.

### **1) Locally Owned Mass Media**

#### **a) Electronic Media**

The goal of pluralism is denied by monopoly ownership, whether on the part of the state or commercial interests. The balance to be achieved in a particular state will depend on the level of economic development in that state. State ownership of the broadcasting media does not necessitate government control of what is broadcast.

State licensing of broadcasters is the norm in the world today. The licensing body should be autonomous and independent of direct government control. Licences must be awarded, denied, cancelled, or suspended according to established and published criteria. The process of the licensing body must be open and non-discriminatory. It is legitimate for a state to establish licensing criteria that deny broadcasting licences to non-citizens.

#### **b) Print Media**

The overriding goal of pluralism will be frustrated by monopoly ownership.

The licensing of newspapers, journals and magazines by the state is unacceptable.

The state may establish rules that limit the extent to which the same individuals or corporations may own both print and broadcasting media.

While it is legitimate for the state to own and produce a range of journals and publications, other printed publications, whether owned by individuals, corporations, or institutions, should not be directly regulated by the state. Such publications may be subject to laws of general application that provide for the governance and control of businesses and private corporations.

## **2) Foreign-Owned Mass Media**

It is legitimate for states to resist the homogenization of the mass media. States may adopt measures designed to regulate the penetration of foreign broadcasting; there is no justification for imposing restrictions on the distribution of foreign newspapers or journals. The most efficacious means of protecting indigenous culture is through encouraging and supporting local broadcasting, rather than through prohibiting or unduly restricting foreign broadcasting.

## **3) Access**

Legal rules that mandate general public access to the mass media are not necessary. Nonetheless, governments and media corporations should seek to encourage the presentation of diverse points of view. Governments should encourage and facilitate the development of community-based radio, television, and newspapers.

A right of reply for opposing sides on controversial issues should be recognized and enforceable by law where persons establish that their reputations have been damaged or that untrue information about them has been published. There should be a corresponding obligation on the mass media to correct errors and misstatements.

There should be formal rules that guarantee equitable access to the mass media for candidates and political parties during election campaigns.

## **4) Administrative Issues**

The allocation of foreign exchange, the administration of import licensing, the imposition of taxation, and the placing of government advertising can all be used in ways that limit freedom of expression and adversely affect the mass media. Such negative practices are unacceptable. On the other hand, positive practices such as tax advantages or the allocation of newsprint can be used in an affirmative fashion to benefit smaller, community-based broadcasters or publishers.

## B. CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTION OF FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Freedom of expression should receive express, formal protection in written constitutions. This protection should reflect existing international human rights standards. Where this has not already happened, international human rights standards should be formally incorporated into national constitutions. If a new constitution is being adopted, or an older constitution is being revised, the guarantee of freedom of expression should be straightforward, direct and in non-technical language. Courts and governments should give effect to guarantees of freedom of expression in national constitutions and as provided by international law.

## C. JUDICIAL PROCEEDINGS AND CONTEMPT OF COURT

### 1) Openness

Constitutional guarantees of rights should expressly recognize that, as a matter of principle, judicial proceedings are open to the public and to the mass media.

### 2) Contempt of Court

The law of contempt of court should be set out in statutory form in order to preclude arbitrariness and excessive use of judicial discretion.

In a democracy there is a need for robust criticism of judicial decisions. The trend towards abandoning or narrowing the offence of scandalizing the court is sound. Nevertheless, in extreme cases malicious and deliberate attacks on the judicial institution or on judges as members of that institution may be punished by the state.

It is also legitimate for the state to impose sanctions on media interference with the due administration of justice. Anyone accused of the offence of interference with the administration of justice must be accorded all the rights normally associated with criminal prosecutions. Furthermore, before anyone may be convicted of this offence, the prosecutor must prove that the accused created a real and substantial risk of prejudice to the outcome of a proceeding actually before the courts.

### 3) Journalistic Privilege

The question of the possible revelation by a journalist called as a witness in a judicial proceeding of information received in confidence from a source raises a conflict between two public interests. These interests are freedom of expression and the free circulation of information, on the one hand, and the integrity of the judicial process, which depends on all relevant and necessary information being available to a court, on the other. A broad discretion should be given to judges to balance these interests. In exercising this discretion judges should avoid requiring any unnecessary revelation of confidential information. Among the factors a judge should consider are the seriousness of the matter before the court, the possibility of harm to the source or the journalist, and the general effect on sources of information. The more open is the flow of information in a society, the less the need for journalists to rely on confidential sources.

### 4) Searches of Newsrooms

Searches of media newsrooms can have a chilling effect on freedom of expression. Such searches should be permitted only pursuant to a warrant issued by a judicial officer in accordance with established law. A warrant for the search of a newsroom should be issued only as a last resort and may permit the persons executing it to search only for specified items.

## D. STATE SECURITY AND PUBLIC ORDER

### 1) Security Issues

The constitutional authority to declare a state of emergency should not be exercised unless, in the words of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, the "life of the nation" is threatened. The use of colonial emergency provisions is to be deplored. Existing colonial emergency laws should be replaced. New legislation should conform to international law. Emergency powers must never be used as a substitute for the normal system of government. States of emergency should be rare and they should be brief. Preventive detention should be permitted only pursuant to a formal declaration of an emergency.

The journalist, operating in good faith, should not become the object of emergency laws or other public security provisions. But the journalist who ceases to operate as a journalist and becomes an activist or a partisan must be prepared to accept full responsibility for such behaviour.

The law of criminal libel, if not already repealed, should only be used to protect public order; it should not be used to control expression.

The objective of promoting relations with friendly states is not a legitimate basis for limiting free expression.

## **2) State Information Issues**

The practice of governmental secrecy is a relic of earlier times. The goal should be to achieve maximum openness in government. Where it does not exist, access to information legislation should be enacted. Such legislation will recognise access to information as a basic principle. Limits on access should be few and carefully defined. The monetary costs of access to information should be reasonable. There should be independent review of refusals to permit access.

## **E. THE JOURNALIST AS EMPLOYEE**

Free expression does not belong exclusively to employers and managers. Rather, free expression requires that journalists enjoy substantial professional independence. The terms of employment of journalists should respect and reflect this requirement.

Freedom of expression demands the recognition of journalists' professional associations and unions. Journalists' unions play an essential role in protecting journalists and advancing professional standards.

## **F. PROTECTING SOCIAL VALUES AND SOCIAL GROUPS**

Most Commonwealth states are multicultural, which is to say they contain a multiplicity of cultural, ethnic, linguistic, or religious groups. The mass media can be a positive force in promoting harmony in such societies, but they can also be a negative force and promote hostility and hatred. Journalists in multicultural societies bear special responsibilities for the way they exercise their freedom of expression.

It is legitimate for the state to suppress and to use criminal sanctions against public statements which can be proved to be promotion or advocacy of hatred or incitement to violence on the basis of race, religion, ethnic or linguistic group membership, sex or sexual orientation.

It is not legitimate for the state to prohibit or limit the public or private use of any language.

The law with respect to obscenity and pornography must arise from, and respect the values of, the society in which it operates. States have a special responsibility for eliminating child pornography.

The question of depictions of violence in the mass media should be addressed through self-regulation.

The offence of blasphemy or blasphemous libel should be repealed or restricted in its scope. The state may limit the public denigration of religious beliefs, but it should not interfere with the discussion of religious issues.

Journalists should establish professional codes and standards governing these matters.

The media and advertisers should develop codes that establish standards for advertising.

## G. PRIVATE RIGHTS

### 1) Civil Defamation

We do not favour fundamental reform in the law of defamation. The law should continue to strike an appropriate balance between the protection of reputation and freedom of expression. Commonwealth states should not follow the direction taken in the United States of affording special protection to those who defame so-called "public figures" unless there is proof of malice. While open criticism of public figures is healthy and desirable, we believe that the US approach leads to bad journalism, civic unfairness and unfair and unreasonable attacks on people in public life.

Some reforms are desirable. There should be consideration of new remedies in defamation actions, including correction and a right of reply. Where damages are to be awarded, the awards should be moderate and consistent. Speed and expedition in the resolution of defamation actions should be encouraged and serious efforts should be made to reduce their costs and technicality. Finally, government departments and ministries, state corporations, and parastatals should not have the legal capacity to sue as plaintiffs in defamation actions.

### 2) Privacy

A feature of contemporary media practice is intrusion into what should be the private lives of individuals, especially persons who are neither officials nor public figures. The law has so far failed to address this situation ade-

quately. This must be rectified. In particular, intrusions by reporters and photographers and the hounding of persons targeted by the mass media should be regulated. At the same time, respect for the privacy of individuals should be reflected in journalists' codes of ethics.

## **H. PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE MASS MEDIA**

### **1) Press Councils**

The establishment of Press Councils is to be encouraged. Press Councils need to be strengthened and should encourage the trend towards media self-regulation.

The tripartite model, structured around the separate and distinct interests of the public, journalists, and media owners or managers is to be preferred. Press councils should not be the forum, however, for the resolution of purely employer-employee disputes.

### **2) Codes of Ethics**

Journalism should remain an unregulated profession. The adoption of Codes of Ethics should be encouraged. Such codes should be created and administered by journalists, not by the state.

Amongst other matters, Codes of Ethics must require that journalists maintain high standards of integrity, honesty and accuracy; avoid disinformation; steadfastly refuse to be manipulated by, or become propagandists for, governments, corporations, or political or other interests; and scrupulously maintain the distinction between presenting facts and presenting opinions.

A unique set of challenges to journalistic ethics and practices arises when journalists confront terrorism or armed insurgency. Journalists may become targets both in order to achieve publicity and to prevent the objective reporting of events. New legal and professional responses to these realities must be fashioned.

### **3) Ombudsmen**

The spread of the institution of internal media ombudsmen should be encouraged. The practical value of ombudsmen lies in promoting the resolution of disputes between the media and their readers, listeners, and viewers.

## Appendix 15: FOCUS AND INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

### 1. DULCIANA SOMARE



***Tok Pisin reporter for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation bureau in Papua New Guinea. Aged 28. Audiotaped interview in Port Moresby, PNG, 26 April 2001.***

***Email address: [abcnews@daltron.com.pg](mailto:abcnews@daltron.com.pg)***

*Q: Could you give some background about yourself and how you got started as a journalist on Radio Australia?*

I am 28 and have only just started working here at the ABC. I've only been here for about six weeks. I was recruited as a broadcast journalist. All my work at the moment is done in Tok Pisin. I'm basically sourcing stories and sending them off to Radio Australia, which then broadcasts them or turns them into programmes. I will either source stories or they ask me to do stories for them. Hopefully, as time goes by I will start to do more English work here.

*Q: How did you embark on a journalism career with ABC?*

As a child, I had always been interested in journalism. I've done a lot of writing. I was heavily involved in PNG politics in one way or another, particularly through my family. My father [founding Prime Minister and current Opposition Leader Sir Michael Somare, himself a pioneering radio journalist and broadcaster] has been a politician in Papua New Guinea for many years, and my brother is also a politician. So it's been something that has been ingrained in each one of us. I write a lot on social awareness issues. I have done so for many years. This is just the next step for me. I've had no official training at all but because I've got a keen interest in social and political — and many — issues about PNG, this was the logical step for me.

*Q: In Papua New Guinea, there are two journalism schools and almost a generation of journalists have had tertiary education, and although you didn't have such a background, how important do you think journalism education is for journalists?*

I think it is very important. We Papua New Guineans don't understand enough of the importance of the integral part of journalism in a democracy — an awareness where all our journalists should start. Aside from the technical know-how of how to go about writing a story, it is just exposure to other things that westerners take for granted but we don't have as part of our culture, as part of our tradition. Predominantly we are raised in traditional and cultural modes different from western culture where every day children and young people are expected to ask questions about stuff, about anything and everything. And parents play a role and information is fed to children at each different stage of their development. Young people are encouraged to know what's going on in their surroundings and in their society.

In Papua New Guinea, that's not encouraged enough. It's a whole series of things that you would sort of need a few days to talk about. Education is so important in that it locks us into asking questions; it locks us into just being aware of stuff that most other people take for

granted. But it's your job to be asking questions. You need to know how to do it and why you are doing it.

*Q: What does your news organisation — you can answer this about the ABC here as well as with your experience at Nau FM (PNG FM Ltd) — believe journalists should be prepared for their career?*

ABC and PNG FM obviously have very different guidelines. At PNG FM, because it was a commercial institution, when I started there I found young school leavers from well-to-do families predominantly who had come out of school in Australia and been given some sort of an exposure. There wasn't really a focus on whether or not you had qualifications or how many years you did at Divine Word or UPNG, or whether you had a communications degree. This was at the time that I was there in late 1997ish. You had to have a bit of get-up-and-go. They were just after outgoing personalities.

And coming to work with the ABC, I responded to an advertisement for a vacancy for a broadcast journalist. And it didn't stipulate that you needed to have any kind of qualification although it would have been handy. And as far as I was concerned the job with the ABC had my name on it.

*Q: What do you think is the essential role of a journalist in the Pacific?*

Our role is so broad. I think we're really lucky as journalists in Papua New Guinea to be able to be given the opportunity — we're media watchdogs, and we provide information to people who wouldn't otherwise be in a position to acquire information on anything. Potentially we have such a powerful role because so many people don't question why they see and what they hear. It appears in the media, or they hear from other people. It feels quite dangerous and important at the same time because we're in control of something quite huge.

*Q: You mentioned the watchdog role. How important are such concepts as the watchdog and Fourth Estate for Papua New Guinean journalists?*

I feel that being in Papua New Guinea, those roles such as a watchdog are not represented and executed, as they should be. When something will appear in the paper, and there are questions — or there should be questions. How much of this is based on fact? Or did this person do this? We don't scratch the surface enough in Papua New Guinea. My role working for the ABC is obviously going to be quite different, I'm a few steps away from what a Papua New Guinean journalist does for a Papua New Guinean establishment. There isn't enough investigative stuff happening. People go along and report the facts and that's all there is. And I just feel that stories in Papua New Guinea are poorly done. They feature isolated incidents. And nobody will relate it to the history, or what it's really related to, like a chain of events that played up to that incident. That's why I say it is dangerous. It's dangerous because we're not allowing our people the opportunity ... we're supposed to be the experts and we are supposed to put it all together. And I don't think we are doing that enough in PNG.

*Q: So what is the missing link? Why isn't this happening?*

I don't know. It is really hard. I feel really fortunate with my exposure as a young person as I went to school in Australia from when I was eleven years old. So most of my development, mentality and values are very western, if you like. And so when I talked about the questioning, whatever the context, and I feel that I was very fortunate because I had lots of opportunities to be able to do stuff, to see stuff, to answer questions, to ask questions in my head, and to be able to come to some sort of conclusion — according to my values — about what I wanted from any particular situation. What is lacking in PNG is ... well these are comfort zones that we have here. Whether it is to do with fear because people don't question enough: if I don't know then that's fine. The thing is it is relative. It is very difficult to live here.

And I think that could be another related issue. I just feel that people aren't going to ask questions in the same way. I always talk about these Australians; they carry on so much over fuel prices. It's gone up by one cent and they carry on about it. How important is that? But after

I had those thoughts, it's brilliant. Something has happened. They don't like it. So you're going to hear about it John Howard. And for us, we have really controversial stuff like Sandline that was in the paper for a couple of weeks. And then after that it is just part of our history now. Every now and then we sort of refer to it. But it is not something that has changed the way that we will live our lives in the medium term. It might be in the long term. It's hard enough to get by every day. It costs the same amount of money for people to buy a bag of rice in the shop. So you're not about to go and get involved in anything else. A whole series of social issues come into that.

*Q: This touches on my next question. Politicians in the Pacific, and in PNG, throw up this notion of development journalism. What does the phrase mean and how important is it to Papua New Guinean journalists?*

I have to rethink what I'm going to say here.

*Q: You've partly addressed this already, but how well informed are media audiences in Papua New Guinea?*

They know enough ... You'll find it in conversation with people living in towns and you ask them something, and they'll tell you what they think you want to hear. And that's the way I believe everything is reported in the papers, it's the way television happens. You watch the news and people will say what they think you want to hear. So how does that work when your job is to provide the facts? There is that famous line about 'never let the facts get in the way of a good story'. I'm not sure what it's about. But I always feel when I see stuff in the paper, particularly about my father who was down sick recently. And I think there was about one sentence in the whole six-paragraph story that was based on fact. The rest of it was just stuff that someone had guessed about and they actually had the audacity to put it in the paper. Audiences in Papua New Guinea need to ask more and say give as a fair go.

*Q: Is there an adequate process for redress for the public when the media haven't given them a fair go?*

Yes, this is the sort of question that we are all banging our heads about every day. It is all part of the media development progress. We have come comparatively a long way in the short time that we have been independent. And I think we still have a fair way to go to work out what our people actually get at the end of the day. In terms of processes, it becomes really difficult. If you're a woman it's going to be hard because you're not going to be heard in the way you expect to be heard. Or a lot of women don't even think that they should have independence.

*Q: How are journalists actually perceived in Papua New Guinea?*

Journalists are seen as just another job, but it's not. It's not that I think that they should role out the red carpet for journalists, but I do think there should be some recognition and in turn there should be some responsibility.

*Q: Do you think journalists actually influence public opinion?*

Absolutely. It's amazing how we saw it recently with the PNG Defence Force upheaval. It was an opportunity for somebody to pass the buck and say it was not us doing it, it was actually the media blowing this all out of proportion. But it was actually a situation where every morning the people listened to the radio and waited for the paper to come out to find out what the developments were. Anything that came out was as good as gospel. It was really frightening to see that some of the media establishments here had come out with completely the wrong thing. And people had listened to this and reacted to it. When lots of people's lives or livelihoods are at stake it just becomes frightening in terms of how much people do listen to, or respect the media. You probably get that throughout the world with people reacting to the media. But in Papua New Guinea, people don't react in the way the world expects.

*Q: What are the salary structures like in Papua New Guinea for journalists and is there a sufficient career path?*

Across the board, salary structures are pretty appalling. It is just becomes obvious to outsiders and people that think about stuff that journalists are not going to be able to report following neutral processes. You're going to have a bit of a bias. If you are working for an absolutely meagre wage that's not going to get you through much, your opinions are going to be able to be changed or swayed with a bit of influence. Somebody is going to be able persuade you basically, with a bit of cash or some sort of incentive.

*Q: Does it happen much?*

I have a general feeling — my personal opinion and not based on anything — that processes are not followed by public servants because somebody has a bigger need and will take a shortcut. And I don't think we can exclude journalists. In the case of the Skate Tapes revelation about journalists being allegedly paid, we had the opportunity of one incident being taped. I think it would be pretty embarrassing if other incidents were taped. I think it is rife.

*Q: Should freedom of the press reflect free expression of the media, or free expression for the public and interest groups?*

Both. But I don't think we consider the importance of media freedom enough. I notice that in our newspapers at the moment a lot of stuff starting to unfold about the perception of our political leaders and the responsibility that they have to our people. Those things haven't been able to come unto fruition for many years now. And a lot of it's unfolding and we're seeing what's going on. The importance of media freedom now is that it's time for us to be able to come out and report what's going on. We need to be investigative about stuff, to use initiative, and to calculate and understand things based on what our values are. Don't be completely oblivious. Don't just go in there and write a story and don't relate it to its context. The story I'm writing today is based on the Highlanders and in Highlands society these are the sets of rules that they live by — when you can and cannot do this. When you're reporting it's got to be appropriate and you've got to have the whole picture.

*Q: This applies to the role of investigative journalism and sources and so on. Do news media give sufficient encouragement and support to investigative journalism?*

We don't do enough. There has been one newspaper in Papua New Guinea that does stories that don't come out in our mainstream daily press...

*Q: The Independent?*

Yes, *The Independent*. And every now and then they come out with a grasp of what's really going on. Whether its perception, whether its facts, or whether someone has gone off the beaten track, everyone has seen it, but nobody has been able to deliver it back to the people in an informative and useful manner.

*Q: Is culture then a problem for investigative journalism?*

Yes, it feels like it is at every different level in Papua New Guinea. Like I said before, I have had every opportunity to go out and be a person, and a girl child, and I am very comfortable with that. Coming back to Papua New Guinea, everything is so loaded. First you are a wife, then you're a mother, or you're the daughter of this person. How you carry out such a very important task being a woman is difficult. And emotionally it is hard, it wrecks people. It is so different whether you grow up as a boy does, or as a girl, and the responsibilities.

At one level, it is very difficult to acquire any amount of useful information that you will be able to use. This is purely in terms of reporting. On the other hand, people will happily spill their guts at the drop of a hat. And there doesn't seem to be the protocol attached to certain issues that need to be treated as if they were confidential. Sometimes how Papua New Guineans tell a story and what is actually happening on the ground is something totally different. The understanding then by the foreign media then ... and it's wrong to place the blame on anyone because it is the reaction between lots of different cultures. I know speaking to my mother what she's trying to tell me is not necessarily what it is. And like a police commander who was talking about something that needed to be ... you've got to hold back a bit, find out, and say I'm

not happy to divulge this information just because my reports haven't be confirmed yet. And that's all you need to say. But instead, he's gone and said it, and it becomes a free-for-all for everyone then. And he didn't even bother asking me who I was. And if you start looking at it in those terms here it become a bit frightening.

During the time of the PNG Defence Force drama and PNG FM had come out and given the wrong information about something [a false report saying then Opposition Leader Bill Skate had died]. An apology came out the next day. But how is that good enough? That information was out there now and heads should have been rolling at the time. I operate on a level where something I would not report on because I am frightened about it and because I have a responsibility to my country as well as to the establishment that work for.

When we talk upon the responsibility of journalists the emphasis that needs to be put on how important it is to get something right the first time isn't here. It just isn't. It is okay to come out and say sorry the next day and you are forever seeing apologies.

*Q: The damage is done?*

That's right, the damage is done.

*Q: Whatever the apologies, or whatever the clarifications, or whatever, it never matches the harm that has been done.*

You can retract, and you come out and say this person apologises for it. But I'm sorry; it's not good enough. It went out the first time, and we just need to be more stringent about it in the first place. I haven't had enough experience in journalism. This is from someone who has seen things from both sides. Like I have been operating as a media person and also as part of the audience. And it isn't good enough. I don't know gets slapped about the wrists and when. And whose job it is to do that. I don't know whether there should be legislation, or a regulating body that says, "Pull your heads in — these are the responsibilities and these are the guidelines". They need to be defined more and made clearer. It's bigger than regulation and control and

what authority says this, that and the other. It is about us as people and the all-time lowness of morale in Papua New Guinea. The way we conduct ourselves in the media is no different than what is happening in the rest of society.

*Q: I asked you earlier about development journalism?*

As I am say I am very much finding my feet. I talk to you today as someone who has just turned up in media circles, and is now hoping to do a job and I hope very well and as neutral as I possibly can. And also as someone who sat in the audience for a long time.

I don't know what politicians hope for in developing the media. I guess that's really something I'll have to think about; I'm not really certain about that question.

*Q: A last question is really whether you have any comment on any issue you would like to raise, which hasn't come up in this interview?*

No, I think we have pretty much talked about everything and anything. But one thing I really would like to say is that I was doing a story yesterday and I was interviewing a woman leader up in Goroka. And everything she had said, and everything that was part of her experience, or what she had felt, was part of the wider community. Often women in Papua New Guinea particularly grasp the real issues. We get caned for being emotional about stuff, but there's got to be an element of that in Papua New Guinea, particularly in the media. You don't want to be an emotional wreck, but by the same token you don't want to be on the level that so many of the men seem to operate in Papua New Guinea. Women seem to grasp issues in a more wholesome way, because they automatically take into consideration that they are the leaders in their families, and they are the teachers in their families. Whether information is going to be disseminated it has got to be thought through. Young women need to be encouraged. While people say you've got it made, you're better off than most developing nations — whose standards are they, and why can't we in PNG's women decide our own standards?

But until such time as we have more women who are at the forefront of giving information, the people are going to start to look at it and think, 'Okay, they have got something to say'.

Changes have been made and they have been responsible for those changes. So I think that in terms of the respect that women will start to acquire over the years, there has to be more of a push for young women particularly to be conscious of the issues and get out there and talk about them.

## 2. RICHARD DINNEN



***Foreign correspondent in the Australian Broadcasting Corporation bureau in Papua New Guinea. Aged 42. Audiotaped interview in Port Moresby, 26 April 2001.***

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*Q: Could you give some background about yourself as a journalist and how you became foreign correspondent?*

I have been in journalism since 1983. I studied law prior to that and I was lucky to get a job with commercial radio station in Sydney. And I worked in print and radio for several years and came to the ABC in 1989. Shortly after I began to specialise in international coverage, mostly as a desk editor in the radio newsroom in Sydney. Around 1995, the Pacific correspondent's position became available and I did that from 1996-1999. That involved a job based in Sydney

but with extensive travel around the South Pacific, excluding Papua New Guinea, which was always Sean Dorney's patch. Then at the end of 1998 the ABC made a decision that Sean's long run here would come to an end and the position was advertised internally. And I was the lucky winner and came up here in January 1999, and I have been here ever since.

*Q: Weren't you also editor of Pacific Islands Monthly at one stage?*

Oh yes, back around 1988-89, a friend of mine had been the editor of it for a while [Carson Creagh] and he actually moved up to come and work for the *Post-Courier* for a while. So the position was vacant. I was officially acting editor in its last several issues out of Australia and it then moved to Suva at the end of that period. I was offered the chance to move with it but at the time it was just two years after the coup and Fiji didn't seem to me to be the right place for me at the time.

*Q: Unlike the rest of the Pacific, Papua New Guinea has almost a generation of journalists trained and educated by the country's two journalism schools, one founded by New Zealand aid (UPNG). Do you think this has had an impact on standards in journalism in the country?*

I think you can see that when you look through the generational changes in journalists since independence and now and those whom I have met and have experienced. I look at some of the ones who are now probably a bit older and who would have come that early period of training that came from things like the New Zealand support, and I guess the ABC. which trained a lot of broadcasters prior to independence, and you can see a very high standard for a nation that was just brand new. But as time went by probably the standards of training went through various fluctuations. They probably came in at a very high level, dropped down a bit, and came up again, as funding and other issues affected the courses over the twenty-five years.

So there is a bit of impression in the industry that after that first wave of quite big achievers it has fluctuated since then in terms of the textbook knowledge and training that they got before they started. You keep coming across people all over the country who had training from the late

1970s and early 1980s and it has certainly had an impact on them. They probably had a bit more — and I'm not saying that this is a good thing — of an awareness of other ways from outside that gave them a bit of a start. And at times now I do look at the crop today and they don't seem to have the sense of the possibilities. I don't think they quite realise what they can do with what they've got. The earlier generation of journalists, and some of them in quite recent times, seemed to have more heightened sense of what they can achieve and their responsibilities.

*Q: What factors do you think contributed to this change?*

I think resources would be the major one — not just money for the training or university courses, but the money that it costs for a newsroom or a news organisation to free somebody up. You always need more, a little bit more training, and exposure to do different things. And for local media organisations to let their staff go for a week or two has a real cost. No one's rolling with money at the moment. So I think that's one of the reasons.

I think we do have an almost entirely commercial media in Papua New Guinea. Everybody is out there in some way trying to make money out of what they do. And the ABC is the great luxury of non-commercial broadcasters so we're not under quite the same pressure. The pressure to run a profitable organisation, to make a balance sheet look as good as it can in a difficult economic environment mitigate against spending money on quality on product like taking broadcasters out and giving them extra training and experience. And sending them away on assignments. Like when the Bougainville leaders go off to Townsville, all the radio stations should have been there. To their credit, a couple of the newspapers and the NBC did go. But the popular end of the radio, the commercial end, should have been there because of the experience that journalists get even if they didn't do much of a story. There is a whole other level of the way to operate in the environment of Townsville. They can write a feature about people in

Townsville, write a report about another place. So that exposure to different influences and experience cost us money and I think that's the biggest impediment.

And I'm not surprised. Somewhere in the background I had this thought about some of the media organisations — I'm not expressing this terribly well — the daily grind is to get your newspaper out and to fill your news bulletin. And if you do that then I guess that's enough, but you could always be doing a little more. You could fill it in a slightly different way, or a different level of quality, or with a broader range of stories. And I don't think the news organisations, or the people that manage them, quite see they could take it further, or how they could take it further. They fill up the top of the hour, but what about the longer range. What will we do tomorrow, what about getting an agenda going? It's a product and they deliver it. But you can always take it further. I just don't think there's a great sense of that being possible at the moment. With the individual journalist, let alone the management.

Q: There is a perception among some media that it is best to take people straight out of school and mould them, to the newsroom. Others have the view that basic training and education at a journalism school is a better grounding to start in a journalism career. What are your thoughts on this?

I think the obvious one first up is that the person who comes out of the journalism degree is going to be three or four years older than a school leaver. And he or she has been exposed in those years to a wider range of ideas, experiences than someone has fresh out of school. So if you have got a person who is a little more mature, a little more turned on to ideas, and of course who has had some very valuable training, you're going to get someone who comes through the door with a focus on journalism in a practical way. During the degree they would have at least been actually doing journalism in some form. So they arrive with at least the vocabulary which they can speak in the industry.

But with a school leaver you've got someone who might have a lot enthusiasm, but basically from day one if you sent them down to do a story, the person out of a journalism school is going to run rings around the school leaver. I think the process of going through any degree course also really sorts out in that person's head whether this is really the career for them or not. When I started out I wanted to be a lawyer. And I went through the law degree and failed contract miserably two or three times. It was a kind of a tap on the shoulder saying, "Look buddy, this isn't for you" and I was very lucky that life just chucked this opportunity on me and I ran with it. If you had been through three or four years of university and you had made it to the end and you really wanted to be in the industry, then good. The Pacific is a great place to write stories and do all this stuff, it is full of amazing things to talk about and write about. But it's also very hard to do — it is not an easy job. There are a lot of pressures in small island nations that don't exist elsewhere and you've really got to want to do it. It's not a job for people who just want to work nine-to-five and get a pay a cheque at the end of the week. And I guess it is a region where there are good, strong academic institutions that operate in very difficult circumstances — the USP kind, where you have a regional university, that is a big challenge to reach out and do that. It's not a region that has a strong academic culture. There are pockets of it and they do a great job, but it's not really the kind of thing that people say, "Guess what I am doing after leaving school, I'm going to university". And the fact that there are these possibilities for journalists to go out and get a bit of exposure to this academic style of knowledge and learning will stand them very good stead. It will teach them how to research; it will teach them how ... just the skills of journalism, but that broader thing about the value of knowledge and the ways you go about getting it. I think that's very valuable too. In the end, you can teach someone the principles at the university but the first day they come into the newsroom is still going to be a real shock. They have got all the theory, and all the knowledge, and a lot of the practical skills. But they still go, "Whoa, how does this work." So it's still going

to be hard for them. But I think it prepares them in many ways, more than just learning about journalism. I think that's the great value.

*Q: How important are concepts such as the Fourth Estate and the watchdog role for Pacific journalists?*

I've never heard an indigenous Pacific Islander use the expression the Fourth estate, I think because it is a term of US origin. But I think there is an awareness of the concept that drives it. The watchdog is one that you do hear people use, like just recently somebody said on the radio, "Let the watchdogs out" and it is always worth a chuckle. I think it's a role that individual journalists that I'm aware of here and in a couple of other places often find very uncomfortable. It's probably one of the reasons they are doing this particular job, or have chosen it, because they see the need — and always in Papua New Guinea there is a need — for a strong sense of the public through various agencies watching and monitoring the actions of its leaders and its governments. There is a prime need for that to be strengthened, and strengthened again. And you have the Ombudsman Commission here and various other agencies, and even the media has a kind of role doing that — which is not terribly well defined. It is a bit vague as you go along on some days.

There are people here who are in it because they see the need and because they feel in some way able to do it. But there are a lot of grey areas about how you actually go about doing it. Papua New Guinea has a place that has that "big man" culture and you see people very respectful and differential to a leader. And there is the whole thing of having to stand up and question the leader in a public forum, or a media conference, is very scary for some of them. They are crossing a lot of social lines there, cultural lines. And they do it quite well. I mean you will hear some of them ask these "killer questions" in very gentle and differential language, and their body language is all very, "Sorry for asking, but where did you hide the money?"

An illustration: I am very wary of naming names and things but there is a discussion I have taken part in with a couple of Papua New Guinean journalists. One had broken a story that caused the government some embarrassment. And the other one had, quite rightly, followed up and reported on it. There was a quite vigorous discussion between the two of them about the idea that by exposing this information the leader was embarrassed. One of them thought well, you know, he is a political leader, he is not a traditional leader or chief. The other one was: "We'll he's just a political leader and if he has done the wrong thing then he deserves to get the consequences. And the other said: "No, leaders have to be treated a certain way and be treated with certain respect". The other one comes back with leadership carries responsibility and if you don't exercise responsibility then you're not a proper leader and you ought to get the consequences.

Quite vigorous discussion and both views were incredibly strongly held. So for one of them there he was being a journalist and writing about this sort of stuff, but in his heart he had this really strong feeling about the leader deserve a certain degree of respect and that special treatment. For someone to have that and also a strong sense of "I am scrutinising the actions of this leader who I am supposed to respect". For a lot of us, all we have to do is go along with a notebook and a pen. Who am I to be some judge of what's right and what's wrong?

I think sometimes that's a very uncomfortable position for people in Papua New Guinea to be in. For me it's easy because the worst that can happen is that I am going to get booted out of the country if I have displeased somebody to that extent — and there are precedents for that in various places around the Pacific. But it is not as if they are going to come back to my wantoks and make trouble for them, or isolate them from their families. I do have a strong sense of what some of these people have to go through to do the basics of journalism that in western countries people wouldn't bat an eyelid about. It would be known to them that if the minister were involved in something shocking — then front page.

*Q: Politicians in Papua New Guinea and the Pacific frequently come up about the need for "development journalism". But there are varying definitions of what this is. How do Pacific journalists view this concept and is it important?*

I don't think the politicians specifically express a definition of what developmental journalism is that makes any sense at a basic English language level. I've heard people use that expression in a way that suggests that we ought to run soft on, we shouldn't be too critical of governments or administrations because they are developing governments and administrations and haven't quite got it together yet. We are getting there and you know ... it is like a young child does something wrong, well you deal with that at a level that is appropriate for the child's age and level of experience. And a lot of people in governments around the Pacific seem to have transplanted that idea into some sort of adult world. Why shouldn't we deal with it by the same standards as, say an Australian or an American government?

What is developmental journalism? I think it probably means more to do with style than content. It means that content has to deal with the issues that arise in a developing country. And I mean some sort of a big story about the economy and you sit there writing about balance of payments and trade deficits all these big words and that economists use. They probably mean nothing to the people that read your paper unless you explain it. Then if developmental journalism exists then I think it is the responsibility to take that information and turn it into a story that makes sense to your audience. And to deal with stories that go around all the time — like the copra industry, and at one level they are deadly boring to anybody not directly connected to the copra industry but they are critical to anybody who reads and whose livelihood depends on the industry. You've got to almost got to get out of Port Moresby, get out of the capital city, and get out of the political circuit and go to grassroots places and write about things and report about things in those places.

We've had quite a debate here recently about the content of local media, and to some extent my stuff as well. You know that you're reporting about Papua New Guinea is largely the reporting of Port Moresby. And rural areas don't get quite the attention that they should. The stuff that goes on out there, issues journalism rather than just news stories. So and so got attacked in a market at such and such a place is a news story. But the developmental journalism model should be looking at *why* did he get attacked in the market. There is a story there somewhere. It's because his stall was meant for somebody else's stall, or there was some history between them, or some local information that makes sense of that. We don't do enough of that. It is very difficult because it's an expensive place to travel and go and do those kinds of stories. But it's a developing nation, and the places where it is developing are not Port Moresby, they are out and about. The focus of any developmental journalism has to be much more grassroots. I think a lot of the journalism in the Pacific writes for an educated elite. We should not ignore them because they are the people driving the economy and making the decisions, but you ignore the rest of the population at great peril. That's wrong.

*Q: How well informed are news media audiences and readerships in Papua New Guinea?*

About news and information?

*Q: In terms of how they relate they are to the information, how well informed they are on issues, and how critically they evaluate the information?*

It's a hard one to answer. Everywhere I have ever travelled in Papua New Guinea, when you fly into any place in the morning the odds are that in the cargo hold of your plane there will be a bundle of newspapers going out of Moresby up to wherever it is. And there will always be people who come down to wait for their newspaper. There is a real hunger and thirst for knowledge and more information about what's going on in the place. It's human. And the people who publish say *Wantok* might say they sell x number of copies, but four or five times that number of people actually read the paper and share it around. As to how critically it is read,

I think at one level there is quite a critical readership or audience out there. But I don't think it is that big. There is something that we talk about a lot. There is a tendency to accept public statements or people in public life too much at face value, quite uncritically.

And I guess something that I'd like to see happen, where it is appropriate, is a more analytical approach to reporting. You often go through the papers particularly — and they are the real bastion of journalism in this country, the broadcast media has got a way to before it realises the potential that it has —and you get an absolute hunger for what you'd call in Australia a "think piece". You know, on the front page is your little story of what happened, and then you go a few pages and then there would be an expert, a person with great knowledge of this subject, who has been asked to write 1000 words about what it means, why it is, and where it will go next — the deeper questions. There are people who do that with great distinction. But there aren't enough of them. There isn't enough explaining what this means. A lot of people are ready more than they are currently getting, to get more analysis, explanation, interpretation, rather than just straight reporting.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in Papua New Guinea?*

I don't think outside of Port Moresby there is a great understanding of what we actually do. I think there is degree of respect for our role. Some of the better known newspaper journalists have got a bit of a following, and people have views about their stuff. Perhaps they think such and such a reporter favours a certain opinion ... They do talk about that fellow, oh, he's on with PNM, or he's involved with this or that. They do have quite strong perceptions, quite often not terribly factually based perceptions about what drives media people. A lit bit of a celebrity thing sometimes. Some of the broadcast ones have a touch of fame about them.

I don't know that there's a great deal of understanding of what they do in the sense of how people tend to interact with them. You'll often see an organisational take of a full-page advertisement to run a press statement. If you contact them and talk to them about it and say,

"why didn't you send me the press statement". And they don't sort of see that direct media link of just going direct to the ABC or this one or that one. Some of them feel that if they put a press statement or want to make a public statement, it just won't get a run, so that's why they take out an ad. But often they don't seem to have a really strong sense of ownership of their journalists. I sort of see journalists as being this pipeline between the power structure, authority or administration and the rest of the people. And we sort of inform the people about what's going on up there, and then the people give feedback. Ordinary Papua New Guineans don't have much of a sense of how they can engage with the media.

*Q: How are the salary and wage structures for journalists in Papua New Guinea. Is there adequate provision for journalists to have a career path in the industry?*

I don't think so, and this is entirely anecdotal . It is based on chats that I have had with people I have worked with in the business. I was staggered to find how poorly paid a lot of them are. We recently hired a journalist to replace Ekonia Peni [former NBC journalist now turned lawyer] and I had no idea what the salary structure was. And nobody could really tell me when I asked around. And in the end I based it on the application forms where we had asked people indicate what salary groups they had been in. I was staggered to find people doing jobs in Australia that would earn A\$80,000, A\$90,000 and A\$100,000 a year were getting less than 20,000 kina a year in Papua New Guinea to exercise exceptionally high responsibility. And I think it's really inadequate. But then again there is the overall PNG wage structure, and this is a low wage economy. I would hate to see a situation in which journalists suddenly got paid a whole lot better than they currently do and became an elite. It think it would distance them from the people they should be working with and talking to.

But at the same time, I don't think they are anywhere near sufficiently well compensated for the sorts of work that this involves, and the pressures, the hours and hard work. It is hard work and a lot needs to be looked at, not just the salaries, but the terms and conditions, to make it easier

for the journalists to have a career that they can last in. It is not just here, but I have seen it in Fiji too, where I have asked them how can you survive on that much money? And they have gone off into public relations, or they have gone to work for government. The industry has lost people, but they might have lost them anyway. If you see someone come through the industry whom you think has "got it", and then you want to be able to try to hang on to that person. It's a problem in Australia too, not just in the Pacific.

*Q: How would journalist salaries fit in relation to other professions and jobs in Papua New Guinea? Like secondary schoolteachers, for example?*

In Papua New Guinea, I'm not entirely sure. I would guess that they are probably slightly better paid than high school or primary schoolteachers, depending on the school. If you're talking about teachers at ordinary government schools, then journalists are probably ahead of that. I see journalism as one of the professions. Professions imply higher standards of responsibility, skill bases and all those sorts of things, not just coming into an office and shuffling papers. And that deserves to be rewarded. Journalists are probably somewhere on the higher end of the PNG pay scale, but this is a country where the minimum wage is only twenty, thirty or forty kina — it's not much. It's not some big industry where you can look three or four years into the future, and rising up and making a better deal for yourself. As a career structure, there isn't a clear path. Wherever it exists.

*Q: So this is a factor in why there is such a loss of journalists?*

It's hard and it doesn't pay all that well. Why would you stay if something better came tapping on the door? Because you do in your work as a journalist get exposed to people you'd never meet otherwise — presidents, prime ministers, leaders, and diplomats. You get to meet a lot of big shots, people in industry, chief executives and that sort of people and you can go and chat to them. You have a level access to people that even staff on those organisations doesn't have sometimes. You're a bright, young person and you sit down to interview the chief executive of

a big regional airline, or something, and he looks at you and says right, "You're in". You've got to be exposed to an opportunity all the time. There are a lot of potential ways in which people can be lost to the industry by the day-to-day quiet words. So how do you compete with that?

*Q: Is enough effort being put into investigative journalism in Papua New Guinea?*

If I say no then it sounds like it is not quite what I want to say. You can always do more. Here at the moment we are sort of in the unravelling stage of a period in which a lot of strange things happened. From the time after the 1997 elections until the change of government in 1999 there has been all this stuff like the National Provident Fund, Motor Vehicle Insurance and the way revenue of government-owned enterprises moved around. The allegations about government funds for many years. And all of that is now being unravelled. Some are at official inquiry level and in others issues are being chucked around by politicians and various people. It is a bottomless pit at the moment of stuff that ought to be investigated. And to some extent the saturation point has been reached. I was interviewing somebody a couple of weeks ago, trying to get a handle on how the exposure of all these things has affected public perceptions. And the impression I got was that people were saturated with all this bad news — and they don't want to hear anymore. And perhaps that's one of the reasons why the media have not reported that sort of reporting quite as hard in recent times.

There is so much to investigate here. If you took a programme like *A Current Affair* — I don't cite this as a worthy example — from Australia, the kind of door-knocking stuff, they was just be flat out full time here for the next year. They would be just about able to generate a new programme every day on the stuff that's been going on. You do see it here, but then it's the papers that do what is done. If you had to identify what need to be done, and then it would have to be the broadcasters. They haven't realised their potential. The papers have done a pretty good job. But all of them need to ask, what's next?

It's funny that in a lot of western countries it is often the media that gets the big discovery of some evil deed and exposes it. And then the inquiry comes. And then the repercussions come. Here it has more often the other way around in recent times. There is some little skirmish in the media about an issue and it creates a climate in which an inquiry might happen, or some action might take place. And then the media weighs into it.

*Q: Politicians are quick to criticise standards around the region, but to what degree do Pacific governments actually support journalism education and training, or do they obstruct it?*

There are probably two levels to that question. One is the idea of training, and the other is the way that they relate to media generally in the day-to-day workings of government. At the training level it is hard to see much real commitment from governments. I remember going to a function a few years ago in Fiji where the information minister of the day [Ratu Inoke Kubuabola] made a lovely speech about the importance of media, partners in development and all the right thoughts. But as a government at that time, did they do much to support it? I don't think so. Did they in real practical terms, did they put the cash on the table and say you need this? Industry training, you need that?

To be fair to them, when you're a government with a low revenue base and you're trying to feed people and provide medicine and basic services. In any assessment those things have got to come before any journalism training, I would have thought. But at the same time you've got to find something for it. Journalism training feeds into society in another way, creates more information specialists who can better inform people. It is great value in any society. The running of the university generally here like every other institution struggles to get the money. The government allocation is due for allocation on a certain day and it comes three months late. Well, obviously that causes problems and if you're fair dinkum about journalism training well you just can't let that happen.

The other end of it is that if you want better journalists, part of the responsibility — if you're a government, a leader, or a politician — is to actually engage with them in a mature and positive way. If you don't respond when the journalist calls and asks for your side of the story, and then the journalist goes off and writes something, and you don't like it so you slag them off, well, that's very silly. You had the opportunity to put your case. And if you don't deal with them on that sort of level then you can't expect them to get it right. If you're a leader you are accountable, and one of the ways you are accountable is through the media. You have got to participate.

An example: You go to a media conference with a politician and some journalist will ask a question that is just nonsense. Some bit of gossip or something that he has heard, and it is just fanciful nonsense. And in that exchange between that journalist and the leader, that's an education process as well. Actually doing the job is part of the education and the way that that leader responds to that situation is going to educate that journalist in some way about how do you respond to, "That's a silly question. Where did you get that from?" I don't think in the day-to-day dealings between government and media that government does enough in much case to actually properly informing the media about what it is doing. It is quick to criticise, but it is slow to act proactively in the process of actively engaging with the media.

*Q: Are there are any comments that you would like to make that haven't come in the interview so far?*

There are a couple of things being pushed here at the moment, the media complaints tribunal, and the *Freedom of Information Bill* — this is coming from private people, not from politicians. I would really like to see if it's going to those sorts of things to create mechanisms by which there is important feedback from audiences and people who have contributed to your stories in some way. If they feel aggrieved, in some sort of forum in which that can be dealt with professionally to a predetermined set of standards, I think that is going to be very valuable

for places like this. The freedom of information is something that media organisations regionally should be looking at. And a lot can be done to improve our standards, improve our working conditions, improve our product that we deliver — and look at how the internet has revolutionised it, some people embrace it, others aren't. A lot can be done regionally to strengthen the Pacific media.

### 3. TONY YIANNI



***Managing director of the South Pacific Post Pty Ltd, publisher of the PNG Post-Courier. (He was appointed managing director of the Fiji Times Ltd in October 2001). Audiotaped interview in Port Moresby, PNG, 26 April 2001.***

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*Q: The Post-Courier has been quite innovative in journalism training in the region in the last few years. This is at several levels. I myself recall when at the University of Papua New Guinea for five years that the Post-Courier financially supported both PNG's journalism schools through equipment assistance and publishing newspapers. It had a commitment that has been quite unique in the Pacific. Why is this and what is the rationale for the Post-Courier's policy? Working with the two universities, Papua New Guinea is actually spoiled in the expertise that comes out of the universities. We rely on the universities to bring up our journalists. We've got*

a lot more new media companies here now yet we're not focused enough on developing people ourselves. In other words, getting people from school and developing them. And one of the things that is eroding the universities' contribution to journalists in the country is that in the previous prime minister's day there were certain cutbacks in the university for various reasons. What this does is stifle good learning and free speech. So we have to be more in control of our own destiny. We've done a few things, but we consistently will always support Divine Word and the University of PNG in producing newspaper products that they do. We print Divine Word's publication, which I think comes out quarterly, and also the same with the UPNG publication. We do that free of charge as part of the process of assisting the journalism courses. At the end of the day, nobody does enough training. No matter what we do there will never is enough.

There is a greater need for better journalists today whether it is in PR, or whether it is Government ministries, or whether it is new media that's coming. I mean we've have got so many new media today as opposed to ten years ago. Ten years ago we only had one national daily newspaper, a weekly newspaper, a pidgin weekly newspaper and two radio stations. Today we have got three national radio stations, radio stations in Lae and one for Central, and more regional stations coming up; two national daily newspapers; and I imagine that a few years down the track there will be a second pidgin paper.

*Q: The Post-Courier recently embarked on a new aspect of its training by funding and establishing a new training room for the media industry as a whole in association with the PNG Media Council. Would you explain the reasons for setting up this training centre?*

Papua New Guinea, like a lot of Pacific Island countries, gets a lot of influence from outside, from donor countries, the Commonwealth Press Union, PINA and others, where there are opportunities to go to other countries for a course, or for trainers to come to a particular country to run a course. Now if a radio station has an opportunity for a trainer to come to talk about

defamation then it makes sense to involve the other newspapers and television because it costs a lot of money to bring someone to the country. So instead of training or getting involved with five people, why not get involved with twenty people. So we decided to create a training centre so that everybody could take advantage of trainers coming. We have to take, like I said before, more control of our destiny. So there is no reason why we cannot share training together, which also means we share the cost. If someone was coming over to talk about, say defamation, and then everybody should benefit because regardless of what media you are in, defamation can still occur. And, of course, not everybody stays in the same media.

So I believe we had to create a centre and it wasn't easy because we had to move seven departments to do all this. It cost over 100,000 kina to establish that room. It has everything that you need, except for something that we are going to buy very soon, which is an electronic projector. In other words it can project from a computer onto a screen so that it can be used for subediting training, as well as graphics arts training, and various other training. For anything you want to do, it will make training a lot easier. At the end of the day, training costs a lot of money. One thing that most companies don't do is allocate time for training. However, if you know that somebody is going to come from another country and there is a chance for you to jump on this then you'll make the time because you are going to do it relatively cheaply.

Bringing people to PNG is going to cost a lot. However, if we don't bring people to PNG how are we going to maintain world standards unless we employ a lot of expatriate people in the editorial field. We firmly believe we shouldn't do that because Papua New Guinea people should be in control of their destiny. At all news organisations in PNG, we have Papua New Guineans taking the main editorial roles and all reporting roles. And this is important. For good or for bad, this should never change.

However, you also need to have input from outside areas to make sure that we are maintaining world best standards. It's no good if we don't progress. Today with the internet and all the other

forms of communication everything we do is now being seen worldwide. So we need to improve our practices, maintain best possible standards and the only way to do that is to train. If we do it collectively we'll all grow together. Sure in most other countries the news media is very competitive. We are competitive. However, raising of standards doesn't erode the competition base. In fact, it improves it. And by doing it together, we don't work together in training. We might do it in trying to get advertising revenue or circulation. But when it comes to training, I think the Media Council works very well together. We have been doing it fairly consistently for at least the last five years. And basically it doesn't matter whose idea, or show shows the way, it just has to be done. As I said before we are just spoiled by the universities. All the surveys show that we have probably more university graduates working in the media in Papua New Guinea than any other country. And, like I said, we have to take control of our own destiny. And to do that one media company can't do it. But collectively we can. And we've benefited from it, whether it is working out a code of conduct together — in bringing out a lawyer from Australia to talk about it — or whether it is a complaints tribunal, we now do it all together.

I consider the training room “foreign territory”, or — how can I say it — not a *Post-Courier* thing. When you come to the media training centre that is in our premises, it is not just for the *Post-Courier*, it is for everybody. So it is neutral territory, as opposed to next door, which is our newsroom. It is fully exposed — there are windows there and you can see what's going on there. But when you're in that training room you are completely separated from the *Post-Courier*. It is a joint thing. We gain more by getting lots of people together and talking about their experiences or realising that the same things happen on television as on radio, or in the press — the same problems and the same pressures. But by getting together people realise that media is media. They're all one and the same thing. And if there are ten opportunities a year for

all the media companies for training and we all do it together then it's a lot better than just ten single opportunities.

*Q: The Post-Courier spent, as you said, 100,000 kina on setting up the training centre and this is quite an investment in setting up “neutral territory”. Have any other media organisations volunteered to assist on this, or is the Post-Courier carrying the can alone?*

Well, it was never part of our plan to expect anybody else to contribute because at the end of the day we'll use it, whether Post Printing or the sales area, we use it — so it is ours. The benefit we see is more in the future rather than investment costs. We were going to do it regardless of whether all the media were going to do it or not. If we have to stand alone, I don't think it is that beneficial to Papua New Guinea. I think I have an obligation like any managing director of a media house to train as many people as possible. And they don't necessarily have to be my own people because people move around and eventually people might want to come to us. And I don't want the standard of journalism to diminish. That doesn't mean to say that we've reached the right point because we definitely haven't. There are just not enough journalists out there that have a wide enough range of experience. The media has grown too fast.

However, if and we do work together now, that sets a pace for itself time and time again. The first course we ran was a Commonwealth Press Union-sponsored one for subediting and it was done interactively. And that course would have been worth around 150,000 kina. In other words — there were 15 participants — it would have been around 10,000 kina for each participant. Well, it virtually cost us nothing because the only cost — which was still reimbursed by the CPU — was food and an overhead projector etc. The facilitator was provided by News Ltd and the CPU paid for every other cost. So we've already made our money back as far as I'm concerned. We had three people on the course so the *Post-Courier* got 30,000 kina's worth of training straight away. And that was the day we launched the

training room. So I'm just happy if a media house will come to me today to say, "Oh, we've got Joe Blow coming up to talk about print production in newspapers or whatever. We'd like to do something in the training line." So we pencil in the training room and away we go. We have found in the past that paying for training facilities is not cheap. If we don't have to ask for sponsors to pay for training facilities because we have already got them, then we ask for better trainers more often. And by doing that everybody benefits.

*Q: So the training centre opened in May 2000 with this submitting course. Could you indicate some of the other courses that have been held so far?*

One of the odd courses that we did was one with the Red Cross and the St John's Ambulance. A medical training course and we invited all the media to that. Now that might seem odd but if you have an accident in the workplace and the ambulance isn't forthcoming then you need somebody to look after you. It is essential in an organisation like ours that employs more than 180 people. But that was an odd one.

We have used it for meetings. So far there was a freedom of information seminar conducted this year, a regular series of meetings on the code of conduct, and a basic defamation course for subeditors with our lawyer.

*Q: You twice made the point about the media industry being "spoiled" by graduates coming out of the journalism schools. Papua New Guinea is rather unique in the Pacific in that it has had a generation of journalists in one way or another out of the journalism schools since 1975. Are the schools not catering for the needs of the media?*

Oh no. We have to be more in control of our destiny and we have to develop people from scratch. As an employer, if you employ someone straight from school and give them thorough training and then you tend to keep them. They become career employees as opposed to people who come and work for you for a few years. I mean Divine Word has been fairly consistent. They're a fairly tough university in that discipline is fairly strict. In the first year they certainly

eliminate quite a few students. UPNG on the other hand has been supporting journalism for so long. When I say we're spoiled, I mean we have just come to rely on them. My argument is that we shouldn't. It is great that they are there and we should exploit it as much as possible. But there could come a day when they are not there.

We all have to in control of our destiny. Also, we should be developing our own people. I don't know of many industries that expect universities to provide important people in their workforce because we are not paying them to study. We are not employing people and saying to them go and study at university for two or three years. We're not doing that. We're getting them for nothing. There are some obvious advantages in employing university graduates but if you depend on them to keep coming through then one day they might not. And that's what I am more concerned about is the day that the courses stop or whatever. Politicians in PNG could stop them one day. Free thought is something that really should not controlled. It should be encouraged as much as possible. And of course the newspapers, the media, should be encouraging as much free thought as possible. Not by asking for it, but by actually making it happen.

*Q: There is a high mobility among media staff in Papua New Guinea, even experienced journalists. Do you believe this approach to training might stem the flow out of journalists and encourage loyalty?*

I certainly believe that. Everybody remembers his or her roots. If you employ somebody and ignore him or her then they are not going to want to come back. However, there is nothing wrong with moving on because we all have to find out what our net worth is. Sometimes people are put in the wrong positions. They could be more effective in other positions. They might be a square peg in a round hole and they could be dissatisfied with that. But they can't talk to their employer and say, "Why can't I be chief sub? I reckon I can do better than that."

Everybody needs an opportunity. And the only way you can be confident about talking to your employer about moving around in the organisation is if we train properly. So you have to water a plant. You have to fertilise it. It's the same with employees. And eventually they do move on. But sometimes it's not a bad thing. Is it good to have journalists in the same news organisation for twenty years? I don't think so. If we have someone and develop them for ten years and then they go and work for a government department, or an aid agency, or whatever, and then they come back to us, well isn't that better for us in the long run anyway. Sometimes they're just an employee, but if suddenly they can branch out and learn another phase, see a different aspect from what they do and come back a better journalist. That's a good thing too. The problem the media houses were complaining about two years ago was that everybody was going around in circles. You go from TV to radio, to a paper, and also a lot have been poached with the lure of more money and all that sort of thing.

At the end of the day it's tough for journalists because they're reporting about corruption every day and all this sort of thing. When you work for a media house you're above board, you're not open to ... well, you might be exposed to it but you're not supposed to get involved with it. And generally they don't. It can be disheartening to work through a media organisation on a particular package when your friend has just left and gone to work as a consultant for a government department and earning a fair deal more for a job that might not have many career opportunities. Whereas in a media organisation there's lots of room to move. But, of course, nothing happens unless you make it happen. And a lot of times the obvious person isn't so obvious to management.

So it's important that all media people sell themselves. I have no problem with somebody who is leaving us who is good and going to something that is much better because, like I said, they might come back one day as an even better journalist. As long as they're not just leaving for ten kina more a fortnight, which is a terrible reason to leave. They're leaving because there are

better career prospects at that moment in time. Sometimes we don't see what's in front of us. And a lot of people perform a lot better with a little responsibility. I encourage people to better themselves. Whether its within our organisation or not is probably not relevant, providing I know that this is the sort of employee who could come back.

*Q: In journalism, and in many other fields, it has always been a view that half the training is to actually move around between different media organisations and gain the experience. But one thing that has emerged from my newsroom surveys is the high attrition rate of journalists who do drop out of the industry altogether, or who are lost to public relations. Is there a sufficient career path in the media?*

If I was working in a radio station, then there is probably more opportunities in the electronic media than there is with newspapers because of the structure that is required to put the product together. You might have six stories in a three-minute news bulletin on the radio whereas a newspaper could have anything up to 50 stories or so throughout the whole paper. So the for newspapers there is a more obvious career path. I think it is tougher for radio and television. And, of course, there are only a few people that ever get to the top. Ones at the top have been there in every organisation for quite a long time. I don't know whether it's a good thing or a bad thing. We need a bit more influence from outside Papua New Guinea to develop a proper procedure where you have job descriptions and where everybody knows the chain of command. There is a structure and everybody can see somewhere to aspire to.

One of the things we do is that we have a policy on training and it is probably quite unique: if somebody wants to do a course that's outside the realm of their own area, we will pay for half that course. And at the end of the course — providing they pass — we'll pay the other half. In other words if somebody in the accounts department wanted to study marketing, they can do a marketing course, we pay for half, and they pay the other half, and then we pay for the balance at the end of the course. That person could be totally suited for marketing but his way into the

company was through the accounts department. This is the same with journalism, especially with online courses. There are lots of opportunities with people to do courses, or in their own time but using company facilities. And they can take advantage of that. We've had this policy in place for a year and quite a few have taken it up now, but not enough.

One of the things I don't understand is that reporters need feedback on their stories every day. But if I was a reporter, I would want to do an online course on subbing so that I could understand that better. If I become a subeditor, or if I put up my hand next time there is a position or training position, it's going to improve my terms and conditions. Also, it is better for the paper because there are not enough subeditors being trained. We are training four subeditors at the moment. So to jump from being a reporter to being a subeditor is really up to the reporter, not the editor. Once you train on subbing and you learn about defamation, why the design of the paper is done a certain way, you're not just a reporter — you become a real journalist. Every aspiring journalist should jump at the opportunity, and should be making the opportunity as well. In other words, if a reporter came to me and said there's an online course and it's going to cost whatever, I'd say we'll pay half, that's our policy. The policy is in place. The policy is for everybody in this whole building — even if I want to go on a course. If I wanted to do a masters degree — but I don't think I could handle it — the policy is that the company will pay half.

*Q: So would you say that journalists themselves in Fiji, PNG and the Pacific generally should actually have a greater sense of responsibility in improving themselves and upgrading their skills, providing the policies and opportunities are in place to assist them? In New Zealand for example, every journalist is expected to have the National Certificate in Journalism as an entry point when they start their journalism career. But then they are expected to upgrade their skills with a series of course modules up to the National Diploma in Journalism level at their own*

*expense and in their own time (sometimes with some assistance from their employees) at the Open University. Should Pacific journalists be more proactive about their training?*

Well, we certainly encourage it. But if they don't know the opportunity is there then we probably have communication problems. One thing about a journalist is that generally when they want something, like better terms and conditions, they are fairly vocal. They are probably the most vocal department that we have. Yet when it comes to training they're not vocal. They don't come up to us and say, "Gee, there's a course in a Brisbane university. I have spoken to a friend of mine and I can stay at their place. I'd love to be able to do it for the next three months." What's it going to cost us? An airfare, and a bit of salary and wages. If we can get a better employee out of it, why wouldn't we do it? So I don't think they knock on the door enough. Maybe, it's because they don't know where they stand.

I'm not sure how to explain it. If we compare it with the New Zealand model, New Zealand probably has the most readers per capita of newspapers of any country in the world. Every paper, except one or two, is a broadsheet whereas in the rest of the world it is tabloid with just a few broadsheets, quality papers. So the expectations would be quite high on the journalists because you have the variety and the captive audience for newspapers so they have to be better. Even though we have been producing newspapers [in PNG] for 50 years, we are still kind of at an infant stage because English is a second language for Papua New Guineans. It is something that will take a fair while to get on top of. Fifty years ago there was only one paper — the *South Pacific Post* and it came out one day a week and it was 16 pages. Now we come out five days a week, we produce a magazine once a month, and we rely world resources to do it. I'm not sure of where I have gone to there ...

*Q: Well, you have been showing just how far it's gone...*

Yes, I think that every news organisation in Papua New Guinea has world standard equipment. But their employees can't be world standard yet. The only way to be world standard is to get

out of the country and go and work for the *New York Post*, for example, and see what a trashy tabloid is like, and experience it. And work for a news organisation that prints half a million newspapers. Or go to the London *Times* and see what a quality broadsheet is like. Now not many people here get those opportunities. But one thing through the Commonwealth Press Union is that at least one Papua New Guinean gets that opportunity a year for three months with the Harry Brittan Scholarship. We've had at least at least five journos in the last ten years go on that. And of course it is restricted because you've got to be under 28. They come out better journalists.

The standards are different. But it doesn't mean that we are substandard because we're not. We do a great job. I used to work for *The Australian*. It used to be called "The Miracle" because it has to gather stories from all around Australia and put them together and come out with a paper every morning. We do the same thing in Papua New Guinea every day. We have no different problems than *The Australian* has had for the last thirty years. No paper has the problems that we do because we have to airfreight it all over the country and we don't have home deliveries. And every day we're asking our audience, "Would you like to buy a newspaper", instead of most countries where the newspaper is a habit. You get it home-delivered, or you get it delivered to the office. In a sense your circulation is guaranteed. We don't even know if our newspaper is going to get on the plane let alone arrive at the destination in time where it can be sold.

*Q: Would you please expand on the cost factors, like you were telling me the other day, about getting the newspaper around the country by airfreight? And the freight cost in proportion to the cost of producing the paper?*

If I compare our paper to the *Herald-Sun* which is the Melbourne metropolitan newspaper: the *Herald-Sun* is in profit just from the circulation of the paper alone. In other words, the revenue

from the newspaper covers all costs, whether it is the cost of the journalists, the cost of the newsprint, cost of the press etc. So all costs are covered by the circulation.

For us, 80 per cent of the cover price of the newspaper goes to airfreight alone. In other words, it costs about twelve times more than what it would for an Australian newspaper to get it to its reader and the opportunity to be sold. Another factor we have is the exchange rates. All our newsprint comes from New Zealand, bought out of Australia, so with the kina is only worth 58 per cent of its value against the Australian dollar whereas eight years ago the kina was worth A\$1.50 — or almost three times the value it is today. So our costs are a huge factor and for us they are horrific because we are reliant on the airlines. This is another area where we are not in control of our destiny.

Every day to get the paper, people don't want to see it at four o'clock in the afternoon. It is too late. It is like a loaf of bread, it gets stale. They want it every morning. We are looking at doing that. We have got Mt Hagen, Goroka, Madang and Lae covered with a dedicated charter. We are now looking for a dedicated charter to cover the island route so that we are in most centres before nine o'clock each day. That means we have to put the cover price up to do that. We have an obligation as a national newspaper to be the newspaper for all Papua New Guineans, not just for Port Moresby, not just for the main centres like Lae, Mt Hagen and Goroka. So the cost is very high. We believe that if we spend the money then circulation could increase a little bit but at the end of the day the cover price doesn't pay for anything really at all. It costs about three kina to produce a copy of the paper. So what that means is that advertising has to take up the slack. And with that three kina the *Post-Courier* runs on a fairly low profit margin, in good times around six per cent. In bad times, it can be as low as only two per cent. That is not much to work with so if exchange rates go up and down there is more or less a panic in our organisation and we wonder about how we can carry on. But not everything is gloom and doom. We have got a good product and it is well respected and people do wait for us.

So that is probably the thing that keeps us going, the belief that we are important to the country. It is worthwhile to spend a lot of money on an air charter, and not charge three kina a copy — nobody could afford it. We have to be realistic, the majority of our readers are grassroots. It is important that they get their newspaper.

*Q: When I did the last survey as part of this research in 1998, I found that the mean age for journalists in PNG was about 29 and the media experience was five and a half years. In Fiji, we found that the mean age was just over 22 and the mean experience was two and a half years. One of the explanations perhaps for Fiji's lower comparison was that quite a number of journalists left the country after the 1987 coups. Now there has been another exodus with experienced people like the Daily Post editor, Jale Moala, migrating overseas. There has been an observation that how young and relatively inexperienced when compared with many other countries. Do you see this as a problem for Papua New Guinea?*

I think there are two things that have changed. I'm sure the median age in PNG is now a lot younger than 29. But there are also a lot more women. If you look around our newsroom today, more than half is women. If you looked at it five years ago, the *Post-Courier* had two or three. So we have increased the number of women in journalism at least four-fold, maybe even five-fold. And I'd say that's more to do with interest in journalism has changed. Most of the people out at the universities are women, I think ...

*Q: When I started working at UPNG in 1993, we had about a two-thirds majority of men. But by the time I left at the beginning of 1998, it was a two-thirds majority of women. So it was quite a dramatic change.*

Well, I think one of the things that has made it change is that women now have a voice. We started a section called *Women Today* in the *Post-Courier* nine or ten years ago, and all of a sudden we were writing about women's issues. The only time time that we wrote about

women's issues prior to that was when somebody was attacked, or taken to hospital, or whatever.

Suddenly, we've created an area of reporting to the point today we have come out with our own magazine, *New Age Woman*, once a month with an international flavour. So I think maybe the interest has come about because the women are really the backbone of the country. They have to support the family etc. But now they want to get into journalism because they want to have a voice. They are frustrated because it is being tough being a woman in PNG, especially raising the family. The women who come into journalism seem to be more careful, more accurate and are maybe smarter than the men. But they seem to be more switched on. We've got some good women working for us; a couple we have poached recently. But one of the problems they face is there is a lot of pressure put on women in PNG.

But I would say that the average has come down. I would have thought it about 25 in PNG today. But I am surprised that the average age in Fiji is 22 with just over two year's experience. I am staggered.

*Q: My research also makes comparisons with many other countries outside the region. This may well be a pattern through the rest of the Pacific...*

Well, in Australia most newspapers have a cadet scheme. The age of a cadet would be at least 24. So they have come from university or wherever. But I think the age of an 18-year-old cadet in Australia is over. Journalism demands that they are older. This is one of the problems in Papua New Guinea is that the law is catching up with the media. It is making harder and harder. World standards in law are fairly high in PNG, what you can and cannot do. And then with the internet, the fact that you can defame somebody in another part of the world by publishing something on your website makes things a little bit hairier because it forces us to achieve world's best standards. People read *Post-Courier Online* and they say its very refreshing — you can't say this in Australia. Well, we are saying it in Australia because it is on the internet.

It gets to the point where I get a bit worried about some of the responses to stories with the threat of defamation. I think, do we stop the website, because we can't do what we do with PNG anymore? The last thing I want to is sanitise anything we do because you've got to do it the PNG way. It doesn't mean the PNG way is substandard because people say that PNG media does get away with more than what you would in other countries. But isn't that because we have free speech enshrined in the PNG Constitution unlike other countries.

So there is nothing I like better than seeing a story, it could even be a negative story, one day and for two weeks we see all these positive letters to the editor that are contradicting the story.

So all of a sudden we've had two views instead of the view that could have been kept.

Sometimes it's not bad to publish a story that could actually be the wrong perception of something that happens because somebody is allowed to reinforce what they believe is true and you have balance. I think that's an important role of the newspaper to sometimes — not to get it wrong — but to publish different points of view because at the end of the day its opinion.

*Q: What are the biggest challenges now facing journalism training and education in the Pacific?*

All of a sudden you have to understand each national interpretation of stories now more than you would have interpreting PNG media law because the Defamation Act has never really been challenged. By and large free speech is the way we operate. We believe in free speech providing what the person is saying is fair and reasonable. It is harder and harder to produce a newspaper today. I'm not a journalist, but if I had to write a story every day I would be concerned about the impact of the story for defamation. Yet I don't have to because we have subeditors to do that for me. This is like I was saying, reporters should get involved in subbing to understand the consequences of what they do. A lot of people don't.

*Q: The Post-Courier has been one of the influential pioneering newspapers in online journalism in the Pacific. Are media organisations doing enough about online journalism, are journalists getting enough training in new media, and are there enough resources available?*

All of our journalists have access to email. Whether they are using that as an important tool remains to be seen. We haven't been using the internet enough. We should be interacting with our readers a lot more on a daily basis. The internet is not a threat to newspapers. All I can do is give an example: if a story broke at lunchtime today that the prime minister was assassinated, it would be on our website that minute. It is just the newspaper. It will mean that our online readers will want to buy the newspaper next morning. The internet will always assist newspapers. I don't believe it will hurt newspapers. For ten years now, we have heard that newspapers are dinosaurs and everybody is telling us that the internet will wipe us out. Well, it's ten years on and it should have happened by now. Anybody who uses the internet wisely will not be threatened by it. Sure there is a lot more news, and we have access to a lot more information. But at the end of the day, if you want to know the facts, you either go to the *Post-Courier* or *The National* website, or buy the paper. People don't believe it unless they can hold it up in their hands and read it. It's like a contract.

Today we have email in every bureau office in Lae, Hagen and Rabaul. We're hoping to sign an agreement today with the National Broadcasting Corporation to supply us with snippets of local news in the 20 provinces. It is very important that can now try to be everywhere and the only way we can do it is with something like email because it is fast and efficient. In all our branch offices we have scanners so that if they took a photo at four o'clock in the afternoon, it could still be in the next day's paper in full colour. And that is so much better than the way we used to operate. By eleven o'clock you had send a packet the day prior, and that packet of film had to be developed. And now because we are online, in all our branch offices we have almost

doubled our staff in the past twelve months. We are committing ourselves to be a more thorough national newspaper.

*Q: What is the future role of the journalism schools? What should they be doing?*

They should be interacting with the media. Every day there is an opportunity for them to send stories, whether it is local stories, national stories, or working on big stories. One of the big failures of journalism in Papua New Guinea. But if you've got a school of 20 students, why can't they go and study things like the budget, and then make a qualitative student of what the budget means for people over the next 12 months. Talk to people involved. Education? Is there enough money for education? How is the budget disbursed. If the universities concentrated on developing investigative journalism and working together, and not in isolation like most journalists work — they don't work in teams — I think there would be a few block-busting stories coming out of the universities. The stories would really shake the news media into asking why don't we do it that way.

#### 4. KEVIN PAMBA



***Tutor in Journalism, Divine Word University, and Columnist on The National.***

***Audiotaped interview in Madang, PNG, 27 April 2001.***

***Email address: [Kpamba@dwu.ac.pg](mailto:Kpamba@dwu.ac.pg)***

*Q: You have worked for several years as a journalist with The National. What made you take up journalism education as a career?*

I took up journalism education as a career basically because in this country there are hardly any local journalism trainers. As you know, at the University of PNG there is only one person there [Sorariba Nash]. So I felt that there was a need there for Papua New Guineans to take up journalism education to train their own people in the way they see journalism in their own eyes, rather than having people from overseas coming over to teach Papua New Guineans. And those people who come from overseas teach the Papua New Guinean journalists, perhaps with their

own biases, in the way they see journalism in their own society, or economy, or in their own context. I felt that as a student myself that there is a degree of bias in our foreign journalism educators come in and teach our students. So I felt there was a need for Papua New Guineans themselves to train journalists in the way they see it practised in this country.

That's why I took a quick switch in taking up journalism education. Secondly, that switch was also propelled by my going to Australia to study my master's degree course in International Communications. That kind of provided the push for me to take up journalism teaching.

*Q: What factors specifically led to this?*

In my course at Macquarie University in Sydney, it was about international communications, how the media works in the global context, and how the political spectrums of a global society in the First World affect the Second World and Third World and so on. We critiqued how the Western media dominates the world, or covers the Third World with stereotypes. And for myself, I come from a Third World country like Papua New Guinea. And there is a high degree of bias; the Western media doesn't cover the issues of the country in context. So I was able to do a critique of the problems as they affected my country. That also added to my desire to come and share from my experience.

*Q: So what do you see as the major problems for journalism education and training in Papua New Guinea at the moment?*

One of the problems is the lack of facilities in the training courses we have, and there is no clear government direction. The government wants to have training of journalists, but they don't seem to [understand] the real value of the role the media plays, or how the government can assist in the role of the media, which is to uphold the constitution and the democratic ideals of our society. So the government doesn't take journalism education in this country seriously, a fact that is testified to by the problems with the UPNG journalism programme.

*Q: What are the problems?*

They have not increased staffing and given enough finance, or see journalism as a separate entity which can survive and operate within the university, but as a fully funded and fully fledged journalism programme as you see in Australia. There is no clear support of university training at UPNG, which is a major university. As a former student of UPNG, I feel the government has failed in its duty to uphold the democratic ideals of the country.

*Q: Given that UPNG was the first journalism education programme in the South Pacific, can anything be done to restore the course to its former role?*

Somebody in Waigani should be thinking right. The administrators of the university should see the important role of the training of journalists as one component of upholding democratic ideals that we talk about and that the constitution speaks for. It is good to have lawyers and other specialists there, but we don't have people who also uphold the democratic ideals like the journalists. We talk about freedom of expression, but we are not emphasising about the loophole involving journalists.

*Q: One of the things that have come up in interviews so far in Papua New Guinea, is the shortage of journalists. Is there room for two journalism schools?*

Yes, there is room for two journalism schools. The media in this country is growing, developing. And the population is growing as well. There is room for two schools to cater for that growth. You may recall that in 1993, when you joined UPNG, there was only one daily newspaper, there was only one commercial radio station, which was state-owned, and the state-owned radio network, NBC, and Channel Nine-owned EMTV. Since then it has rapidly changed. Towards the end of 1993, we had *The National* newspaper starting up. And that opened up opportunities for the media in this country. Then the following year the PNGFM group came on, with the commercial radio station NauFM. Since then there has been a string of commercial radio stations in Port Moresby, Lae, and there is a Christian radio in Mt Hagen.

The Seventh Day Adventist Church has recently won a licence for a television station. That just goes to show the need for more people to be trained for the media.

*Q: An organisation like the Post-Courier has spent quite a lot of money [100,000 kina] on setting up its own training room and facility. At the time this was launched last May there were statements made about how important it was to get people to go straight into an organisation, be trained in the organisation, and would be therefore more likely to remain there on a career basis. Does this reflect on some aspects of the journalism programmes, that the journalism programmes may not be providing the sort of journalists the news organisations want? Or what does this represent?*

I have a view that what the schools provide may not be the complete thing that the journalists need to get out there and do the work. The media organisations themselves have to throw in something to help with journalism training. Obviously, media training is not a purely academic approach at the universities — we take into account the practicalities. Here at Divine Word this is what we are doing, we are incorporating as much practical work, where we allow students to report news stories on a daily basis. What they cover gets sent to the media in Port Moresby each week and that gets run. This is to keep our students in touch with what is really happening out there. If there are press conferences happening in Madang, we allow our students to attend. About the case of the *Post-Courier* putting up a facility for training, there is also an argument that the news media organisations need to do a lot more training. That is also a good approach, the media need to take responsibility themselves and train people. Journalism schools are simply there to introduce journalism, but the students are not really exposed to the practical things about what is done on the job in media newsrooms. Whatever their shortcomings, the news media organisations also need on-the-job training to address weaknesses.

*Q: Do the news media organisations perhaps have unrealistic expectations of the graduates coming out of the journalism schools?*

I don't think the media should expect ready-made journalists for their own newsrooms. But they should see students coming out of the journalism schools as people who have been given the basics, people who have been trained to follow the code of ethics, people who have the grounding to go out and do reporting. One thing you have got to remember is that journalists at journalism school are always learning things, and when they are at a media organisation to have learn things as well. Media organisations that expect the schools to provide ready-made journalists are asking for too much.

*Q: Are the media organisations sufficiently committed to journalism training? Or are they relying too much on the journalism schools, or overseas aid donors?*

I think it is a mixed bag. There are some committed. One or two are committed. Others are not committed. I could say that there is a high level of dependency on overseas donor groups, such as Pacific Media Initiative by the Australian Government. Compared to other Pacific Island countries, the media in Papua New Guinea is big, and the level of investment is big, and the level of foreign management staff is big. And you could imagine what is paid to those non-journalist management people. If they have enough funds for this, then there should be a budget for journalism training to ensure that the journalists they have are of high quality.

*Q: How do journalists regard the notions of "Fourth Estate" and "watchdog"?*

I cannot speak for other journalists, but for myself the journalist's role is very important, we are the watchdog of society. We are the Fourth Estate and it is our job to highlight what goes wrong in our society. We are an important component of society and our role is just important as the government's Ombudsman Commission, or the judiciary. From my observation in Port Moresby when I was there, although journalists know they have an important role, there are circumstances play over their respect for this role as a watchdog. The wantok system plays a big part in this and there are compromises.

*Q: How well informed are PNG media readerships and audiences?*

The public in PNG are not so critical about issues. Firstly, the country is made up of a high number of undereducated and uneducated people. Some of them do not have access to newspapers and radio news broadcasts. If they do, people do not read or listen to the media critically. The level of critique of what comes out in the media is in my opinion very dismal.

*Q: What is your view of salary/wages structure in PNG media? Is there an adequate career path in the media?*

This is one area where a great deal need to be done. When you get out of journalism school and join a newsroom, there is no structure, nothing laid down in black and white on pay and working conditions and given to you. I graduated from UPNG in 1995. I went to one media organisation that offered me a job. Besides telling me what I was going to get paid, there was nothing to tell me what there was for me to follow, or work towards.

*Q: You asked them for this?*

I asked them like about health cover, accommodation, and other things. The next thing I got, was they told me that I could always get out of the newsroom — so I did.

*Q: Really?*

I mean, I delayed. I told them, what is there for me for covering health and insurance and so on. But I delayed giving them the instant answer they wanted on the job until I found out. When I saw what the bosses had offered me, I was thinking, I had been studying for four years at university and how could they start me off like this.

*Q: What was the offer?*

At the time, they offered just some housing to share with other journalists, and a salary that was far below what I expected. For example, my fellows with me who were graduating in accountancy and law would have started much higher.

*Q: What should journalists do as a professional body?*

The reality is that journalists are disorganised. They don't have an organisation that can speak for them as employees to employers. That's the bottom line. Should there be any problem, whether it be housing, salaries or whatever, other professional groups have bodies to make representations. Lawyers have a law society, Accountants have an organisation. As journalists, as important members of the makeup of the country, we don't have that. The Papua New Guinea media in the year 2001 is not the media of the 1980s, or 1990s, when journalists were singly placed in a take-it-or-leave-it situation. The journalists didn't have much choice at the time. But the media has grown. Journalists have to see the value of organising themselves.

*Q: So why haven't journalists done this? There have been attempts in the past to establish a PNG Journalists' Association, but then it has died again. Why not now?*

I don't know. I think it is purely lack of enthusiasm and ignorance. I don't know whether ignorance is the right word? Journalists know that they have problems as some employees of some employers in this country. They cannot always operate in the eyes of the public as if everything is always going well. That is far from the truth.

**Focus group interview:**



*From left: Patrick Matbob, Peter Maime, Stalin Sawa and Pius Ikuma.*

**5. PATRICK MATBOB**

*Post-Courier journalist, aged 40, studying at Divine Word University, Madang.*

*Audiotaped interview in Madang, 27 April 2001.*

**6. PETER MAIME**

*Wantok journalist, aged 32, studying at Divine Word University, Madang.*

*Audiotaped interview in Madang, PNG, 27 April 2001.*

## 7. STALIN SAWA

*Radio Bougainville reporter, aged 26, studying at Divine Word University, Madang. Audiotaped interview in Madang, PNG, 27 April 2001.*

## 8. PIUS IKUMA

*National Broadcasting Corporation journalist, aged 34, studying at Divine Word University, Madang. Audiotaped interview in Madang, PNG, 27 April 2001.*

*Q: How important is journalism education and training in Papua New Guinea?*

**PATRICK:** I think it is important for all journalists to be well trained. I have this idea that the first years should be spent at a university like Divine Word where it is very practical. Groups of journalists go out to collect stories and write them up. But for people like myself, who have already worked as a journalist in a newsroom I would like to see the course more focused on our needs. From my experience in the newsroom, journalists are looked down upon by the professional people, like they see us as not being well trained or educated, and we don't ask intelligent questions. Also, that when journalists write their stories, they don't write them well and don't research them thoroughly.

**PIUS:** For a journalist to do his work properly, he needs to be trained properly. It is most likely that he will encounter problems in his duties if he isn't trained. The problem that I encountered was that I was with the NBC for quite some time out in the field without proper training. With advanced education and training I can go out and get what I want. When you talk about the time factor, you've got to get something big the first time and then you get it out to the public. Information is very important for our people. It is vital. So more training and education for journalists is very important.

**STALIN:** Most journalists who have limited knowledge and training hesitate on their reporting of issues. I worked on radio broadcasting on Bougainville for two years, covering political stuff. Now I often hesitated to cover some of the stories because of pressure from the politicians. I felt I was looked down on sometimes over the questions I asked. I mostly had to rely on press releases. It was difficult to get more because of lack of cooperation. If we get more training or educated journalists, you know the next step to get around and get the next piece of information. So I think it is very important for journalists to be educated.

**PETER:** I think it's important that we have trained journalists. Now things have changed in our young country; there are people are well qualified in their own fields and journalists, too, should be qualified. They should know how to go about their jobs and not using unnecessary excuses. People who come out of the university with a degree or qualification in journalism have the confidence to face the world. Also, the public have confidence in the journalists because they are qualified, they have been trained. They have gone through the process of acquiring special skills and knowledge to be on the field to do what they are supposed to do. I think it is important that we have training. It is not only about reporting. There are so many things to do, like the ethics of journalism.

*Q: Now how do your media organisations — the ones you have been working with before — think you should be trained?*

**PIUS:** The NBC employs its journalists from UPNG or DWU. They don't have a facility for training broadcast journalists at the office. Other news organisations also still depend on journalists from the journalism schools.

**PATRICK:** The *Post-Courier* has set up its own training centre. I find that a bit of irony because I asked the *Post-Courier* to sponsor me for study and they declined. Still, if they have started this off to train journalists then it's progress.

**STALIN:** During my two years working, NBC only sent me on a one-week course in radio broadcasting. They don't really support training. When you tell them you'd like to study, you're supposed to resign. And that's exactly what I did when I came to Divine Word. They wouldn't give leave.

**PETER:** I just worked for two years with *The Times of PNG* and *Wantok* and I don't feel qualified to comment on this.

*Q: The Post-Courier has spent \$100,000 on its own training centre. Is there some hesitation on the part of some of the media organisations in supporting the two journalism schools?*

**PETER:** From my observation, sometimes the companies send the students to the journalism schools for training and then when they return from the schools, they don't remain with the companies.

**STALIN:** Most of our workers who went to UPNG for training and study never came back.

*Q: What is the essential role of journalists in PNG?*

**PIUS:** I guess it is to disseminate information to the public. As journalists we act as the eyes and ears of the people. We work on behalf of the public, the masses.

**PATRICK:** I think that more and more, the role of journalism is leaning more towards being a watchdog than anything else. People tend to have this expectation when they buy a paper something like about corruption. The feeling is that the politicians don't do their job very well. Everybody has to look to the media. So the media have this important role as the watchdog.

**PETER:** The media is meeting the aspirations of the people. Like they see a lot of corruption, mismanagement of funds and all those things that have been mentioned. But they see those things and they want to somebody to speak out about it. Sometimes they don't have a voice. So the media kind of speaks out and says how things should be.

**STALIN:** The writing's on the wall. Most of the papers don't speak of positive things anymore about government. They are acting as a watchdog. They people are not confident in their politicians. So the people think there are many loopholes, for example in the leadership code.

*Q: How important is the notion of "development journalism" in PNG and the Pacific?*

**PATRICK:** My view of development journalism is that it is news about positive development. So you are writing information about agriculture, health, small projects and so on. At a recent seminar there were many politicians and senior government officers and they talked a lot about development journalism. And they said the media in PNG isn't doing enough to promote government work and development. I talked to the deputy provincial governor here and he said we do a lot of good things but you people don't report them. The people don't get to know about it. So they think we sit around in the office and do nothing all day. That's what they think of us. When we go to the Agriculture Department, or the Health Department, we don't see things happening. In fact, things are deteriorating. There is always corruption, there is always a problem, and we stand for hours waiting in a line like everybody else. So we get affected like everybody else. We can't see their positive side of development that they are talking about. So as journalists we tend to report it from the public's point of view, how hard it is.

**PETER:** I don't know whether I am saying the right thing, but the trend in Papua New Guinea at the moment is that the media seems to centralize its reporting on Port Moresby and the big centres. So when we get the papers, the stories mostly about what is happening in Moresby. But there are lots of things happening to the rural people, some projects, some happenings, some sufferings, and the difficult times they are having with no government services in remote areas that go under-reported. It's that kind of reporting that the media could do to help development. Allocate resources to help those people who face these kinds of situations. Let the media help the little people.

**PIUS:** I think the newspapers are more centred, as Peter said, on the main centres where the working class has the money to buy the papers. But in my experience with NBC and now Nau FM with the information, sometimes I liaised with government departments, about what their programmes are. The kind of cooperation between the media and the line staff was very good, you know, because through you they will tell you what kind of programmes are being initiated in certain areas of the provinces. So you just go out and interview them for radio, or for newspapers, and come back and do the stories. At the NBC we had a half-hour programme in the evenings in which we could put out the information. I think radio is the fastest medium. And it is the only medium that you can sit down present information about development quickly.

**STALIN:** I think I experienced some very good examples from what Peter and Pius have been talking about. In the two years that I worked I was surprised that I was the only journalist on Bougainville. There were no other media organisations, like the *Post-Courier*, or *The National*, represented. At the time they only came for big negotiations and with free rides for journalists. It was a very challenging task to cover all the stories considering the fact that there were no proper channels for information. So finding sources around Buka was very hard. So sometimes journalists rang me from Port Moresby, and I'd tell them, "Why don't you come here and get some good stuff". They would have a lot to do.

*Q: What is your view on the salary and wage structure for journalists? Is there a satisfactory career path?*

**PATRICK:** From my observations, probably one of the reasons why I have ended up in school is that the media industry in Papua New Guinea is still too small. We cannot go after rank, as we want. Some of us have to get out to make space for others, I guess. Conditions tend to be better up there as you go up. When I began I got paid between 70 and 100 kina a fortnight. That's how we started. It was probably okay then, but now it is far more difficult living in Port

Moresby. The good thing about the journalism schools is that a lot of journalists realise they can improve their pay if they improve their qualifications. So I think a lot of journalists will come back to school to get degrees.

*Q: So are you saying that news media organisations tend to recognise the higher qualifications, or you hope that they will?*

**PATRICK:** That's something I'm not too sure about, because when I was discussing going to school I was disappointed that this point was made clear, "What are you going to do when you come back?" And so obviously somebody is saying indirectly to me that even if you have a new qualification that doesn't mean to say your conditions will be better.

**PETER:** When we submitted our assignment on PNG media, my concluding remark was that last time Anna Solomon wrote something on media freedom she mentioned some journalists were writing press statements for politicians. And she said that this was something they had never heard of before and it was against the ethics of journalists. The PNG Media Council is going to establish two things, a complaints tribunal and the PNG code of ethics. I said they can have their code of ethics, but if they cannot look after their journalists and their employment conditions, then they should forget about the code because it doesn't make sense.

When I first left here in 1994 and worked with Word Publishing, I think I was paid about 150 kina fortnight. Then later I went to the PNG Catholic Bishop's Conference and I got something higher than that, and a free house. And then I came back to Word Publishing where I worked on *Wantok* newspaper. My salary was the same but because they gave me a free house, they deducted that and my net salary dropped!

**STALIN:** At NBC we had a good salary range, in the first year it is about 10,000 to 11,000 kina a year so I got about 400 kina a fortnight. Every six months, there is a review and you get paid a 3.3 per cent increase based mainly on your performance.

**PIUS:** now I just want to make a comment that like in any other profession — and journalism is a profession — to keep people working to provide for the masses, any new organisation should be paying better salaries and providing better conditions. The journalists are out there in the field risking their lives, gathering information about sensitive issues and covering stories. And considering those factors, their salaries and conditions should be lifted like other professions around the world.

## 9. FATHER JAN CZUBA

***President, Divine Word University, Madang, Papua New Guinea. Audiotaped interview in Madang, 28 April 2001.***

**Email address: [Jjczuba@global.net.pg](mailto:Jjczuba@global.net.pg)**

*Q: Divine Word University has become an important player in journalism education in Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific. Could you give an outline of the university's progress, particularly for the development of Communication Arts?*

When I became the president in November 1995, I analysed Divine Word to see what could be done. With a team of experts, we decided on a strategy for the development of the university. A very important element of the strategy was to establish an alliance with the state universities. After two years, I found out that the PNG Government was trying to monitor media. What they did to the University of Papua New Guinea was not acceptable in my way of understanding when they closed three departments, one of them the very important journalism department. I was alarmed at that time so I called a special meeting of our university so that could look at the budget and the resources we had. We drew up a new plan for the development of Communication Arts at Divine Word University and increased the allowance for students for the diploma and for the degree.

Right now we have two streams. From 30 students we increased to 90 students. At the Communication Arts Department, we invested a lot of money and new equipment. The aim is to grow to more than 100 to 120 students in the department and to establish formal relationships with other universities overseas. I believe that for the country to maintain democracy and freedom, the only way is with a free media. And we have to prove that.

*Q: What has been the time frame for the increase in journalism resources since the programme first began in 1982?*

At the moment, Divine Word increased resources was at the moment you left the University of Papua New Guinea [in 1998] because there was no leadership [in journalism] at UPNG and the department was shrinking smaller and smaller. Finally, the Government took the opportunity to close it. In a developing country, one person can make a difference with the shortage of leadership skills. At that moment, when you left the country things went wrong at UPNG. Then I started to see what DWU could do. And when Government made the decision to close the department at UPNG that was when I had the urgent meeting. Altogether, the investment in terms of equipment and computers was K100,000. We also built additional student accommodation costing DWU K320,000. Then we employed four extra lecturers at the same time. Altogether we invested K600,000 of K700,000.

So that's why when I found out about the Government decision, I called an urgent meeting of the University Council to see how we can address this issue. At the same time we extended an invitation to students at the University of Papua New Guinea to say that they can come to DWU to continue their studies. We designed a special course for them so that they could continue their education because, as you know, courses at UPNG were run in a slightly different way than ours. That makes sense not to have exactly the same courses. But at that time when we enrolled students from UPNG, we put quite a lot of effort to meet the demands of the students and not disturb their education so we designed courses to follow on to your courses.

*Q: How many students came from UPNG to DWU?*

Altogether about 16 or 17 students. Something like that.

*Q: There was a period of about three or four years when there was a degree programme, which stopped about 1994, I think just before you took up your appointment as president. And then it was resurrected. Could you clarify that period?*

The previous head of the Communications Arts Department introduced the bachelor's programme and it was communication and not so much to do with media. And there was no market for such people. My guess is that somebody adopted courses which were taught at one of the other universities in the Philippines (UP, Los Banos), where Divine Word has connections, and they were not needed in the Papua New Guinea context.

Once you left and the leadership collapsed at UPNG, and there was such an urgent need for well-qualified Papua New Guineans before we entered this bachelor's degree. We are still developing the degree because right now we are focusing very strongly on print media. We are now getting the equipment for electronic media, TV and radio. So I believe that by 2003 we should have the systems in place — print media and electronic media, TV and radio.

*Q: Is it correct that in the recent graduation for students from Divine Word there were three with bachelor's degrees?*

Yes, there were graduates in both 1999 (one) and 2000 (two) — and they were all students from UPNG. We also had three further degree graduates this year in February (one from UPNG).

Right now at the diploma level, we have two streams — in one, Diploma I, we have 40 students, and 39 in the other, Diploma II. If all the students graduate in the year 2002, we can expect 39 students (Diploma II) graduating with the diploma and eight with a degree.

*Q: What is the difference between the two streams?*

There is no difference because we put them into smaller groups. Our policy is not to have more than 25 maximum in one class. So they were put into two different classes, but they have the same curriculum. In the future, in the degree it will be different because we will have students studying radio and television in the year 2003. Right now we have one programme.

*Q: You mentioned earlier on in my stay here about the political implications of the closing down of UPNG? Would you elaborate on that?*

I believe that PNG politicians are not comfortable with the media in Papua New Guinea, which exposes their activities such as corruption. What PNG politicians wanted to do to allow them to monitor the media was to restrict qualified journalists. So what the politicians did was look at the University of PNG, which is fully sponsored by government, and they basically refused to allow any money for journalism studies. The simple solution was because the department cannot produce qualified journalists, then it would only be a matter of time when the journalists would die. And “we would be safe” was most probably the thinking of the politicians of that time.

And because Divine Word is private, and we increased the number of students. I think that’s what the politicians wanted to do. And I myself I was against the closing of the departments of journalism, and library studies, and creative arts at UPNG. But I was only the single voice. And I wasn’t the one providing funds for UPNG. But I don’t know whether it was because of wantokism or what, but I found it very strange that some of the academic staff at UPNG [on the University Council] supported some of the politicians in wanting to “get rid of unnecessary expenses”. It was alarming to find educated Papua New Guineans thinking that way.

*Q: Would you name anybody? Who were the people supporting these closures?*

At the time, it was the UPNG administration. But most of them were in acting positions. They brought forward this new statute of UPNG. It was ex-Vice Chancellor Joseph Sukwianomb who was the one designing the restructuring. And the rest took things from him after he left.

*Q: But Mr Sukiwianomb was actually one who strongly supported journalism, wasn’t he?*

*Wasn’t the problem from the time Dr Rodney Hills became Vice-Chancellor?*

Dr Hills had his own agenda. I thought he had a hidden vision for UPNG but I don’t think he got cooperation from his team. There was too much internal politics at UPNG.

*Q: How did you perceive his vision for UPNG?*

He wanted to restore UPNG as the leading University of Papua New Guinea. First of all, he wanted to get all academics working as one team and he did not succeed in that. He got involved in some internal politics and everything he wanted to do for the university was paralysed. But he got very strong support from University Council, that's for sure.

*Q: Is there any documentary evidence on political pressure on journalism education and training that you referred to?*

There is a document for the restructuring of UPNG, and there is a document from the Office of Higher Education, which says we have to cut down on expenses in education. So the Government was looking at different universities and saying, "If DWU is offering journalism courses, then we don't have to offer them at UPNG". And my comment was, "Sorry, we need both schools, because we do not have internet journalism courses here". Government tried to justify its moves, and it used the excuse that said we wanted to cut down on expenses. So, basically they used that excuse to close down journalism at UPNG.

*Q: I was well aware of this at the time. But it is rather ironical that in my experience of five years at UPNG — and also the experience of my predecessors — that there was hardly any spending on journalism education. The only major factor would be staff, essentially two people, and general expenses. The rest came from project funding initiated by the journalism staff through constant lobbying outside of the university. The actual funds being saved by closing journalism were minor, and surely this rationale could not really be sustained?*

You are absolutely right and I was well aware of this. In fact, I noted that issue in discussion. The only cost involved at that time was Natskol and that was K2,700 per student. And, from memory, you had 60 scholarships ...

*Q: For journalism?*

For journalism.

*Q: If that was the allocation, in the five years I was at UPNG it was not that high in fact. One year we had something closer to 70 students but in other years it was about 55. So were Natskol scholarships reallocated to DWU? How many?*

Twenty for the diploma. I know it was 20, because it was about half that UPNG had at the time.

*Q: One of the issues that have come up in interviews with editors is that there are not enough trained journalists for the country's needs. And DWU is putting in a lot of resources, as you have outlined, to increase the number of students on the programme and so on. But UPNG has still got something going, even though it has not been labelled as a journalism programme — they have still got a number of students and I visited there the other week. Is there still a need for two programmes, or would one be sufficient?*

There is a need for two, definitely, because one is committed to quality. The other is marginal, but would still help satisfy the market for journalists. Within our programme it is basically impossible to address all the needs which our media in Papua New Guinea currently have. I was taken by surprise when the Government decided to close the journalism department at UPNG so I didn't have much time to prepare myself. So once they closed UPNG journalism, I invited all heads of media in Papua New Guinea in Divine Word to tell me what kind of programme they want me to prepare so they would be satisfied. And we had brainstorming sessions and we designed courses that would meet the needs of the PNG media. I think it may take one or two years more to meet everything the media need.

I agree, we don't have enough well qualified people to work in the media. The other thing is that Papua New Guinea is at quite a difficult stage of development. People working for different media face difficulties — they don't have basic living quarters, and they don't have easy means to get to work and so on. So there are a lot of factors contributing to a situation where media do not attract well-qualified people. Their salaries are too low, they don't have the houses, if they want land they cannot afford it, and media have to see that because there is a

danger. It is not enough to have qualified people. It is not enough to meet the media needs. The media has to create the environment to attract people to go there to work.

The Papua New Guinea media should offer more attractive packages like salary and accommodation to encourage people to work. I cannot imagine people with a degree working for K180 to K220 and then they cannot afford to rent a flat. Journalists are dedicated and are committed, and they are trained. But is the media ready to employ these people? If so, what are their conditions of employment? And that is what I am a little bit frustrated about. Some of the heads of the media don't see that. Not everyone has wantoks in Port Moresby.

This is quite important. We can produce the quality. UPNG can produce the quality. But have the heads of media created positions where they can employ these people? In that environment, people can walk.

*Q: To what extent do you think that perhaps the media organisations are relying too much on the journalism schools? So they're basically saying, we want this, we want that. We want courses along these lines; we want courses along those lines. But the other side of the coin, as you say, is that is the PNG media ready to employ these people? What could the media do specifically to address these issues?*

There are a lot of things the media have to do. But first we should separate the print media and the electronic media. The print media will have to work together, especially on one level, distribution of newspapers. And the unity will be extremely important because it is too expensive for the papers to distribute by air on their own. They need to share the expenses. In terms of television, EMTV should employ people in different centres like Lae, Mt Hagen or Madang. And then we'll see national news, not only about Port Moresby, but also about Papua New Guinea. And in radio, there should be more focus on issues. Radio is the most important. Many people in PNG have no access to TV and don't read. More effort should be put into the quality of programmes and information as well as news and current affairs.

## 10. BENJAMIN NAING

***Vice-President (Administration), Divine Word University, Madang, Papua New Guinea, and former Deputy Registrar (Academic), University of PNG. Audiotaped interview in Madang, 28 April 2001.***

**Email address: [bnaing@dwu.ac.pg](mailto:bnaing@dwu.ac.pg)**

*Q: Why was the decision made in 1997 to “close down” the UPNG Journalism Programme?*

It was a decision by the Central Executive of UPNG that the journalism programme was a duplication. It was seen that there might be an overlap between UPNG and DWU and there was no need for two journalism schools to exist in Papua New Guinea. This was due to a misunderstanding on the part of the politicians and bureaucrats of the differences between the two programmes and why they both needed to exist.

*Q: But UPNG was the pioneering institution in journalism education in PNG. The programme was funded with NZ Government aid in 1975 and about two-thirds of the educated journalists over subsequent years came from UPNG. Why was UPNG Journalism seen as a duplication of DWU, and not DWU seen as a duplication of UPNG?*

It was a matter of the budget and economics. The university had to make budget cuts and the Central Executive looked for programmes that it could abolish and make savings. There were also personalities involved. The then Vice-Chancellor, Dr Rodney Hills, who had been appointed to carry out the university's restructuring programme, looked particularly at areas where he did not have a good relationship. This was done on an ad hoc basis.

I did not appreciate the way Council was being misled over the reasons of the cutting out of Creative Arts, Journalism and Library and Information Studies. I asked for justifications in Council. I argued that these were all needed as part of the country's human resources

development. Unfortunately, Council did not look at issues objectively; it looked at them subjectively. Council swallowed everything Dr Hills told them, hook, line and sinker.

*Q: But surely Dr Hills had guidelines and procedures to follow?*

He breached University statutes and bylaws, and ignored fundamental procedures in making his proposals within Council. Normally proposals for changes were discussed within University committees and with various stakeholders before decisions were made. But he trampled on bylaws.

Dr Hills was very persuasive before Council. English was his mother tongue and he could make his proposals sound very constructive before Council. For example, he argued that cutting out the journalism programme would save costs by leaving future journalism education to the Department of Communication Arts at Divine Word. It was never said openly about the personal reasons involved and he failed to justify his arguments.

*Q: What were these personal reasons? Did the Topul Rali affair and the vigorous reporting by Uni Tavor in March 1997 just after Dr Hills took up his appointment play a role?*

This is true. He did not like people to contradict him. He seemed to have a view that his senior staff should support the VC no matter what the lies were. He expected Central Executive solidarity: "If he lies, I must lie with him".

The Business Studies and Law bylaws were an example. These changes had to go through Council and were made under extreme pressure. As chairman, Dr Hills spoke against the bylaws put forward by Professor Oliga.

I have seen vice-chancellors come and go. I have seen chancellors come and go. I have seen registrars come and go. But this was the first time I had seen a vice-chancellor argue at Council against the committee he was chairman of.

*Q: How did he have such influence in the wider community in Papua New Guinea at the time?*

On the surface, he was characterised as plausible and persuasive. He had a good relationship with everybody in the community except his own workers. This vice-chancellor collaborated with hand-picked supporters within the University to avoid procedures to achieve what outsiders wanted. Council is dominated by outsiders, comprising more than 60 percent of its membership. They propped him up and encouraged him.

Another example is how he conspired to replace the Bursar. He wanted to be above everybody. He had difficulty with black people who seemed smarter than him.

When the Bursar had to reapply for his position, he was ranked second on the shortlist behind an American. This was put to Council and it was expected the Council would rubberstamp the American. No data was provided for all the shortlisted candidates.

Also, the new candidate was being offered a K145,000 salary, higher than the incumbent Bursar, plus a domestic servant (only provided to the VC previously) and an entertainment allowance (not offered previously).

The question we asked was, what is wrong with the present Bursar? We also said the Standing Committee should provide data on all the candidates and that the appointment should be made on merit.

The Chancellor, Dame Jean Kekedo, left the room in protest, and many of the "outsiders" left, and we succeeded in overruling the Vice-Chancellor. In effect, it was a vote of no confidence.

Dr Hills wanted to get rid of the Bursar because he caused him trouble.

Dr Hills recruited what I call the "young Turks", academic staff who had come to UPNG from recent overseas study; people who wanted to support him.

*Q: What were the circumstances of his leaving the University and what were the implications?*

It was an act of bad faith and embarrassing that he should leave the University after misleading Council and leave chaos behind when he departed PNG (MAY 1999). Some K6,000 was spent on his farewell and Professor Otto Nekitel was one of the few who spoke openly about the

destruction of the restructuring. There were many who spoke with a forked tongue and double standards.

Dr Hills was arrogant and not transparent. He did not have the decency to consult, and he manipulated the community and the Council, which he had in the palm of his hand.

Unfortunately, he harmed the calibre and quality of the University and people like myself were no longer proud to serve UPNG.

## 11. JOE WEBER



***Head of Communication Arts, Divine Word University, Madang, Papua New Guinea. Audiotaped interview in Madang, 29 April 2001.***

***Email address: [Jweber@dwu.ac.pg](mailto:Jweber@dwu.ac.pg)***

*Q: How important is journalism education in the South Pacific?*

I think that a university type education is particularly important, and particularly important in the Pacific. The education system generally is not one that encourages analytical thinking, not one that encourages people to be critical in any way, which are skills that a journalist needs. So the universities have to address this shortfall in the education system. In more Western societies — in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand — people will have come through an education system that encourages them to think, to analyse and to criticise. Here there is a lot of

rote learning and memory learning, and those are skills that are not really the skills a journalist needs.

So in some ways the content that the journalism schools are teaching — the actual skills, the actual knowledge — is of less importance than the actual teaching of people to think. [It is better] if you can give people those skills that are going to equip them for life. The industry knowledge and craft skills are ones that are going to help them get a job initially, but once they get a job they're going to do that anyway. Some of the content is going to be out-of-date fairly quickly, no matter how up-to-date tertiary education institutions keep. The material they teach dates so you can never do more than give people information at a particular time. If you can teach them the thinking skills, then they can use those throughout their career.

*Q: In your experience in the Pacific, how do news media organisations believe journalists should be prepared for their careers?*

News media organisations are looking for craft skills. Their focus is that they want somebody who can come in and do the task of going out and gathering the news, and writing the news stories. I don't think that they are as concerned as tertiary institutions are on the thinking skills. They see it as equipping somebody with the tools they need to go into the profession or the trade, or whatever you call it.

*Q: What is the essential role of a journalist in Papua New Guinea, for example?*

There are a number of roles: There is the watchdog role, but that's almost too simplistic an approach. The idea that somehow the media is keeping the bastards honest doesn't translate too easily into the PNG scene. The media has a good track record of exposing corruption in PNG, but the impact of those exposés is fairly limited. There is a revolving door political system. People are out of power for a short time and then they come back in. And the reality is that when they come back in they've often got a score to settle with the media organisation or the journalist who caused them to lose their job in the first place.

It could be suggested that it is partly the media's fault in that the media is not succeeding in explaining the wider repercussions of corruption. Yes, they will say this person is corrupt. Yes, this politician is corrupt. They have abused their position that they have taken on in the election, and they have appointed a brother to a position that they shouldn't appoint. But the affect on society as a whole of the corruption is not explored and explained. The fact that the money has gone into the politician's pocket means that there aren't drugs in the local hospital is never explored.

I think that one of the reasons why corruption is almost accepted in PNG is that there isn't a view that sort of says that this is the consequence of the corruption. And this is something that the media should be doing. Whether that fits within the watchdog role, or whether that's broader into nation-building, I am not quite sure. It would depend on how you would define the areas.

*Q: Why do you think the media is not performing this wider role, the explaining of the consequences of corruption?*

Partly it's the lack of resources in many ways. To do that requires people who understand the way society operates, the way PNG society operates. You need people with a degree of experience and with a degree of broader knowledge. Some journalists do remain within the profession, but there is still a large fallout rate. People come in, they've gone through their training, they start on their career, but they don't last a great deal of time. And there are problems about the amount of money that journalists are paid. There are problems about their working conditions. All of which are a disincentive to remain in the industry.

So that the clever, intelligent, articulate, bright people are going to be lured away to other careers. That's part of the problem. Part of the problem is that there isn't a history of this sort of analytical type of reporting so;

- The ordinary journalists are not seeing it as something they should be doing; and

- The chiefs-of-staff and the editors are not expecting it.

So there is no pressure to produce it and it doesn't fit into the way they operate their newsrooms. It needs a change of mindset right from the top to the reporters.

*Q: Politicians often refer to a catchcry of "development journalism". But how is this defined and practised in the region, and how important is the notion for PNG journalists?*

How it is defined is an interesting question in that it seems to mean different things to different people. It seems to be defined partly by saying that there is this role of nation-building. The institutions are young and fragile and the media, as the watchdog being critical, is not entirely appropriate because it can destroy the institution when it brings down an individual.

There is also the sort of view that creeps in here that development journalism is talking to grassroots people, reporting their views. Personally, I don't find that a useful definition. A lot of good journalism is talking to the people who are at the hard end of the story, and if that's the people in the villages, and the grassroots people, then those are the people who should be interviewed anyway. I don't think that is a special kind of journalism, that is good journalism.

But in some ways that is a label that has been used here in the Pacific. It is the sort of approach that has been adopted by Gemini News, and very successfully done by them. And it is somehow seen as different from ordinary journalism, which in the Pacific tends to be to a large extent relying on the views of politicians and the views of ordinary people. And there seems to be a view that the two are different, rather than a broad spectrum.

*Q: How well-informed are readerships and audiences in PNG?*

There are very distinctive audiences and that is part of the reason why the media covers the country and institutions selectively. There is Port Moresby with its high percentage of educated people holding down good jobs and a high percentage of expatriates, which is an intelligent and well-informed audience. And to some extent the media is talking to this audience more than to the rest. There are then Lae, Goroka, Madang audiences where there are smaller numbers of

people who are well-educated and who are interested and involved in what is going on. And then there is the broader base of the country, people in the more rural settings, who in many ways the media is not engaging with and doesn't regard it as an audience. But the media would like to say they did, but the material that they produce most of the time is not to do with the issues that these people concentrate on.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in PNG?*

Journalists seem to have quite a high status in many ways. There seems to be a certain amount of respect. It seems to be seen as a profession — as something that is working for the good of the country, for the development of the country. To an extent that is due to the fact that many of the journalists have been educated in the tertiary institutions. It is seen that you have to have gone through the educational process, and gone to university. So it is thought that you are an intelligent and articulate person and you are deserving of respect for that. You have mastered a set of skills, you have a set of knowledge.

*Q: How successful is the media in forming public opinion?*

I'm not sure. Certainly it seems to be able to influence events to a very great extent. The recent Murray Barracks incidents recently and the way the Government changed its policy once the media started reported what was going on. The media got hold of the eminent persons' report on the proposed changes to the PNG Defence Force, published details of that. It appears the Government hadn't actually addressed this issue. It had the report but hadn't given it a high priority. Suddenly it had been leaked to the media and they needed to address it. They addressed it very quickly and didn't take the time to explain what was happening what was going on to the Defence Force, the Defence Force reacted, they had a problem on their hands and they changed their policy.

Certainly the media had been part of the thing that changed the way the Government perceived the problem, and the way the Government reacted to it. Certainly the media has an influence

within the political circles and within Port Moresby. How much it influences opinion outside of this area, I am not sure. Within Port Moresby, within Waigani, the media is very influential, but further out, perhaps less so.

*Q: This question is really developing on some earlier points you made. What is your view of the salary/wages structure for journalists in PNG? Do media organisations provide enough of a career path?*

The simple answer is that journalists are very poorly paid. People don't appreciate the skills that are required to be a good journalist and the amount of work that goes into being a good journalist. So I think that people start on a salary that is low, especially for people who come from a university system who have expectations, who have invested a lot of time, and in many cases personal money, in getting these skills. And they are often very poorly rewarded. I don't think a great deal is done to retain people. There isn't a structured career path and the result is that in PNG reporters see their job in a news organisation as a stepping stone to somewhere else.

Somewhere at the back of mind, I wonder whether the universities are contributing to this problem in that they are producing increasing numbers of graduates with these skills. And there is a limited number of jobs in the media. Although the media is growing and although there are more jobs than previously, it is still a relatively limited number. And is the fact that we are providing a continuous stream of people with skills helping to reinforce the idea that there will always be journalists? We don't need to pay these people too much. We don't need to worry about retaining them because if they go there are always more people coming out. I don't what the answer to that it?

*Q: This educational survey has indicated about 140 journalists in PNG mainstream media, so this quite a body of journalists. Given that journalists are concerned about this issue, what are they doing about it?*

They don't seem to be doing a great deal. Journalists are often individualists, they are often people who work on their own initiative, they are not usually very good at being organisers or being the joiners that set up these sorts of organisations to do something about it. Maybe it is an issue that journalists themselves need to focus on. There isn't a national union of journalists. There isn't a journalists' organisation as such that is active in PNG. Maybe if journalists are serious about these issues, that is the sort of organisation that they need to set up.

*Q: Do you have any theories or guesses why this situation has persisted for so long — why there is no journalists' organisation in PNG? It is relatively rare in the world for a country not to have a national journalists union, or professional association. But it is also the situation through much of the Pacific.*

No I don't.

*Q: With World Freedom Day coming up next week, should freedom of the press reflect free expression of the media, or free expression of interest groups (the public)?*

There are a large number of restrictions on freedom of expression on the media. There are defamation laws. There are contempt of court laws. There isn't total freedom in any shape or form. The media does need to state its own views, and that inevitably will mean that the people who own the media have a right to state their views. You end up with the people who have the controlling influence in the media organisations will be able to influence what is said and what is declared is the media's policy. And this does have an affect on what is on the political agenda in Moresby and the way that people react. To try to restrict that in any way opens the door to much wider restrictions.

And it is dangerous if you say that certain sectors of the community should be able to express their views. Yes, you may allow people with the money to set up or to buy into media organisations to have a great deal of influence, but to do it any other way is even more dangerous.

Freedom of expression for community groups? Part of the difficulty here is that the media sees perceives the sources of news in a fairly restricted way. They have a method of working which more or less identifies the sources of news as being the organisations they have an ongoing dialogue with and they are not particularly open to looking beyond that to other sources of news.

It is the press release culture. The media organisations tend to accept press releases word for word from a press release and turn that into a story, often in a very uncritical way. They do this rather than seeing a news release as a starting point and being able to analyse what the message is there, and then going out to find the story behind it. They tend to simply process it. That means that the organisations that are good at conforming to this work practice are able to get their views across. The organisations that are not media savvy are less able to lock into this system. If the information is not arriving in a press release, then the journalists are less happy to go and get it. Sometimes, I wonder if this is partly due to a lack of confidence on the part of the individual reporters. If they have a document there in front of them, they can turn around and say this is where I got the information. If they have to go out and interview people and do the work on a face-to-face basis, then they are going to have to produce notes to back it up. It is not as easy to demonstrate that you have been accurate. And I feel that there is a lack of confidence in them and a lack of confidence in their chief-of-staff or the editor in the ability of their journalists. So in some ways they quite like the press release. There are also difficulties getting out and about. In Port Moresby, it is possible to get out and about, but there are still security and transport constraints. It is not always that easy. Even contact by telephone is not that easy. But it is usually achievable. Outside of Port Moresby it is more difficult. So there are logistical constraints as well as the professional constraints.

*Q: Do Pacific and PNG governments support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

I think there have been different approaches adopted by different governments. I don't think there is a huge amount of support; some are prepared to pay lip service to supporting journalism education, and are prepared to attend functions that are in favour of journalism education. But when it comes to getting resources, then there is a lack of support. There are a huge number of demands on government resources and journalism education tends not to move up to the top of list.

In Papua New Guinea, the previous government, the Bill Skate Government, was particularly against journalism. I strongly suspect that the troubles that UPNG had in attracting funding had been partly due to this.

## 14. COLIN TAIMBARI

**Senior Reporter with *The National*, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.**

**Audiotaped interview in Port Moresby, 30 April 2001.**

**Email address: [National@online.net.pg](mailto:National@online.net.pg)**

*Q: Would you give some background on your career as a journalist and your education?*

I am 29 years old. I finished at the University of Papua New Guinea in 1995 with a Bachelor of Journalism degree. I started out with a cadet for the first half of the year with the *Post-Courier* and before the end of the year, while I was still a student; I was signed on as a fulltime reporter with the company. And I was there until March 2001 when I moved over to *The National*. I've mostly covered court reporting. During the initial stages of my career with the *Post-Courier* I did a lot general reporting covering workshops, police, crime reports. Right now I am concentrating on covering political issues with *The National*.

*Q: In journalism education and training there are those who argue that the best way to get into journalism is to and get a journalism qualification first. Others argue elsewhere in the region that it is best to go straight from school into a media organisation and learn on the job. What do you think? Is journalism education important in the Pacific? How should Pacific journalists start their careers?*

I think journalism education is very important for journalists just because our job as reporters is important in our region. We have a journalism programme that has developed and a lot of people say that journalism is new and we have a long way to go. But we should start from editing our journalists from universities. At the universities, we have a programme where student journalists go on attachment with media organisations before they are employed. That to me is the best way to go. We have instances in Papua New Guinea where certain

organisations employ people without training — we don't know where they get them from, from the schools perhaps. But we have a lot of criticism from the public who claim that those in the industry who are not trained are not doing their job.

*Q: Which organisations are taking untrained people?*

I can't really pinpoint specific organisations, but they are mostly radio stations. Recently we had an incident when a radio station went on air announcing that Opposition Leader Bill Skate was dead and that caused a lot of commotion in the city. There was a lot of feeling, people were scared to move around. Some might take advantage of the confusion. It was only confirmed in the evening that Bill Skate hadn't actually died.

*Q: Which station broadcast this?*

It was PNG FM Pty Ltd [Nau FM]. The sad thing is that to date this incident has been ignored. The PNG Media Council never mentioned anything about it. I don't know whether there are any guidelines about this sort of thing for disciplining over the report.

*Q: Perhaps they are waiting for a complaint from the public? Do you know of any complaint being formally lodged?*

I wouldn't know. I am not part of the Media Council so I wouldn't know.

*Q: Who was the reporter?*

I'm not too sure. We haven't been told. I did inquire myself with the radio station. I felt obliged to ring up and ask the editor, "How would you let something like this go through." There are supposed to be checks. If somebody said Bill Skate was dead then they should have cross-checked and made sure. The only thing the news director told me was that the editors discussed it in-house after they realised they had made a mistake and they didn't want to discuss it any further with anybody outside the organisation, so I said that's fine. But I just didn't think it reflected well on some of us.

*Q: And what you're saying is that you think this happened because the reporter concerned was not trained?*

I cannot say for sure what the background of the reporter is.

*Q: I know who the reporter is. On the basis of my inquiries it was an untrained reporter.*

What I am saying is that if we have better trained reporters who understand their responsibilities to their organisations and the public, it would better.

*Q: How does your news organisation (your current one and you can refer to your previous one) believe journalists should be prepared for their career?*

I can't really say much for *The National* as I haven't been here long, but at the *Post-Courier* we did have sessions and in-house programmes and workshops, for example dealing with defamation cases. At that time we had a big file of many defamation cases against *the Post-Courier* and the company felt it was important to address this issue. We had to sacrifice our Saturdays to attend these sessions. It was an ongoing in-house programme. They gave us reporters the opportunity to think of any topics that we thought might be important so they could find someone to give us a refresher. Here at *The National* we have meetings on Mondays and Fridays to see what we have done and how we can improve, and see what the opposition has done.

*Q: What about recruitment — does The National largely recruit from the journalism schools, or does it take many school leavers?*

They look mainly for students coming out of university. But recently we have been having a problem in that we don't seem to have enough experienced reporters in the country. Most journalists who have done more than say fifteen years in the industry have left for one reason or another, so we are trying to fill this vacuum from out of the university. But while I was at the *Post-Courier* last year it so had happened that one senior journalist had left and I was the only one apart from Ruth Waram and chief-of-staff Blaise Nangoi who had experience. The Post-

Courier had to bring in five or six girls from straight out of university. And they also brought back an experienced journalist, Peter Niesi.

*Q: How well have the reporters straight out of journalism school been performing?*

They have done well. While I was at the *Post-Courier*, we had a lot of discussions about how we went about doing stories. We shared ideas, so that was good.

*Q: There has been some debate about the two journalism programmes, DWU and UPNG. For a long time most of the employees in the media organisations came from UPNG. Is there any change? What is the situation at the moment?*

I don't really know the situation with both universities so I won't say much. I might be biased having come from one, UPNG. UPNG's journalism programme is still there. But I think what is happening is that Divine Word has been getting a lot of publicity, maybe because it is a sort of new programme, I don't know. It certainly seems to have been getting a lot of publicity. UPNG has gone quiet for a while. But the fact is that we have been getting students coming out of UPNG is the last year or so, and most of them are in the mainstream media and they are doing well.

*Q: Do you think there is a bias on the part of some media organisations in relation to DWU and UPNG at the moment?*

Yes, sometimes that is so. Like I said before, I may be biased in my opinion, but sometimes my feeling is why are they giving so much attention to these people and not the other group.

*Q: The other group is left out in the cold?*

Exactly, yes.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in PNG?*

Journalists in general are highly respected by society. But I think a lot of people still don't appreciate what we stand for, what we do. There are a lot of times when people get afraid —

maybe it's the culture — they find it hard to speak to us about certain issues. But journalists are generally held in high-esteem by Papua New Guineans.

*Q: Okay they are well-respected, but what about salaries and working conditions? Is there an adequate career path for journalists?*

No. For us journalists in Papua New Guinea — especially the print media — it is bad. This is especially so for journalists fresh out of journalism school. Many have left to go into public relations because of the poor pay situation. Some of them are paid very, very lowly, even though they consider us as being professionals. A lot of people cannot believe the pay we get. We love doing the job, but there is little incentive to keep going on the pay we get.

*Q: You would be regarded as a senior journalist now, wouldn't you?*

Yes.

*Q: Were you when you were left the Post-Courier? I remember you tell me a while back how unsatisfied you were with the pay, and even your colleagues said you were not paid reflecting your work and your value to the newspaper?*

Yes, at one stage ... The problem is that I have seen a salary structure where you have a ladder where you go from one stage to another. I have never seen that exist in a news media organisation. Most of the time in media organisations they just give you titles, but it doesn't show in your pay. One day the editor might introduce you as "our senior reporter" — maybe because you have there for three or four years they call you senior reporter — but in your actual salary there doesn't seem to be any change. Yes, there and here I have been called senior reporter.

*Q: What would be the starting salary for a reporter these days — say, for example the range for the five recruited by the Post-Courier?*

They could be paid just above the minimum wage, which is for Papua New Guinea 120 kina.

*Q: A fortnight?*

Yeah, a fortnight. They could be earning between ... let's say about 200 kina a fortnight. But out of that they have to find housing, pay their food, their fares to work, their medical bills, their electricity ... The cost of living in this city is so high. You cannot survive on 200 kina.

*Q: So they really have to rely on wantoks? They have to be able to stay somewhere. If they haven't got that, then they're in trouble?*

Exactly. There are a lot of journalists in this situation.

*Q: Do many journalists on media organisations get housing allowances as part of their working conditions?*

Oh yes, sometimes. At the *Post-Courier* they do provide some housing. Like when I first started at the *Post-Courier* I was sent to Lae. So when I got back to Port Moresby accommodation was provided and water was paid.

*Q: At what point do you get help with housing?*

There is no pattern. It depends on circumstances and a vacancy. You just have to see how quickly you can get up there. How people see you. Something really bad happens to you and the boss says, "Oh yeah, we can give him a house". So they find a place for you. It's not like it's in a contract when you start.

*Q: How much political pressure do journalists face during the course of their work?*

I guess not so much. Politicians are very much aware of the role of journalists, how important they are and the power they sort of wield. So there is a lot of respect there but most times it is not expressed, or it is not spoken. They just allow journalists to go about doing their jobs. As journalists we have to give respect to politicians. It is a give and take situation. But as far as trying to influence stories, I can't say there is too much pressure in private news organisations although I'm not too sure about the public broadcasting organisations.

*Q: During the so-called Skate Tapes affair in 1998 it was alleged that the Government paid out money to journalists in brown envelopes. It caused a lot of upset at the time and speculation over the identity of the journalists and their news organisation ...*

Yes, there was a lot of speculation. But the issue should have been investigated.

*Q: Didn't the Media Council investigate at the time?*

No. At this stage we don't know which reporters got brown envelopes, or if it was true that they got brown envelopes.

*Q: In your experience, do you know of cases where journalists have got brown envelopes, or been bribed? Is it a problem?*

I can't really say whether it is really a problem because most of the time it is normal for politicians to put up a press conference, and give reporters a few beers. There are also instances where reporters do give advice [to politicians] for fifty kina at the most. If there is, say, five of them in a group, a politician will say why don't you go and buy yourselves some lunch, or something. But I'm not aware of any reporter who has been paid something, even though you hear rumours. I haven't seen anything myself, so I can't really say.

*Q: Do Pacific governments, including the PNG Government, support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

They do speak about it openly, about the need for journalism education, more awareness, teaching journalists to be professionals, but I can't really say whether they actually promote it by going out and buying facilities for journalism schools. Most of it is being done by foreign governments and aid agencies. I guess it is the same with all the other professions like law, the medical school and whatever — it is really up the university in terms of budgetary support.

*Q: Is there support for investigative journalism?*

Maybe *The Independent* would claim to be the investigative newspaper in the country, and a lot of people would agree with this. The problem is that on the dailies we just don't seem to have

the time. At the end of the day, most newsroom managers are more worried about getting a story for tomorrow to fill the pages than worried about spending time and resources on investigations. Most of the time you might never have a story at all after spending a week or two investigating. Sometimes you get lucky; most times you need the contacts who are willing to talk to you. I believe we still have a long way to go before investigative journalism will develop. We need to organise more workshops and more training for senior reporters for investigative journalism.

*Q: Any comments that you would like to make on issues that I have not asked about?*

I just think we journalists need to restart the PNG Journalists Association that has been dead for a long time now. Some of us have been trying to do that. We have a draft constitution drawn up and already in place. All we need is for it to be approved and endorsed. We have missed out on a lot of training programmes and workshops for journalists because of this. As an association we'll have a stronger voice and we'll be able to do things together as a body.

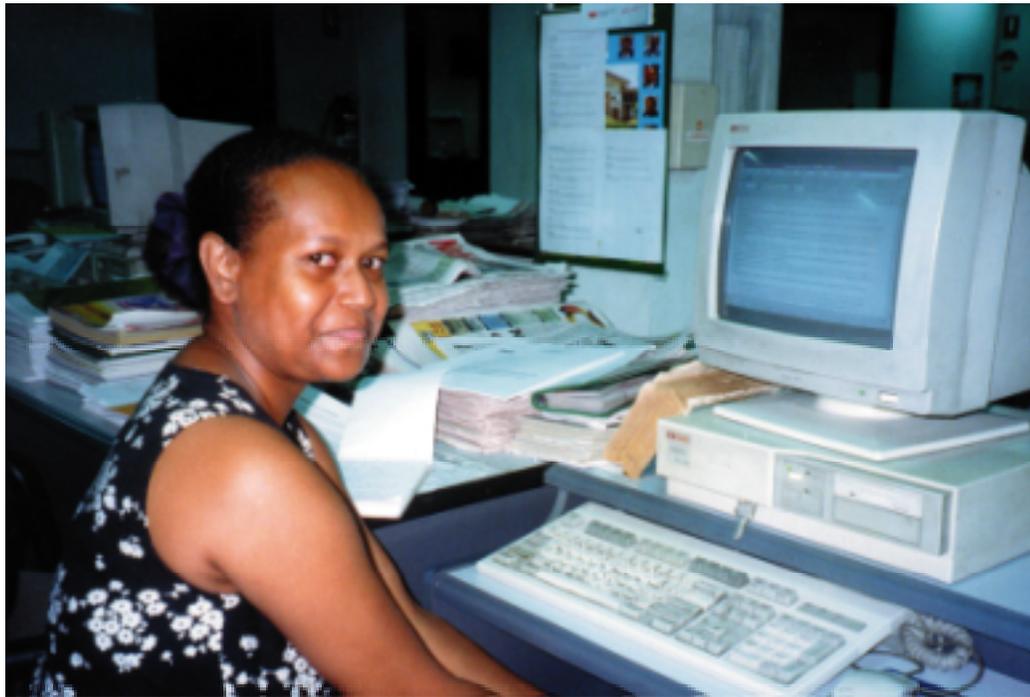
*Q: Is there a working group at present?*

Yes, it is being led by Joseph Ealadona, the news manager at NBC. There is myself. And we are negotiating for an office. We have Ruth Waram at the *Post-Courier*. Daniel Karimbao here at *The National*.

*Q: Hasn't this been a problem in the past: when PNGJA has been set up in a short space of time key people involved have become editors or taken key responsibilities that have made it difficult to be active in a body like this?*

Yes, this is true. But it is important to start again

## 15. MELANIE VARI-TURIA



***Business Reporter with The National, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.***

***Audiotaped interview in Port Moresby, 30 April 2001.***

***Emailaddress: National@online.net.pg***

*Q: Would you give some background on training and education and what got you started in journalism?*

I am from Central Province in Papua New Guinea and I am twenty eight years old. I was actually studying music at the University of Papua New Guinea, but I always wanted to be a journalist because my mum has been in the information industry for the past thirty two years. I actually admired what she did and still does. I left music school in 1993 and then I just stayed around for about four years — doing some part-time work such as with the UNICEF child survival programme — before I decided to take up media studies at UPNG. That was in 1998. I actually signed up to do a Diploma in Media Studies and then in 1999 we were told that the

journalism school would be closing so I decided to take on board all the subjects for print and electronic media. And then in 2000 I was awarded a Diploma as well as a BA degree in journalism because of all the course work that I did. I have been working for *The National* for almost two years now. I have attended only two training workshops, one here at The National by our editorial consultant Brian Gomez from Sydney, and the other was a three-week workshop with the Centre for International Journalism and the Centre for Democratic Institutions at the University of Queensland in Brisbane.

*Q: What was the subject of the course you did with Brian at The National?*

Introduction to business reporting and advanced reporting techniques.

*Q: And you're now with the business news section of The National?*

Yes. I worked with the general news desk for six months and then Brian decided to move me to the business news desk.

*Q: There are various ideas about how journalists should start off their career. Some say it is best to get an education and a tertiary qualification. Others say don't bother about that, go straight from school to a media organisation and be trained on the job. What do you think?*

*How should journalists be trained?*

I think journalism education is very important. If you just pick someone from high school and bring that person into the newsroom then it's going to take some time for that person to catch up with what is going on and how to report it. But if you get somebody who has already been trained at one of the universities then they already have a fair idea of how to go about reporting the story, and they do a better job.

*Q: How does your media organisation believe journalists should be prepared for their career?*

*The National* has both ideas because right now we have some people who have had basic education in say agriculture and they have been recruited as reporters. *The National* definitely

has both approaches in recruiting straight from school and also from the university journalism schools.

*Q: Is this partly because of the shortage of journalists?*

Yes, I think so. Most of them are moving into public relations because they get better pay and all that. So there are not enough news journalists.

*Q: What is the essential role of a journalist in Papua New Guinea?*

One should inform the public on what is actually going on because most of our people are illiterate. They don't know how to read the papers or follow government policies. They don't know how to interpret them. So the reporter's job is to simplify everything and tell the people out there what is actually going on.

*Q: Are concepts such as Fourth Estate and the watchdog role of the media important to journalists?*

Watchdog? Yes, I believe being a journalist is actually being a watchdog. You know that there are certain things going on and you are able to report about it and then people know about it. If somebody on the street knew something, he or she would not be able to get it across to the majority of the people. So he or she can come to you and you can investigate it further and have it published. And then maybe something can be done about it.

*Q: How important is the notion of development journalism in the Pacific? Politicians sometimes use this term, but there are different interpretations of what this is. What do you think it is and how important is it for journalists in Papua New Guinea?*

Development journalism is very important, especially one is reporting on development, trade ties and all that stuff. When reports on it, it usually encourages more aid to be given. If you do a better story, the donor organisation gets read and they somehow get interested in giving aid to whatever organisation or country that you have written about.

*Q: How well informed news media audiences are?*

I don't think they are well informed. Maybe those living in Port Moresby are well informed because they have access to the papers whereas in the rest of Papua New Guinea, the papers don't get there in time, and the cost factor is involved where you have to fly the papers. Some people don't get the papers on time, and some don't get it at all.

*Q: How does the public perceive journalists?*

Whenever we cover stories, or attend meetings where the grassroots people are involved, they are very happy to see reporters. They usually come up to reporters and usually shake hands with them and smile and all that. But when it comes to companies and government ministers then they are a bit cautious. They are not as open as those in the settlements.

*Q: How is the salary and wage structure for journalists? Is there an adequate career path?*

Right now in Papua New Guinea because we have no PNG Journalists Association — there used to be one, but it is now defunct — we don't have a salary structure. Our pay conditions are very bad. We don't get paid well for the work we do. That's what I think and that's what most of my colleagues think too. They think they do a lot of work and work long hours.

*Q: What is the range for a starting journalist?*

When you're fresh out of university, you get about 180 kina a fortnight. And then it just increases. They say they pay you according to your performance. That's true. But then they also say they do three-monthly reviews — and that doesn't happen.

*Q: What would senior reporters be getting paid?*

About 500 kina a fortnight. But we also do what the senior reporters do. Sometimes we cover stories they are supposed to do. They should pay us just like them because we do the same work.

*Q: How does that compare with what teachers get paid, for example?*

Cleaners get better paid better than us. Teachers ...

*Q: Cleaners?*

Yes, cleaners. Not those working here at *The National* but those working at other big companies. My aunt who works at UNDP says their driver gets paid about 700 kina month.

*Q: How would it compare if you had taken up a music career?*

Music teacher? Now if I had taken up writing and composing my own songs that wouldn't make me much money because recording studios are right now ripping off musicians. Music teacher? Yes, I would probably make more money if I were a music teacher. Music lecturers at uni get about \$500 a fortnight, plus their housing allowances and other benefits. Here it is non-existent. Journalists are expected to find their own homes. I live with wantoks.

*Q: Should freedom of the press reflect free expression of the media, or should it be free expression for the public and the grassroots, and interest groups?*

Freedom of the press should be both. There should be freedom of expression for the media as long as the media reports responsibly. And for the interest groups, yeah I would say free expression for them too but a journalist must make sure what he or she is reporting is truthful because sometimes these interest groups have their own agenda. So how do I say it? A journalist has to be cautious.

*Q: Do Pacific governments, including Papua New Guinea, support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

I don't think there is any obstruction because we have the journalism school at UPNG and the one at Divine Word, which has just been upgraded. But I think we should have more journalism schools in Papua New Guinea.

*Q: You think there is sufficient demand for journalists in PNG for more journalism schools?*

I'm not sure about that, but it's what I think.

*Q: What about the relationship between the media organisations and the journalism schools at the moment. Are they supportive?*

I don't think there is much support given to journalism schools given by the media organisations. Only when it comes to practical training do they take on board students to come and work in the newsrooms. But most of the time I don't think there is much support for the journalism schools.

*Q: Do you think any particularly schools are favoured?*

Yes, the new school at Divine Word is now getting more publicity than the one at UPNG.

*Q: Why is this?*

I don't know. It must be the lecturer at UPNG, but I'm not really sure. And some of the journalists like promoting Divine Word rather than UPNG. That's how I see it because most of the time if there is something great going on at UPNG journalism school it doesn't get published, while any little thing that happens at Divine Word is published in the newspapers, in The National. Maybe the lecturer is slack, or I'm not sure.

*Q: Of course, UPNG has produced by far the most journalists in the country. How much investigative journalism is going on and how much support is given by media organisations?*

Not much. The senior reporters do carry out some investigative work, but I don't think much of it is being done here. There should be more training given to young reporters to help them do investigative journalism. Most of the time when you want to call up and investigate something further, the person on the other end of the phone says, "We can't comment", or "You have to speak to me lawyer", or they tell you to call somebody else. And there is a blockage there.

*Q: What sort of resources are provided by a paper such as The National for computer assisted reporting (CAR) such as data bases research, and what training is given?*

We have the internet here but then it's restricted to a few people. Most of the reporters have no access.

*Q: Who gets the access?*

The editor-in-chief, some of the subeditors, general manager ... but the rest of us, those in the news reporting section have no access. Most PNG journalists have no access to the internet because the management reckon that they have to save money. They say it costs a lot of money. So we just rely on the fax machine and the secretary sometimes downloads some stuff of the internet for us.

*Q: Do you believe culture is a problem for investigative journalism?*

Yes, it is when say your wantok is your minister and then you hear something bad about him. Then one of the reporters writes something about it. And then say you're the editor and you read it. It usually happens that the editor takes the story off [the news file] and then it never gets published. So culture is ... I'd say 50 percent [of the time] it helps, and then the other 50 percent it stops you carrying out your reporting.

*Q: What about religion — is this an obstacle to investigative journalism?*

Religion is not a problem.

*Q: Do journalists, including you, face political pressure in your job?*

Most of the senior reporters do. But as for me, no.

*Q: What about threats — do you face them?*

People usually call up and swear and say they'll sue me and things like that. But it doesn't get out of hand.

*Q: Is there anything you would like to raise as an issue that I haven't asked you about?*

I think there should be more training for working journalists in the newsrooms and incentives for development.

*Q: Personal and staff development?*

Yes.

*Q: Are these issues discussed with your newspaper?*

Not really. Every time we have an editorial meeting, we are told there is not enough money and things like that. So everybody shuts their mouth and don't say what they want to say. We just sit around and then when some kind of training is offered by an overseas organisation and they say they are going to pay for all the expenses then we give in our names. We do it ourselves. Sometimes if our editors come across it then they choose anyone from the newsroom. We should have more training. And then we should also have a PNG Journalists Association.

## 16. BARRY MIDDLEMISS

**Commercial and Logistics Consultant, Word Publishing Pty Ltd, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Audiotaped interview in Port Moresby, 1 May 2001.**

**Email address: [kavera@online.net.pg](mailto:kavera@online.net.pg)**

*Q: What are some of the problems with current news media practice?*

One of the biggest problems facing the media is the laziness of journalists — they rely too much on handouts. These days we see too many stories that are little more than handouts and they have bylines of the reporters on them. An important objective on this newspaper is investigative journalism, but a lot of what we actually see in the paper is nothing more than tip-offs, ready-made stories with little effort by the journalists. The journalism is actually by the sources.

Journalists tend to depend too much on their sources. My perception of their laziness is that they are totally dependent on their sources for a handout. But they end up being hostage to their sources unfortunately. They think that if they don't write the story along the lines of what the sources want, they will be in trouble.

When the source has a particular interest in mind, the journalist takes it as face value without question. This pattern is an important concern as it has been going for a long time. Often the reporter doesn't check out the story. They don't see the importance of doing the hard work, the cross-checking of facts.

*Q: So what has changed?*

Journalists in Papua New Guinea today are lazy. Many of the student journalists who came out of UPNG in the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s were very good journalists, well trained. Many

of them are still around today. And there were also the experienced journalists who had on-the-job training. Staff were torn apart the if they didn't do the job.

Today I don't think journalists know what they are supposed to be doing — they don't follow-up, they don't follow through on stories. You read a story in the papers and you often wonder, 'What happened after that?' You don't find out what happened in the story.

Good journalists are no longer working on the newspapers. Too often the journalists today have become lapdogs for their sources.

Journalists who have been given good training are too often let down by their own newsrooms.

The stinginess of the media companies in providing additional training is also a handicap. The role models may be still there, but they are not allowed to surface.

*Q: How do the Papua New Guinea newspaper readers and broadcast audiences view journalists?*

The people of Papua New Guinea understand the role of the media and the risks that journalists sometimes have to take. Up until the Bougainville conflict, journalists had never been assaulted until Wally Hiambohn was attacked by the BRA in 1989.

Journalists have noticed the support of the crowd if they are doing their job properly. And the role of overseas journalists is respected.

*Q: What are the incentives needed for journalists to have a career path in the media?*

Less stinginess by some of the media employers. At the moment there is a:

- Lack of training;
- Lack of trips overseas;
- Lack of opportunity — where else do you go for a job, there is nothing for them to advance.

So journalists ending moving into public relations jobs, like at OK Tedi, or the Bougainville PRO.



## 17. WINIS MAP



***Reporter, Word Publishing Ltd, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Audiotaped interview in Port Moresby, 1 May 2001.***

*Q: Would you outline the background to your career as a journalist and your education?*

I started with Word Publishing's *Wantok* newspaper in 1992 and worked there until February 1994 when I went to the University of Papua New Guinea to do my Diploma in Media Studies. I spent one and a half years at UPNG before going over to the University of Hawai'i on a scholarship. So I completed my degree in journalism in May of 1999. In July I was offered a job in the Marshall Islands in public relations. I spent seven months there and resigned in January. I was supposed to go down to USP to do postgraduate studies in journalism in 2001 but things didn't work out because of the coup in Fiji, So I joined *The Independent* group here in September.

*Q: How old are you now?*

I am thirty.

*Q: And where are you from?*

I'm from in Sandaun Province.

*Q: There are different views on how journalists should be prepared for a career in journalism. Some say that having a journalism school background is a good way to start off as a journalist, others say it is better to go straight into a media organisation from school and learn on the job. How important do you think journalism education is in PNG?*

It is better to have a degree or diploma or other tertiary qualification in journalism together with part-time experience on a media organisation. When I first joined *Wantok* I did not have any background in journalism so I started off as a cadet and then went to UPNG to get my education.

*Q: What were the advantages in doing that — why was it worthwhile?*

It helped me in any many ways, learning about media ethics and laws. It provided a good grounding in the principles of journalism and what is required in terms of requirements and responsibilities. When I started off in the newsroom I had no idea about media ethics.

*Q: How do you think your news organisation believes journalists should be prepared for their career?*

I don't really know much about the policy, but when I was with Word Publishing before the management supported me to get further education because I had no background in journalism. So the management asked me to go to UPNG.

*Q: What do you think is the essential role of a journalist in PNG?*

The essential role of a journalist is to inform the public and provide a watchdog on government.

*Q: What about concepts such as the Fourth Estate and watchdog, how important are they to PNG?*

A watchdog is very important because it keeps the public informed about what the elected leaders in government are doing, it informs the public on what actual things are happening in the government.

*Q: Political leaders often refer to development journalism, but there are different interpretations of what that is. How important is the notion of development journalism in the Pacific?*

From what I understand development journalism refers to journalists writing news stories about development like roads and bridges, but again we have to look at policies too. So I don't hear journalists talk much about it but journalism has improved so much in the country that development is well covered. Journalists need to be careful that they don't just become PR people for parliamentarians when writing about development.

*Q: How important are journalists and the media in forming public opinion in PNG?*

It is very important for media in forming public views on policies.

*Q: How does the public perceive journalists?*

Generally, the public perceives journalists as being very important in terms of news.

*Q: What about the standing of journalists themselves?*

Well, from experience when people learn that you are a journalist they respect you and are careful about what they say.

*Q: What sort of salary and wages structure is in place for journalists — is there adequate provision for a career path?*

I think the current salary scale is not adequate enough to lure journalists into the profession. In PNG, journalists are forced to move from paper to paper, or go into public relations, because the media salary scale is not good. So journalists in PNG move from the *Post-Courier* to *The National* or to *The Independent* because the pay is not that promising.

*Q: Should freedom of the press reflect free expression for the media, or should it be free expression for the public and public access and access to public interest groups to the media?*

Freedom of press should be both. The publisher should have free access to information and the media should give free access to informing the public.

*Q: Do Pacific governments, including the PNG Government, support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

In Papua New Guinea, the Government should support journalism education, but unfortunately we have two journalism schools in the country and the Government seems to be supporting the Catholic Church-run school at Madang, Divine Word. It doesn't seem to support the public journalism school at UPNG.

*Q: Why is this happening — why is the Government supporting one and not the other?*

It might be politics. People have their own political agendas. It is unfortunate that the whole journalism school at UPNG is not being supported.

*Q: Do you know of any reason why UPNG is not being supported?*

No, I have no idea.

*Q: What about the media industry, is it favouring one journalism school and not the other?*

The way I see it, there is some support from the region like PINA for Divine Word and it is unfortunate that there isn't support for UPNG.

*Q: Is there enough investigative journalism in PNG and is there enough support for it?*

I think there is enough investigative work, but there is a lack of sufficient resources for investigation. Our paper has done a lot of investigative work with people like Dominic Kakas.

*Q: How much political pressure is there on journalists in the course of their work?*

There is some pressure, but not enough to compromise a free press.

*Q: Any further comments that you would like to make about the media and training that I haven't asked you about?*

There are two comments that I would like to make. One: I would like to see ordinary journalists represented in PINA, not just managers. Every time there is a PINA conference, it is always managers, editors and publishers who go but very few ordinary journalists. The conferences are covered from the management's point of view; it is better to have journalists involved so that their views as journalists can be heard.

*Q: Papua New Guinea doesn't have a PNG Journalists Association at the moment. Are there plans to revive it?*

There is some talk about reviving the PNGJA, but I don't know when. There is a group working on it.

*Q: If there is a body like the PNGJA it is easy to raise the concerns that you have about better representation collectively. It is very hard for individuals to raise it...*

The other problem is that we cannot address the issue of better salaries and working conditions without a body like the PNGJA. All we can do is get on with our job when there is no union to represent us. So often we are forced to go elsewhere. We love the job, but get so frustrated about the pay and working conditions. It is very expensive to live in Port Moresby.

## 18. FAY DUEGA



***Editor of The Independent, Word Publishing Ltd, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Audiotaped interview in Port Moresby, 1 May 2001.***

***Email address: [Word@global.net.pg](mailto:Word@global.net.pg)***

*Q: Would you outline the background to your career as a journalist and your education?*

I went to Divine Word University and did two years there and did my diploma, finishing in 1990 and started in January 1991 on the sports desk at Word Publishing. From there I went to the *Weekend Sport* newspaper, which is no longer around, for three or four years and then I was moved to the *Times of PNG* as a sports reporter. And then I became in charge of the sports section.

*Q: When did you become editor of The Independent?*

I acted in the position for a while, starting in 1998.

*Q: There are different views on how journalists should start off on their career. Some say that is best to go to a journalism school and get a journalism qualification, while others think it is best to go straight from school and learn on the job. How important to do you think journalism education is for PNG and the Pacific?*

It is very important. Anybody interested in becoming a journalist should go to a journalism school and then go to the newsroom. Now to learn journalism theory, it is important to go to the journalism school and then get the practical experience in the newsroom.

*Q: Do you have anybody currently on Word Publishing staff who came straight from school or another organisation without formal tertiary journalism education?*

All of them have had journalism education.

*Q: Well, this leads to my next question on how does the organisation view journalism education and training?*

It believes journalists should be trained. When I first started, Word Publishing used to recruit graduates just out of the universities, DWU and UPNG. Lately it seems to have dropped down on that a bit. Previously we used to get two or three journalism students a graduation, now it seems to be down a bit. Training wise, I think Word Publishing prefers to get graduates from the university rather than training them on the job.

*Q: What do you think is the essential role of a journalist?*

To let people know what is happening around them, a watchdog for the people and the nation, to tell them the corrupt acts that are going on — we need to tell the people that.

*Q: What about the notion of development journalism in the Pacific? A lot of politicians come up with the phrase development journalism but there are different kinds and different definitions. Is it important in the Pacific, the idea of development journalism?*

I define development journalism as working with the grassroots people to develop their communities and the country as a whole. It is important.

*Q: How are journalists perceived?*

Very, well. But on the whole it comes down to the individual journalist.

*Q: What about salaries and working conditions for journalists? Is there a sufficient career path for journalists on media organisations in PNG?*

We lose a lot of journalists in PNG to the public relations sector. The pay isn't attractive.

*Q: Do you believe the media should be regarded as a watchdog, or as just another business?*

It should be a watchdog. I don't think it should be regarded as another business. I see the impact on the news space by the advertising, and it was just another business, the quantity of adverts on a page would pile up to make more business out of the industry.

*Q: Should freedom of the press reflect freedom of expression of the media, or should it be freedom expression of the public and interest groups to access the media?*

I think it is really for the public. In Papua New Guinea, the public has freedom to speak and the media should reflect this. The Government tries to intimidate the media, but the public should have more say.

*Q: Do Pacific governments, including the PNG Government, support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

The Government doesn't give much help, but I don't think it obstructs journalism education.

*Q: How important is investigative journalism in Papua New Guinea?*

Very important. To play our role as a watchdog it is very important that journalists carry out their own checks and investigations.

*Q: How well resourced are the media for this role such as access to the internet, researching databases and so on?*

Very well resourced. We have the internet; it is up to how people use the resources. If people know how to use the internet for searches then they can make more use of the resources

available. But in PNG we don't have many electronic databases. Some of the data systems are really outdated.

*Q: How much political pressure is there on journalists during the course of their work?*

I don't think there is much political pressure. While you get complaints about stories when they are published — people ring up and once in a while make written complaints. But I don't think there is much political pressure.

*Q: Is there any issue that you would like to raise about the media that I haven't asked you about?*

I don't know what it is like in Fiji but here in Papua New Guinea because journalists are not paid all that much they're always hopping from job to job. They use the mainstream to become settled for a while, but once they find a better job such as in PR that offer more pay then they just go. It is not good for the media industry. They don't give much notice sometimes. That is one problem for the PNG mainstream media. Other sectors pay much better. The media needs to make changes about pay and conditions if it is going to attract good journalists.

## 19. BONNER TITO



***News director and talkback host Radio Kalang — FM100, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Audiotaped interview in Port Moresby, 1 May 2001.***

***Email address: [Kalang@tiare.net.pg](mailto:Kalang@tiare.net.pg)***

*Q: Would you give an outline of how you got into journalism and your education and training before you ended up here with Radio Kalang?*

I am basically 33 now. I started in Madang. I was at Divine Word Institute where I did my diploma and graduated in 1988 and in the same year in December I got to work for the National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) as a broadcast officer. That was my first job. I worked as a programmer for about a year and a half. About that time I also worked in Sri Lanka as a broadcast officer. On my return I was promoted to be a provincial journalist in Madang. I spent about three years in Madang. In 1994, I resigned from the NBC and got into mainstream newspaper journalism with the *Post-Courier*. I spent a few months with the *Post-Courier*.

My biggest job was when I was the press secretary for the Office of the Governor-General in 1996-1997. I served on Bougainville during the first peacekeeping exercise as press secretary for the then Prime Minister, Sir Julius Chan. I coordinated the local and overseas media at that time. Then I was with the *Post-Courier* for a while again in Lae in 1998. And then in 1999 I started working with Radio Kalang. I was the first news director for the department and have held that position for about a year. And at the same time I host the FM100 talkback show.

*Q: There are two conflicting views in the Pacific about how journalists should get trained for the media. One view — the most common one in Papua New Guinea — is to go to a journalism school and get a basic journalism qualification before joining a new media organisation. There is another view that it is much better to take people straight out of school, put them in a newsroom and train them on the job. How important is journalism education?*

I think it is really important for journalists to go through formal education first. He needs that information, he needs that experience and knowledge through the formal process of learning about journalism, which he can use in practical terms once he is on the job. But many media organisations here are now bypassing that education and training mainly because of the salaries they would like to avoid. The excuse is that somebody has some education, as long as he can read and write and understand, we'll give him a job — and we train him on the desk.

I believe that the important thing is to get that [media] background at a formal journalism school and then they get the experience on the job. It is a lot easier if they do that. For instance, in my organisation here I have a very limited staff. I am working with a skeleton staff. I have three fulltime reporters, plus myself and a casual — a casual who does not have a journalism education background. And it becomes sometimes very difficult to try to train someone who hasn't gone to journalism school, to teach them the code of ethics and media law, the principles of journalism, and how to report and what not to report. For starters, it is really difficult to sit

down and edit when there is a skeleton staff. But in a larger media organisation where you might have a training officer or a cadet counsellor then that might work.

*Q: You have other voices that I have heard on the radio just now. Do you have stringers as well?*

Yes, we have stringers. I have stringers located in strategic parts of PNG. I have one covering the New Guinea Islands region. Another one at the tail of PNG who does most of the islands of Milne Bay and Milne Bay itself. And I have another one in the Highlands. So I basically have three stringers at the moment and I am looking at expanding that.

*Q: What do you think is the essential role of a journalist in PNG?*

Because we are a developing nation, we as journalists are seen as in partnership with the Government. That is one area. The second area is as an information desk and also as a watchdog. We raise the alarm over issues that we think are of concern to the people. And that is basically what I see as the role of journalists.

*Q: How important are the Fourth Estate and watchdog roles of the media?*

It is important in the context. Look at our government for a start. We have got a government of so many backgrounds, so many political affiliations, and so many platforms. They just make a decision in Parliament. Nobody knows what happens behind the scenes, nobody knows if there is corruption. And it is our role as reporters to basically get in there, get our information and get it out to the people. As long as our facts are there, let's give it to them.

*Q: Is the notion of development journalism important? Politicians come out with the phrase from time to time but there are differing interpretations. How do journalists view it?*

I maybe straight here, but I see politicians in how they define development journalism in the context that they like to use journalists to get the type of information they want to the people. I see development journalism as you go out and the type of information that you get helps unite the people of PNG, helps give a positive picture of what generally people should be thinking.

*Q: How well informed is the public in Papua New Guinea?*

I'd say about 50 to 80 percent are informed about a lot of things that are happening.

*Q: Does that mean that they are critically engaged with the media?*

Inevitably, you do have people who are critical and who have engaged themselves with the media on issues right down to the doorsteps of organisations. I served in smaller radio stations and in regional print media in Madang, for instance. For almost 80 percent of the people in rural areas radio is the only means of communication. So you get a lot of these people, as soon as they're in town, they come to the radio station to pass on information or to critically analyse something.

In the print media, it's almost the same. I also worked with the *Post-Courier* and I worked in Lae, looking after the region. And you find that as long as people know where the media agency is, they come straight to you and give information. Otherwise, when you're out there they freely give information. Sometimes if you point a mike at somebody they get "mike fright" or sometimes people are reluctant to give information. So it's within that range.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in PNG?*

Journalists are mostly perceived as neutral people, but one that you can actually relate information for broadcast or printing. There have been a few cases in PNG where the journalists have been seen as "enemies". Enemies in the sense that whatever information they get will be turn into their own needs and not what a politician, or some group, needs. This is where we sometimes get some conflict.

*Q: What about the status of journalists?*

From my personal perspective and experience, in the rural areas the status of journalists is quite high. You're rated very highly out there. You're one of the educated elite that passes on information. In an urban setting, he is just another person with education and able to get out there and inform people. Let me also say that politicians value of journalists as important

people and if you are within a certain group or at a certain function you will be treated very highly, and sometimes with respect. It depends on your credibility and how you stand up in your community. So a lot of it comes back to the credibility of the individual reporter.

*Q: How influential are the journalists in creating public opinion?*

They can be very influential at times. Let me just state an example here: at the last standoff between the Government and the soldiers [March 2001], when arms were taken out of the armoury. Journalists played an important role there. What they said, particularly the radio stations, on air at the time was very influential. And people were calling in to the radio stations and asking what was the latest. Reporters and journalists are very influential.

*Q: What is your view of salaries and wages for journalists? Is there adequate provision for a career path in journalism?*

I don't think there is adequate opportunity there. Generally in Papua New Guinea, journalists are some of the lowest paid professionals. Certain organisations here are now seeing the need to pay a journalist so much because of the work he does, but not because of the qualification he has. This is a big concern. A lot of those renowned journalists are moving into the private sector, or into the government sector, where there are better financial opportunities.

*Q: Are media organisations doing anything about keeping those people? Can they afford to lose them?*

That's a question that needs to be looked at by certain media organisations. In general, media organisations are doing something, but not to the extent of hauling the entire news organisation together because of other interests as well.

*Q: Should the media be regarded as a watchdog, or should it be thought of as another business?*

The media should be looked at in both contexts — as another business, and as a watchdog. And as another business, running its affairs and doing what it can to make money. As a watchdog, in informing people.

*Q: Should freedom of the press mean freedom of expression for the news media, or should it be free expression of the public, or interest groups?*

Either way. Not only expressed in what the media organisation thinks, but what should be reported.

*Q: Are Pacific governments, including the PNG Government, supporting or obstructing media education and training?*

The Government has been supporting — not to the full extent — but it has been supporting. An example would be, for instance, the Government subsidising Divine Word University at Madang, which has had a lot of support. Most of the remarks from the Government offer positive support. A lot more needs to be done by the Government.

*Q: What specifically has the Government done over assisting Divine Word?*

I think it is through national scholarships, but I am not sure. But it is a very good package.

*Q: What about the other journalism school at UPNG? Has it had Government support?*

I think it has had Government support, but not to that extent. The last time I spoke to the journalism head, he said they really needed government support. It just reflects on what facilities they have there.

*Q: How important is investigative journalism in the media industry?*

This is something important that the news media really needs to look at. Some of the things highlighted are basically that it is too expensive. And you need probably the most experienced journalists doing it. It has to be out there. It is a really important area that needs to be looked at. In an organisation like FM100, we are unable to do that. We would need more staff. But investigative journalism is probably the way to go in PNG.

*Q: How much political pressure that journalists face during the course of their work?*

I'd say about less than 50 percent of journalists face pressure. But again it depends on the writer, on the journalist, and how he perceives and uses the information to his or his news organisation's advantage.

*Q: A final question: is there any issue related to media and journalism training that I haven't asked about and you would like to raise?*

We have a PNG Media Council but that council is supposed to take the interests of the industry and to ensure that there is a lot more training. I think training lacks a lot, especially when you look at those who have been on the field for some time need refresher programmes. That's the issue that I think of the moment.

*Q: There has been a lot of talk in other interviews about the need for a revived PNG Journalists Association as a body representing journalists themselves. Would you make any comment on that?*

I think we really need one that would safeguard and also cater for the interests of journalists in the country. At the moment we all fall back on our own organisations in times of problems and the Media Council only makes a comment once in a while.

## 20. ELLIOT RAPHAEL



***Senior Business Affairs Reporter in the national newsroom, National Broadcasting Corporation. Chimbu Province, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Aged 31. Audiotaped interview in Port Moresby, 3 May 2001.***

***Email address: [News@nbc.com.pg](mailto:News@nbc.com.pg)***

*Q: How did you get started in journalism and what training did you have?*

I did my early schooling in Chimbu and then went to Divine Word Institute where I did my matriculation and diploma. I spent a couple of years looking for a job. And then in 1993 I was employed at Word Publishing as a reporter with *Wantok* newspaper for eight months. I joined NBC later in 1993. And since then, I have been here. My primary role is looking after business and parliamentary reports.

*Q: How important is journalism education in Papua New Guinea?*

As the world goes through major changes, I believe that journalism needs to be more investigative so journalists should come out of journalism schools with university training. However, having said that it isn't enough going to journalism school alone to get a grasp of what journalism really is.

*Q: How does your organisation believe journalists should be trained?*

Most of the journalists here have been recruited straight from Divine Word and UPNG, including those who have come from the Office of Information and the ABC base.

*Q: What is the essential role of a journalist in PNG?*

There are many answers to this. I like to take the view that we hold at NBC — to inform, educate and entertain, especially on radio. Because we go through about 90 percent of the whole country, our primary purpose is to inform the public about what is happening in the country, the region and internationally. Given the fact that most of the population do not know how to read or write, NBC does play an important role. NBC journalists should improve on that role.

*Q: How important are the notions of “fourth estate” and “watchdog” for PNG journalists?*

As a watchdog, I guess because of the nature of politics here in the country, journalism is important for society.

*Q: How is “development journalism” defined in PNG, and is the concept important for PNG journalists?*

There has been too much talk about development journalists by politicians. But actually they are putting the wrong interpretation on it. They should be putting in place regulations that give journalists more power to have access to information from various organisations.

It is quite hard at times in the country to get information from certain organisations when there is something controversial going on over certain issues. But politicians jump up only when something bad is written about them.

*Q: How well informed do you think media audiences are in PNG?*

I don't think we have had survey information for quite some time about this, so I wouldn't know how much people listen to news or music. We need some studies to look into this.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in PNG?*

Probably as a watchdog, or the eyes of the people. Otherwise they think of us as being much the same as other civil servants.

*Q: So the public sometimes equates journalists with the civil service? What sort of status do they have?*

They look upon you as somebody who watches for news, probably because they haven't grasped the whole concept behind journalism. This would give the recognition that you would expect.

*Q: What is your view of the salary/wages structure for PNG journalists? Is there a sufficient career path for journalists?*

I don't think so. I've been around for quite a while now and I don't think anything big has been promoted by either the journalists' association or the Media Council for journalism as a career in the future. Journalists themselves need to have a strong, solid group to fight for our future as journalists. Journalists tend to be stubborn at times and because of that we haven't had any strong organisation to fight for better wages and conditions.

*Q: Why is this? Is anybody trying at present to work for better salaries and conditions?*

Not that I'm aware of. Some years ago we joined the Communication Workers Union and have been fighting for better pay. Almost all the workers at NBC, but not all the journalists, belong. I belong. About 70 percent of our journalists belong to the union.

*Q: Should the media be regarded as a watchdog or thought of as another business?*

Traditionally we work for the public, so we are a watchdog. It is part of the journalist's job to dig into things.

*Q: Should free expression for the media reflect free expression for the media, or free expression for interest groups (the public)?*

A bit of both.

*Q: Does the PNG Government support or obstruct journalism education training?*

I guess the PNG Government has helped journalism education in the past, and I'm sure it will continue to do that. At certain times they lack action. But the NBC is regarded as just another government department and it isn't helped.

*Q: How much political pressure is there on journalists in PNG?*

The Government doesn't put much pressure on the print media and private radio stations. It does put pressure on the NBC over reports that are regarded as controversial. But in general the NBC has been able to tell the Government that we are independent, and please respect our independence. We have been quite neutral over the years, except at certain times like during the Sandline mercenary crisis when we were gagged.

## 21. JOSEPH EALEDONA



***Manager of News and Information, National Broadcasting Corporation, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Aged 36. Milne Bay province. Audiotaped interviewed in Port Moresby, 1 May 2001.***

***Email address: [News@nbc.com.pg](mailto:News@nbc.com.pg)***

*Q: How did you get started in journalism and what training did you have?*

I graduated from the UPNG journalism school in 1987 and started work with the NBC in 1988 on the two-year cadetship programme. And I have been with the NBC ever since, apart from being attached to the Constitutional Reform Commission from 1994-97, and then I came back to the NBC and became the chief political reporter. And then I was the chief editor leading to what I am now. Basically I have covering police, courts, general reporting, finance and political reporting before taking up my present job.

*Q: Is the cadetship scheme you mentioned still in place at the NBC?*

Unfortunately no. We really wanted it to come back because I really feel that it is not good to go straight into journalism from the journalism schools without further support and a little bit of training from those journalists who are experienced in the field. We couldn't continue the cadetships because of lack of funding.

*Q: Is something missing in the preparation of the journalism schools?*

From experience, I really think what is missing is that going straight out from theory and practical on campus into the hard world of journalism doesn't really prepare journalists unless you have a bigger practical side while in school.

*Q: Didn't there used to be quite a lot of practical work in the journalism schools?*

Yes, there was a term of practical attachment with a media organisation. But then you see they are putting you through press releases and minor stories and that doesn't prepare you for the bigger jobs. This is especially now because a lot of the older reporters are leaving and you see the new people going straight into the bigger jobs without the experience. A cadetship for a few years would help a lot.

*Q: Is journalism education important for PNG?*

I think it is important. In this current climate of developments taking place, it is important for journalists to have qualifications. Journalism isn't just writing what people say, but it is also analysing what they say, and drawing other information. This thinking that journalists are just there to hear you and write about what you said is wrong. Journalists should be more critical about issues. Tertiary education is important for journalists nowadays.

*Q: How does the NBC view recruitment and training?*

We have a policy in place. All our journalists employed at the NBC must come from a recognised journalism school. All our journalists are graduates with either a degree or a diploma from UPNG or DWU.

*Q: Do you have any preferences or is it an open policy?*

We have an open policy. We advertise and it is an open market.

*Q: What is the essential role of a journalist in PNG?*

Two important roles of a journalist are to:

- Relay accurate and simple information, because many of the people in PNG live in rural areas.
- Critically analyse situations, especially in politics and finance. And let people decide how to respond to them.

*Q: How important are the concepts of “fourth estate” and “watchdog” to journalists in PNG?*

We act as the fourth estate. We are the eyes of the people and because of our duties, we need to be the watchdog of the public. This is one of our primary roles, to inform, educate and to expose corruption.

*Q: How do journalists on PNG define “development journalism” and how important is this notion for the country?*

As a developing nation, this is also important. When we are talking about debt and development, we need to also talk about the positive development that is taking place. It is not only the bad things that are happening, there are also positive things happening. And it is our job to portray those also.

*Q: How well-informed are media audiences in PNG?*

In the urban areas, they are well-informed. We gauge this by the responses that we get in the urban areas, those areas that are well-served by radio, television and the newspapers. But there is still a majority of Papua New Guineans who are not well-informed simply because of the communication facilities that we have in rural areas. Maybe they just listen to the news on the radio and that's it. We don't get responses from the remote areas.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in PNG?*

That's a good question. On the social side, I think we should get out from that and develop more professional grouping. In urban areas, politicians, business people, corporate sector view journalists as people who like to come in and party, and drinks, and I think we need to change that image of journalists into respected professional people.

Especially for Papua New Guinea, we haven't got a journalists' association. We are currently making efforts to establish that, not just as a union, but as a professional body. It would be aligned with the PNG Media Council, not only journalists, but graduate journalists and editors would be involved with this.

*Q: How do you view the salary/wages structure for journalists in PNG? Is there an adequate career path?*

For Papua New Guinea, I don't think so. For NBC journalists, we pay at levels that are acceptable that is comparable with other media organisations here, except for executives. Generally, young starting journalists are better off at NBC. A graduate cadet fresh out of university gets better pay than starting at another news organisation.

*Q: What is the starting level?*

About 300 kina a fortnight.

*Q: And how would that compare with, say, a secondary schoolteacher starting off?*

Journalists are not well-paid compared with other professions. We really want to get into investigative journalism, and expose corruption and all that. But we are human beings and we have to think of our families and their security too. After I write my story and go home, what happens to me, what happens to my family?

*Q: Is that a worry for quite a number of journalists?*

It is a worry, especially in Papua New Guinea. They can come and get you, just like that. Our security and that of our families is not guaranteed. We really need to get journalists better

developed, respected, especially in investigative journalism, and the security and looking after journalists is important.

*Q: How much political pressure do journalists in PNG actually face?*

Fortunately, there isn't so much political pressure. Yes, they may accuse us of this and that, but to pressure us not to write this, I don't see that happening often here. In my case, the NBC is a sensitive area. While we have editorial independence, NBC is government-owned. It doesn't happen often, but just the recent example of the dismissal of the managing director because the prime minister wasn't happy over the NBC coverage of the military rebellion. The Government demanded certain things, but we stood our ground and in the end the managing director was dismissed.

*Q: Does the PNG Government support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

It does not obstruct it, but it does not support journalism training in the country. Divine Word is a private institution. The Government doesn't fund journalism training. But at the University of Papua New Guinea, I really think that journalism training has dropped drastically. This is maybe because most government departments are facing financial problems. As you are aware, UPNG recently decided to scrap the journalism programme, but decided to bring it back in again. But the importance of it is not there. There is really no evidence of Government support for journalism education and training in this country.

*Q: Is there any comment you would like to make about the media and training that I haven't asked at present?*

There is one area, which is of great concern to the profession and this is the lack of incentives, rewards, protection and security. There is a trend and that is that we are not holding onto experienced journalists. They come up and they see greener pastures elsewhere — and off they go. Public relations, or public affairs positions, all go to experienced journalists. We haven't

questioned that yet. A few of us with not all that much experience — say 10 or 11 years — are hanging on. And those who are in the very senior executive posts stay on.

But in Papua New Guinea you will see a lot of young journalists. In they come to try to make their name. They make one or two headlines and feel happy about that, and then off they go for greener pastures. That's why I really think we need to move on from that, to hold onto experienced journalists.

*Q: This problem has also been raised by others. Any ideas about how this could be done?*

If we are to hold experienced journalists, we have to provide incentives, better pay and security for them. Let's get them into making documentaries, writing features, and being sent out on special reports. We're not an island of our own in Papua New Guinea. Let's send them out on issues, worldwide issues.

## 22. PETER SEA



**Chief Subeditor, Post-Courier, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Aged 43. Gulf Province. Audiotaped interview in Port Moresby, 2 May 2001.**

**Email address: [Psea@spp.com.pg](mailto:Psea@spp.com.pg)**

*Q: How did you get started in journalism and what training did you have?*

I was in one of the graduates of the last batch of in-house trained *Post-Courier* journalists who did a four-year cadetship. I started in 1979 and qualified in 1981.

*Q: So the scheme ended in 1981?*

Not exactly, it slowly fizzled out in the 1980s. And now we get a lot of our cadet reporters straight from the University of Papua New Guinea and Divine Word.

*Q: Even by then, the UPNG programme had started in 1975 and DWU in 1979. Were they not producing enough graduates back then?*

It was more the policy of the company to train their own people. It was felt that the people coming out of the universities were not trained to their liking.

*Q: This was the period when Ross Stevens and his contemporaries were teaching many of the journalists?*

That's right.

*Q: So there are those who believe it is better to recruit straight into the newsroom from school leavers and train on the job, and those who believe it is better to go through a foundation course at a journalism school first. What do you think of the value of journalism education in PNG?*

It is very important to get well trained, educated journalists in the field. It helps by having more knowledgeable people writing the stories. It is better than having people come into the field who have no idea what journalism is all about.

*Q: What is the situation today with the products of the journalism schools?*

The *Post-Courier* has changed with time. It has now realised the importance of getting properly educated, qualified journalists from the universities. They still came out raw and then they get taught what the *Post-Courier* wants them to do on the job. So it is important we get properly trained journalists who know the theory.

*Q: There is a big turnover of journalists in PNG, and many leave the industry altogether. Is this a problem?*

It is a concern in the sense that you get people trained up to a certain level and aptitude to do with the job, and then suddenly you are left with a vacuum when people leave.

*Q: So what has to be done to stem this "leak" of trained journalists?*

Basically, a lot of people leave the profession because of monetary reasons. People in public relations jobs get paid a lot more than journalists. Mining companies pay PR staff much, more than senior journalists get, so some journalists get lured away from the profession.

*Q: What is the essential role of a journalist in PNG?*

It is being the mouth, ears and eyes of the public on development issues, government issues, and getting information across to the masses.

*Q: How important are concepts such as “Fourth Estate” and “Watchdog” to PNG journalists?*

As a watchdog on government, I think the media in Papua New Guinea has done exceptionally well. I think it would compare well with its counterparts in the United States and Great Britain. But given its status as a developing country, it has done exceptionally well, keeping the government on its toes and in the middle of the road.

*Q: How important is the notion of “development journalism” to PNG journalists?*

I think we can't roll this into one parcel because of all the different cultures in PNG. Papua New Guinea is a developing country and needs a lot of well trained people in areas like environment, journalism, and a whole lot of new concepts coming up. So the country needs a lot of people who are well versed in their particular subjects in a global society.

*Q: How well informed are PNG news media audiences?*

It is hard to give one answer. It depends on the subject. Like rugby league. The people are very well informed about the sport and the State of Origin match that is taking place in Australia this weekend.

Politics? A lot of people are informed about politics in Papua New Guinea. But how well informed the readership is depends on what they get. And that depends on the few insiders on what happens with the changes in government. Nobody really knows what happens except from what they see and hear in the media.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in PNG?*

They are seen as friends and enemies at the same time. It depends on the circumstances with what the people are confronted with at any particular time. Generally, journalists don't compare

with doctors, lawyers or accountants. Journalists aren't too far down the scale, but they're also not too far up.

*Q: I have noticed that a number of people, including media people, associate the term journalist with "reporters". Subeditors and other journalists seem to be a different breed.*

*Would you like to comment about that?*

At the *Post-Courier*, the public regards everybody as a journalist. It doesn't matter whether you are an advertising salesman, or a printer, when you mention *Post-Courier*, you're automatically seen as a journalist. Unless you explain that, people automatically think that. So we don't have journalists, subeditors etc. I am a subeditor, but first of all I am a journalist.

*Q: What is your view of wages/salaries in the media? Is there an adequate career path for journalists?*

This may be one reason why there is a high turnover of people in journalism. A lot of people find that they can't progress any further. This is not a very lucrative job. You spend a lot of time at work, you don't have regular hours, and the financial benefits are not enticing enough to keep good people. Some of us stick it out because we like what we do.

*Q: Should the media be regarded as another watchdog, or should it be regarded as another business?*

Media has several roles and one of them is a watchdog. But definitely just being a watchdog alone is not enough in Papua New Guinea. Being a watchdog is not fulltime, so you have to put out a newspaper and it has to be a business.

*Q: Should freedom of the press reflect free expression of the news media, or should it reflect free expression of interest groups (the public)?*

This is a two-way traffic. It should be both.

*Q: Has the PNG Government been supportive or constructive in journalism training?*

We think the case of the University of Papua New Guinea journalism school, the government hasn't been doing enough to help training. There have been a lot of words, but not much money, and not enough lecturers, tutors. It is one of the best schools in the university, yet it is always the target of cost-cutting.

*Q: Where do you recruit most of your staff?*

Mostly from UPNG. Last year we got five from UPNG, and then this year two from DWU.

*Q: How much political pressure are journalists facing in PNG?*

If there is pressure on individual journalists, I really have no idea. Usually where there is pressure, it is on journalists to run certain kinds of information. I think there is also a certain amount of pressure to stop journalists getting vital information that will make their stories stronger, or more accurate. Some information is sensitive because it touches the reputation of a politician.

*Q: Any important media issue that you would like to raise?*

Environment journalism is important in Papua New Guinea because it is the country with the third-largest tropical rainforest in the world. At the moment, people are just giving out timber licences left, right and centre without any thought of the consequences. We need to educate our people about the issues and the environmental concerns.

## 23. ROBYN SELA



***Police and Defence Reporter, PNG Post-Courier, Manus, Papua New Guinea.***

***Aged 28. Audiotaped interview in Port Moresby, 2 May 2001.***

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*Q: How did you get started in journalism?*

An interest in journalism came to me at a very early age. I came from a journalism family on Manus, my father Luke Sela was editor of the *Post-Courier* for many years. When I completed national high school studies at Ayura, I was accepted on the Diploma in Media Studies course at the University of Papua New Guinea and graduated in 1994. An FM station, Nau FM, was starting up in PNG, so after I finished my attachment at the NBC, I joined the station and became news direct. After four years there, I joined the *Post-Courier* in 1998.

*Q: How important do you think journalism education is in PNG?*

It is very important. There are differing views on how journalists should be trained. Some think you should come straight out of school and learn on-the-job, and others think it is best to go to journalism school first. Personally, I think people should go to journalism school to learn ethics and basic journalism ideas, and then go on to a newsroom and be taught from there.

*Q: When you first joined Nau FM, the radio reportedly recruited many of its staff without any training in journalism. Is that true?*

Yes, at the time only the news director and me had gone through journalism school at UPNG, the other two journalists who were on board had no training at all. It was very difficult.

*Q: What criteria was used to select those staff?*

They could speak English with an Australian accent.

*Q: Why did you leave there and go to the Post-Courier?*

There were some personal difficulties in the newsroom, but more importantly I felt I had gone as far as I could there, but there was more to learn and no one to teach me. I was already the news director and I wanted to have the opportunity to learn more. I needed more job satisfaction and I couldn't find it there so I had to move.

*Q: What is the view of your current news organisation about journalism training?*

The view of training is better than with Nau FM. They consider it important for reporters. We ourselves have mentioned it from time to time, and we have actually gone on training. But I feel more should be done in terms of training for journalists on-the-job.

*Q: Does the fact that the Post-Courier has put up funding and established a training facility within the company office demonstrate that it is willing to put more into training?*

Yes, not only for the newsroom but also for the company as a whole. We have already some training sessions in there and it does show management commitment to more training. And it's

not only for the *Post-Courier*. There is an open invitation for other news media organisations to make use of the training room.

*Q: What's the essential role of a journalist in PNG?*

Watchdog... Investigations into corruption, and that kind of thing. And to educate. Awareness,

*Q: How important are concepts such as "Fourth Estate" and "watchdog" to PNG journalists?*

Very important. It's what we are really here for — educating, to be a watchdog, to investigate corruption. Which we have done successfully over the years. I think we have done a great job.

*Q: Politicians in the Pacific often talk about the need for "development journalism" in the Pacific. But there are differing interpretations over what this means. Is the concept of development journalism important in PNG and is it practised?*

I don't know what they mean by development journalism. I don't know how the politicians define it. Maybe they mean more investigative journalism. That's probably what they really mean. Maybe journalists should be more educated, more intelligent, policy decisions — maybe that kind of development.

*Q: And what do journalists think about this?*

More what the politicians think.

*Q: How well informed are the news media audiences and readerships?*

It depends on the different media organisations. Radio has a bigger audience. You have a lot of people in the villages. Radio actually reaches them.

*Q: How does the public view journalists in PNG?*

The public see us as a watchdog, they see us as the eyes and ears of the community. They don't really understand public policies, so they rely on us to interpret them.

*Q: What do you think of the salary/wages structure for journalists in PNG? Is there a sufficient career path?*

No. Salaries are terrible.

*Q: So why do journalists work if pay is terrible?*

For love of the profession and, personally for me, job satisfaction. As an example, I left my job at NauFM to come to the *Post-Courier* for less money, but better job satisfaction.

*Q: Is there a challenge here for media organisations — how to address the high turnover and loss of journalists?*

Yes, a challenge to media organisations to improve their pay. That is what most journalists complain about, and it is why many move on to greener pastures.

## 24. CAROLYN IVE



***News Director, PNG FM Ltd (Nau FM), Eastern Highlands, Papua New Guinea.***

***Aged 28. Audiotaped interview in Port Moresby, 2 May 2001.***

***Email address: [Carolynive@hotmail.com](mailto:Carolynive@hotmail.com)***

*Q: How did you get started in journalism and how were trained?*

I always wanted to be a journalist and I entered UPNG in 1990. I did the Diploma in Media Studies and then went out again and returned to do the degree, graduating in March 2000. I wanted to be a newspaper journalist, and I don't quite know how I got into radio journalism. But I think I am loving every minute of being a radio journalist working with PNG FM. I have been given a lot of opportunities here to learn and to build up myself from what I have learnt at journalism school under your guidance. And I think I have learnt a lot — I have no regret in that., and it has been very helpful to me in my career right now.

*Q: How important is journalism education in PNG?*

We need more practical because when I was at school I was working here as well. For three I was working as a journalist and going to school as well in order to get my degree. And I think it has helped a lot. You tend to be more focused on what you want in your career as a journalist. And when you relate that back to school it becomes clearer. You know what you're doing, in theory as well as practical. What journalism is all about.

*Q: How does your news organisation think journalists should be prepared for their career?*

They believe that we have to have the right attitude. That is the most important factor. When you have the right attitude, you focus on what you want to achieve in your career as a journalist. That is the main focus when we look at hiring journalists.

*Q: When NauFM first began in 1994, it recruited three journalism graduates from UPNG and it is also hired two people without any journalism training. Is it still the practice?*

Yes, because this is radio we concentrate more on presentation and the attitude — right presentation, pronunciation and everything to do with that. We recruit people and then give them in-house training, which we usually do yearly.

*Q: But you also recruit from the journalism schools?*

Yes, mostly because we want a mixture of people in the newsroom. If they can know how to write stories, and they know how to present news stories on radio, that's the main focus that we have.

*Q: How closely do you work with the journalism schools to get the sort of people you would like?*

Currently, with UPNG after you left there we have not had that real close contact, but with Divine Word we do have a link because they have a new radio programme that has been established. We are doing an arrangement where the students can file stories by phone, email, disk of tapes and we edit it.

*Q: Why is this not happening with UPNG?*

We have difficulty getting in touch with them. I just don't know. Every time I try to call them there is hardly any communication. But when it comes to recruiting, they do write to us and we have a look at them. Individually, student journalists at UPNG interested in radio do call me up, and I ask them to come in and I take their voice piece and see how they do radio stories. And then I call them back if I want to take them on part-time or an attachment.

*Q: Do they still have attachments at the moment, because UPNG used to have 16-week attachments with the media industry?*

Yes, but last year I haven't seen any. I faxed across to [Sorariba] Nash to see if any of their students wanted to come in. But unfortunately I didn't get any response.

*Q: What is the essential role of a journalist in PNG?*

To get essential information about things affecting the country and the people. And from what we have here — because it is a commercial radio station that I work on — we have to get news stories that affect people directly, such as increasing prices, the politics of the country, and environmental issues. Those are the reports that we have to get, and we need to get them first before anybody else.

And now that we have the PNGFM web page, our journalists are also expected to write in newspaper style for this.

*Q: How important is the concept of "Fourth Estate" and "watchdog" for PNG journalists?*

These are very important concepts as the country goes into its 26<sup>th</sup> year of independence. And it is very important with all the issues coming up. We really do need journalists to act as a watchdog for the country. We had been doing that very well before, but now we have slipped back into press release journalism. It is very important that most journalists under the concept of a watchdog in PNG.

*Q: Politicians in the Pacific say there is a need for more “development journalism”, but there are differing views about this means. How important is the notion of “development journalism” for journalists in PNG?*

It is important, but the thing is that they have all this development coming up but once it gets down to the people, we don't see it. They have all this, 'I'll do this, I'll build this, I'll do that,' but nothing really gets down to the people. It is all paper talk.

*Q: How well informed are news media audiences in PNG?*

In the past we had everything written in English, but now we use Tok Pisin on radio. And for the papers to get out into the rural areas it is very limited, it gets there two weeks later, or three weeks. When I was at Ayura, we usually got our Monday paper a week later. So it's quite difficult. But now with more radio broadcasting coming into the country, people will be more informed. But newspapers carry the detail, and that's very important.

*Q: How does the public perceive journalists?*

They see them as the watchdog.

*Q: How are salaries for journalists in PNG? Do news organisations provide enough of a career path?*

No, I don't think so. I have been fighting, fighting very hard for my journalists. Because we don't have the journalists association that we should have in PNG, it is very difficult. When you go up there to fight management on behalf of very good journalists, you get nowhere.

That's why journalists leave for greener pastures, public relations and what not. Every year we have young journalists coming in and old journalists moving out. There is nothing really solid [like an association] for journalists here in PNG to grow into something that is worth what we are supposed to be.

I have tried very, very hard, and now that I am in management, I have budgeted, and pushed and pushed. For my own organisation, we are getting there, but some of the others are not getting anywhere.

*Q: Should the news media be regarded as a watchdog, or should it be seen as another business?*

It should be regarded as a watchdog. They get information and give it out to the people, and let the people make their own judgement.

*Q: Is that the reality in PNG today?*

I don't think so. It should be but it's not. We had the Murray Barracks uprising in March. Every time we go on something like that, you know we have to carry live crosses, and the NBC, and FM100 had theirs ... Well, we had Government officials coming down hard on us, and saying that we were not giving out the right facts. But we were in that situation and reporting it live just as it was happening.

And then you have for a commercial radio like ours, we have the client's interests [to consider].

You are trying to write something, but you can't write it. You write it, but then it gets pushed away by the top management. It can't go on air...

*Q: Should free expression be free expression for the media, or free expression for interest groups (the public)?*

It should be free expression for the public. And let the public make the judgement, not the media. We write the facts, but they make the judgement.

*Q: Is the PNG Government supporting or obstructing journalism education and training?*

A tough question. You know we had the courses at UPNG, but they have been restructuring in such a way that they're trying to shut down the journalism programme. And when it comes to freedom of ... well, we don't have that. And they always have something to say.

There was a clear incident we had over a story we ran, and we had [Prime Minister Sir Mekere] Morauta's top officials threatening our news organisation that they would have to monitor the news before it goes to air. But we found out next day that they were wrong. Those are the little threats that we have.

*Q: How important is investigative journalism in PNG?*

Very important. We should have it. But to get the information we need, everybody is to tight-lipped. They send you around in circles for the whole of the day, and they're back to square one. There should be freedom of information legislation.

*Q: Is your news organisation supportive to investigative journalism, or is there little scope for it?*

We encourage journalists to be more investigative. When they come out of journalism school, they go into courses for more investigative feature writing. Monthly we have people coming in from other organisations, like the Central Bank, or the Secretary for the Environment, to talk to our journalists. We started doing this from last year so that we can get access to information and build up their trust.

*Q: How well resourced are news media organisations in PNG for computer-assisted reporting (CAR) and access to internet research?*

I can only speak for PNG FM. Everybody has their own email and has access for doing research. We encourage everybody, there is no boundary or limits.

*Q: Is culture an obstacle to investigative reporting in PNG?*

I don't think so. It is a matter of trust and how well a journalist presents his or her people — with information that is not biased, that is how they earn the respect that they need.

*Q: What about religion? Is there any barrier there?*

No. From here, I see there is nothing. But a journalist has to earn respect.

*Q: This follows on from some comments before about the Murray Barracks crisis and other issues. How much political pressure do journalists face in the course of their work?*

When it comes to sensitive issues that we have, from the experience that I have had, we have some political interference.

*Q: So, is the media free?*

*I don't think so. No.*

*Q: In what sense is it not free?*

You can only write what the Government wants you to write. You can't write what is factual.

*Q: What happens, for example, when you have conflict? When you run something on the station and you get pressure from the Government, how supportive is the news organisation?*

Sometimes you feel you're about to have a heart attack. But we all stand together. Whatever decisions I make, I stand by them, and the radio also stands by them.

*Q: Any comments on media issues that I haven't asked you about?*

Journalism is not something that we learn in school and then when we're out in the real workforce, that's it. It builds up and you become more mature. It broadens your knowledge. It is something that goes on forever.

One thing that is stopping journalists mature is the pay that they have. Sometimes the very good journalists that we have cannot afford to work in journalism anymore, and they move on into greener pastures. This is something that really needs to be looked at.

And training doesn't stop after you graduate. We need more training as we move along on our career path. With whatever little training that we gain, it will last a lifetime.

I'll give you an example — when we had to do critiques of movies that you showed us. And it has helped me a lot in looking at the presentation of news that goes on air. It can be applied in a lot of things as a journalist. It is lasted me a lifetime.

## 25. RAYMOND TOKAM



***Sports Reporter, PNG FM Ltd (Nau FM); Rasup, East New Britain Papua New Guinea. Aged 23. Audiotaped interview in Port Moresby, 2 May 2001.***

***Email address: [News@naufm.com.pg](mailto:News@naufm.com.pg)***

*Q: How did you get started in journalism and how were trained?*

Actually, I don't have a background in journalism. I was studying land management at Unitech, Lae. I just stayed there until my second year and then I flunked. I saw this ad saying that PNG FM was looking for new reporters, and I applied. That's how I got here. Due to my ability to learn and work fast, they made me a junior reporter, doing both news and sports.

*Q: What is the role of a journalist in PNG?*

Journalism needs to be addressed more often. Currently, people are not talking and many things go unheard, or are hidden, so most of the things that happen do not get across to the people. It is only the things that happen here in Moresby, or another major town, that get covered.

Journalism needs to be broader so that people can have their say, and express what they want and they needs.

*Q: What is the best way to be trained as a journalist?*

It is best to go to university and to get to know about journalism. Find out about the things the people want, what they are missing, so that you can be the link between them and the issue.

*Q: But you personally didn't have the opportunity of going to a journalism school at university, but you studied land management. Do you find that has been helpful for you as a working journalist?*

The presentation has been a help. Like studying land management, you go out on a survey and have to come back and write up a report. So that gives me a fair idea of what journalism does, and a little bit of experience.

*Q: Are the concepts of "Fourth estate" and "watchdog" important for Papua New Guinea journalists?*

Watchdog is important for PNG at present. If the media is not around, the so many things go buga up, especially in political things. The media plays a good role as a watchdog.

*Q: Politicians talk about the need for "development journalism". What does this mean for PNG journalists and is it important?*

When I read that question in the paper [questionnaire], I didn't understand it. Could you explain it to me?

..... *[An explanation]*

Development journalism should be addressed, in the sense that the facts should come out. Not to make people violent, or something like that. They should be informed, and then, what is the solution?

*Q: How well informed are PNG media audiences?*

Some people are well informed, those who have radios, or can buy newspapers. They are very well informed. But those who are not informed are those who don't speak much English, or find it hard to get the news. They would not be very well-informed.

*Q: How does the public perceive journalists?*

For myself, being around and covering events means that when I go back home I am seen as a person who has all the answers. So they ask me questions: "I heard about this and that, could you tell me more?" So I have to learn more.

*Q: Hard to live up to that. What is your view of salary/wages for journalists? Do news media organisations provide enough of a career path for journalists?*

I don't think journalists are paid enough for this type of work that they are doing. If you ask anybody in PNG how is a journalist paid, they always answer journalists are underpaid. That's what I reckon, it's true when I see my pay slips.

Even though I don't have a degree, those guys who joined Nau FM who do have a degree all still get the same pay as me. It's not good, the pay for journalists in PNG.

*Q: Are you satisfied with your career as a journalist?*

Yes, I am satisfied. Back on school I was a quiet person. I didn't talk a lot, but when I started work here, it came me confidence. So it makes me proud to work here.

*Q: Should the news media be regarded as a watchdog, or should it be seen as another business?*

I think it should be regarded as a watchdog. It shouldn't be like a business. It is supposed to report news as a means of information, like what's happening, so that those in authority should fear that there is an organisation out there that will tell the people what I am doing.

*Q: Should freedom of the press reflect free expression for the media, or should it be free expression for interest groups (the public)?*

It shouldn't be the interest of the public. It should be what the media thinks should go to the public because the media speaks the truth. So what the media thinks, they can say, they should tell. They shouldn't be in fear of the public.

*Q: Is the PNG Government supportive or obstructive for journalism education and training?*

I think they are supportive, but looking at terms and conditions for journalists, they are the ones who give journalists a hard time. They don't want some things to be made public. They don't want some things to go on air. They should leave journalists alone and let them do their job.

*Q: How much political pressure is there on journalists in the course of their work?*

I personally haven't had pressure. But seeing what our other reporters have been through, there is always political pressure on journalists.

*Q: How important is investigative journalism in PNG?*

It is important because most things when they are reported, and go on air, are left there unfinished. There needs to be investigative journalism to follow up on things.

*Q: Any other issues that you would like to raise that I haven't asked you about?*

The media should be looked at as one of the priority professions because at the moment many things are not brought to the people. Those people who are educated, or have access to the internet, get all the information. Unlike the rest who don't get the information, they suffer. The Government should look at journalism, provide the profession with things, and spread the news for the people. There is a lack of support from the Government, and journalists need this.

## 26. JOSEPH SUKWIANOMB



***Secretary of Social Welfare and Development, Chairman of Papua New Guinea's Commission for Higher Education, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Papua New Guinea, 1992-1995, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Audiotaped interview in Port Moresby, 3 May 2001.***

***Email address: [Nico@daltron.com.pg](mailto:Nico@daltron.com.pg)***

*Q: You were a student leader at the University of Papua New Guinea during crucial years in the establishment of journalism at the university. Please give an overview of the early years when Ross Stevens set up the programme?*

I am not sure what the arrangement was, but Ross Stevens “moved” things, he organised programmes and set things up. Another gentleman worked with him [*Michael King — see interview 44, page 791*]. But Ross is remembered now by many journalists working in media organisations, including John Somare, Joshua Kalinoe. These were initial students who were also my friends. I remember the years 1976, 1977, 1978 ... these years were very productive

when journalism really came alive. Every Friday we were huddled around the radio to listen to a programme that was put together by the students.

*Uni Tavor* also came a little later to play a significant role in the university scene in terms of changing ideas. I myself was involved in student news as the president of the UPNG Students Representative Council. [Not only] with the journalism students, but also with our own SRC paper. *Uni Tavor* was running and then there was this radio programme [*University on Air*] that would come on the NBC every Friday night about 7 o'clock. There was lots of debate, the journalism students, and Ross himself worked with other workshops too. Generally about that period from independence right through the decade after independence, the campus was very vibrant, very active. The students were well aware of what was happening. This was the time of student demonstrations and strikes. They were all reported from student angles by student journalists.

So the intervention by the New Zealand Government to host the journalism programme at UPNG laid the foundation for future work that is continuing. You yourself, David, came in to oversee the programme. But it started with one man and with New Zealand seed money. Now, looking back over the last few years, people who are in high places at the university don't think that journalism is important.

*Q: They don't think journalism is important in a democracy?*

Well, in terms of allocation of resources. And I think it is to do with appreciation of journalism training. We really haven't gone that far in investigative journalism in Papua New Guinea compared with some other countries. Investigative journalism needs skills, training and resources to get the good journalists out. But right now in the media field .... There used to be a time when *The Independent*, what used to be the *Times of Papua New Guinea*, was really good with really capable journalists like Franz Albert Joku and a few of the other journalists who worked so hard to make investigative journalism work.

*Q: Over the years the UPNG journalism programme has fluctuated depending on staff, resources and university policies. At the end of the 1990s it seemed to partially “disappear” altogether, but is back now. Was the attempted shutdown because of political pressure or administrative pressure from within the university?*

I think it is administrative ignorance on the part of senior management at the university. It has to do with allocation of resources, they decide who gets what. I think it also has to do with a bit of jealousy within the rank and file of staff at the university. The journalism department was doing very well, and getting the support of the media industry, and also with business houses donating equipment and prizes and so on. And their other poor cousins, the Language and Literature Department, were not receiving the same sort of support, so I think there were pressures within the rank and file to reduce the support.

It has nothing to do with Government influences from outside. It has everything to do with the influence of top management, from the vice-chancellor down, who did not see the importance of journalism training.

*Q: UPNG’s long established journalism programme made the major contribution of journalism education over the past two decades, yet there was a point of view within the UPNG Council in 1997/8 that the journalism programme was a “duplication” of Divine Word in Madang. But wasn’t this the wrong way around because Divine Word started much later, was smaller, was physically remote from the media industry and produced far fewer graduates? What was the justification for this view?*

I think it was to do with the power brokers at UPNG. Council was just the authority to authorise a decision that had already been made by the system. Language and Literature or journalism did not have a strong voice in the faculty board, and from faculty board to academic board. It is how do you construe the place of journalism? It’s not so much the training, but to see good journalists out there to do good work.

And then there was also Divine Word. Well, there were a few more people who were making practical things, you know. And UPNG decided it would probably be easier for the wrong reason, or the right reason, to let them do it and we'll do something else.

But at that point I was also thinking that well if they are going to do the basic, first lot of training, okay let them do it at DWU. And UPNG could concentrate on a postgraduate programme, like postgraduate certificates in specifics like investigative journalism, or political write ups on something.

From outside I was sort of pushing that line, if this a problem then the two programmes could be complementary. UPNG could concentrate on research and on the larger framework of what journalism is supposed to do, like investigative journalism and follow-ups on corruption cases. Have them documented in the form of feature writing and so on.

But certainly the decision initially to close the UPNG programme, as they do, was taken based on wrong information, or information that was twisted, or for the convenience of those who make those decisions. It has probably very little to do with Government thinking, it is to do with the university's internal administration.

*Q: Even the argument of cost-cutting was questionable surely? Much of the costs of the journalism programme were met by outside donors funding specific projects — there was virtually no cost to the university apart from salaries.*

That is correct, it wasn't so much a matter of cost. It had to do with those people who were in positions of power and how they perceived their relationship between the hierarchy and the rank and file of staff.

*Q: Were there particular people involved in that process who you would identify?*

Well, Rodney Hills was one person who had a lot to do with termination of some of the programmes. He himself was not coming from an academic, or a university background. That

contributed to his limited perception of professional training like journalists, and artists, the faculty of creative arts.

*Q: After he left in May 1999, the programmes were reinstated?*

They were reinstated by Government.

*Q: But the damage was done perhaps?*

The former Prime Minister [Bill Skate] gave an undertaking to reinstate those programmes after, I believe, representations were made by students.

*Q: Had you still been vice-chancellor during this period, would the journalism programme have continued uninterrupted?*

I was very interested in having the journalism programme continued, probably — if there was some duplication — I would have wanted more of a postgraduate programme. As you know, I was pushing a school of postgraduate studies. That would have been my target, slowly to get it established. And I am sure you would have stayed to be around to see it happen. But when I left UPNG the school concept collapsed.

*Q: At Divine Word's last graduation (2001) there were three BA graduates in journalism while at UPNG, there were 12 BA graduates in the journalism strand. This seems to demonstrate two things: First, the need for both journalism schools; and second, that in spite of all the publicity for DWU, UPNG is still producing most of the degree graduates in journalism. What of the future?*

I don't think the newspapers, television and radio are doing enough to educate the people, to "conscientise" them. We are not really doing anything, apart from a few features, such as, let's say Sabina's Corner. The rest are not keeping us informed. This is where a postgraduate programme at UPNG could focus a lot more on analysis and interpretation, explanation... critical thinking.

I think for the future, the Government would support, should support the development of a postgraduate programme, but on specifics. Political writing might be different from someone who is writing economics. You might even bring in graduates from other disciplines. Like a political science graduate could easily be brought in. There is a need for further research, so the skills of research is very important; the interview and the ethics that go with it. I see that university students should pursue a postgraduate programme in journalism, doing a masters and so on.

*Q: What sort of process could develop for the university to do that?*

It is up to Sorariba Nash and others, I don't know who is there now, to get it going. And you have a vibrant Media Council in PNG now. Very senior journalists are involved. Nash should embrace them and get their support. I was talking to a couple of journalists yesterday about reviving the PNG Journalists Association. You have to have an association representing not only the wellbeing of the profession, but also the common voice.

The university has to come out and be part of a bigger group so that you are seen to be advocating certain things about journalism, being part of the real world.

## 27. YEHIURA HRIEHWAZI

***Editor-in-Chief, The National, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Aged 37.***

***Audiotaped interview in Port Moresby, 3 May 2001.***

***Email address: [Warasava@hotmail.com](mailto:Warasava@hotmail.com)***

*Q: How did you get started in journalism and what training did you have?*

Basically. I got interested in journalism back in high school days when we used to get copies of the newspapers dropped off at Yangoro High School, East Sepik province. I used to read a lot about the South Pacific Games and I saw pictures of journalists there writing about our sports stars. I thought to myself, I'd like to be able to do that. And I used the newspapers frequently for my projects in school. So I got interested in newspapers in school, and that's how it all began. And then when I went to the national high school I got introduced to a lot of people who encouraged me about the media.

One of my classmates, Wally Hiambohn, had the same interest as me and we ended up studying journalism together at UPNG, doing a Diploma in Journalism in 1980. And we ended up starting work on the *Post-Courier* together — on the same day. So here I am.

*Q: Journalism has been looked upon as a career for many years and a qualification is sought in PNG, but in some other countries in the Pacific this is not so. Why is this?*

I suppose it's the excitement. Papua New Guinea is a very diverse country and a lot of things are happening. And there is the excitement of being able to know it first, and let the people know. Also, it's the opportunity of being able to get a job quickly — the demand was right now. Maybe newsrooms don't have that many jobs anymore. But in those days the jobs were actually there. The Office of Information in the Government, and the radio stations, really needed a lot of journalists.

*Q: You were part of the first wave of Papua New Guinean journalists. Prior to that there were mostly expatriate journalists working in the country ...*

No, there were quite a number of journalists before us ...

*Q: So, you were the second wave, were you?*

Maybe second or third wave, I'm not really certain.

*Q: You graduated in 1980, and UPNG only began in 1975. I don't mean literally year by year, but the pioneers ...*

Oh yes, generally speaking ... and still around.

*Q: Would it be fair to say that maybe there are more of your early group still around in journalism than some later waves? Was your generation more committed?*

Commitment? I suppose maybe, it's just the drive in us. We did not have the benefit of the four-year degree programmes, we just had a twelve month, maybe ten month crash course. A crash course on what is news and how to present it, starting with who what when where how and why. These were the basic skills that we were taught.

And when we joined our newsrooms we were told, "Look, just because you've been to university, it doesn't mean that you're a journalist". They just threw us on the streets and said, "Come back with a story".

And that's how we learned, and that kind of training helped us. These days, I think that the training is a lot broader and the graduate journalists see this is an opportunity to do other things than just journalism. So a lot go into PR.

*Q: Was Ross Stevens around then?*

Yes, Ross was our lecturer. I think we were his second last lot of students. Ross was actually instrumental in getting us, Wally and I, to work at the *Post-Courier*. The others went to the NBC — there were not many newspapers — and the *Niugini Nius*.

*Q: You mentioned how different training was then from today. How important is journalism education today in PNG and the Pacific?*

We need to arm the journalists coming out with the basic skills of journalism — they must have that. If you just pluck them of the streets it will take a while getting them into the way of writing how a journalist writes.

There are some good writers around, even though they haven't been to journalism schools. But what I am saying is it will take a longer time frame to get them writing as a journalist. Whereas if that training is done at the journalism school, then when they come out you just give them a story and they'll write it so that the copy doesn't become a headache for the subeditors.

That is the benefit, the big plus for students coming straight out of the journalism schools.

Also, there is a Programme we have in getting graduates [in other disciplines] or straight of the street —when we tell them, “We think you can write. You have a got a bit of flair there”. We bring them in. The problem is we have to teach them how to write. After that, when they get going it is good because they feel committed. First, we give a bit of training, then we spend a bit of money. And so they feel a little more committed to stay on because we trained them to put them through. But if they come from a university, they are not really committed to us.

*Q: They're not as loyal?*

They're not as loyal. They're exposed to a lot of other opportunities. There is also the mentality that if you take them out of university, they should be treated better, they should be paid more, they should cover politicians only, and not report the normal court rounds. This sort of attitude.

*Q: So would you say that the journalism schools are not instilling the right sort of attitude among graduates?*

It is an attitude problem. We can be a bit more responsible — and the graduate says to himself that just because I have got the degree, it doesn't make me an A class paid journalist, and that I should go after the prime minister and opposition leader. A lot of them have that sort of attitude

and they just quickly want to make page one, or the lead item on the radio. It takes a while to get up to that sort of level. But if we can help them come up with a good attitude, it should go a long way.

*Q: What is the essential role of a journalist in PNG?*

I think the main role of journalists in PNG is to speak up for the silent majority and to ensure that corruption and all these things that go on in Government and in the private sector are exposed. If anything is destroying this country, it is corruption. And priority number one must be to expose all these things. We must be resolved. We must do it diligently. And we must keep at it so make sure that all the dirt is revealed.

If we don't do it, who will? The Ombudsman Commission and Transparency International do something. But it is often kept to themselves, nobody gets to know about it. In the PNG society, embarrassment is something that affects the ego of a person. So if we can embarrass some of these people who are perpetuating corruption, I think we can help keep our country free from some of these things.

It was my resolve here when I was appointed here as editor: I want to make sure we will expose corruption where there is corruption. And that's the number one rule. Secondly, I think we should help enhancing the right information to go out and educate our people. A lot of our people live in rural areas and they don't know what goes on in government and the private sector. They think that what they are given [in information] by politicians is right. But in most cases it is misleading. We have a responsibility in educating our people.

Thirdly, I think because it is a developing country, we should help development and progress. We are not like England or Australia, or other advanced countries, but we have a duty to ensure that the investment climate here is right. I am not saying we should not report on crime, but it must be balanced.

*Q: How important are the concepts of "Fourth Estate" and "watchdog" to PNG journalists?*

Very important. That's why I am saying we must report on corruption. I am speaking for the majority. Many people don't like bad things, they don't like corruption. Many of them are unable to speak out. That's our duty. So we have to play that role as a watchdog, expose some of these things. The Ombudsman Commission may not have access to some of this information. Just like our story today about the sacking by the Government of the NBC managing director [Bosky Tonny]. The Ombudsman said he would look into it. The sacking is wrong. Definitely wrong. Absolutely wrong. The Government should not just sack somebody for the sake of putting their person so that they can prepare for the elections. And radio is actually now the most powerful tool. It reaches every rural village in the country.

*Q: You mentioned development as the third most important priority for PNG journalists.*

*Politicians talk about the need for more "development journalism". How do journalists define development journalism and is the concept important in PNG?*

Politicians talk about development journalism only where it suits them — where they have put in bit of a road here, or build a bridge there, and they ask us to cover it because it enhances their status for votes. I would like to concentrate on development in the country such as major, or good projects, like building a school here, or a major trans-islands highway that will benefit a lot more people, not just a little feeder road that a politician likes to talk about.

Most of the time when politicians are talking about development, I don't think they know what they're talking about. Development is the most abused word used by politicians. They say development and they don't understand what it means.

*Q: How well-informed are news media audiences in PNG?*

Bearing in mind the majority of our people — 70 to 80 percent — are in the rural areas, and don't have access to newspapers, although they do listen to radio, are quite well informed. Those who have access to the media are well aware of what's going on around the country.

*Q: How does the public in PNG perceive journalists?*

I really don't know. I suppose they look at us as being people who bridge that information gap. Many of them would ring up and say we've heard about this, and say, "Is it true?" They don't ring the authorities. They don't ring Parliament and say, "We heard that this law has passed." They ring us and say, "Is it true this law has passed?" They look at us as people who will pass on information. They think we should be the first to know what is happening.

*Q: Do journalists have an influence on public opinion?*

Yes, we have a significant level of influence. When you look at the Aitape disaster and the various past problems and crises in the country, the Government relied on the media to pass on the information. When the Sandline crisis was on, everybody went for the media to find out what was going on. In the recent standoff between the soldiers and the Government, we played a significant role in making sure that the public knew exactly what was going on, and there was no revolution in the country. There was just a standoff in the Murray Barracks, and not out on the streets, which unfortunately was how it was portrayed in the overseas media. We have a significant role to play so that the right information goes out, and the public does not panic.

*Q: This is rather trick question for an editor, but what do you think of the salary/wages for journalists? Is there an adequate career path for PNG journalists?*

It is drifting more towards individual employment contracts and performance. There is no set salary structure for reporters now. If I wanted to go and negotiate with one of the reporters, I do it on an individual person-to-person basis and not on a structure in place. It depends on the person. For a young recruit, yes there is a base salary.

*Q: What would that be?*

A young reporter here would be on a salary of about K200 a week, or K11 000 a year.

*Q: There is a high turnover of journalists in PNG. They hop backwards and forwards, and then a lot of them leave the media industry altogether. Are the media organisations paying enough to be competitive with other industries, other fields, to keep journalists?*

Maybe not, that's is why they leave. The cost of living is quite high, children need school fees ...

*Q: Housing is mentioned a lot in interviews?*

Housing is a big concern of journalists. This company, for example, has not been providing housing for staff, for journalists.

*Q: Do many news media organisations provide housing, apart from the top people?*

Most of the journalists at the *Post-Courier* have housing. This company is now looking at housing.

*Q: Your company has been quite successful at recruiting staff from the Post-Courier. Why are they leaving there?*

The ones who have come over here, we have offered them housing. They had housing there and we need good staff here to strengthen our newsroom. So we took the decision to provide housing, this is a cost we have to carry.

*Q: Is your news organisation worried about loss of staff?*

We don't want to lose good staff. We have got young reporters who are coming up, and they are quite good. We don't want to lose them. We have to think of strategies that will make them stay here longer.

*Q: Should the news media be regarded as a watchdog or another business?*

Well, actually it is a business. Otherwise there would be no newspaper. But the main role of a newspaper will have to be a watchdog. That's why I said earlier we would concentrate on an investigative role, and expose corruption as a watchdog.

*Q: Does the PNG Government support or obstruct journalism training and education?*

I don't think it obstructs. The problem that the University of PNG had in the past was more to do with funding. I think the Government wants to see journalism schools develop, that's why it

is quite happy to facilitate the development of the Divine Word University school. It's a very good journalism school now.

*Q: Some say that there is an unfair policy at the moment that actually favours DWU. What do you think about that? Is there a need for two journalism schools?*

I don't think there is any intentional discrimination. It is more to do with funding. When you sit down and look at it, I think when they looked at UPNG and said, we'll we've got the church-run one that can cater for the needs of the country. For the size of this country, and the number of news organisations that we have, one school would be sufficient. We have a lot of students enrolling in journalism and if they all graduate, we won't have enough jobs for them.

*Q: So, is there a future for the UPNG programme?*

It was sad to see it go. I would like to see it continue, but I would like to see it [concentrate] more on the press side. We are more interested in the press media. I would like to see more students do their training here [in Port Moresby] because the newsrooms are here. And those doing electronic media can go over to Madang because I am told they have some state-of-the-art training equipment. Great stuff!

So we can restructure and reorganise the journalism schools so that those interested in print media can go to UPNG, and those interested in radio and TV go to DWU. And those interested in public relations could also go to Divine Word. And UPNG could be strictly for print media.

*Q: The UPNG programme does have a dedicated Certificate in Public Relations. Are there any other media issues you would like to highlight?*

One of the things we need is specialist writers. We don't have that. We hope that we can find a reporter who can specialise in business and economics, or in health, or in politics. This sort of training will help a reporter to be a bit more focused and to look at issues, and to be able to analyse them. He can write commentaries and over time becomes an authority on, say, economic issues.

We have this kind of training, our newsrooms will look up. Right now we have a lot of generalists, people who do everything. One day, he does economics. Next day he does health. It really does help for the journalist to be focused.

*Q: How important is investigative journalism in PNG, and is enough being put into it?*

No. I don't think we are doing enough. And there isn't enough resources for people to develop in that area because of a lack of manpower, and because today's story must be done today for tomorrow's paper.

For investigative journalism, we have to be absolutely certain with our facts if we accuse somebody of wrongdoing. It is difficult to get that kind of story in a day, it's not possible. We need time and money to fly people around and that sort of thing. There is a lot of corruption going on, but we don't have the manpower and time to investigate these things.

*Q: What about an investigative story that might involve the ownership of your paper? I am thinking of the SBS programme on the PNG industry last night, which named Rimbunan Hijau in the course of its investigation. How would you deal with an issue like this? If you were doing an investigation and during the course of the investigation you actually find something that involved your company?*

Put it this way. We would not hide the story. We would write the story and we would give them the right to reply. We must, otherwise we would lose credibility.

*Q: Just take that SBS story as an example. I have noticed a couple of stories appear in the papers, and both of them were in the Post-Courier. So, has the National looked at that story?*

Yes, we had a page four lead story about it yesterday.

*Q: I am sorry — I must have missed it. At that stage, had you seen an advance copy of the SBS programme, or were you relying on wire service copy from Australia?*

We do rely on the wire services.

*Q: Did any of those stories name the company?*

I have reports on the operations of this particular company. I investigated it earlier. It was not a Rimbunan Hijau company. It was another company. I have just confirmed it with Mark Davis of the Prime Minister's Office. Here were a lot of inaccuracies in the report.

*Q: Is there going to be a follow-up story about that?*

I think they used some old clippings of a Rimbunan Hijau company. And media had to apologise about this in the past.

If such a story comes up, our policy is that we must write a story and the operators must be given the right to say something. The company must have a right of reply.

*Q: Do PNG news media give enough resources for computer-assisted reporting (CAR), and data base and internet searches?*

It is quite minimal here, generally in PNG and here at our organisations. This is mainly because of the cost involved, internet charges in PNG are exorbitant. Very expensive. There are only two servers and telecom rates are so expensive.

For our organisation in particular, internet use was quite open earlier in the year. But then we started to have a problem with corrupt files coming through and viruses erasing our system. So we clamped down on use. Certain people have access to the internet and if reporters need something, then they ask for it.

*Q: So who are these certain people?*

The deputy editor, myself as editor, and the subeditors [have direct access]. Reporters are assisted in getting what they want.

*Q: So what about the National website? Who is responsible for that?*

Deputy editor Sinclair Solomon is responsible for that. One of his titles is online editor.

*Q: How much political pressure do PNG journalists face?*

A lot of pressure will come on senior editors. I have experienced quite a bit of pressure. But I just tend to do what is right. The best way to withstand political pressure is simply to do what is

right and those people who are applying pressure will soon realise they can't tell you what to do. Doing what is right is the key to withstanding pressure. Politicians will sooner or later come to realise that this man will not bend. And also do it properly. If it is a story that requires Government comment, then get it.

*Q: What kind of pressure have you personally faced as editor?*

Most recently, we have been writing stories on the millions and millions of kina that are supposed to go through to the landowners for the oil projects. And a lot of that money has been misused by a few executives who are based in Port Moresby. The money has gone through to politicians. We started exposing those things.

There have been a lot of telephone calls here. One particular person rang and said, 'Look, I'm sending over my executive officer and a car to look for you.' And I said, 'No, that isn't necessary, thank you.' He rang up the next day, and said, 'Why don't you come for dinner.' And I said, 'No thanks, I have an appointment.'

And they ring, and swear on the telephone, and say, 'We'll get you' and that sort of thing.

## 28. ANNA SOLOMON



***General Manager and Publisher, Word Publishing Ltd, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Audiotaped interview in Port Moresby, 4 May 2001.***

***Email address: [Word@global.net.pg](mailto:Word@global.net.pg)***

*Q: How did you get started in journalism and how were trained?*

I always had an interest in writing, reading and finding out what was happening around the place. When I went to the university I was undecided about whether to do the one-year diploma in journalism that had started in 1974. But I decided to enroll for the arts degree programme and in the end I decided to stick with it. And I never regretted it. After the four years, I decided to come to Word Publishing. Again my main interest in that area was writing in Tok Pisin. I could have gone to one of the two daily newspapers and write in English, but I felt there was a

much greater need for people to go into reporting in the vernacular. I came to work at *Wantok* newspaper and have stayed on at *Word* ever since.

*Q: How important is journalism education in Papua New Guinea?*

Very important. The view that you recruit school leavers and train them on-the-job is outdated view as far as today's world is concerned. Papua New Guinea is no exception. In the long run, it is better that the person who comes into the newsroom has a grounding in theory and practice about what journalism is all about. Once they are in the newsroom, then that's when the real world begins.

Again, depending on how the newsroom is managed, and the important thing is that there is somebody responsible for training. If there is no in-house trainer, the onus is on the editor or chief-of-staff to guide the young reporter, talk to them about their stories, why they have to rewrite the story, all these things to get the best out of a reporter. It is very important.

And there has to be a continuous arrangement along the way if you want to get reporters. I feel this is very important. But most of the media companies just don't have the time for that. They feel that once a person joins the newsroom, they should be able to do it and be left on their own. I feel that is very unfair on a young reporter to begin with. And again, for the good of the news organisation, you have to do it if you want to get the type of reporter you want. In the newsroom we have to continue to encourage the young journalists to build on what they have learnt in the classroom.

*Q: When the UPNG journalism programme was established in 1975, it was a far-sighted move. You did your degree about the same time. What do you recall about the era?*

The thinking then was that the country needed people to get out there and carry on from the expatriates. That was the time of change from the colonial era to a young, independent nation. Our leaders in those days were far-sighted people and we thank them now for that. And we had some very good expatriates working at the time for the Office of Information, in broadcasting.

The need to get some kind of formal training then was very important, including the journalists getting a group of young people to go down to New Zealand for training and to set up the one-year course at UPNG. It was a big favour by the New Zealand Government and we are thankful for that.

*Q: Some of the journalists from that era are still around in spite of the media revolving door scene today. Was there a difference between those early journalists from the 1970s and today's generation?*

In those days we saw journalism as a profession, as something we wanted to do as a career. Two are of those from that first lot of pioneers, who went to Wellington, are still actively reporting in the industry — Jack Metta, *The National's* reporter in Rabaul, and Dora in the NBC newsroom.

In those days it was a career that people were interested in. They were people who wanted to make a change, who wanted to make a contribution to the development of the country. They wanted to give information to the people about alternatives, and to let people know what was happening in other parts of the world so that they could apply it to their lifestyle.

*Q: One of the things that I have noticed in a quick glance at the survey questionnaires so far is that quite a few of the younger journalists — as opposed to older ones — responded with the view that they don't see themselves as a journalist in five years' time. What is missing compared with your generation of the 1970s?*

There isn't a lifetime commitment, I guess. There are more options available today. The young generation now want to experiment. They want to come into the newsroom to get some experience, but then move on to something else like public relations, which has a big attraction. The money is much better in PR than we can pay in the newsrooms. The young want to travel more. A lot of people are taking up jobs with international organisations. They are also

interested in being their own boss rather than working under someone else. Another reason is the pressure, they want to get away from the deadlines.

I'll give you an example: It will take six months before a new journalist will gain confidence, and then another six months to build up contacts. After a year, you can just give them a story, and they will do it without having to tell them, you need to get this person's comment, or find out that. You have to push them to meet deadlines. Many of them get used to it, but others don't. Many of them stay in the newsroom for about two years, and then they are already applying for jobs elsewhere.

*Q: What about the two journalism schools, UPNG and DWU? Are they producing the sort of products that the industry needs?*

In terms of writing and knowing the basics of journalism, yes they are. However, I find that those who come from Divine Word in Madang take a lot more settling in the newsroom than those from UPNG.

*Q: Why is that?*

I guess that the ones from Madang need a lot more settling in when they come to Port Moresby. The other thing is that the ones from UPNG seem to be a bit more confident. They know is around the place. I guess with their kind of training, you expect that. They know the Secretary for so and so, and who to call up. Little things like that. It is noticeable.

And the other factor is that the ones from UPNG come in to the newsroom regularly, whenever they have questions. They come in here for this and that. So that contact is important, they get to know who's who in the PNG media. And they have access to the different media, the newspapers, radio and television.

The other good thing about UPNG is that they come in here on attachments and they learn a lot in the newsroom. So when they get a job they find it a lot easier than just coming from the cold [like DWU]. That helps.

*Q: Is UPNG now getting adequate resources, after the period of uncertainty where it was expected to close?*

I think the uncertainty is still there. I say that because they have just cancelled an internet workshop that they were going to carry out back in March.

*Q: Is there a need for two journalism schools?*

Yes, I think so. I feel very strongly that a person who comes out of a university who has taken courses in other disciplines would be a much better person than someone who has just done straight communication arts theory.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in PNG?*

I have mixed feelings here. Once upon a time a journalist was seen with respect. But these days questions are being questioned about journalists. You here about people pushing their agenda. Certain journalists here in PNG are unofficially attached to, or pushing, one political party. We know that so and so is ... when PDM, for example, wants to put out a political statement then they would run to this media organisation because they know a person who is very sympathetic to their cause. This is very dangerous.

*Q: Is this undermining media credibility?*

No, we make sure we have a credible media organisation. But other people tend to tarnish the record of PNG journalists. You might have heard about that unsavoury incident when Mujo Sefa claimed journalists were being paid. That was the first time we had heard of that type of thing and I must say we were shocked about it. I hope that sort of thing is not going on now. After that incident we talked about in the PNG Media Council. We stressed very strongly that each one of the people sitting at the table would now go back to their organisation and check whether anything like that was happening.

*Q: And did the Media Council come up with any evidence of this sort of thing?*

No. From what we heard there was only one person, or two. One wasn't even working in a newsroom, he was a PR person. The other one was, but he left shortly after to take up a PR job.

*Q: Is the media concerned about salary/wages for journalists and the loss of trained media people? Do media organisations enough of a career path for journalists?*

Yes, the media is concerned about it. All of us are now paying the market rates for those who come out of the universities. We have to do that. A career path? Yes, it gets frustrating for the young reporters. They came out [after graduation] and after a year they look at the structure of the company and where they fit in the scheme of things in the newsroom. And they wonder five years down the line am I still going to be sitting behind this desk, or am I going to be the business editor? Or am I going to be the sports editor?

To be honest, it is up to the media organisations. They have to structure their set- in the newsroom, and look at the strength and weaknesses of the reporters who come in. Then they have to encourage the reporters to move up if they have the skills and the potential. And again, the obvious thing the reporter has to do is bring in the stories — and then the editor will take note. A lot has to with the editors and training.

*Q: Should the media be regarded as a watchdog, or as another business?*

A watchdog role is very important. In PNG, people look to the media to be the eyes and ears of the public. But having said that, the media also has to make itself more accessible to the public. The letters to the editor are very important. The media has to create a space where the public can have their say as well.

*Q: It is ironical in Media Freedom Week that Word Publishing and the NBC has been the target of pressure. How much political pressure is going on for journalists in PNG?*

Well at times we have politicians coming out and berating the media when we get things wrong. And, of course, we do get things wrong. We go through these periods where there is alarm. Then you have a big thing when somebody comes out very strongly with a statement,

and then everybody takes another view. I guess, now we haven't had much because Parliament has been in recess.

The incident at NBC is very regrettable. Reporters who work for a Government organisation would feel the pressure more than those of us in the private sector. Than God, we do not have a law that licenses the media. We are safe for the moment. However, we do get pressure from the Government directly, or indirectly, to get the facts right. And not to keep reporting negative things. There might be some good things happening. These are the usual criticisms that we get. But I guess in a way the media has developed to a stage where we are conscious about our role and we are able to report without fear or favour. And we know the public at large would always will stand up and voice their opinion if they felt the media was unfair.

*Q: For the tape, could you please explain what happened over the specific incidents this week against Word Publishing and NBC. Is this a concern with the lead up the elections?*

In the case of Word Publishing, we had run a story about two top advisers of the Government and pressure from the PDM to get rid of them because they were not advising the prime minister well. In the same edition of the paper, there was a letter to the editor questioning the role of the prime minister's wife in representing Papua New Guinea overseas when she is not a citizen of this country. We were not the only ones to run to run this letter. Anyway, the Government wrote to the bishop to pressure our newspaper as it is church-owned. It was just ridiculous. This was my first experience of something like that.

*Q: How important is investigative journalism in PNG?*

Very, very important. Again I am sad to say that we haven't seen too much of it, getting in their, digging to find out what is happening to the economy of this country. Again you hear stories about money ... People being paid from one faction of Government to another. There are these things happening. This whole thing about the National Provident Fund. Okay, we have a Commission of Inquiry that's taken place.

*Q: Which is thanks to the media, isn't it?*

Oh yes, but what is happening, is there any action being taken about the people implicated? It shows the lack of skills that we have as journalists in economics, money. I throw my hands up in frustration. We need somebody with a bit more other than journalism training in that area, they need skills in economics. Maybe he or she would be able to find out what has happened.

*Q: Is the PNG Government supporting journalism education and training, or is it obstructive?*

Let me put it this way, it is not actively supporting journalism training. However, it may continue ... [journalism at] UPNG is a good example. The Government is not actively supporting it, but at least it is something — UPNG could have been wiped out last year.

However, in the case of the NBC they are not so helpful on training compared with the private media sector.

*Q: Is there any issue that you would like to raise that I haven't asked about?*

Postgraduate studies is very important. I feel really strongly that the future, or the growth of better trained people in the media industry can only happen if the opportunities are made available for those who have been in the newsroom five to ten years want to go back to school to do their postgraduate studies. When they come back into the newsroom, or into the training institutions, then they will be the ones to train the future journalists of the country.

At the moment, if you look at those training our journalists, not too many of them are Papua New Guineans. There is only Kevin Pamba at Divine Word, and Sorariba Nash at UPNG. What happens when Nash drops out?

I would like to see more encouragement in that area. We have had tertiary educated Papua New Guineans in the newsrooms longer than the other areas of the Pacific. I think the next phase now is to look at the postgraduate area. And to take up the challenge of training. The way they can do that is to go back to school. If the courses phased out at UPNG are reorganised, I would like to see a postgraduate programme.

## 29. SORARIBA NASH



Sorariba Nash (*right top rear*) with colleagues and students.

***Media Studies Strand Coordinator, School of Social Sciences, University of Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby. Oro Province. Audiotaped interview in Port Moresby, 4 May 2001.***

***Email address: [Sorariba.n@upng.ac.pg](mailto:Sorariba.n@upng.ac.pg)***

*Q: How would you describe the state of media education and training in Papua New Guinea today?*

In my broad observation of newsrooms and products of the universities, I think it is satisfactory. The University of Papua New Guinea is producing a fair number of journalism graduates, and so is Divine Word University. Although I don't have direct knowledge of their

curriculum, I believe the media units that we offer are similar in terms of content and the body of knowledge we try to convey to the upcoming journalists.

*Q: How many journalism graduates are being produced in the country at the moment, and is this meeting the needs of the media industry?*

I think when you, David, were around, our biggest number went up to around 30 or so. We have gone to 12 in the past year, but I feel that is adequate for the market as it is. The industry may have a different viewpoint because of their demands and needs. If they do, then I would agree with them. But from my judgement on campus, I think it is adequate given the market and availability of jobs.

*Q: Is there a need for two journalism schools in PNG, and is there any duplication?*

I don't mind having two schools as long as we complement each other, and understand what each other is offering. So that we work together in terms of course content and facilities. We don't mind Divine Word using our facilities, if the facilities are not available. Likewise, we could do the same with DWU's facilities. I think it is healthy to have two training schools in the country because it gives you a chance to compete. It keeps you on your toes while you try to produce the best.

*Q: Is the PNG Government supportive or obstructive about journalism education and training?*

I wouldn't say the Government is supportive, but I have not seen any direct support, or any word in support of training. Even if they do have that in mind, they have not shown us they are supportive. Although they do express to us there is a need for free media coverage — they want to see transparency and true media coverage of everything they do. But if they are really serious, my feeling is that they have to put their money where their mouth is.

*Q: A couple of years [1997-1998] ago, there were problems for UPNG in terms of restructuring of the university. What actually happened then, and is the future of the journalism/media studies programme now assured?*

What happened was a cost-saving mission, so all departments lost some positions and some programmes were cut. This meant that the journalism programme lost the Diploma in Media Studies and we were left with the degree, which is now known as a Bachelor of Social Science (Media Studies) instead of the previous Bachelor of Journalism. We still have the semester-long courses, Certificate in Public Relations and Certificate in Investigative Journalism. These are listed in the new handbook that is being drawn up at the moment.

The only change there is that we lost a number of staff and certain programme components were abolished. But other than that, the quality and what is expected is still there. We still have a good programme.

*Q: According to some people I have interviewed in Government, they said that the media studies programme had been unfairly targeted because of agendas among particular people in the top university administration. Was this the case?*

No. I think this is a misinterpretation. It is just a lack of understanding. It takes time for people to understand what we really do. And I feel that our programme and the approach that we have taken over the years is starting to shed light on what our main goals are, what we try to achieve. So that statement, I think it is made, true, but it is a misunderstanding, a misconception.

Q: A misconception of what?

Maybe they feel we have certain biases, maybe we do without realising ...

*Q: Oh no ... the comment was made that some people in the central UPNG administration unfairly targeted journalism in the cost-cutting process for reasons that had little to do with economics, or the university budget?*

Well, I can say yes, because there was a very senior university person, not an academic, who actually admitted there was a former senior university administrator who for some reason could not see eye-to-eye with journalism — not the programme itself, but what journalism

represented. I would say that it was just one person's point of view, but unfortunately that person was in a very influential position.

*Q: Would you name that person?*

The then Vice-Chancellor, Dr Rodney Hills. For some reason he had that sentiment against what media and journalism represented, in terms of publicity, how journalists went about writing stories and that sort of thing. And so he took it upon himself, voiced his opposition, expressed his opinion openly all the way to the University Council. And I believe the Council decision was eventually influenced by him. And that resulted in the closure of the journalism school.

*Q: For how long did that happen — the closure before it was reopened again?*

The closure was announced at the beginning of 1999. And there was silence when a lot of us involved in this cost-cutting exercise were throwing back and forth arguments: Could you consider this restructure package, we're cutting this, how about taking us back, leave us alone sort of thing. This went on for a whole year, until 2000, and that is when the Council reversed its decision and said journalism could stay, as long as it was restructured as part of the general cost-cutting.

*Q: UPNG was the pioneering journalism school in the South Pacific and you were one of the original students in those days. Would you like to make some comments about the unique role of UPNG in journalism education in the Pacific?*

To be honest with you, I am very proud of the school. In 1975, it was established by the New Zealand Government as the pioneering school in the Pacific. Not only did the school bring together Papua New Guineans, but all sorts of people from the rest of the region. I remember there was somebody from Kiribati, the Solomon Islands, Samoa, many of our colleagues out there now working in big positions in Government and the private sector — they all benefited

from this school. I see it as an independence gift. It was the best gift because the school has survived all these years and produced so many journalists.

Now a lot of people are talking about Divine Word. But Divine Word just came in yesterday. UPNG is the school that trained the journalists, and set the pace for the media industry. My feeling is that if this school is to survive then all those who benefited from it should think about it.

*Q: The pioneering lecturer in those days was Ross Stevens, and when you started off as a journalism student he taught you. What was the contribution he made to PNG journalism education and training?*

To us, the concept of journalism when we entered the school was new. We didn't know that you had to go to Parliament and face parliamentarians. You had to go to court. You even had to argue with taxi drivers. Ross took us out from campus to do interviews.

I think it was his character, the leadership that he demonstrated on what a journalist should do, that provided a model. It was quite new to us. We come from a cultural background where we are shy, we don't shout at people, we don't talk a lot. The way Ross Stevens took us around Port Moresby during training, during practical work, set the pace, gave us that example as a journalist, and the courage.

And as a man himself, he wasn't so talkative. When he spoke, when he delivered lectures, he was very selective with his words. Everything he said, would cause you to run into problems two weeks later if you didn't listen. And then it would come back to you, this is what he said, and I didn't do that.

Ross actually influenced a lot of us. He was more or less our role model, those of us who attended the school — the first lot. We wanted to be like him. He played a very important role and I am grateful for his presence.

*Q: What are the challenges for media education and training in Papua New Guinea today?*

Lack of funding is a real problem. And ethics. I am starting to sense this massive corruption coming in. And what I am afraid of is that journalists can be taken in. There are people who offer free lunches, there are people who are starting to pay air fares, hotel expenses for journalists going to cover things. During training, we advise against this. If the invitation is being accepted by the editor and he assigns you, that's fine. But by directly dealing with companies and other interested groups, you can be seen as compromising your integrity and impartiality.

That is what I am afraid of — the corruption culture that is starting to grip Papua New Guinea slowly can even take a lot of young journalists into the pockets of very influential people. This is a challenge we really have watch out for and work at.

*Q: Any other media issue you would like to raise?*

With the lack of funding, I wish that the AusAID-funded Pacific Media Initiative (PMI) project could extend that opportunity to look at the facilities of journalism education and training venues in the Pacific. You cannot give good training without good facilities on the ground.

As an example, if you had to conduct an internet course, you cannot just come in here when there are no computers, or computer lab, and expect to run a very good course — and at the end of the day expect to impart a very important skill.

### 30. YASHWANT GAUNDER



***Managing Director, Associated Media Group; Publisher, The Review. Suva, Fiji Islands. Audiotaped interview in Suva, 15 May 2001.***

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*Q: How did you get launched into journalism and what was your background at USP?*

Journalism was something that interested me from when I was at high school in Lautoka.

Fortunately, I have lots of interests. I loved writing and reading , so journalism always interested me. As would happen with most students in Fiji, especially people from my generation, arts was not something that people did. Parents, especially Indian parents, pushed their children towards science subjects because you were meant to become a doctor or something. I think to some extent that still prevails in Fiji.

So I was a very good arts student — my best marks were in geography, history, accounting and social sciences. But the pressure to go into science so I became a science student, and I found I wasn't a very good science. And I went to USP and enrolled in the foundation science programme. I worked hard and managed to do reasonably well, and to get a scholarship in civil engineering to Australia. Again, it's not that somebody advised me that this was the thing to do. It was something that came up — there was very little career advice at that time, and it sounded good, so away I went, building bridges and things like that.

And then I found out that the kind of science we were doing here in Fiji didn't really prepare me for what was needed in Australia, the physics and the maths. So I struggled and they ensured that only a certain number passed. So I basically had to stay in Fiji.

I was playing tennis at home, I love sport, and I took up this international correspondence course and passed their basic journalism certificate. Then suddenly news came out in 1985 that William Parkinson was starting a new radio station. I loved music and I was a bit out of place because Fiji was still in the reggae phase, and I had converted to rock. But I applied for the job, got interviewed and was hired as a music programmer for about F\$3,000 a year. I started work and found out that I knew more about music than anybody William had hired.

We were working for three months, 18 hours a day trying to get the station ready for launch. As it happened, when we launched we were still not ready — but we had to launch anyway. It was one of the best experiences I had. Nobody was ready. We had all these groups on air and everybody was laughing at us. But we survived.

It was a lot of fun. I learnt editing and I could produce programmes. Then I had some problems there because I felt I was working really hard for \$3,000 a year — and I wasn't getting anywhere. And there were some personality problems. Basically I was given pretty rough treatment for someone who was working 16 hours a day for \$3,000 a year. So I raised this with William but nothing was done. So I resigned. When I resigned, they did something. Again it

happened, and again I resigned. So again it was resolved. And it happened a third time, and I said I was not coming back. This all happened in a period of nine months from when we started.

Then I was sitting at home in the west, doing nothing. I was hired at George Rubine's publications as a cadet journalist for \$50 a day. During that time, Leigh Martin [a cadet counsellor, who later joined the *Post-Courier* in PNG] got me writing music columns for the old *Fiji Sun*.

When the 1987 coup happened, I lost my job and had nothing to do. After sports stringing for FM96, I began working part time for a new paper, *Sports Week*. I was there for a couple of weeks. But the editor was always drunk, and all of a sudden these guys asked if I could take over. I had no subbing experience, no editing experience, and no real journalism experience. Overnight, I became editor of this weekly sports newspaper.

Again it was great fun because it was new stuff, and I was starting new things. I had to learn how to write headlines. And we had this old typesetting machine, so you had to write accurate headlines. And we managed. In fact, we were scooping *The Fiji Times* quite often.

*Q: You joined The Fiji Times?*

And then after a year a vacancy came up at *The Fiji Times*. I applied and got the job. I still remember the interview because the editor at the time was Vijendra Kumar and he offered me \$6,500 a year, the same as what I was getting at *Sports Week*. I told him I was not going to work for that — “If you're not going to give me eight grand, I'm not coming”. Back in 1985, when I came back from Australia, I had applied for a job with *The Fiji Times*. There was an interview done, and he actually said to me that I was the best of the lot. But he never took me on. I told him, “If you had taken me then I would have been a very good journalist for you”. So he offered me \$1,000 more.

You know it is one of those things when you start off on the wrong foot with an employer.

Vijendra never forgave me for that because I put one across him on the first day. But my work fortunately was reasonably good, so we carried on. You'd be surprised to know that when I joined *The Fiji Times* I didn't know how to type. So I wrote my first story in longhand. I got my basic training in the first week I was there. And I got my first frontpage story in the first month.

Then they needed a subeditor. I had joined in October 1989 and four months later I was made a subeditor and my salary was put up to \$10,000. I said I didn't really know a lot about subbing. The editor said: "Never mind, we'll teach you". All of a sudden the deputy chief sub and other senior subs resigned. So in March I suddenly found myself deputy chief sub by default. And then I became chief subeditor after I had been with the paper for 11 months. Later, while Vijendra was on leave and Mosese Velia was acting editor, I became news editor.

[Vijendra Kumar, who was about to retire, promised Gaunder an assistant editor's position. This did not eventuate and Gaunder fell out with new editor Jale Moala, leaving *The Fiji Times*].

I had to take them to court to get my final pay. And the *Daily Post* offered me a job as a reporter on condition that I didn't involve myself in union activities. [Gaunder had been involved in efforts to revive the Fiji Journalists Association and establish the Pacific Journalists' Association]. But coming to a job like that for \$10 000 after getting \$23 000 at *The Fiji Times*, I said, no, forget it.

So I spent three months sitting at home, and I got talking with friends. We decided to start a magazine. That's how we started *The Review* in 1994. Everybody was thinking that I had left *The Fiji Times* with a plan in mind. I had no plans. We did well, but we probably would have been a stronger company — we started lots of magazines — if we had lost a lot of money along

the way, mainly because of lack of money management skills. I wasn't a financial man. Now I think I am a reasonably good businessman, but at that stage I was pretty bad.

*Q: So you did very well in the school of hard knocks. You have had a wide range of experience. But there was a period when you went to the University of the South Pacific for journalism certificate course. What happened there?*

That's when I was at *The Fiji Times* in 1987 when the coup happened. I completed my USP courses, but I still haven't got my certificate yet. I don't know what happened. At the time, I think it was quite a reasonable course.

*Q: Is education important for journalists in Fiji?*

I think it is important. Education needs very much to be run on a theory and practical basis. I feel that the student journalists, after doing six months work at university, should then go and do six months practical and you'd produce better journalists. Also, I think it is more important now because when we went to university our level of English was reasonably good. With today's graduates, I find that their English is terrible. Not only English, but their general knowledge.

*Q: What do you think is the reason for this?*

Well, when we were growing up, our entertainment was reading. That was all we could do. Or listen to the radio. Today's children — I don't know if that's the real reason — spend all their time watching videos and television. Reading is so important. I read all the magazines. I tell everybody that this is the only way that you get knowledge. We are a small country at the end of the world. In terms of a start in life these days, you don't have the same grounding, so you have to read. All my knowledge is from reading, I don't have any degree.

In fact, about three years ago an economist at the Reserve Bank asked us who was the economist on board at *The Review*. None of us have any economics degrees. He was surprised

that we were writing about liquidity, foreign reserves, the economy, fiscal deficits and things like that.

So I mean yes, education is very important because there is a need not only for English and journalism, student journalists need to learn other subjects like economics, history, politics, and other subjects that give a good grounding on life. Most of these guys just don't know what's happening out there.

*Q: What do you think the essential role of a journalist is in the Pacific?*

Well, it has become very clear now that in the Pacific — well, all over the world — it is to be the very watchdog of society, of governance. If the media hadn't been as vigilant as it has been — it could have been more vigilant — governments would have been able to get away with a lot more. If you produce better journalism graduates, governments will be even more careful. But at the moment there is very little investigative journalism in Fiji.

About two or three years ago *The Review* was renowned for investigative journalism. We did quite a bit of it. But again it comes down to economics and we don't have the money. We had some good journalists, but they have left. And we just can't afford it at the moment.

And that's why I think we have conflict situations in our Pacific countries because people are fed the wrong information. Media, I believe, has to take a lot of the blame for it because the media perpetuates it and reports some of the politicians saying the wrong thing. In Fiji — I'm not sure about other Pacific countries — people always say they believe what they read in the newspapers. They may not believe what they hear on the radio, or see on TV. Surprisingly, all politicians in Fiji believe the power of the print media is very great.

I don't know if this is true in the rest of the world, but in Fiji I have found that everybody believes in the power of the printed word. This is one reason why *The Fiji Times* is quite powerful — as Mahendra Chaudhry found out to his disadvantage.

*Q: Today's journalists don't seem to have a good grasp of the notions of "fourth estate" and "watchdog". How important are these concepts in the Fiji media?*

We have to look at society, the evolution of communities, and what's happening around the world. When we came through school, we did journalism out of passion. We didn't worry about the money. We lived daily for the bylines. We lived for the great story.

For today's journalists, it's just another job for them. It is very hard to find now in Fiji journalists who are passionate about their journalism. Especially in Pacific countries, it is hard to pay people well and they lose interest.

*Q: So why isn't the passion there? What is missing?*

I think it is generally the way society has evolved. We are human beings, and selfish. More and more, we have a lot of conflicts with the way our economies are going. There is not a lot of money around and generally people need money. We are in a money culture now, so money becomes the prime factor.

There are so many stories, you see. I remember some years ago when I saw a fire near Nadi — I was off leave that day — and I went straight to the fire. I was driving my own car. I was not even in a company car or anything. A lot of journalists nowadays would keep on going and say, "I'm on a day off today".

Also, there is a general sense of selfishness. I can relate to you what happened during the coup. First, I was sitting in this office, the coup was announced, I ran out of here, and I said, "Guys, bring me a computer". Let me type the story, and we'll put on *FijiLive*. I could have gone to Parliament, I asked to go to Parliament, but they said, "If you go there, they'll kill you".

But here I said to these guys, "Can someone go to Parliament?" Nobody would go. They all wanted to go home — they were scared for their lives. And I must say that prior to May 19 we had probably the best newsroom in the country. Since the coup I lost about five or six journalists with a lot of experience — between them they had about 60 years of experience. So

I didn't push them. Tamarisi Digitaki went [to Parliament] in the end, but she had to be pushed. But she was the only one. The others were too scared. I think this was all about self-preservation.

*Q: Should the media in Fiji be seen primarily as a watchdog, or as another business?*

I think it's a business. All media organisations in Fiji follow the power of businesses.

Advertising is more important than journalism. Not in all cases, but I know that all media organisations have made editorial decisions based on business.

We have tried very hard not to do that, so much so that we have lost advertisers such as Burns Philip. But we didn't change. I think the key is that with us we're not owned by some big conglomerate or business house, and because I am a journalist. So I told my guys that as long as we are not losing money — you have to be financially sound before you can criticise people — we'll be alright. And that's what we have tried to do. Financially, we're holding the line sometimes, but we have survived and said things that others don't.

Fiji Television has pulled out things. The *Fiji Sun* has pulled out things. And *The Fiji Times* has done it in the past. So all the media organisations have fallen over. But Fiji really needs a media that is vigilant, not just like what *The Fiji Times* did to Mahendra Chaudhry last year — which seemed more like a vendetta.

*Q: Is the Fiji Government supporting or obstructing journalism education and training?*

I don't think it is doing anything. I think they would like more trained journalists, but they're not doing anything about it.

*Q: How much political pressure is put on journalists — is there real media freedom in Fiji?*

I think it is a free media. But there is a lot of self-censorship by Fiji journalists. It comes back to personal choices. So I think maybe there is some self-censorship in editorial decisions because of a particular view on some media organisations. But in my personal experience, I've not had any pressure from Government. Even if they criticised us, we went ahead anyway and

did what we needed to do. And then there was no action against us. We have been pretty bold in the last 10 years. The governments here have always screamed, and ranted and raved, but I have never seen them really clamping down on media.

*Q: What about issues like media work permits?*

Work permits, yes. On the work permit issue, I have my own views. In the case of *The Fiji Times*, I believe Mahendra Chaudhry was right. Over the last 100 years, surely *The Fiji Times* could have trained somebody locally to take over. They had locals who could have been trained; I could have been trained. But they are paid peanuts. Nobody has been trained. There has been me, there has been Asha Lakhan, and there has been [*Sunday Times* editor] Mala Jagmohan, but she has been thrown out of there [and is now doing postgraduate journalism studies at Cardiff University journalism school. *The Fiji Times* doesn't pay well, and never trains people so you end up in this kind of situation which means an expatriate is being kept unnecessarily.

It's no secret that the reason why they keep the editor-in-chief's position as an expatriate — as well as the managing director — is so that *The Fiji Times* can take out more money of the country. And the Government shouts, but they don't know these things. If they knew that, then they would be far stricter."

*Q: If the expatriate's primary brief is training, would this be acceptable?*

It is okay if somebody comes in as a consultant or a trainer, but not as editor-in-chief of *The Fiji Times*. Papua New Guinea has got local editors and chiefs-of-staff.

*Q: The Fiji Times' sister paper in Port Moresby, the Post-Courier, has had local editors for the past 18 years. What's the problem?*

So this is what I think. What's the difference between PNG and here in Fiji?

### 31. RIYAZ SAYED-KHAIYUM

**Senior Reporter and Close-Up anchor, Fiji Television, Suva, Fiji Islands.**

**Audiotaped interview in Suva, 16 May 2001.**

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*Q: How did you get started in journalism and what carried you to where you are today as one of Fiji's most insightful journalists?*

I had always been interested in writing since high school at Marist, I suppose. I was involved in the school magazine, in production, and then I went overseas and did a couple more years of high school and studied accounting, of all things. And my love for journalism was there, I just never had any opportunity while I was away. And when I came back, I applied for a job with a local radio station. I did a job as a DJ for about a year, and then they had a vacancy in the newsroom and I started off from there.

I worked in the radio station's newsroom for about a year and a half, and then I applied for a job as a newsreader at Fiji TV in 1985. But because my eyes were crossed, they offered me a job as a news reporter. I started about a month after their official launch.

*Q: How important is journalism education in the South Pacific, particularly Fiji?*

It is very important. In Fiji, to a great extent over the years we relied on people learning on the job. I remember I started off like that. I didn't have too many of the basics of journalism, and I started off learning from others. But education and training is important because you can only learn a certain amount from others who have started off the same way as you have. You reach a certain level and you need the exposure, the international exposure. You need the international training and it is something we don't really get in TV.

But the importance of training cannot be emphasised enough, there is certainly a need for it.

Because of the starting of the USP journalism programme a few years ago, I think there is more of a need for it now. Although the journalists who come out from USP now as graduates are young, and they may not have the experience, at least they have a better start to their journalism careers compared to when we started. Ongoing touching up is needed.

Journalism like any other profession is an ever evolving and changing thing. It is not stagnant. And we need to brush up on our skills. You can't really just do that by learning off others when they are in the same position as you are. You have to have ongoing training.

*Q: Does your news organisation think that education and training are important?*

Well, if you want to go and do a diploma, or a degree or a couple of papers at USP, you are encouraged I suppose. But you're not encouraged in the way that we would finance it, or partly finance it. You do it because it's your own initiative.

In terms of ongoing training, we have a bit of ongoing training, but like any other media organisation it's not enough. We need more training. This is a gripe of mine with all media organisations that there is not enough training. And I've had a few run-ins with media management people about this sort of thing. The thinking has been for years that you learn on the job and you are only as good you are because of what you do, and not because of what you could learn and become better.

Journalists aren't nurtured in Fiji. You are encouraged on individual stories, but your *work per se* is I don't think encouraged. Journalists are not nurtured in the sense that media organisations would identify a journalist and say, "Look this person does really good work and we should invest in him or her and send the person for further training." And try to encourage them, and keep them, and develop them into long-term reliable, honest and dedicated members of the staff.

There is a huge turnover of journalists in Fiji and one of the reasons for it is lack of training. But more so, I think, because journalists, like in most other Pacific Island nations, are at the bottom rung of the ladder. They aren't paid enough. They are not given incentives to stay in one place long enough. Eventually what happens with journalists in Fiji is that a lot of journalists who start off end up in PR work, or some other kind of work. They don't stay in the journalism profession *per se* because every time we have a coup obviously, life becomes a little more difficult.

It's a long time coming in reviewing the whole media profession in Fiji and how we treat journalists and how we pay and train them. There haven't been any studies done, journalists are not unionised and that's why we are a bit weak. There is a cultural aspect as well because people tend to be a bit shy of authority. With a lack of a collective body to lobby on their behalf, journalists have tended to stay in a rut. Things have changed a bit over the years, but not enough.

*Q: What is the essential role of journalists in Fiji?*

Investigative journalism is still relatively new in Fiji, I think. Journalists tend to report. Overall we are more reporters than anything else. We generally do not have the analytical skills, we do not dig deep into things and we take things as they are presented to us and we report them. At the moment, I would describe the role of journalists in Fiji as reporters — people who inform the public on what is happening.

But there are some constraints, like in television we can't editorialise too much whereas the papers can, they can have an opinion etc. However, I really think that over the next few years that's the way to go. We have to become more analytical. We can't afford to just report stories and leave them at that. We have to probe and question.

*Q: How important is your current affairs programme Close-Up in this sort of role?*

I hope so. It's not that I get that sort of feedback from other journalists, or from the journalism school at USP. I hope it is playing a major role. It is funny that you should ask that because we just got our surveys back a month ago and the highest rating programme on Fiji Television is the *News* which is Monday, Saturday and Sunday news, in that order. And number four is *Close-Up*.

So obviously there is a huge desire by our viewers to watch current affairs programmes. I get a lot of feedback from guys in the street, from ordinary members of the public, who say you see the real side of politicians. It is very much politically based, but I don't think it is a deliberate thing because Fiji is a very political country. Any good or bad is because of politics, and politics is always an issue in Fiji.

But television culture is still something very new in Fiji, and it will take some time for people to get comfortable with that. Obviously there are some people who don't like watching *Close-Up* because they think it is confrontational. They are not used to that sort of thing. It is culturally insensitive because they believe we are not respecting certain people of a certain class, or a certain rank.

If you ask them direct questions, if you ask them to explain things ... this is where I say we tend to be reporters. We tend to easily fall into the reporting category because we don't go that further step. So whatever somebody tells us, we take it as the gospel truth.

But I think things are changing. If we have another television station, or if this station expands a few more years down the track, we'll see a lot more of this kind of programme, this kind of journalism in everyday news programmes. There have been some young journalists who have come up to me and said they like the sort of stuff we do, and there should be more of it.

Then again, there comes the training aspect as well. I never got trained for something like this. I ask what I feel because I have a strong sense of justice. I really feel that training in this area is needed, not just by others but by myself as well. I am not fully up to scratch, I can learn too.

*Q: But can you learn a strong sense of justice, which is so vital to journalism?*

It is an inherent thing, I think it comes naturally. But it can be nurtured too by way of the environment you work in. If you work in a newsroom where the sense of justice is strong, where strong leadership emphasises that sort of thing time and time again, then eventually it does creep up on you and before you know it you are it. You feel that people ought to know the whole truth and not just part of it.

So it works both ways. You can have the belief deep within you, but you can also be moulded to think that way. It is not an option for journalists. Every journalist should have a sense of justice.

*Q: How important are concepts such as “fourth estate” and “watchdog” to Fiji journalists?*

Regardless of what people say, I think we are generally lucky in Fiji. Although there are mild threats now and again from the powers that be, whoever is in charge of the country, it is not too harsh. I think it is a learning process for us because we learn how these people react. We have to keep on pressing because if we keep on pressing then they will learn that journalists do operate this way. The older people of this country think of journalists like reporters, like the message middleman.

We can make the changes a lot faster because of programmes like *Close-UP*. One thing that we don't do that I think we should is to have regular meetings with officials. We should explain how we operate in each media organisation, and what we are looking for. This would get them more media savvy so that they understand us and are ready for stuff like that. Instead of going into shock and denial.

*Q: Politicians often say that there needs to be more “development journalism”, but there are different definitions of what this means. What does development journalism mean to Fiji journalists and is it practised?*

In the Fiji context, development journalism is looked upon as responsible journalism. That's a pretty open-ended phrase — to some people responsible journalism means not to ask too many questions, to other people it means not to offend, for others it means not to offend the cultural aspects of certain people.

You really have to weigh up from where the call for development journalism is coming from and what context they use it in. I think the only form of responsible journalism that we need in journalism in Fiji is to get more people who are experienced, who are more trained. That way, responsibility comes naturally, responsibility in the sense that you check your facts, you check your sources, and you get both sides of the story.

Journalists tend to make a few mistakes now and again often because they're young guys, or girls, and they're thrown in the deep end in the newsroom and they don't have a clue about how things work. Here comes the training aspect again. Apart from being a bit more responsible, as they say, I don't think we have got any problems with authorities, not yet anyway.

*Q: How well informed are Fiji audiences?*

I think people in the country are very well informed. We get tight news bulletins that inform our audience of more than 400,000 people well. But in terms of responses, people in Fiji are fairly lethargic. Even if they like something they won't respond. They'll talk about it, but they won't write to us, or give us a call. But it is changing slowly. We have more letters coming in, but it is still not in sufficient numbers for us to feel it will make a difference.

You get a lot of response from children about children's programmes and that sort of thing, but when it comes to hard news there is still a lot to be done in terms of responses from viewers.

There is also the education aspect as well, that's why we try to keep our language very simple.

We need to remember that more than half of our population lives in rural areas.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in Fiji?*

The perception of journalists changed quite dramatically over the past. Journalists were never given too much importance for quite a while. But because of the political turmoil, one of the few good things to come out of it, is the importance of journalists in informing people and analysing what is going on.

It is a growing trend. Importance is given to journalists, it isn't like before. And it can only grow from here.

*Q: How successful is the media in influencing public opinion?*

We are influencing public opinion, but whether we are having a huge impact, I don't know. A lot of people watch our news, a lot of people watch our programmes. In terms of lifestyle, yes. But in terms of news, I don't know. It has some effect. We would need some surveys to show that.

*Q: If the perception of status of journalists has improved, how is that translated in terms of salary, working conditions and a career path?*

That's a difficult one. I don't think a career path as such exists. You can only go to a certain extent in journalism. You can become a cadet reporter, you can become a reporter, then a senior reporter, and then maybe you can become news editor. But you have to ask yourself how many news editor's jobs are there in Fiji? After you become news editor, then you're looking for a management position.

But if you're the kind of journalist who likes to get out in the field, who loves the nitty gritty of journalism, then you basically can only go up to a certain level. And you can only become better in your position. But that is not often reflected in your salary and wages etc And eventually people do get disenchanted. They love their job, they want to continue, they know they have got a lot to contribute, but that is not reflected in their salary and eventually they get disenchanted with the whole situation and try to move on, or take up a new position.

*Q: Should the news media be regarded as a watchdog or another business?*

Definitely a watchdog, we have a role to play. For a country like Fiji, the role of a watchdog is now even more important than it was a few years ago. I cannot emphasise enough how important this is.

One of the catchcries during last year's political crisis was that there was a silent majority opposed to what was happening. But the media was the only way that the silent majority could express themselves. Fiji has a culture where people who do not like something happening will not express it. And the media is the way to do it. Not only that, if there is wrong being done because of nepotism and lack of transparency, then people rely on the media.

*Q: Is the watchdog the actual situation in Fiji today?*

Yes, it is, but we could do much better. But given the circumstances of what I said earlier about journalists start off their careers here and the lack of training, I think it is not too bad. But we could do much better if we had a lot more training.

*Q: After the 1987 coups there was quite an exodus of journalists from Fiji. Has there been much of problem again after George Speight's attempted coup?*

I can only speak for us at the moment, and the answer is no. Only one journalist that I know has left Fiji TV, for example.

*Q: Does the Fiji Government support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

Not really. There are some training programmes offered to media organisations that come from the Information Ministry now and then. But it isn't too when that happens. Apart from that I personally don't know of any training in which the Government takes part.

We have our own organisations like PINA and PIBA. There was a little bit of Government support when FIMA was around in terms of giving us a little building to house the office. But in terms of money given to the media to improve, or resources, or more courses, the Government hasn't given as much as it could be. If the Government wants us to be more responsible, then they have to put in more, they need to be more committed.

*Q: How much political pressure do journalists face in Fiji while doing their work?*

A bit. Not too much, although there is nothing overt. You have sort of people writing you official letters from Government saying, we don't like this, or that, or do that, or do this. I have received letters that say, we don't like this particular journalist, talking about me, because he's said this in particular, and he's wrong. And if he comes to cover any other events that we organise then we won't give him an interview. That sort of carry on. But that sort of thing doesn't last long and in the process you develop a very thick skin.

I don't care too much about it, as long as I know I've done the right thing. I check my facts and I carry on. Last year was different of course: I had threats, stones thrown at my house, people swearing and threatening me in the middle of the night, my family had to move house at one stage. And the police and the military were no help at the time.

But that was a different case altogether. I'm not saying that that sort of thing won't happen again. It might. But in every day life for us, you expect it in a sense like, "We won't give you an interview." "We don't like you." Or, "You're a racist."

An official letter saying this person is racist. He or she is anti-Fijian. Or anti-Indian. Or anti this party, or that party. And we don't want to talk to this person again.

I get this sort of thing occasionally. There are certain people in office that I get it with a bit more than others. But I guess the good thing is that I have been accused of being biased by every government in office in Fiji since 1992 so I think I'm doing the right thing.

*Q: Any other issue you would like to comment about?*

You have covered a great deal. My main concern over the years has been the training aspect. The media organisations should nurture their journalists, encourage them and train them to become better than what they are. It is no good for a country like Fiji that we're pretty good. Everybody knows that. But we can be just as good as our neighbours. There is nothing stopping us. What we need is a bit more money for media organisations and a lot more training.

## 32. VIRISILA BUADROMO



***News Director, Communications Fiji Ltd (FM96 group), Suva, Fiji Islands. Aged***

***29. Audiotaped interview in Suva, 17 May 2001.***

***Email address: [Viri@fm96.com.fj](mailto:Viri@fm96.com.fj)***

*Q: What was your background when you joined FM96 and what inspired you into becoming a journalist?*

I studied journalism at the University of the South Pacific. I was there for two years and then went on academic suspension. When I was on a semester off and while I was bartending at Traps, Peter May, one of our consultants for Communications Fiji Ltd, suggested that FM96 was looking for a reporter and a presenter. He asked me, why don't I try it out. Which I did and after two interviews got the job. To be honest, journalism wasn't something I planned to do as a career. It seemed the easiest option at university ...

*Q: Not now!*

Because I liked to write and because I liked meeting and interviewing people, it seemed something good for me to do. Once I joined, I realised that it was something I really enjoyed because it involves two of the things that I greatly enjoy — meeting people and writing.

*Q: Is journalism education important in Fiji and the South Pacific?*

I think it is important. Anybody who is going to go into journalism needs to have some basic training, either in-house by their organisation they are working for, or a qualification at university, or some sort of tertiary qualification. I think the best thing is if you are actually working in a news organisation as well as studying at the same time for a degree. That works better for you, you get more out of it.

*Q: How does your news organisation believe that journalists should be prepared for a career?*

Our company policy is that we normally train them on the job for three months. If the individual is inclined to study at university, we pay for it. A couple of our staff have gone through that track already — they're not with us anymore, unfortunately.

*Q: Is this a problem about training staff and then they go somewhere else?*

Yes, as soon as they have got their training here, on the job as well as the organisation paying for them to go on and do further studies at university, or a tertiary institution, I notice that after they have achieved their goal they don't spend much time with us. I think the longest that anyone stayed with us after that was about six months. They normally get poached by another organisation that gives them better pay.

*Q: What is the essential role of a journalist in Fiji?*

The role of a journalist for a country like ours, other than giving out the facts on what is happening, is also to analyse and educate our audience. Politics and economics are two things I notice that people in Fiji are not very knowledgeable, or informed about. I think this is something the media lacks because we just assume as journalists that the people we are trying

to give information to have the same knowledge as we do. And we don't go a step further in trying to analyse to make them understand.

So our role is to give out information, but at the same time in Fiji we have to analyse as well as educate. A person needs to be able to make a well-informed decision on what they are reading and hearing.

*Q: How important are the concepts of “fourth estate” and “watchdog” for Fiji journalists?*

To tell you the truth, the concepts of watchdog and fourth estate — I myself have very little understanding of them.

*Q: Is this general? What would you say is the view of other journalists, in your experience?*

I can't really make comments about other journalists.

*Q: No. Just your perception of other views because I am interviewing a lot of other journalists?*

My general perception is that they don't know as well, but they are not willing to admit it.

*Q: What about “development journalism”? Politicians jump up and down from time, saying that more development journalism is needed. But there are differing definitions of what it actually is. What does the concept of development journalism mean to Fiji journalists and is it important to journalism in this country?*

Can you explain to me what that means?

*Q: Well, I am actually asking you the question because there are lots of different interpretations. I could tell you what some of the interpretations are, but it would influence your response. Politicians use that phrase. Do journalists in Fiji use it?*

I have no idea. I would think about training for journalists, that's the way I would see it. I don't think journalists in Fiji think too deeply about issues like that. Maybe it's just my perception.

*Q: You haven't heard other journalists refer to development journalism?*

No. I have never heard it at all.

*[A brief explanation of varying development journalism definitions given to the interviewee at this point.]*

*Q: How well informed are audiences in Fiji?*

A classic example is like during the coup when George Speight was making his slanderous comments about how [deposed Prime Minister] Mahendra Chaudhry was trying to sell Fiji to India: Now if we had put out that information as is, in the way he had said it to our audience, a vast majority would have accepted it as gospel truth. Whereas something like that, if it was said in America, where they are a lot more politically sophisticated, so to speak, they will be able to analyse it and go, “that guy is full of crap!” They are able to work that out. In Fiji, it is not like that at all.

I get the impression that most people think that if they read, or hear it on the news, then it is the gospel truth and they will not sit back and analyse for themselves and then form an opinion on the information that they have.

*Q: Is it changing at all, because there is a very vigorous news media in Fiji?*

Well, I hope it is changing. If it is changing, I reckon it will make my job easier, giving out information. But I always work on the assumption that it isn't changing as fast as I would like it to be. So we always have to try to break things down to the simplest way to say it, to explain it.

*Q: Does the media have an influence on public opinion in Fiji?*

I think we have too much influence on public opinion. And once again it comes down to the fact that the majority of the people aren't forming their own opinion. They base it a lot on what we say, and they make it out as their own opinion, when in fact it is the view of the media organisation.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in Fiji?*

Most people seem to think that we know everything.

*Q: Don't we?*

We like to think we know everything. People feel that we are doing our job, but at the same time I have had a lot of criticism from a lot of my friends who have lived overseas and who have now come back, and their general comment is that we don't analyse things enough. We don't look at things deeply enough. We're not doing enough investigative journalism. But my friends are a minority compared with the rest of the people out there.

The rest of the people treat the media, the journalists, as some kind of stars. Every time one of my journalists would go over to Nadi, or Ba, some place like that, and he says that I am Vijay Narayan from FM96, or something, and they are given special treatment.

*Q: But in spite of the status, isn't salary structures and working conditions low for journalists?*

*Is there an adequate career path for journalists in Fiji?*

For one thing, we don't get paid enough for what we do, and for the hours we work. And the employer can only push "passion, passion" to an extent. After that, you need to pay your staff well. I think most media organisations in Fiji are not paying their staff what they are worth.

*Q: What sort of typical hours would a journalist work in radio, for example?*

About 12 hours in a shift. I feel bad about sending a journalist to cover an after 6pm event such as a cocktail party where they have to wait for another four hours or so for the ceremony to be over so that you can actually get around to talking to an individual. That's another four hours on top of their normal day's work. They don't get compensated for that.

*Q: Do media organisation managements discuss these issues much?*

Because media organisations in Fiji have always underpaid their journalists, it has sort of become an issue now whenever you interview someone you say, "I may as well tell you right now, if you're going to become a journalist you'll not going to be paid well". It has become a standard answer.

We're sort of using that as an excuse, we're not progressing.

*Q: I have noticed a reluctance by Fiji news organisations to reveal their salary scales and conditions. Yet in other countries, such as Australia and New Zealand, company pay scales are well-known through awards and journalist unions. Why is it so secretive here?*

It is a touchy subject in Fiji.

*Q: Should the news media be a watchdog or another business ?*

It depends on the news organisation. If the role of the watchdog is formed into the organisation's philosophy then that's fine. But if the primary job of the organisation is to give out the news, such as *The Review*, then it is a watchdog. It really depends on the organisation.

*Q: Does the Fiji Government support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

Going back to the coup, when we had military rule I felt that we had much more access to information, and it was easier to get information, than it was under a democratically elected government. For example, when the military came in, we had so much information. It was so much easier to reach people because everybody wanted to say something. It got to a point where we had to figure out what to say, and to try to look at it from the bigger picture.

But under an elected government, whenever we didn't say something good about them, they would jump up and down. They didn't realise that, "Hello, you're not the first government to have a bad press". The other government had a bad press. The same thing. It isn't going to stop now. Every government that comes to power seems to get the impression that we just want to pick on the bad things, and forget about all the good things.

Under military rule it was like a free-for-all and you could basically do everything.

*Q: How much political pressure do journalists face in their work?*

Political pressure? The kind of pressure that we get, especially for a commercial organisation like us, is from a lot of our advertisers. When we run a story that doesn't make them look good, they immediately ring us and threaten to pull the advertising. There is one particular company that is fond of doing that.

*Q: Would you name it?*

Okay. Home Centres and its managing director James Datta. He is always threatening to pull his advertising. And he has actually done it once, for a week. And I had a fight with my advertising director. He said, “You can’t do this, can’t you not just run [the story]”. I said, “I’m sorry, but if we don’t run it, somebody else will. So we might as well run it.” But when we try to ask for comment, he gets agitated. When he should be using the time to try to make things better, but he doesn’t. After he pulled his advertising, he realised he was doing his company more harm than good.

*Q: So it’s commercial pressure rather than political?*

Yes, commercial pressure.

*Q: Your company is one of the leading users of the internet with your Fiji Village website. How well-resourced are Fiji news media in computer-assisted reporting (CAR) and use of the internet?*

Most media organisations don’t provide the kind of access for internet use that Communications Fiji Ltd provides. On the use of data bases, very few journalists use it. We have an IT person here who teaches our staff, but our company is not very interested in data bases so it doesn’t use them very much. It would be a useful tool for *The Fiji Times* or Fiji Television.

But at Fiji TV there are only two computers with access to the internet — and they are both management. Only the news director and the news editor. And at *The Fiji Times* there is not much internet access as well. That’s really bad. All our reporters have access. We have radio stations in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands so our reporters need internet access to send them stories.

### 33. SAMISONI PARETI



***Senior Freelance Reporter (and later Editor), The Sun; former Pacnews and Radio Fiji reporter, Suva, Fiji Islands. Aged 34. Audiotaped interview in Suva, 17 May 2001.***

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*Q: What inspired you into becoming a journalist? What was your training and career path?*

I joined Radio Fiji as a cadet reporter in 1986 and I did that because the previous year I was on a foundation social science programme at the University of the South Pacific. As part of our English course, we had to produce a radio programme and I got interested in the media. While waiting for the exam results that year I applied to the FBC. I was accepted and had to turn down a scholarship for university.

I was basically trained on the job and also through a lot of courses I that attended through Radio Fiji and I remember one at Kuala Lumpur in 1987 on my first trip overseas after the coup. There were numerous courses with PACBROAD, which is now PIBA. Regional workshops on news writing. And to some extent with the Press Club, which was later changed to the Fiji Islands Media Association (FIMA). And an attachment with the University of California, at Berkeley, graduate school of journalism in 1992 when I was with *The Fiji Times*.

*Q: Is journalism education important in Fiji?*

Very important. Even now as we speak, I am trying to pick up from where I left off in 1985 with my university studies for a degree majoring in economics. I really feel that when I am writing economics stories nowadays I am lacking in a lot of things.

It is very important for us as journalists to study. When I started off there was no journalism programme at the University of the South Pacific, and now there is. It is very important for all of us.

*Q: So you are majoring in economics and what is your other major?*

History/politics. There is a possibility I may be doing a year of fulltime study.

*Q: How does your news organisation (The Sun or Radio Fiji/Pacnews) believe journalists should be prepared for the career?*

Now that there is a journalism school, they should try to go there. Or alternatively there was this arrangement, which I think was a great arrangement, whereby working journalists who come just out of school, or who couldn't get a scholarship or couldn't pay for study, could come straight into the newsroom and use the weekend for going to courses. The courses used to be provided by FIMA at the Fiji Journalism Institute (FJI) and this ought to be revived again. Some news organisations in Fiji have their in-house programmes. *The Fiji Times* does. And so does Radio Fiji. And the *Fiji Sun*? I know the present editor, Wainikiti Waqa, is very keen on introducing one.

*Q: Is there enough in-house training? Some news organisations say that they do in-house training, but they actually do very little.*

Yes, not many employers, particularly at this time after the coup, are doing much. In-house training has been one of the casualties of the crisis.

*Q: What is the essential role of a journalist in Fiji?*

Disseminate news and information without bias and as accurately as possible. And it is very important in Fiji, unlike other Pacific Island countries, to be easily swayed by racial or ethnic concerns.

*Q: Is this one of the biggest concerns for journalists in Fiji?*

Even now. Especially in this sort of situation. You are covering the events, but if you're not careful you can easily be absorbed by ethnic issues, and it can control your thinking and writing.

*Q: How important are the concepts of "fourth estate" and "watchdog" in Fiji journalism?*

They are very important but we must separate them. But the concepts aren't well understood. There are cases where you have got people in those institutions, which tend to mix things up. For example, we had a story yesterday called by a church leader and all the politicians were attending. So even the newsmakers are not aware of that separation between the different roles that we have. Journalists, if they are not careful, and they don't understand the principles clearly, then they mix them up too.

*Q: Mix them up in what way?*

By being too close to either of the parties or the institutions. For example, perhaps you're wanting something, wanting favours, or a job, because we are not well paid. For government. Your stories then can be slanted, pro-government. I have seen that happen to my inexperienced colleagues, particularly the young journalists coming through. This is especially so if you haven't been through ethics training.

*Q: Politicians often push the notion of “development journalism”. How do journalists define this, and does it have any importance in Fiji?*

Development journalism in Fiji involves things that relate to a particular community and the economy, and specific things such as a new road, or a new bridge. But there is also another aspect that is well developed, even here in Fiji, and that is analysis of development policies of government. The impact of policies on the people. And even constructive criticism.

You can talk about a new road, but what about the impact of the new road, the construction of the road on the environment, for instance. From personal experience, I know back home [Lau, the island of Vanua Balavu, which is the home island of caretaker Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase] we can no longer swim in our rivers now, and we can no longer catch prawns because of the road that has been built.

And I guess that is why we have not been able to develop these stories in the time factor as well. With the resources that we have we cannot afford to send a reporter to spend a week investigating these stories with their environmental impact or whatever.

*Q: How well-informed are news media audiences in Fiji?*

They are pretty well informed. Through a 24 hour period, we have the news every hour, and now we have television, and then the three daily newspapers. Perhaps an example of how well-informed the people are was in 1999 when Sitiveni Rabuka was defeated in the general election. The day after the election, he was interviewed by a radio journalist and he accused the media over his defeat . He said: “Wherever I went on my campaign, there were people questioning me on this, and questioning me on that.” How did the people know? Through the media.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in Fiji?*

It is difficult for to answer that. I tend to think we are quite well liked. But after the coup, and I find this quite shocking really, we were not very popular with a number of the rebels and

George Speight supporters and that is why a number of journalists were attacked. And that was a big development and a change from 1987, when hardly any journalists were attacked by rebel supporters. We only heard of overseas journalists striking trouble.

For the first time, the rebels were actually looking for journalists and that is why they came out and trashed Fiji Television on May 29. But I guess that is changing now. They were just disappointed that not all reporters were siding with them; they were not happy with the kind of reports that were coming out at the time.

*Q: But Speight and the rebels did get extraordinary media coverage, didn't they?*

Yes, I think more than they deserved. But now generally speaking, I would like to believe that we are seen in better light, more than the politicians. We have just celebrated World Media Freedom Day a few weeks ago, and I was surprised to hear somebody talking on the radio criticising the media for everything it does. But before he signed off, he said that after all that had been said, he supported the work of journalists.

“These are our eyes and our ears, out and about,” he said. “They tell us what is happening, not only in Fiji but around the world. They risk their lives to do their work and we should be thankful.”

*Q: You have partially already answered this, but does the media have a real influence on public opinion in Fiji?*

Yes, it does. What we publish, or what we broadcast has an influence. You don't get a chance to see this in the cities, but last year I had time to venture around into the rural areas. And just sitting down over a bowl of yaqona and just listening to the people discussing national issues. Most of what they say is from what they have heard on the radio or read from the newspapers. Their opinion on Rabuka, for instance; their opinion on politicians.

*Q: You mentioned earlier on that journalists are not well paid yet they are perceived quite well in society, but there is also a high turnover and loss of journalists. Do you believe there is an adequate career path for journalists in Fiji?*

No, I don't. And that is why there is such a high turnover. The starting salary is way down in terms of the national average and cost of living, and when compared with other professions.

There is no career path and there is no structure in place. I know, for instance, in my experience with Radio Fiji there was this case where the editor made numerous submissions to the executive for raising salaries of journalists, particularly the lowest rung. But the answer was always no, there is no money.

It is not a priority for the bosses. Usually what happens is that when you actually put in your resignation and you say, "Oh, so you'll be getting this much from your new employer, will we can top that." You can use it as a bargaining chip.

It also reflects the lack of management skills. Some would say it is a lack of skills among the newsroom managers, but I would also say a lack of skills among the managers. They need training too, not just the editors.

I don't know when the managers of media organisations will realise this. It is a cost to them and the journalists are all frustrated. Radio Fiji has these cases of sending people overseas and the moment they arrive back from training, they leave. That is why they are putting in a rule that if you go overseas for training, you must stay a year before you can leave.

*Q: Should the media be regarded as a watchdog or should it be seen as another business?*

Either way. I hope that it would be seen as another business because that's the way it survives. But its watchdog role should be brought to the fore. If we are not doing it, who else would be doing it? In Fiji, as in other parts of the world, a muzzled press would lead to a corrupt government. So it is very important for the media, while it is a business, to be doing the job of a watchdog at the same time.

*Q: Should freedom of the press be the freedom of the media to express its view, or should it be the freedom of the interest groups (the public) to express their views?*

I think both. But I don't know whether it does happen. If it is just freedom of the press for the media only, leaving out the public, then that can be dangerous. But at the same time the media should be free to say that something is wrong. It is a balancing act perhaps?

*Q: Does the public get enough access to the media?*

Yes, I think so. The editorials every morning reflect this. What is the public doing today that we should cover? If we only say what we want to say on our editorial page that is only a small proportion of our product.

*Q: Does the Fiji Government support or obstruct journalism training in the country?*

The problem now is that we don't have a legal government in place. But if we look back at other governments ... I don't know. There is a lot of noise. They are aware of the need to help journalists get training. That's why the Rabuka Government gave us the building for the Fiji journalism institute and then the government has taken it over again. So there was some development there.

*Q: What went wrong?*

Because the journalists took off with the money — and one of those journalists is on Nukulau Island at the moment. [Jo Nata, who was later found guilty of treason].

*Q: USP is constantly being criticised by some sectors of the Fiji media in spite of its contribution to Pacific journalism, yet I have hardly seen any criticism or reporting of what happened at the Fiji Journalism Institute (FJI). Why is this — doesn't it seem a double standard?*

Yes, it's certainly a double standard. I know it's even talked about even here in *The Sun* newsroom. We go to town every day, highlighting all this waste of public money by government officials or by political leaders. But what about in our own backyard? Why can't

we account for the money we used? And this was aid money to help journalism in Fiji. If we cannot even look after money ourselves who are we to lay blame, to preach about accountability and transparency?

And with USP, I know that Wainikiti [Waq, editor of *The Sun*] and I discussed this after the article by Laisa Taga criticising USP over its new journalism textbook, *The Pacific Journalist* [published in *Pacific/Islands Business* and *The Sunday Times*]. They are very quick at criticising the USP Journalism Programme, but what have we, particularly the media executives, done for Pacific journalists. What have they offered as an alternative? Nothing. What we are seeing is some senior newsroom executives using organisations such as PINA to advance their own political agendas.

*Q: How much political pressure do journalists face in Fiji?*

Political pressure is always there. It is always a concern. The thing is for each editor to make their stand known from the very start and not allow themselves to be subdued by this sort of pressure. Particularly for public news organisations like Radio Fiji, they are having to deal with this every time. The newsroom at the moment is lucky in having Vasiti Waqa because she won't accept that. But the moment you say yes and do favours for them, then you don't where to stop. It is dangerous once you bow to any political pressure.

*Q: What is the state of investigative journalism in Fiji?*

There is hardly any investigative journalism being done. And it is a pity really. I know in Radio Fiji last year we were trying to get two or three reporters to do investigations. But the coup threw that plan out the window. But even the newspapers, and they are the media most capable of doing investigative journalism, don't. Again it is a matter of not having the resources to have someone exclusively available for investigative journalism. This is one area that I was thinking of going into now that I am freelancing. But three weeks into the job I find that I hardly have

time anyway, basically because of the political nature of the situation that we have now. So many stories are needed to be done in the lead up to the election.

*Q: How well resourced are Fiji news media for computer-assisted reporting and use of the internet for research?*

Cost is a big factor there. I know that when the *Sun* first started, each reporter had access to the internet. The paper had to cut that out because of cost. Now there are just two workstations with internet access for the newsroom, the editor and one for the rest of the staff. It is only the *Sun* that has gone extensively into colour.

*Q: Any other important issues?*

A concern to me, I know, and to some of my friends in journalism has been the absence of a good professional organisation of journalists. At a time like this when we have a lot of young people coming into the profession, it is very important to have an association that can assist and help, particularly in training. The question of funding is not really a big problem. Other organisations are willing to help and we can liaise with your programme at USP in terms of journalism training. This is the only way we can prepare journalists for the future.

### 34. WAINIKITI WAQA-BOGIDRAU



***Consultant Editor, The Sun; former Chief Subeditor, Daily Post; Vice-Chancellor's Gold medal and Social Sciences Gold medal at the University of the South Pacific, 2000. Suva, Fiji Islands. Aged 32. Audiotaped interview in Suva, 17 May 2001.***

***Email address: [Truth@is.com.fj](mailto:Truth@is.com.fj)***

*Q: What inspired you into becoming a journalist? What was your training and career path?*

I guess it was money in the beginning. I was an undergraduate at the University of the South Pacific, doing a science degree in biology and chemistry. I wasn't doing very well because I was young and enjoying life. And I needed money and I saw this ad at Radio Fiji and I got the job. It was basically money that made me become a journalist. I started on \$5500 in 1989.

*Q: So starting salaries haven't changed a lot?*

No, they haven't changed a lot. In fact, I find that at some of the organisations I have worked in, like *The Fiji Times* and the *Daily Post*, and even *The Sun*, they pay their cadets much lower than what I started on.

*Q: And the cost of living and everything else has soared in that time?*

Yes.

*Q: How important is journalism education in Fiji?*

Well, at Radio Fiji there was always education programmes. In my first week there, they had this in-house training programme which we attended all the time because we had to have our voices "presentable". But after Radio Fiji, I joined *The Fiji Times*. At the *Times* I found a totally different attitude. They did not encourage education as such. They believe experience counts more than any training, or degree.

*Q: What do you think about that?*

I think that's a whole of bullshit really. I know, with the benefit of hindsight, that it is good to get trained journalists rather than people fresh out of high school, or just off the street. The advantages of trained journalists is that they are aware of the issues, ethical and otherwise. They have a good understanding of what journalism is all about.

I have noticed this with some of the graduates, especially from USP, it is easier to talk to them. I mean, it is easier giving them an outline of a story than with those who haven't had training, or education. You don't need a lot of supervision with the graduates. They grasp the ideas quite easily.

*Q: What is the essential role of the journalist is in Fiji?*

Inform the public on what is happening, to be a watchdog for the public in the cases such as corruption and abuse, and all these things, and to insure a free flow of information. And it should educate too, especially in a developing country like ours.

*Q: How important are the notions of "Fourth Estate" and "watchdog" for Fiji journalists?*

We would love to act as a fourth estate, to act as a watchdog, but we have a whole lot of obstacles before, cultural as well as red tape. The other thing is when we get these very good stories, we have a whole lot of people who do not want to identify themselves as sources. And that is a whole ethical problem for us. We all try to become a fourth estate, we all try to be a watchdog. But too often we do not achieve what we want to achieve in the end.

*Q: Politicians often talk about the need for “development journalism”. But what does this concept mean to Fiji journalists and how important is it?*

I worked with Jale Moala [former editor of the *Daily Post*] who believed in positive stories, encouraging stories that could uplift people. He looked at human reconstruction. He thought that in the end, we should promote human life, where good living is promoted ... in the context that when social conditions are good, in education and all that, then people get access to all services that are needed. That basically was his idea of development journalism.

I agree to that idea. But we have problem with that because basically people don't like to read these kinds of stories. Yes, for a feature. But not for a front page story. I just believe that people would rather read about corruption and abuse of power than about somebody has done really well on their farm.

*Q: Is there a conflict between this approach to journalism and the watchdog role?*

That really depends. I believe there would be a conflict if we promote development journalism and ignore the watchdog role. I also believe they can work really well together.

*Q: Your views seem to highlight the change in editorial style in the Daily Post in the months since the political crisis. Is this so?*

I agree with you. This is another cultural obstacle. We now have an editor on the *Post* who is directly related to the caretaker Prime Minister [Laisenia Qarase] and favourable stories are planted. I would love to talk to Mithleshni [Gurdayal] because she has been writing some of the stories. But staff generally knows that there is a leaning towards Qarase and they go out of their

way to supply these stories. At the same time, I believe there is pressure being applied from the editor and also the publisher [Ranjit Singh].

*Q: Is it that the publisher supports Qarase, or is he dead against Chaudhry?*

I don't think the publisher was against Chaudhry. He seemed that way initially. But I believe he is a great Labour Party supporter.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in Fiji?*

Generally I believe there are two views: There are those who hate them, and there are those who think the world of them. There are those out there who think what we write is the gospel truth, and there are those who are more sceptical of what we say.

*Q: There is a big turnover of journalists and salaries are low compared with comparable careers. Is there an adequate career path for journalists in Fiji?*

No, I don't think so. For graduates coming out of university after three years of dedicated study, some of them start in journalism at F\$8,000 a year, some at \$10,000. And then you have colleagues who start in secondary teaching at \$15,000. Those graduates going into the civil service start at around \$14,000.

Same input. Some of them, same degrees. But very different salaries. And there are no chances for salary increment. I was at *The Fiji Times* when they had COLA [cost of living adjustment] when it was increment time. It was across the board pay rise. Otherwise if you did exceptionally well, they gave you a pay increase. But there were no required things, no written law, about when they will review performance again. Things were like that. And I believe they are still like that at the *Times*. At the *Post* there is no structure involved. And here, at *The Sun* there is no structure too but we are trying our best to put a structure in place.

*Q: There also seems to be a reluctance by news organisations to discuss salaries and conditions. Last November, Wansolwara published a survey of Fiji news media pay scales and recruitment policies and some were very secretive. Yet in other countries, such as Australia and*

*New Zealand, it is public knowledge what journalists' salary scales are, Why the secrecy in Fiji?*

This is all due to the confidentiality provisions that put into journalists' contracts. But generally that's not the case. I think it is just because news organisations in Fiji do not pay as well as they should and most of them are afraid of being exposed about the salaries that they gave their reporters. And there are times when they would rather be secretive about it so they can exaggerate, rather than being honest about how much they pay.

There are people sitting in all the newsrooms who don't even know what salary the other people are getting. Salaries are at the discretion of the hiring person.

*Q: Should the news media be regarded as a watchdog, or as another business?*

That's a very good question. First and foremost, we would like to think we are a business, we need to generate a profit. And obviously you cannot operate without profit, or without money. But again the whole idea about being a watchdog comes in. And there are times when there is a conflict of interest.

There are stories regarding people who advertise with us, very good stories, and some we couldn't publish in the past. They advertise with us and they threatened to withdraw their support. It is a very difficult decision in this case. I haven't come across a decision like that since I have been here, but there was a case about somebody concerning one of our reporters, sitting right there, who was killed by a window from Home Centres which advertises with us. We didn't run the story just because it involved the Home Centres. This is really hard. And the same thing happened at the *Daily Post*. I was there. Same company, same story. It involved neglect.

*Q: Does the Fiji Government support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

I don't think so. I don't remember the Government running any training programme for journalists. Oh, there was one, but that was during the post-1987 coup [Ratu Sir Kamisese] Mara interim administration. But since then, none whatsoever.

*Q: What sort of political pressure do journalists face in Fiji?*

There is a whole lot of pressure. For instance, in this newspaper we in plurality, we believe in equal access for everyone in what Fiji has to offer. Recently our editorials have been along those lines, and then we had people from the SVT calling us and asking who is the Indian who wrote that editorial. This kind of thing. We had Peter May [a Canadian] here as a consultant who wrote one editorial in particular and he had the SVT threatening to go to the Immigration Department.

*Q: How did they know he wrote the editorial?*

That's a very good question. They must have called someone and they must have found out. I really have no idea. But I was on a day off that week. I found out when I read the letters to the editor.

Since that incident, the editorials have been written exclusively by the editor. If we have a sports editorial, then we encourage the sports people to write it but it is vetted by the editor. But I do encourage the senior reporters to write editorials.

*Q: Are there any issues you would like to raise?*

To be very honest I am sick and tired of ... We have training programmes every year which are directed through PINA, and PIBA. For *The Sun*, and for the *Daily Post*, these things haven't filtered down to us. I don't know for what reasons. PIBA had one and recommended us. But I believe there are a whole lot of personal differences out there that are affecting the primary objectives of all training programmes. And it gets to be sickening at times.

I think that they need to just relook and review the whole process of training. After all, they are the ones getting funds. They should be these training programmes to all the media organisations

in the Pacific so that all benefit. In the past I believe it has been working like a favourite kind of think, like, “If you’re on my side, I’ll give you training. But if you’re not, then you’re out.” We need to get rid of this kind of mentality and start afresh. Training needs to be provided for everyone.

*Q: In this context, why has the USP journalism programme been singled out for criticism by some media quarters in Fiji even though it has demonstrated many achievements for the region?*

I think the biggest problem here is jealousy. They’re supposed to be very good, and they’re not been asked to help out in this programme. It must hurt them somehow. We need to get outside of those feelings and try to help out. After all, everyone needs to be helped out. We all need a beginning. If these experienced journalists should go out of the way to stop criticising and go in and help in any way they can. It would be better than sitting out there and going on and on about these kinds of things.

Another thing, because of the ban on training for us by PINA that we seem to be getting, that we have organised our own in-house training. We have invited people from a wide cross-section of the community to come in and talk to our journalists. That starts next week.

### 35. FRANCIS HERMAN



***General Manager Public Broadcasting, Fiji Broadcasting Corporation Ltd, Suva, Fiji Islands. Audiotaped interview in Suva, 17 May 2001.***

***Email address: [Fherman@is.com.fj](mailto:Fherman@is.com.fj)***

*Q: How important is journalism education in Fiji?*

Education of journalists is critical, particularly in Fiji where, not just the politics, but the economics of the whole country is becoming very complex. Journalists need to educate themselves and to understand the intricacies of how these operate and the flow-on effect from a particular policy, its ramifications and its implications. Armed with that knowledge, and using their education, they will be able to give not just a more informed opinion, but will be able to get the message across to the audience. They will do this without allowing themselves to be used by sources to promote a particular agenda. That is why the education of journalists is a

critical issue. Apart from giving a fair, balanced and accurate picture to the audience, they are also helping the masses understand what the balance of payments are, or why a particular political party is pushing a particular agenda ... those things.

*Q: What is the view of the FBC, for example, in how to train and prepare journalists for their career?*

We have often been used as a training ground for journalists in Fiji. They come in to get their training through the cadet scheme, and then they leave us. We have now decided as an organisation that we want to create our own journalists who are moulded in our format of news. So we are opting now for younger journalists.

It's a long process. But with our news team, if you look at our current news team, there is a bias towards the younger generation. Simply because the older ones come in with very bad habits, — the experienced journalists, I am talking about. They think they know everything. It is very difficult for them to adapt to our style that we are developing. And basically an extensive in-house training programme on all facets of society, not just politics, but everything, and then giving them on-the-job training. Getting them exposed to professional, specialised, or niche areas, like investigative journalism, or specialising in the environment. What we are moving towards is getting more specialists on board, instead of generalists. And that way they can do the rounds, we have journalists specialising in key areas, instead of trying to do everything.

*Q: When you're talking about the "younger generation" and older journalists, how do you define these?*

Okay, we're looking at journalists who have not necessarily come out from university with a journalism degree, they may have come out with economics, or geography, or perhaps they have come out with science. And we believe that if we brought those and trained them, both internally and externally, about the journalism side of things, the depth picked up at university, would be reflected in what we put on air.

That's not to say that journalism education at university is not important. No. There are a few of us on the station who are graduates in journalism, but we have gone and done that after 10 years of working in the field. We have gone and done the journalism degree. It has made it very easy for us to understand. We were able to interact a lot more closely with our tutors and lecturers at university. We were able to dissect some of the theories and practical sides of journalism training.

What we lacked, and what we felt some of the journalism courses didn't provide, were specialising in finance, specialising in a few other things. We might do one or two units or a couple of units in history or politics, for example. But we felt that that was not enough to make us specialists in that field. That's how we look at it now. We want specialists.

Two journalism graduates we have taken on from USP at present have come in very strong on the journalism side, but we feel that they need a lot more exposure on the other side — I harp on this, the finance side, like understanding balance sheets for example.

*Q: There are journalism students who do economics and finance as their second major. In fact, one of our best graduates last year opted for a career as an economist instead of becoming a journalist. Is the actual diversity of the double major programme being fully considered?*

Yes, the student journalists are excellent. It is really a matter of more specialisation in the newsroom.

*Q: So you intend to recruit more graduates, yet there is low pay and a high turnover rate of journalists. Do media organisations provide a real career path for journalists?*

The rate of pay of journalists in the Pacific is very low. To many of us, it is a profession, not a job. And therefore like doctors, lawyers and accountants, we do not see why journalists should get equally high salaries. Often we get the criticism that they are not a graduate, or they don't have tertiary education in a particular field so why should we pay them higher salaries like accountants, lawyers and doctors. And we know important the media is in shaping opinions.

If you can use radio as an example, particularly our Fijian station, where the bulk of our audience who listen to what we broadcast in Fijian, even in Hindustani to some extent, believe it is the gospel truth. What they hear on the radio is the gospel truth. So that forms the basis of their discussions around the grog bowl, in the nightclubs, and whatever next. It also shapes their opinion.

We believe that influence is there to a huge extent. Therefore we see that it is our responsibility to make sure that what we are putting out, not just in our news bulletins, but in all the other on-air public service type programmes, helps fully inform the consumer.

That's why we say, "Yes, we opt for graduates. We aren't able to pay — the media generally isn't able to pay what doctors, lawyers and accountants are getting." But unless the media organisations, or the journalists, get together and argue, or somehow put their thoughts together, and come back to the media organisations and say, "Hey, come on, journalists should be paid X dollars, or this should be the scale," then nothing will happen.

I remember that in 1989 there was a move — David, you were involved — to set up journalists associations, and the Pacific Journalists Association. That kind of thing fell through in Fiji, not because it wasn't an excellent idea. But we didn't have enough people committed to pushing the cause.

Not denigrating the younger journalists in any way currently in the field, but once they have interviewed the prime minister, or a prominent politician, that's it — they think they've made it. Seriously. They cover Parliament. Or they attend an international conference or something, that's it, they feel they've made it. In my personal opinion, that's not journalism, that's only part of it. Just writing a story and putting it on air, or in the newspapers, does not necessarily make you a good journalist.

And there's a difference between a journalist and a good journalist. You know some of the criticism of a lack of depth in news reports. There is a lack of depth. We talk quite a bit to the

business community and they point out a lot of deficiencies in the way the media is reporting, not necessarily political issues, but economic issues, financial issues, or social issues. That is a major shortcoming among the news media generally.

If the news media organisations don't train their respective newsrooms in those specialised fields, nobody else is going to train them. It is also our opinion that it is our responsibility as the national broadcaster: it is our role to teach journalists the basics of their craft. We shouldn't shirk that responsibility and leave it to the institutions, the funding agencies, the media organisations, and the umbrella organisations — it is really not their role to train them in the basics. We feel that there is an option: The universities, the technical colleges that are a step up from the basics we teach them. Therefore they graduate to the next level.

*Q: There has been an increasing trend for working journalists to undertake part-time or fulltime study at university, yet donor agencies continue to support short courses. Isn't there a need for more scholarships for working journalists?*

In our case, what the FBC does is actively encourage all our employees to pursue tertiary education, be it at USP or any other institution. They enrol, and when they pass their units the company reimburses them. We have on the station now about five employees at USP who have passed their undergraduate or their masters [degrees]. And we have paid for their tuition. Not because we forced them to do it, but because they went out on their own initiative. Plus we have paid them.

*Q: Are you keeping those people who get extra training? They are not joining the media industry brain drain?*

This is where the company must provide for progression planning. So they become all trained and become very enthusiastic, but it doesn't necessarily mean that because you come out with a piece of paper that you're better than anybody else. It's a start. Unfortunately, a lot of the young ones who come out with a piece of paper, come and say, "See I'm a graduate, so I

should be paid X.” They should be paid X more than that journalist, even though he has 20 years’ experience because they are a graduate. It doesn’t work that way for us.

In the organisation we have an entry point for non-degree holders in terms of salary. So if you came in from school with no experience, there is one salary in play. If you came in with a piece of paper, with a degree, then you’re slightly up the ladder. But that doesn’t automatically take you up to the top. You have to earn that.

In the last two weeks, we have just finished about interviews of 60 people for some key positions in the organisation. Not senior management positions, but middle managers and others. And a lot of them are university graduates, not just from USP but from other universities, looking for a job. Settling for a salary like F\$8,000 a year. And they have a degree in economics, or they have a degree in whatever next.

What’s wrong with the market? There is something wrong. The market is not allowing these graduates to fit in to the place. And if they do , they don’t get a decent salary. So therefore they will not be stable in any organisation. It’s human nature. I’d do the same.

But at the same time, we found that a lot of them are just straight out of university, they graduated just last year. We asked them what salary did they think they should get. Nothing less than X, Y, Z. Why do you say that. Because I have a degree. When we looked at their degree, they had some excellent grades. But when we put them through some broadcast tests, they couldn’t write a decent radio script. Or they had terrible radio voices. It was disappointing. None of them were journalism graduates. But it was an interesting exercise for us.

This was the first time we did this under our new Training and Development Policy.

The study is up to them, and then they are bonded to the company. But the bond is not severe.

For example, if they do study for three years, it doesn’t necessarily mean that they are bonded for three years.

*Q: I am aware that two of your promising journalists recently received training overseas and then jumped ship, so to speak, as soon as they got back to Fiji. It is a worry isn't it?*

Oh yes. Internally we'd like to pay more than what we pay now. But unfortunately the cash flow doesn't allow us to. That doesn't mean that we don't recognise their worth.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in Fiji?*

Personally, I think journalists are not highly regarded in Fiji. I opted to move out of journalism and into management because there was nothing at the end of the road, After you've been the news director, that's it. I wanted to move on in life, so I made a choice. But nobody gives a damn whether you're a journalist or not. They don't hold you in high esteem. If a doctor, lawyer, accountant and a journalist walked into a function, the journalist would most likely be pushed to the side, or told you can't come in. The other three would be given red carpet treatment.

I can't understand why that happens because for me journalism is a profession and it will always be. And it is very important. It needs to be given a status, some weight, and it's not, If I can use myself as an example, there are four of us are in the family: one's a teacher, one's a lawyer, one's a doctor, and I am a journalist. The journalist is at the bottom of the ladder. That's a very sorry state of affairs.

It is the same even when you're editor. They will talk to you about your articles, but you are not given the same status as other professions, as the engineers, the doctors and the lawyers. And it also reflects in the salaries. Apart from two media organisations, all the other senior journalists are paid lousy money.

The USP law graduates come straight out of Uni., they go smack into a F\$15,000 or \$18,000 a year job. A journalism graduate comes straight of Uni. smack into an \$8,000, \$9,000 or \$10,000 a year job. Why the difference? That's the question I ask.

*Q: What has been the Fiji Government attitude towards journalism training and education? Is it supportive or obstructive?*

In my experience, all the governments, since I have been a journalist, have supported wholeheartedly journalism education and training. They have gone as far as giving buildings, giving funding, and all sorts of things, endorsing applications for journalism education. Even the Fijian Affairs Board provides scholarships for journalism, and Government endorses AusAID scholarships for journalism through the public service system. There is, I believe, a great interest by Government in promoting journalism education. The media practitioners themselves don't pay much attention to it. But really what else can a Government do?

*Q: A lot of lip-service is paid by some media organisations to more training and raising journalism standards, but is there a real commitment?*

I can only talk for us, and we are 101 percent committed. But I know there are some others are committed, but their level of commitment, and their level of input, are again questionable. Not enough is being done to train journalists. I suppose, David, a lot of it has to do with the logistics of the newsroom. Small newsrooms and all the organisations are interested is churning out copy. Why send someone off?

We send people away for three months training, such as at Deutsche Welle. We send them to ABC on attachments, to all sorts of courses locally and abroad. It's a sacrifice because someone else in the newsroom has got to double up while they are away. I know there are other media organisations who would never release their people for three months. Not that they don't believe in journalism education, but they are not making that extra effort to carry the burden for three months while their colleague is away for training.

*Q: Any burning issue that you would like to raise that I haven't asked about?*

One of the things that I personally would to see, David, is some sort of unification. Some sort of camaraderie among media organisations, among the journalists. It doesn't help the younger

journalists who have just started, the ones who are cadets, when you speak to them about a code of ethics and those sorts of things, there is a very lukewarm, shallow kind of response.

Personally, I believe that if senior media practitioners regularly come together to sit under one roof and look at the state of the media, and hold post mortems — like coverage of the coup last year — it would be good for the industry. Yes, we belong to regional organisations like PINA and PIBA, but they are regional organisations, not Fiji organisations. We don't have a Fiji Islands Media Association right now, and I think that is an important forum.

PINA and PIBA can't speak for individual countries, they are regional bodies. This is my personal view. They can't pretend to speak for just one country. There would be more meaning to it if national media associations got together and spoke about issues. The ones that used to run FIMA have become too busy running radio stations, or running newspapers. Or they are too disillusioned. There is too much politics in the media, too many personality clashes, scoring points against each other.

Competition is fine, whether you're *Fiji Sun*, *Daily Post* or *Fiji Times*, or FM96, FBC or Fiji TV, but as a profession we should speak with a united voice.

But right now it's very easy to break. There is no unity. We may meet around the bars, but there is no forum for Fiji media practitioners to discuss issues working conditions of journalists, pay structures, professional issues, training plans, even the future of the Fiji training institute.

*Q: What about the Fiji Media Council? Doesn't it provide a forum for some of these issues?*

There is a lot of merit in the Media Council and a lot of advantages. But this is for executives. The ordinary journalists don't have any say in the Media Council. How many cadet journalists can go up to the Media Council members and talk to them?

## 36. JOSEPHINE PRASAD



***Senior Reporter, Fiji's Daily Post, Suva, Fiji Islands. Aged 24. Audiotaped interview in Suva, 17 May 2001.***

***Email address: [Dailypost@is.com.fj](mailto:Dailypost@is.com.fj)***

*Q: How did you get into journalism and what sort of training did you have?*

To start off with, I never had any training. After I finished high school, I got a job as a fulltime radio presenter in 1993 on a station at Radio Fiji's FM104, a DJ playing songs. I used to always admire the way the journalists came and read the news. The news has to go on at 12 o'clock and you play the line-up and the journalists are still not up, and they're running through, and they tell you why they're late. After they closed the station down, they offered me a job in the newsroom. But I refused.

I liked the flowery style of writing so I thought I would become a features writer. So I applied at *The Fiji Times* and I applied at the *Daily Post*. I got letters from both, and I was interviewed

by *The Fiji Times*, and they did not give me a very good offer. I went to the *Daily Post* and they gave me a supplements reporter's job which was \$30 a week, whereas *The Fiji Times* was offering me just an attachment job with no money until I got the hang of it. They actually offered me a subeditor's role, which I didn't know anything about.

So I started at the *Daily Post* in 1998 on \$30 a week which after a month went up to \$60 a week. Laisa Taga was editor at the time, but she was leaving for *Islands Business*. Jale Moala took over as editor, and he knew me from my radio days because he used to listen to my show. So he got me into the newsroom, so that's how my journalism career started.

*Q: What is your role now?*

I am the senior journalist slash political commentator, but prior to this I was chief of the *Daily Post's* western bureau at Lautoka for the past six months.

*Q: How important is journalism education and training in Fiji?*

I think it really depends on the person. Some people really need to get trained. It depends on how good some people are with language in high school. When I was in the west, I had a reporter from form seven and he was so good, he had the urge to kill the story in one go.

He doesn't have to be spoon-fed. Whereas I had a degree holder [not journalism graduate], who just couldn't meet the deadlines.

*Q: What is your news organisation's attitude to training and recruitment?*

They hire whomever they want. I don't think the *Daily Post* has any policy at all.

*Q: When Jale Moala was editor, didn't the paper seek to recruit graduates?*

Oh yes. Jale had a lot of policies. But I am one of the only reporters left from last year with Jale's background.

*Q: The turnover has been that great?*

Yes, so many people have left since then.

*Q: What is the essential role of a journalist in Fiji?*

Having a mind of your own. Journalists should be going out and getting their own news stories rather than waiting for press releases. At the end of the day people know if you are writing a news story from a press statement and it looks good. They have to learn to be more investigative, they can't just sit in a newsroom. Or just because someone knows a person and likes the person, but doesn't have the guts to stick a byline on a story, passes it on to someone else who has their byline on the story.

This is what is actually happening in the newsroom at the moment. Some journalists refuse to go out and get a story. They prefer to sit in the newsroom and wait for a story to come to them, and that's it. Presto! Here's your page one.

*Q: How important are the notions of "Fourth Estate" and "watchdog" for Fiji journalists?*

I have been covering Parliament and the coup — I was the sole female Indian journalist covering the coup. These notions are very important, especially at this time. The Fourth Estate and the watchdog have to be kept on their toes all the time. You can't be seen to be taking anybody's sides, whether they are your best friends in Parliament or whatever. I really think Wainikiti Waqa [former *Daily Post* chief subeditor] is a role model in the Fourth Estate and watchdog, she taught me a lot.

But the problem here is that when you do actually become the watchdog you are seen as a security threat. There is not much space in Fiji for being the Fourth Estate, or being the watchdog, because people are trying shutting you up, they send you a writ. Or they get other people to threaten you. Like, for example, what happened to the Coalition Government, they started flashing photographs of reporters in Parliament.

*Q: Like the infamous Margaret Wise photo? What was the point of showing that photo?*

It showed Margaret asleep while she was working with a male colleague. It was just a way of getting back at Margaret because of a series of articles she had written that the Labour politicians did not like.

It was just like yesterday when we saw deposed Labour parliamentarians Krishna Datt and Joeli Kalou having a meeting together. And we actually saw them. But when we wrote about it, they rubbished the paper and me.

*Q: How did they rubbish you?*

They said I should have got my facts correct. They threatened to take it up with the Media Council, and we said, “We’re not retracting.”

The other thing is that we have learnt a lot. The political crisis has been a very tough time for us. We’ve never been through this kind of crisis. The 1987 coup was totally different from what we went through this time.

We used to work 24 hour shifts. I couldn’t stay at home because people were coming around to threaten me. I was in Parliament the day the Government was taken hostage — along with Matelita Ragogo (*Fiji Times*) and John Kamea (*Fiji Sun*).

It is very hard trying to be a watchdog and the Fourth Estate in Fiji. People always try to shut you up. But I think it is probably the most important part of journalism. I think that since democracy is a principle, we have a responsibility to see that it is upheld. In Fiji’s case, I don’t see the media fighting for democracy, they have all been taking different angles. The *Fiji Sun* is quite outspoken about democracy, *The Fiji Times* does it from time to time, and we are completely gagged.

*Q: Isn’t that another major difference with 1987 too? Then the news media were fairly united in fighting for democracy, but not now?*

Yes, this has been a complete turnaround. I was at primary school then, but the media kept on fighting for it even after Dr Bavadra died. [Dr Timoci Bavadra headed the Labour-led Coalition Government deposed in 1987 after one month in office.]

But in this case the media didn’t play its role well. They are not fighting for democracy like they should.

*Q: Why is this the case?*

Because people are more or less taking sides, journalists have decided on other priorities. This is probably because the media had differences with the [Chaudhry] Coalition Government — like Russell Hunter not being given a visa, Margaret Wise was not being well liked, and Mesake Koroi's ties with the caretaker prime minister Laisenia Qarase.

*Q: Grudges affecting their judgement?*

Yes, these are the things that are darkening, or colouring, their concept of what they are doing.

*Q: Does this have implications for the future of the freedom of the media in Fiji?*

Yes, it does have serious implications. Just the other day, a judge gagged all the media and none of the organisations said anything, except for the *Fiji Times* in a rather muted sort of way.

*Q: Why was this?*

They are probably all showing their solidarity to the President.

*Q: But this was a very straight forward news story to cover?*

Yes, it was a very straight forward story. I had a row with our editor, Mesake Koroi, about this. There is a lot of talk about us being the Qarase newspaper, we're not bringing out the facts as we were before. We've been gagged quite a lot.

*Q: Does this have an effect on morale in the newsroom?*

It does. I used to do the stories involving Qarase and now I have been taken off that and another reporter is doing this. I made it very clear that I would not do any PR for a politician.

*Q: Politicians talk about "development journalism" and the need for more of it in Fiji. But there are differing interpretations about what development journalism is. How important is this concept to Fiji journalists and is it practised?*

I don't think development journalism can be studied at any university. You can go to university to study, that's fine. In Parliament, they say the journalists need to go out and study. But you really need to develop journalism here in the newsroom.

*Q: But what is development journalism to you? How is it defined in Fiji?*

Going out on training on an attachment basis, that's what I would define development journalism is. I have heard politicians in Parliament and when they talk about development journalism, they are talking about journalists going out and studying, getting more practice on the job. Krishna Datt said development journalism is not about going to university, but working journalists going on workshops and learning to read and write all over again. That's what he said.

*Q: How does the public regard journalists in Fiji?*

In the Indo-Fijian culture, if you do anything in the media, even radio presenting, there is a perception that you are a person who sleeps around, they should not talk in front of, and a person to keep away from. And it is definitely not a woman's job.

*Q: But isn't that changing? When I did this last survey in 1998, the gender balance in journalism in Fiji was about equal.*

Yes, I am guess I am talking about attitudes among Indo-Fijians who are quite old. But my Fijian colleagues tell me that this sort of attitude is not only among the Indians, the older Fijian people talk like that too. The younger generation look up to us.

*Q: How is the salary structure and working conditions for journalists in Fiji? Is there a career path?*

You're overworked and underpaid. The view of this newsroom at the moment is that if you're a degree holder, you're paid the highest salary, whereas if you're not a degree holder and no matter how much experience you have, you are still on a very low salary scale. I am one of the lucky ones in the newsroom to not hold a degree, but I get higher pay.

*Q: Does the Fiji Government support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

They support the idea of journalism training. The Government perception is that if you're a trained journalist, you know it all. But there is no support from Government to train journalists.

All our scholarships, all our fellowships, all our workshops are funded by aid agencies. We don't even have FIMA any more.

*Q: Was that dependent on Government assistance?*

Yes, FIMA was very much supported by the Government; it provided the building for example.

*Q: But is it the Government's fault that FIMA doesn't operate any more?*

Yes, it is the Government's fault. If they had continued to support FIMA and looked after it, then there would not have been mishandling of funds at all. They only criticise us.

### 37. MAIKA BOLATIKI



***Chief-of-Staff, Fiji's Daily Post, Suva, Fiji Islands. Aged 46. Audiotaped interview in Suva, 18 May 2001.***

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*Q: How did you get into journalism and what sort of training did you have?*

I was a secondary schoolteacher for 12 years (at Lau Junior High School) and I resigned in 1991 to enter journalism at the *Daily Post*. I started off proof-reading. When I came into journalism, it was a totally new field. I am now into my 10<sup>th</sup> year as a journalist and I learn new things every day. This is not like teaching. As a teacher, every day I teach things that I learned 10 years ago. And there has been no change in the teaching curriculum so I can fit into teaching anytime. But in journalism, you learn new things every day.

*Q: How important is education for journalism in Fiji?*

You have to know where you going, especially in your writing. You have to have the knowledge and the background and this is where education comes in.

*Q: How does your organisation think that journalists should be prepared for a career in journalism?*

We have certain criteria. Now we have a journalism school at the University of the South Pacific, which is the first in Fiji, and we based our selection from there. Also, we are recruiting some people fresh from school. And one of our criteria is ability in English. At present, we have six straight from school, and three from university who have degrees.

The criteria is that they must have good English. One of the tests that we give is that have to write something, an essay. And what I find is that it is easier with the people who are just coming straight from school. They want to learn.

The people who come out from university have their own ideas, it is harder for us to instill in them what we want. In time they realise. That happens in about the first month. After that, they fit into our system.

*Q: What is the essential role of a journalist in Fiji?*

The central role of the media in Fiji is to inform the public on what is happening. And we have this media freedom, but I find that freedom is within. We are not that free to express what we should tell the public because of some legal or other restriction. So freedom would mean in a limited area.

Justice would be in telling the people the real truth. But I find we are unjust sometimes because we are unable to tell the real truth. For example, under the Company Act we cannot really go into the privacy of the company. We are just being given certain things about a company, but privacy prevents us being able to reveal them to the public. In other countries the media really goes into the privacy of a company, or a politician, especially in investigative reporting. An example is former Finance Minister Jim Ah Koy's company interests [widely implicated in the

George Speight attempted coup], we cannot go into this even though we are many debts out there.

*Q: How important are the notions of “Fourth Estate” and “watchdog” to Fiji journalists?*

The media are seen to be watchdogs, in the sense that they are keeping the people informed on what is really happening. But, as I have said, at times we are not keeping the people really informed. That is worrying us.

*Q: Politicians talk about the development of “development journalism” and more of this is needed in Fiji. What does development journalism mean to Fiji journalists, and is it being practised?*

Politicians are just saying about development journalism because of the way the media reports certain stories. When we report something good about them, then they don't criticise us. But when we report something bad about them, they call for development journalism in Fiji. We have developed a lot. We have USP for development. Also, I have found that we learn a lot from reading books about journalism, about reading from the internet. But this is different development from what the politicians want.

The politicians want their style to be turned into our style. Once we do not cooperate with them, then they say you must go and learn development journalism. Development in the sense of favouritism. They want journalists to be styled into their own way of journalism, that's how I interpret it. They have their pet journalists.

*Q: Politicians work through pet journalists and peddle influence with the media, are most journalists in Fiji impartial?*

Yes, I think most are.

*Q: How are journalists perceived by the public?*

Journalists in Fiji are very lowly rated. They are not looked upon as something. They are only important when they break a good story for the public. When I have been overseas, I have found that the overseas media don't face this problem.

*Q: How does it compare with being a teacher?*

A teacher? It is totally different; you are respected by the community. Even if you not at work, just because you are a teacher. Once you are a teacher you have earned their respect. But for journalists, you are respected for just what you do. And that respect is a day-by-day respect.

*Q: Do journalists and the media influence public opinion?*

Yes, they do very much. Now that we are going to the elections in August and the public will look at the papers to see which party will win. Opinions for the elections will be based on what journalists write. But after the election we'll know whether their opinion was right, based on what they read in the newspapers.

*Q: In the last election, in May 1999, did that reflect what was being published in the newspapers?*

In the last election, we had this new preferential voting system and the *Daily Post* predicted a landslide victory for the Labour Party. When you looked at the preferential votes, it was a ganging up against the SVT to put it down. SVT had the last preference.

*Q: But the same preferential voting system will still be in place for this election. So what are journalists predicting now?*

We haven't seen the preferences yet, but the Labour Coalition won 19 open just because of these Fijian votes going to them. But now, I think if the Fijian parties work together we can win the election. With the Indian voters, there are only two parties. The result will hinge on the Fijian voters, on how they will give their preference votes.

*Q: What is your view of the salaries and working conditions for journalists in Fiji? Is there enough of a career path?*

Fiji is a small country and we have just three print media companies. What we're doing now is being a training ground for the print media. The Fiji Times are after our young journalists — they poach them. They have a salary structure that they go up to. We have a future, but we are struggling on the salary side. As soon as they are competent enough, our young journalists go to greener pastures. Some of them go to the other newspapers, and some of them are with the Information Ministry.

*Q: Is the drain of staff a problem for the Daily Post?*

Yes, I know there are journalists from outside, but we need to try to retain our staff.

*Q: Should the news media be regarded as a watchdog, or should it be seen as another business?*

I think it should be regarded as a business. The media is a business and we live on what we write. We are not here to watch other people. I usually tell our reporters you must know that what you are writing must not reflect you because if you write something bad about someone, think of yourself. If you create anger, then someone is going to react. You are going to be angry if the same thing is written about you.

So that's why I am saying that, we are not being a watchdog, it's a business. We have to print things correctly, but we are not here to pinpoint. If we're a watchdog, who is going to watch you?

*Q: Should freedom of expression reflect freedom for the media, or should it be freedom of the press for interest groups (the public)?*

It is freedom for the media to be accessible to the public, and likewise the public should be accessible to us. Because we know now that the public are aware of what is happening and we get calls every day. Likewise, when we seek information, we call members of the public to give us information. So we have that freedom of expression for the public to the media, and the media to the public.

*Q: How important is investigative journalism for the Fiji media?*

Investigative reporting is very important. Most of the time we have police investigations from what we write. During the coup, we were exchanging ideas, so they just waited for our reporting for their own investigation. Investigative reporting is very important, especially when we are handling some extreme cases.

*Q: For example?*

Such as during the coup. There are a lot of untold stories about the coup. When we write stories about some new investigation, the next day we get a call from either the police, or public sources. The police go through our clipping files. We are currently doing investigations on the people who were involved in the coup. We are trying our very best to get proof on the identities.

*Q: Is culture a problem for investigative journalism?*

Yes, especially for us Fijian journalists. Sometimes we send Indian reporters to cover Fijian events because we have to show the old people we respect the custom. I have been chased out so many times by Fijian people. When they know that I am there to report on their own affairs. Fijians often find it a lot easier to come out and talk with Indian reporters than Fijians. Likewise, Indian parties find it a lot easier to speak to Fijian reporters.

*Q: How well resourced are Fiji news media for computer-assisted reporting (CAR) and researching internet data bases?*

We have the training, but we don't really have the facilities to go into things very deeply.

*Q: Does the Fiji Government support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

They support journalism education because they know how important it is for them. The past [Chaudhry] Government has been trying to upgrade education for journalists. They have been saying at many conferences how important it is. They know how important media is. In some

cases, if things are reported wrongly, they blame the type of education that we have. So they look at good education in journalism as also resulting in good reporting.

*Q: How much political pressure do Fiji journalists face?*

We are coming up to the elections and there is a lot of political pressure on us. For the politicians, they have their own paper, and their own media people they talk to. So when we assign political stories, we assign someone who is accessible, someone they can talk to. If we send someone else, they'll just say, "I won't talk to you".

*Q: How are the newspapers aligned?*

They are saying we are the pro-Qarase newspaper but I think that is because of how we are getting the news. We have better access, and it is how we write up the stories. For *The Fiji Times*, they have their own way of getting stories. I'll give an example. We were at a fundraising when the prime minister donated \$10 000. The next day, while we wrote a story on what Qarase said about Fiji looking after its own investment, and *The Fiji Times* story was about buying books. So we were both there, but very different stories. Just because it is an election, *The Fiji Times* just reports about buying books.

*Q: Any other examples?*

I went to the opening of a poultry farm at Naitasiri. And the next day, *The Fiji Times* reported on the politics concerning the Naitasiri trip. So I find that Qarase is being targeted. They are using Qarase is a selling point for the paper.

*Q: Where does The Sun stand?*

They have the same course. For us, I think when we send out our reporters, we really brief them on what to chase. I think it is a different kind of briefing for us. So when they go, they have their own questions to ask. And at times it doesn't relate to what has happened.

*Q: Is there any other important issue that I have not asked about?*

We have to do a lot of training on investigative reporting. We lack that and we need a lot of training. Also, training on culture. I have to know Indian culture, likewise Indian journalists have to know my culture.

## 38. ANILTRA CHAUDHARI

**Staff writer, *The Review (Fiji)*, Suva, Fiji Islands. Audiotaped interview in Suva, 18 May 2001.**

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*Q: How are journalists recruited and trained in Fiji?*

Six or seven years ago there wasn't any university education for journalists in Fiji. Even then news organisations could have taken people from the universities and trained them as journalists. Many organisations didn't want to do this because it would have meant that they would have to pay more. That's common knowledge, isn't it?

And the other reason is that graduates had a mindset and you couldn't mould them in the way the organisations liked. Many people coming into journalism didn't have a wide enough knowledge. Personally, I think journalism courses should include economics, business and ethics. Otherwise it is really hard when they have to go out to do interviews.

I'll give you an example: One time I had to cover something about auctions. And I didn't know anything about auctions. And then you're just humiliated. But you just have to go and attempt the best that you can do. Nobody tells you about what have to do, or how to find out about these things. You have to know about how auctions go and what certain things to look out for. And there was no one to help.

Another thing is the court system. Now the courts are really difficult when you don't know your way around them. In 1992, when I started as a journalist on *The Fiji Times*, they sent me to court and they didn't even tell me where the court was. And I didn't know whether you were supposed to go to the Magistrates Court or the Appeals Court, or whatever. Somebody should have told me what the courts are.

*Q: There is a high turnover of journalists in Fiji, especially younger journalists. Do media organisations provide enough incentives and a career path for journalists?*

It is either that, or because you don't have qualifications, you can't get out of it. Some of the young journalists are probably taken straight out of school, and some didn't train for anything else. And now they are stuck in it and they can't do anything else. They can't get out.

You just have to stay there and produce the goods. Sometimes I wonder what the hell I am doing there. One of my colleagues is doing an MBA at university and he probably won't come back. So if I go, who will do the work?

*Q: What is the solution? What should news organisations do, what is their view about training?*

They should recruit more people and pay them more. At the moment, the pay scale is like this:

- About F\$10 000 to \$15 000 a year for a senior news reporter.
- About \$15 000 to \$20 000 a year for subeditors and editors.

There is an interest in training. But there was a high drain on staff since the 2000 coup, and this means that there often aren't enough resources for training. When I was in Australia in 1992 for a three-month training stint, I found that journalists there were still being trained there by the chief reporter for three years. I was shocked. Here in Fiji you have to be pretty good after six months, or you're out.

In Australia, young journalists are being told all the time by senior reporters about what to do. I remember a girl in the Melbourne newspaper office who had been a reporter for three years who was being sent out on a fire case, and she was being briefed by the chief reporter. He said:

“You must do this. You must look out for this. And you must look out for that.”

I had been sent out on a fire in Suva just three months earlier, and nobody told me anything.

And I took down a whole lot of stupid things in my notes that I probably shouldn't have taken in the first place. But nobody told me the right questions to ask. I didn't even know the right

news angle to write. When I got back to my news room, my chief reporter asked me, “Did you ask this?” “Did you ask that?” Fortunately, I had so much in my notes that I had covered what she had asked. But I wasn’t even told to talk to eye witnesses.

*Q: You clearly feel strongly about issues such as newsroom training. Do you and other journalists discuss these issues?*

When I started, I felt really angry about it. After the 1987 coups, before I began in journalism, many of the experienced journalists had left. But there should have been somebody to tell us — I don’t think it really happens, even now. Some of the senior journalists don’t seem to even worry about it. They don’t seem to want to help the younger journalists.

It is okay for us on a magazine. We have time to do research and read up all about a topic . But often on newspapers you just don’t have time before you’re told to go to a press conference, just like that.

*Q: Do journalists need a professional association and/or union in Fiji to address issues like this?*

Maybe we need to be better organised. It is also hard to specialise in the Fiji media. I worked for a year and a half at *The Fiji Times* and then in magazines. We are lucky to have a publisher like Yashwant Gaunder who has a lot of knowledge about things, which he passes on to us. He gives us a lot of training, a lot of advice; you can go to him at any time to ask for help. But I don’t know that there are many people around like him in the media in Fiji today.

It is really hard on a newspaper like *The Fiji Times* where younger journalists have to jump from topic to topic and not build up any thorough knowledge in some areas.

When I was in Melbourne, I worked on police matters with a police desk. And there were eight people there! And there was another desk covering the courts, where the reporters only wrote

about court stories, and nothing else. They had a features desk, an overseas desk, and a motoring desk ...

Here in Suva on the newspapers, one day you'll be covering courts, the next day you'll be covering the police, and the day after you could be doing features. You don't know whether you are coming or going.

Even at *the Review* it is hard. I got very good at doing construction industry stories, and knowing all the background. But I haven't done stories on construction now for two years, so I have forgotten it all. You just jump from topic to topic.

*Q: Does the Fiji Government support journalism training?*

I think they do because they have said many, many times that they are hit by poor reporting. They get angry about it from time to time, saying that the journalism standards in this country should be higher. It would be in the interests of everybody if the standards were higher, for journalists, for government, for everyone.

*Q: Is the news media in Fiji fair, balanced and objective?*

Sometimes. Not all the time. Sometimes they lose their objectivity, it happens you know. You start taking sides. You're not neutral. In newspapers, if you want a story, you report on one side and also the other side, and let the public decide. The editor, or somebody, should point it out, shouldn't they? They should point it out to you that you have gone too far this way, or too far that way.

### 39. STANLEY SIMPSON

***Assistant Director (Pacific News Bulletin), Pacific Concerns Resource Centre; Founding Editor of Wansolwara and history/politics gold medal winner at USP, Suva, Fiji Islands. 1998. Audiotaped interview in Suva, 19 May 2001.***

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*Q: What is the state and direction of the media in Fiji today?*

We have quite a vibrant media, in the sense that we have:

- Three English daily newspapers,
- Two English-speaking radio stations,
- Three Fijian stations,
- Two Hindi stations,
- One television channel, and
- Community Television in Nadi.

The state of the media is that it is quite active. But it is not actually playing up to its full potential. There is plenty of media, but we could do much better.

*Q: What is missing?*

The media could do better in development and in critical thinking and analysis. There is just not enough depth among our journalists to go beyond what he said, she said, or this happened, or that happened.

I find that the majority of stories written by local journalists are just basic. There is no background or research done. It is Ratu [Inoke] Kubuabola said this, [Mahendra] Chaudhry said that and the story ends. Journalists overall are not doing their homework.

I'll give an example: The news will say that the Labour Party led Government will put down housing interest rates for *only* those earning less than \$8000 a year. But the media

does not do its homework. Only a week earlier they would report that the majority of people in Fiji live below the poverty line, which is \$6000 so that the interest rates benefit most.

The media are not doing their job in finding out who is actually telling the truth. You allow people to have their say, you allow Kubuabola to have his say, you allow Chaudhry to have his say, but then what are the facts behind it? What are the real figures? I find this appalling. Some politicians will make a statement this month that contradicts what they said last month and the media doesn't pick it up.

In Fiji, there is often no nose, sense of journalism in the type of stories that the media goes after. Journalism is about investigation. And there are really top investigative stories waiting out there to be done. The last investigative story that I can really remember is the National Bank of Fiji saga.

After the coup, the mahogany issue was hardly investigated. Even when there were 1500 word articles published, you may as well have read a 600 or 700 word article because there was no digging, checking the facts, interviews with sources, in-depth interviews. On mining, the geologists, SOPAC, the environment and stuff like that. It is just not there.

Look at the caretaker Government trying to deregister the Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF) using an out-of-date law. And then the journalists picked up on that if the Government can deregister non-charitable organisations, then it can deregister media organisations and there has been no story about that. And then there is the whole judiciary, the legislative executive and the coup — how it all played out, and how different people were involved in the whole thing. I think there has been no frontline journalism to investigate and find out, to really put people in the hot seat. And I think that politicians are getting away with a lot because the journalists are not doing their job.

Journalists have allowed themselves to be used by politicians for their propaganda purposes, whether it is from Labour, from SVT, or for [Laisenia] Qarase. They have been used over and over again.

*Q: How important is journalism education in Fiji?*

It is very important. We need trained people and we also need expert people. It is very important to have educated people in journalism because educated journalists are far more likely to grasp the issues at hand than cadet journalists, or someone who has been in the media for a while. I stress education and you give educated journalists two or three years' experience and I feel that we would have the well-rounded, whole journalists that the public would really like to have and the country would really benefit.

Unfortunately the public seems to have taken that the media is good enough. But this is not the right way. I think the media can do much better. Education on both sides, educating the journalists and educating the public about journalism and the media industry as a whole so that people can question. If you look now there are about five to ten people who dare speak out, who are speaking out on whether the media rises to the occasion. The public just seem to swallow it. If they question something, they do not raise it. I think it is important that it is raised as that will help education. The public should take part in the training of journalists.

We have journalism education institutions, we have in-house training, but we cannot just rely on that because we need an active public to respond to what the media has put out. And I think that educated journalists, trained journalists will be able to bring out that response from the public while people who have just come up through the newsroom will not get the active support of the public.

Trained journalists, apart from everything else, ask themselves, "What are you writing this story for? Are you writing it just to let people know, or are you writing it to get a response, to build on the story?"

I think that a lot of journalists are not building on the story, it lacks depth, and it dies. After the first day it is dead.

A trained journalist will be able to build on the story and get different angles from everyone. If you write the story in such a way, you'll get reaction from the NGOs, the

community, the chiefs, from the universities, other institutions, and from the politicians.

You bring in the whole society.

*Q: Do journalists not cast a wide enough net for their sources?*

I agree with that and I think it is because they haven't been trained about other sources. For some of the news stories we have in Fiji, you never see any link to the region, you never see any link globally, and you never see any link with Australia or New Zealand. A good journalist links these things. We are doing this policy because of this pressure from this group, or that group. Journalists need to be trained about the major players in society. We can't just rely on these politicians.

If we are to be part of this globalised economy and thrive on it, we have to make use of [these resources]. The media says that they are making use of internet resources, but they're not. What they're doing is getting the stories from the internet and using them wholesale. They're not making use of the internet to help their story. We need educated journalists to make the stories rich by using statistics and additional research. After that you leave society at the whims of what people say.

*Q: How important are the concepts of "Fourth Estate" and "watchdog" to Fiji journalists?*

They are as important as to journalists everywhere all over the world. In Fiji, the role that we have been talking about is a watchdog. I agree with Dr Ian Ward, author of *Politics of the Media*. He spoke on media freedom and he quoted Julianne Schultz [*Reviving the Fourth Estate*]. They talk of journalists, really not just as reporters, but as activists. And I am not speaking here of activists in the way NGOs are. It is the way they address their stories, they are proactive about their stories.

The thing about being the Fourth Estate and a watchdog is important because the journalists are not waiting for the other arms of government to do things, and then they respond.

I think there are stories out there, and can chase the stories in the sense of getting an issue out in the open rather than waiting. If the journalists are active and playing the role of the

watchdog, they can see the signs. Being the Fourth Estate and a watchdog is reading the signs, reading society. A lot of it is about responding to what the government has done, but it is also picturing what the policies mean, or what will happen in six months' time or one year's time. That for me is the basically the role of the Fourth Estate.

I see those reports that the media does as a similar, but shorter and more active form of the same reports that government departments do. NGOs do it. UNESCO does it. And journalists can do it too. A lot of journalists have that experience. If you have been in the media, say five, six or eight years, you should be able and to have the authority to make an analysis of issues. The fact that they are not doing this shows that their experience is dying, it is worthless because they allow themselves to be used. To me, if they have the experience, and they are not using it, then it is of no use.

They are very good at winging things in the media in Fiji, but really they are dead. I don't know how to say that, but while they are vibrant, they are dead.

*Q: What does the phrase "development journalism" mean to Fiji journalists and is it important?*

A lot of definitions can be served up for development journalism, but for me it is how you use the term, how you perceive it. However, they do it, the media is part of development, they play an active role in development. We either become liberal, or we become conservative. The media plays a great role. I wouldn't like to see the media ... although they do, they take sides.

But development journalism is about raising questions, about raising the whole issue of democracy. First of all, media is vital for democracy. For democracy to work, we need people who know things, and also to question. If people do not question, then democracy is useless. In fact, democracy is useless without education ... because people then cannot question the policies and that's why people are simply voting on who comes from this province, or ethnic lines and stuff.

The media plays a big part in this. If you look at it, the world's most advanced democracy, the United States — it is so vital to it. I would say the world would not have developed the way it has today without the media.

I think a lot of times the media are doing development journalism without realising they're doing it. They focus on certain sections of society. The question is, what do you want to get out of development? My feeling is that journalists are not asking that question, which is central to good journalism.

Where is this going to get us? How do you see this heading? Or are they just writing for the sake of reporting? Development journalism is a lot of things, but it is about putting meat in your report so that people can get a full meal out of it. Something like that.

I think development journalism is not valued enough in Fiji, in the Pacific. If it were valued enough we would see a lot more of it. You don't have to keep saying this is development journalism, this is development journalism, it is just in the way you write, or the way you present issues. We have been focusing a lot on the newspapers, but also on TV and on radio. I still feel radio is still the strong medium in the Pacific.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in Fiji?*

Well, first of all journalists are famous. When you become a journalist in the Pacific, this is a small society. Generally your name is there, in the newspaper, people will know it is, oh, Margaret Wise [a leading Fiji newspaper reporter]. They may not know the face, but the name is associated with the media.

Journalists are seen by grassroots people, you know the villagers, they have high regard if you're a journalist. It is a sign of education. You are able to translate the information, a lot of people see that. It is probably a hangover from colonial times that the person who brings the message is somebody important. And we have radio and TV. So the name of a journalist is well known to people. They will know this is the voice of Samisoni Pareti, this is Imraz

Iqbal, Margaret Wise. Oh, you're Margaret Wise, the writer on *The Fiji Times*. That's Emily Moli, of Radio Fiji.

But increasingly, over the years for me as a person growing up as a high school student, I envied journalists, the work of journalists. They were going out, asking questions, doing a report. From high school, I was envious. But as I got educated about the media, I started to look at some journalists with suspicion, they were not doing a good job. I started to see journalists who are biased and I think that comes out overall in society. Riyaz Sayed-Khaiyum is a biased journalist. Margaret Wise is a biased journalist. Somebody else here is a hopeless journalist.

In Savusavu, one reporter came and she reported on something in the community. And when she reported, you know she had asked questions and the community had given her what she wanted to know. But when they read her story in the paper, it didn't turn out the way they liked. They saw her as a hopeless journalist. She didn't live up to expectations. I think people's perceptions of journalists are built by the level of engagement they have with the journalist, a level of how much they read that journalist's articles. Or the one experience they get with a journalist. So it's how much interaction there is between the journalist, and the media organisation, and the people how they are perceived. For instance, I would say Ema Druavesi [official with the SVT Party] would be happy with the *Times* journalists, but the Labour Party wouldn't be happy.

I really wouldn't like to generalise, but some of the journalists are viewed in the same light as doctors and lawyers — as important to society.

*Q: If the journalists are important to society, why are salaries so low, and why is there such a big loss, a "brain drain" of journalists from and between media organisations? Is there an adequate career path in journalism?*

No. I came through the USP Journalism Programme. There is Rosi Tamani, Vasemaca Tuisawau, Nicholas Cornelius ... all the ones that have been trained and educated

eventually leave the media. Everybody in the media knows this problem, those who are in the top positions. But they will not address it. I think that journalists should be on a par with lawyers. I think journalists should be starting at F\$16,000 to \$20,000, trained journalists coming out of university. They may not have the full experience, but in one or two years' time the media organisation will get their money's worth because the journalists will be doing the same thing as the lawyer is doing. You are getting trained people.

That is the goal of what good media organisations should be aspiring to, that they should have journalists who can sit with politicians, sit with lawyers, or sit with an expert on something and be able to speak their language. They are able to grasp things because they have come to journalism with three years of educated experience. We NGOs have the same goal. We are not just the ones who are marching the streets, but we can also speak at the same forums as lawyers and corporate lobbyists, to be able to question and on the same level as them.

*Q: Do you miss the mainstream media?*

Yes, I miss the mainstream media. My whole thing about coming through school and university was that I always wanted to be a journalist. When we started [the training newspaper] *Wansolwara* at USP and I was editor I knew I was destined for the media. With my training I could see myself as really doing some investigative journalism, and making a change — coming up with some really good stories in the media.

Even though I joined an NGO I still really want to go to the media, right now. I still see stories and I want to jump and do a story that will make the people of Fiji sit up. That's my feeling, with the training I have and the enthusiasm I have. And I know others who have gone through USP have this same feeling, a sense of competing. Not just for sensationalism but because there is something there that needs to be done.

But when I came out to the media at graduation, and looked at the way the media was going — the pay and everything, I realised I would be much better rewarded for my other talents.

To make that choice — I need to be rewarded for what I am good at — I can also serve society from an NGO. I can also serve society from other jobs, and then get rewarded for it.

In journalism, I got the feeling that:

- I may not be able to fulfill my real potential because of the way the media industry is structured.
- My work would be exploited because I would be getting F\$10,000 or \$12,000, much less than what teachers are getting. They always say they'll increase it, but the chances are that they will be pushing you out after two or three years, after they have made use of you.

Those are concerns that educated journalists coming out [of university] have in their minds. And some of them will not speak in public about it. But they'll say it in private. The media industry needs to understand that educated journalists have this choice.

And the educated journalists also have their fears about the way the media industry is being played out. If the media industry doesn't accommodate, or get into a dialogue about these concerns that we have, then the industry will continue to lose journalists.

You look at a typical 35-year-old journalist in Fiji now. They have been to practically four or five media organisations by the time they are 30 or 35. They've been to radio, television, newspapers — two newspapers. People are looking for satisfaction and they are just not finding it. Even the untrained ones, when they get a chance they move.

Journalism is so important to society, we cannot just leave it to untrained, uneducated, inexperienced people. We need to get the right people for the job, people who can take journalism to a new level. Media industry really needs to bite the bullet and say we want this person for the job.

*Q: Why is there sometimes a negative response to the USP journalism programme and graduates in Fiji, particularly from journalists who do not have education or formal qualifications?*

I think it is in the way the media industry has used the journalism graduates. A person coming out of the USP journalism school will have expertise on issues and it is how the media make use of that expertise. I see some newspapers that make good use of the graduates, like how the *Daily Post* uses Mithleshni Gurdayal for example.

Resentment will be there by people who are already in the media. But if you look at it, a lot of people I have spoken to in the media industry — the cadets, the young ones — they all want to do their training at USP. They have all made inquiries, they have asked me how they can get into the USP course. They all know that training is important. The qualification is important. That is what they are resenting.

It comes down to the individual journalist, and how the media industry makes use of him or her. I don't agree that journalism graduates are doing the same work. Well, they probably are, but they're doing it much better because they are trained. And they deserve the extra pay that they are getting because they are trained in something.

I look at reports that the *Daily Post*, for example, has got economics students to do some of their work. When Rosi Tamani and Vasemaca Tuisawau were doing economic reports, they were much more insightful than untrained journalists were doing. That's my personal opinion, but I stand by it. But it still comes down to the individual person. No matter what the training, it depends on how enthusiastic they are in getting the story.

As a person who has come out of USP, it has fully equipped me in giving me the journalistic and professional skills. I can only vouch for that.

The resentment from untrained journalists is because the graduates are getting paid more, and from the editor's side because they have to pay more. One thing I'll say about the journalism programme at USP is not the training that is under question. It is a matter of who is being sent there. It is often the governments that are deciding who they are sending to the USP journalism programme on scholarships. I think the media industry should start to send

their people to the training programme and start to see how much better they perform when they come back to the newsroom.

USP is a red herring. If media people are really concerned about training ... it's all about working together with the university and the industry. I don't want to go into personal things, but they themselves in the media industry, some of them, don't want to work with the university. If they are complaining about paying the graduates more, and they're not producing what they want, they can send their cadets to the university. And then they can pay their own staff more. USP is just a red herring.

#### 40. DR MURRAY MASTERTON

***Inaugural Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC) Lecturer in Journalism at the University of the South Pacific, 1987-89; former Senior Lecturer/Head of Journalism, Deakin University, Geelong, Vic., Australia; and co-author of Now the News in Detail: A Guide to Broadcast Journalism in Australia. Aged 72. Emailed interview in Nelson, NZ, 27 January 2002.***

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*Q: How would you describe the state of journalism education and training in Fiji today or at the point you departed from USP?*

I don't know for the first part. I can answer the second part: It was a lot better when I left than it was before I arrived, thanks mainly to the indulgence of Deakin University in seconding me for two (possibly three) years and the generosity of the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation (CFTC), which funded my period in Fiji.

Perhaps the first few of your series of questions are best answered by me telling you how the programme came about. In early 1984, while I was still teaching at Hartley College of Advanced Education in Adelaide, I was engaged by the Commonwealth Journalists' Association (CJA) to deliver two short in-house programmes for broadcast journalists in Apia and Bikinebeu, Kiribati. Of course I agreed and it took place in August, after I had moved to Deakin but with their full co-operation.

While I was in Samoa I had a telegram from Suva asking if I could stop off in Fiji for a couple of days between Apia and Kiribati to have talks with the University of the South Pacific about a journalism course. I changed my timetable to do this because it sounded more interesting, but there was a bit of a snag. There was no message for me at Nadi, so I phoned Sir Len Usher [formerly editor of *The Fiji Times* and a founder of PINA, but who

by then was running his own media consultancy business], who had originated the whole thing, and flew on to Nausori. He met me there but said he had received no message to say I was coming, so nothing had been arranged at the uni. Nevertheless we met Marj Crocombe and a couple of others whose names I can't remember and spoke for a morning about what was needed to get an initial certificate course under way.

I went on to Kiribati in the belief that nothing would happen, or if it did, not for a long time. I was wrong, but before anything further did happen I had a piece on Samoa published in *Australian Journalism Review*. Less than two years later [1986], while at my desk in Deakin, I was told there was a woman outside who wanted to see me. It was Penelope Schoeffel with an offer I very much hoped to accept. Would I come to Suva for a period of about six weeks and write a journalism programme, or at least the first part of one?

This was really where it all began. I was informed eventually that the CFTC had agreed to fund a journalism programme at USP for an initial period of three years (I was told three years) to be reconsidered at the end of that period. The object was for the initiator and perhaps second appointee to train an indigenous person or persons, or find them from the local media, and prepare them to take over the course. In this aspect I was at no time given help or encouragement by anyone at USP.

Deakin agreed that if my work was up to date I could go, even though it bit into the end of one term and the beginning of another. So in June I arrived, set myself (and wife) up at the Townhouse, and reported at USP for work. It was an interesting six weeks during which I wrote the introductory course for the proposed Journalism Certificate. It was to be part of the English [Literature and Language Department] under [Professor] Andrew Horn. We got on well enough personally, since Andrew had a most engaging personality. I'm not so sure our professional association was as well oiled. I wanted to do it my way, which was not always what Andrew thought it ought to be.

At the end of six weeks I had written the single introductory course for both print and broadcast journalists (course code LLF31) and a reader to go with this, broadening the very practical aspects of the course.

Even before I left I was invited back at the end of the year to take the next step in writing the programme, which was a sequential course to be conducted in two areas: print and broadcast. I accepted. Again we managed six weeks in the Townhouse and produced a second book (course code LL131), the sequential broadcast journalism programme, together with a reader.

I can't remember whether it was on this visit or after I actually arrived to teach the course that I delivered a paper to all interested parties — university, newspapers and radio reps, probably at a PINA meeting, on what a journalism course should be. During this second visit I was encouraged to apply to be the inaugural teacher of the course, and in due course I applied and was appointed. Deakin agreed that I could go, then they changed their minds and said they couldn't find a replacement, since I was already inaugurating a broadcast journalism programme at Deakin. I believe it was intervention by then USP VC [Geoffrey Caston], who was a personal friend of Deakin's VC, which made them change their minds. With a couple of weeks' notice we were again on the way to Suva.

Rabuka had already done his coup stuff and CFTC, always the gentlemen, gave me the opportunity to back down on the grounds that Fiji was too unstable, maybe risky. We decided to go anyway, so my term there began on July 4, 1987. Funding for this was entirely from CFTC, which means it contained joint input (the percentages I do not know) from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, UK. The choice of their CFTC staff member was left to USP.

In my first semester teaching the Introductory course, designed to cover both print and broadcast journalism, I also had the task of writing the print partner to the sequential broadcast journalism course already written (but fortunately not printed). This proved to be

a problem for me, since I quickly learned that my approach did not match the Pacific style of the students as well as it should. I began by re-writing the broadcasting course, even if only changing style and approach, not content. Then I started on the print course.

Difficulties in teaching the course were divided between those within the university and those imposed from outside. The course was something new for the students, even though all were already working as journalists, about half of them for some aspect of government publicity or journalism. They had to come to terms with the fact that lectures took place at a given time and place and that there was no flexibility of either. I had to come to terms with the fact that employers occasionally (and family matters frequently) kept students from their fixed time lectures, whether at USP (the classes were in teaching rooms in the then Literature and Language wing, where I had my own office) or by radio extension.

Radio extension provided problems of its own. The equipment was not always as reliable as it might have been, and was subject to weather and sunspot conditions over which no one had any control.

There was also the never-ending computer problem. I had one in my office and bought one of my own. At the beginning of the course no student had a computer, though there were computers in use at the *Times* and in the radio stations. Copy for use or for assessment arrived in all forms.

There was also an internal problem, though not a serious one, in staff members not considering journalism a worthy addition to the academic curriculum. They felt the money could have been better spent elsewhere and didn't hesitate to say so, though again it was without rancour and certainly not personal.

In spite of CFTC, which paid my salary and living costs, there was not as much travel money as I would have liked, with limited personal access to students on other islands. I used every PINA conference as an opportunity to get in some local contact, in addition to

the travel the university could manage. I got to Samoa, Tonga, Cooks, Tuvalu, Kiribati but not to the Solomons or Vanuatu.

The Rabuka Government was a problem. It became apparent very early in the piece that every word of every journalism programme leaving the USP studio was monitored by Rabuka's people. I had several tips, smilingly delivered and apparently without rancour, that I had better be careful what I said. The university has already warned me to sidestep any questions from other islands about what was happening in Fiji, but the warnings from outside meant more: that I should tread carefully in speaking about freedom of the press for instance.

There was plenty of help available. I found the editor at the *Times* [Vijendra Kumar] and the managing editor (including his replacement Geoff Hussey while I was there) very willing to offer printing help at less than cost (for student publications) and the radio stations, government and commercial, willing to give students a fair go.

There was help from Australia also, though it was not official. I asked PANPA for help with paste-up equipment for class work and publication preparation. They sent up a waxer (which cost a bit) and a good supply of wax, steel rules and matt knives. This was before the days of electronic page make-up, so it was state of the art for those times, but not for long.

An aside which is a good story: When I found *Te Uekere* in the same sort of trouble in Kiribati I asked the Australian High Commissioner there for the same sort of thing. He provided the steel rulers and knives which replaced the cutting of paste-up material with blunt scissors.

I'm backtracking all of a sudden, because I realise I left out the fact that in my first few weeks of teaching, after deciding I had to redraft the sequential broadcast journalism course, I had to start and write the sequential programme for those who wanted to go on in print.

Although I believe the broadcast course produced better results with the students, I truly

believe the print course was a better one. Perhaps this had something to do with media use in the islands.

Be that as it may. At the end of each year the students tried their hand at preparing a proper publication. The radio people, thanks to the help with recording and editing equipment from the German-funded PACBROAD and its head Hendrik Bussiek, had the chance to make something in the way of taped programmes for use in their home broadcasting systems. We had nothing, though the students used basic recorder units to get the hang of making material sound worthwhile on tape.

The print students set their material on computers, printed it out, headlines and all, and then we cut and pasted (thank you, PANPA) onto page dummies wheedled out of *The Fiji Times* (the second managing editor, Geoff Hussey, was perhaps less helpful than the first, but he did go along with this project). Then the *Times* printed it for us, at least enough so that everyone involved got a copy with plenty to give away to anyone interested. I think the Uni was charged, but it was certainly less than *Times* cost.

There should be copies of these two in the library as well, eight pages full broadsheet, pink one year, yellow the next, and announcing itself as the students' work. I certainly made sure the library received copies for archiving.

In my time there I was always intrigued by the ethics situation with island journalists. There was no code of ethics existing on any island and the attitude of students, many of whom were actually working journalists though with little experience, was that ethics would be a nuisance. They said so in class.

In keeping with what I thought an academic should do I tried doing some original research into what islanders thought of their media, print or broadcast, and also into a code of ethics: did we want or need one? A paper I presented at a PINA conference in Nuku'alofa in 1988 set out the question, should there be a code of ethics for island journalists? This was later printed in *PINA Nius* of November 1988. Since the Tonga meeting asked me to take the

matter further I circulated a detailed four-page information folder so all those working as journalists or employing journalists would know what we were to discuss. The final sheet was a questionnaire respondents could fill in and return, but so few did that it seemed hardly worth the effort. This went out with the *PINA Nius* of May 1989, my last one in Fiji. Those who did respond favoured a single regional code, though there was also support for local codes (e.g. Polynesian, Fijian, Micronesian).

After I had left Fiji I paid my own way to the conference in Honiara to see this matter through. I circulated information to all attending members as they arrived, so they had ample time to return it before the ethics discussion on the final day. The sheets you have are what I marked from the returned responses, together with some respondent quotes.

When the matter went to discussion on the last day of the conference it became a shambles. Not because the islanders didn't have opinions to express (as I found out later, they certainly did), but because all the visitors from Australia and the United States (not Europe, I must admit) spoke up as if they were experts on what should be in a code of ethics and argued for a code that copied their own. The islanders were too "polite" to speak against this, even though it totally contradicted the Pacific way of doing things.

When I entered the debate to ask the "visitors" to keep their own counsel for a while and listen to what the island journalists had to say, I was challenged by an American visitor that I was not a recognised expert on ethics (I don't know that he was either) and that all I wanted to do was see the islanders adopt a code I wanted to write. He later apologised for this, but that was after the session closed, so it was too late to undo any damage. The whole gathering failed.

Not long after the Honiara PINA conference (late 1989) I was back at Deakin conscious of the ethics mess and also of the continuing criticism in Fiji and in Australia about the reporting of the coup by "foreign" journalists. About the only one not criticised was Jim

Shrimpton, then the staff man for AAP-Reuter (as it was then) in Suva and covering the South Pacific. His reports were never challenged and he deserves that it be known.

Anyway, I wrote a wordy piece on the question of ethics and journalism behaviour and to be honest I can't remember where it was published, if it was published at all. I pass on my original copy, typos and all, for what it is worth.

The second issue of research for me was the regard and respect islanders then had for their media — all their media, not just print. I don't know whether it is in your domain, but my term there ended after two years even though I was led to believe it would become three. Deakin okayed my extension, USP told me (in writing) they would apply for an extension of my work permit for another year and CFTC agreed to extend the funding. Knowing this I took off for a holiday overseas. On my return I was surprised to find that USP had not applied for an extension and that my term was up in a very few months. No one at USP would say why, though I learned later (from a Fijian Government official who was always open and friendly) that when USP said that they intended to apply they were "advised" not to do so. This meant I would not get the extension, presumably because the Rabuka regime thought I was not controlled enough. That part I don't know.

Now to your question 7 etc: The person who followed me was Trine Ostlyngen, a Norwegian journalist and part-time journalism educator. She applied through UNESCO and her name was somehow passed on to CFTC and the university because they were running out of time to keep the course going. Trine came to see me in Australia (USP was out of session just after I went home in July 1989) and went through as much as we could manage in her short time. We got on well, and she called me from Suva whenever there was anything that needed explanation or advice. I saw her again in the Solomons at the 1989 conference and again in Australia before her one-year stint was up. Actually I believe she served less than a full academic year.

To be perfectly honest, I know nothing of the circumstances that led to the appointment of Bob Bartlett to succeed Trine.

In my time there I was quite unreserved in pushing for what the university undertook to make available, and protested when they didn't. I know I got a reputation for being 'pushy for journalism'. In my last brush with the newly [elected] Head of the School, Professor Tupeni Baba, he told me: "Quit complaining. Just pack up and go home. We don't need your type of journalism here, anyway." He may have been one of those who opposed my extension.

In my time there the *Times'* enthusiasm for the course slackened. I put it down to the change of managing editor, though in retrospect he was always helpful and in difficult circumstances. *The Times* was an ally. Towards the end the *Daily Post* was almost a customer. The editor asked me to visit his subs room and help them learn how to put out a newspaper — how to sub, in other words. Radio Fiji was a firm supporter of the course through about 18 months of my stay. In the last six there were staff changes from the top. Ratu Inoke Kubuabola became Minister of Information in charge of broadcasting and he sacked the top brass. Some good and co-operative people went. Those who remained were not willing to co-operate as freely as they had, though personally I still got on well with them. William Parkinson at FM96 was always helpful. I'm not surprised. More than half his staff was in the programme.

PINA's support did not appear to wane in my time. I attended their conferences and was always invited to take part in all aspects. I got on well with Len Usher and Peter. Towards the end of my period I understood Peter was trying to set up something of his own in the way of a training system, but I was not there long enough to follow it further.

However, in your Question 8 Lomas is referring to the degree course that eventually superseded the one I began. [The certificate course] failed for reasons I only suspect, but it

was no surprise when Francophile Horn helped organise a deal with the French. PINA may or may not have had a hand in the way Peter Lomas said in the interview. I don't know. Bartlett is more correct about my programme in his 1990 report, which was critical of PINA. I believe USP made an error in engaging a woman to teach, even though she was an excellent teacher. It was too early for a woman to teach in that culture. Maybe now, but not then. He is right in saying PINA was instrumental in helping get the programme under way. Usher was pushing it with USP, even if PINA's other members were not as enthusiastic. I have not seen island publications or heard its radio for a long time. I can say that there was better English in the *Times* before 1987 than immediately after. Language standards fell with the first coup. I can't say if they fell on radio as well, because I wasn't there to hear. The level of storytelling was very mixed. There were some journalists who told a story superbly, most did not.

*[Q12: Did the establishment of a university based journalism course contribute to the raising of standards?]*

Yes. I think it did from my time on. Some of my students are now doing very well.

I should think that the internet is the greatest tool the islands have to improve their journalism, with or without your help, since it can provide examples and raw material for anyone who wants it. Your part is certainly helping them make the best use of it, which they might not otherwise do.

## 41. MATELITA RAGOGO

***Freelance journalist studying History/Politics at USP, former deputy chief-of-staff of The Fiji Times and an editor of Wansolwara, Suva, Fiji Islands. Aged 27. Emailed interviewed in Suva, Fiji Islands, 9 May 2003.***

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*Q: Three journalism schools based at universities in the Pacific have produced graduates for the media industry for most of the past quarter century, with USP starting in 1994. What are the benefits, if any, that you can see being offered in the region?*

It is good that we are beginning to build up the number of “qualified” journalists. The benefits I see are more long-term for the profession – with the increase in qualified journalists, we can hopefully establish the profession in the region in terms of working conditions. There is no secret that journalists here as we speak are the worst paid and there are no specific legislative provisions that protect us. I believe that once we have a good foundation of qualified people, we should have a stronger, more confident voice to claim our rightful place in society, to be taken more seriously. One would like to think that a qualified journalist would also have taken appropriate courses to help him or her understand issues better. This could subsequently mean more in-depth and analysis will now be written by the journalists themselves as opposed to other professionals writing in publications.

*Q: What is the state of journalism education in the Pacific today? What are the main factors influencing journalism training/education and what are the challenges?*

I don't feel comfortable answering this question because although I did my paper at USP, I don't think commenting from that perspective would fairly represent “journalism education in the Pacific”. I think the challenge would have to be the development of journalism resource materials from the local perspective — maybe specific texts on court reporting here or the traditional aspect of the profession. Like severe restrictions in mainly Muslim

countries, the Pacific region has to deal first with its “all-encompassing” traditions and our customs and traditional practices vary as much as the PNG languages. The Queen of Tonga criticised some journalists’ dress sense here a couple of months ago and that stems from the respect (however over-rated some people think it is) that people of her stature are used to.

*Q: Is journalism education important and why are so few journalists in the Pacific actually educated (outside of PNG where 73 per cent of journalists have a tertiary qualification)?*

*How should journalists be prepared for their careers?*

Education for journalists is important. As someone who started off my career unqualified, I believe education is important if the individual feels it is a profession they want to pursue. The fact remains that with no experience, a journalism degree is not the deciding factor in most cases of job interviews. But if a person has the opportunity to study it from high school then why not – experience can then be gained when they are hired. They will enter the workforce at least with an understanding of the workings of Government (if they studied History/Politics) or people and the non-government sector, depending on the areas of study; with experience, they should become an asset in any newsroom. For those who return to the classroom after gaining some experience, the theory aspect of journalism helps one understand what one has taken for granted in a newsroom set-up.

*Q: In your experience, how do Fiji Islands and Pacific news media organisations believe journalists should be prepared for their career?*

I had a rather bad experience in this area being asked: “What else are you going to school for when all you need to know you learn right here?”. I was asked this when I made my intentions known about returning to school fulltime to get a qualification. I would say that graduates in journalism are relatively new in Fiji so the decision-making level is still very much made up of people who “climbed the ladder” so to speak. Thus the attitude that one does not need to get a “piece of paper.” Personally, I feel maybe the attempts of those at the lower level to get a qualification probably poses a threat to such positions although most

would laugh at the notion (being the macho species)! So, from my personal experience, that seems to be the attitude.

*Q: How would you rate the performance of graduate journalists in your experience in comparison with their age group peers in the newsroom who have had no formal training/education? Advantages? Disadvantages?*

Some came with an attitude that because of their higher learning status, we the “unqualified” were either doing things the wrong way or didn’t know what we were doing, or just followed old-style journalism. Two of the six who came for attachment from USP at *The Fiji Times* were pleasant. I got the feeling that they were willing to see things the way it was and when it really bothered them, they would “quietly” ask about it as opposed to the know-it-all have-to-be-as-loud-about-it-as-possible ones. Then there were some who you knew did not really care either because there was just no effort. At least two made me wonder why they were taking journalism. Needless to say, the two with whom I had great pleasure in sharing what I knew about the business (because of their positive attitude) were both Solomon Islanders who had worked in the mainstream media back home and were trying to get a qualification on top of their experience.

*Q: What is the essential role of the journalist in the Pacific?*

News gathering and dissemination. And in some cases, some allow themselves to be used by politicians/state officials without realising the manipulative approach being taken – some refer to them as sources but the relationship is more or less one way.

*Q: Are concepts such as "Fourth Estate" and "watchdog" important for Fiji Islands and Pacific journalists?*

The word “watchdog” comes up occasionally. I don’t know if the majority of the journalists even know about, let alone understand the “fourth estate” concept.

*Q: How important is the notion “development journalism” in the Fiji Islands and the Pacific? How is it defined, and is it practiced in the region?*

[No answer].

*Q: How well informed do you think news media audiences are in the Fiji Islands?*

Assuming the question is about how well-informed they are as far as the media industry and what should be expected of it is concerned, I would say the audience here has become very well informed. There has been a lot of media workshops in different levels of government, non-governmental sector, youth level and even churches so there is a much greater level of awareness now of the role of the media and what is expected of them – objectivity and content-wise. The coup in May 2000 brought to the fore the importance of the media (access to newspapers and broadcasts are taken for granted) but also how important it is for the media to be free. Instead of just being satisfied with the next day's newspaper, more people are trying to catch the main afternoon bulletins of radio stations and evening television news.

If the question is trying to, generally speaking, gauge how well informed the people are through the media, I would say the audience here is well informed. This government has taken a proactive stance in using its weekly television programme shown on national television and daily radio programmes. There are now three daily newspapers, numerous other publications, radio stations are being established; the USP, with much prompting and support by Vice-Chancellor Siwatibau, is hosting public lectures on an almost weekly basis (that are usually reported); and other developments like the increase in columns written by professionals, so I would say: well-informed. Maybe the people even risk an information overload!

*Q: How are journalists perceived in Fiji and the Pacific (social and community status)?*

I think, like every profession, we have our share of the respected ones and those who are not taken seriously.

*Q: Do you believe journalists/media have an influence on public opinion in Fiji?*

Not really. I think the grapevine and personal relationships or contacts influence ones' opinion more than what the media is going on about.

*Q: What is your view of the salary/wages structures for journalists? Is there adequate provision for a career path?*

I have never really had an issue with the money but I consider myself a career journalist. I love what I do and even if it means I will be poor for the rest of my life, I sleep well after a particularly busy day or a good scoop.

*Q: Why are some journalism graduates choosing other careers in preference to working with a news media organisation?*

Because their expectation or demand for high remuneration outweighs their interest in journalism. Either that or journalism was just part of their studies/area of interest (public relations?) Or they had very bad advice from the university counsellor so they ended up being stuck with something they really had no intention of pursuing as a career.

*Q: Do you believe the news media should be regarded as a watchdog, or should it be thought of as another business?*

I don't think they can't survive without the other. One needs the advertisement revenue while such interests could affect editorial decisions. But I would rather it be a watchdog than a tabloid.

*Q: What is the actual situation in Fiji today?*

It is sad that the recruitment of high school leavers continue to ensure the lowest possible pay. If the market was flooded with graduates, it may be a different story but like other professionals, journalists will get there one day – I'd like to believe we are living the beginning of this transition period. Hiring of school leavers will continue the trend of writers who are not really interested (except for a few – look at me!) because of the perceived glamour, continuing high turnover that can only be bad for the sector and the continuing lack of in-depth, specialised, analysis pieces by journalists themselves unless of course you've been there forever.

*Q: Should freedom of the press reflect free expression for the media, or free expression?*

Very important. The problem here is that newsrooms are always so short-staffed; there is no real chance of specialised journalism or having a few days to do one story. There are exceptions.

*Q: Is investigative journalism encouraged in Fiji? How is this demonstrated?*

Because of the above reasons, I wouldn't say it was encouraged. I was however given opportunities: the most memorable being the Reserve Bank story that required provision of security guards at my flat because of threats to my life – delivered personally at my door step! There are still stories running with single attribution to a source as opposed to confirmation/support/clarification from other people/sources. But sometimes, I can't help thinking some stories are serving other agendas.

*Q: How well resourced are Fiji news media for computer-assisted reporting (CAR)?*

Since I left *The Fiji Times*, the newsroom has been refurbished with new computers, individual email access etc but it is a different story at other outlets – so the answer would be: it varies.

*Q: Is culture a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

For some people, it may still be an issue.

*Q: Is religion a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

Very much so. Religion is still very much a major part of an individual's life here and the region I'm sure and to do an investigative piece that would tarnish one is the eyes of his or her church/pastor may have forced some to drop stories, reluctant to release information they may have etc. Personally, if it's a good story, I'd have a ball.

*Q: Does the Fiji Government support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

The government is fair with the media here – at least most times. It could be safe to say they support journalism training/education with the view that “only then will there be fair reporting” subtly making journalists responsible for “bad” coverage when they are just reporting facts! But if it does then why has it been mainly foreign donors/aid that have seen journalist training/education?

*Q: How much political pressure do journalists face in the course of their work? Examples?*

There will always be political pressure. I think it depends on the journalists' ability to remain objective, strong in ethics. I can say with all honesty that no one can say they/he/she know my political affiliation. I do not allow it to happen to me and if it does, I sometimes have lost "good" contacts because of it. A recent example: *Pacific Magazine* asked me to do a Q& A with [Prime Minister Laisenia] Qarase for their May 2003 issue which I did but Qarase's office asked that a portion which refers to more coup rumours and his relationship with the military be removed. I explained it was out of my hands as I had already sent the interview to Honolulu – his office insisted adding: "Despite what the magazine says, the PM wishes not to have anything said about the coup."

*Q: Is there a need for more professional journalists associations (or unions) at the level of working journalists without management representation to lobby for better pay and working conditions, and professionalism?*

Certainly. Only then will we, as a group of professionals, get our act together and fight for better working conditions.

## 42. VICKY-EVELYNN LEPOU

**Reporter on Savali, former editor of Wansolwara and a journalism graduate of USP, Apia, Samoa. Aged 23. Emailed interview in Apia, 22 May 2003.**

**Emailaddress: [vickylepou@yahoo.com](mailto:vickylepou@yahoo.com)**

*Q: Three journalism schools based at universities in the Pacific have produced graduates for the media industry for most of the past quarter century, with USP starting in 1994. And now Samoa has a journalism programme at a diploma level. What are the benefits, if any, that you can see being offered in tertiary journalism education in the region?*

Polytechnic Samoa, for instance, provides a basic teaching and learning level for students who do not have the opportunity to study abroad, especially at a degree level. It is also a huge benefit for those who have had no formal education, but have worked in the media industry for a long time. This means they would be able to again learn the code and ethics of being a journalist.

I know of journalists who breach or cross the line of ethical reporting. Court reporting lacks the refinement of a reporter's stance. Anybody going before the court is innocent until proven guilty. Too often reports by some newspapers mistakenly report that the accused is "convicted" before being taken to court. The "alleged" word is often missed out.

There was a controversy between the board of directors of the polytechnic and JAWS (Journalism Association of Western Samoa). The quality of J-students produced do not match the needs of the media industry. Then there was a petition to recruit a new lecturer.

*Q: What is the state of journalism education in the Pacific today? What are the main factors influencing journalism training/education and what are the challenges?*

Speaking from a Samoan perspective and from my understanding, journalists should understand the context of writing a story. For example, in Samoa culture is our life and whatever we do, Christian values also come with customary values. There are matai and

chiefs who are sacred. Their names and reputation should not be undermined by anyone. Traditional proverbs are needed to address or greet a high-ranking person. Anybody doing service for the Government must have a matai title to speak. For some — and I believe the same goes for some other Pacific nations as well — anyone is entitled to protection of their names and titles.

*Q: Is journalism education important and why are so few journalists in the Pacific actually educated (outside of PNG where 73 per cent of journalists have a tertiary qualification)?*

*How should journalists be prepared for their careers?*

Trained journalists in Samoa should be able to write in Samoan as it is the mother tongue (and I believe this is the fundamental principle of setting up a J-school in the country). As a qualified journalist at USP where you write in English it is totally different. No matter what or how much you know, the majority of readers would like to read in Samoan. Different countries vary in terms of their beliefs and how journalists should be writing. This leads me to my next point: learning ethics through the overseas training institutions and the quality of the nature of journalism are among reasons why we are sent overseas.

*Q: In your experience, how do Samoan news media organisations believe journalists should be prepared for their career?*

Journalists should be prepared through an understanding of an updated situation of what is happening. Keeping records of past events helps a lot. Where I am right now helps a little because I was away from Samoa for quite some time, therefore I have to catch up with past events leading to the present.

*Q: Is there a gender balance in the media?*

There is a reasonable balance in Samoa. If you look at the *Samoa Observer*, you would see a 50/50 split of both sexes. Television has a 3:1 balance in favour of women in spite of two men being programme reporters/producers. In my office, both staff are female. But you also have to look at related jobs such as Publications, Information and Communications Officer held by men and women at an average level. All Government ministries and companies

have their own media personnel who deal with the media. I don't think it's a major issue for Samoa.

*Q: How would you rate the performance of graduate journalists in your experience in comparison with their age group peers in the newsroom who have had no formal training/education? Advantages? Disadvantages?*

I think graduates are gradually integrating into the media industry and covering “blow up” stories that are of public interest. Performance is based on the quality of our work and how we take initiative and stand by our own opinions. We are welcome to write anything.

However, in my case, I cannot contradict the opinions of politicians at the moment as our newspaper is the “voice of the Government”. Even though it is a newspaper and supposedly expresses my own freedom of expression, it has to be balanced and accurate information.

Would you call that a protocol? I can only write a feedback story or a follow-up story whenever a civil servant is involved in a controversy that should be our responsibility.

*Q: What is the essential role of the journalist in the Pacific?*

Understand both parties and take time to understand both the culture and report well in context. I'd say that is why some natives refer to “white racist” reports. Most high-ranking people say that overseas journalists report on Pacific events without understanding the cultural factors involved.

*Q: Are concepts such as "Fourth Estate" and “watchdog” important for Samoan and Pacific journalists?*

Both concepts are very important to island states. At the moment, the *Samoa Observer* tends to be strongly isolated from other media organisations. To me personally, the *Observer* strongly emphasises “Fourth Estate” and “watchdog” concepts. They are a separate media outlet altogether and strongly seek the truth. They stand by the principles of accountability and being transparent. Government-owned media organisations tend to disregard their role.

*Q: How important is the notion “development journalism” in Samoa and the Pacific? How is it defined, and is it practised in the region?*

[No answer].

*Q: How well informed do you think news media audiences are in Samoa?*

I never missed out on any events in Fiji and I think it is being well informed by the local media organisations. I think the media well recognises its important role overall. Press releases are very crucial as they provide background information for the public as well as media organisations.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in Samoa and the Pacific (social and community status)?*

A few years back, if you remember, the *Samoa Observer* faced legal damages and assaults from the public due to the kind of stories they publish. The then Deputy Prime Minister, Afioga Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi (now the current PM), was never in favour of journalists. For any press conference, he tells journalists off and asks them to rephrase their questions. If he doesn't like a particular journalist, he tells him off. However, these days, the Government has prioritised good governance, being transparent and accountable in every ministry, private and public companies and organisations.

*Q: Do you believe journalists/media have an influence on public opinion in Fiji?*

Public opinion is a very powerful tool that any media organisation can give back to the community. The role of the media plays an important part in disseminating stories that are of human interest. In addition, it provides balance and accurate information. The *Samoa Observer* and *Le Samoa* do have a strong influence among the public.

The fascinating part is letters to the editor. I guess the *Observer's* performance at the moment is enhanced by the fact that it brings quality investigative stories to the public. Their letters to the editor and their editorial columns are a very powerful reflection of public opinion. No matter who holds what position or is related to such and such a person, the public is free to write what they want to express. Samoa is a small country and almost

everyone is related to another. The letters to the editor column does not draw a line about authors. That is the main popularity factor in why the public buys the *Samoa Observer*.

*Q: What is your view of the salary/wages structures for journalists? Is there adequate provision for a career path?*

The Government's reform based on efficiency and redundancy is now in force, which means limited opportunities for someone to apply for the media field. There are talks about reviewing our structural salary per annum. The provision is very poor since we do need more resources and better facilities. For the *Samoa Observer* — and other private media outlets — I think it is doing alright with their salaries. I think there is so much room for improvement in terms of salary/wages.

*Q: Why are some Pacific journalism graduates choosing other careers in preference to working with a news media organisation?*

Two USP journalism graduates have worked in other careers in Samoa rather than remaining in the media industry. In this case, they are Government-sponsored students therefore their automatic placements come under the act of the Public Service Commission but then you have your own choice, not like in those days where all students must work according to their placements. Back to the point, it comes with your passion for writing stories all the time. The loss of qualified to journalists to other careers is self-choice. It is not so much that there is less pay but more a sense of getting the job done.

*Q: Do you believe the news media should be regarded as a watchdog, or should it be thought of as another business?*

I strongly oppose the fact that news media runs alone without profit. Well, we do know how to make money as well, but it doesn't mean that we would disregard our role as a watchdog. We should remain a watchdog in our societies. We too should be objective.

*Q: What is the actual situation in Samoa today?*

The situation in Samoa in comparison with what Fiji is today is that organisations and the public tend to prioritise television. Newspapers always get the last information. There is an

unfair treatment of all media outlets. Having said that, television has an advantage of running pictures and timeliness.

*Q: How much political pressure do journalists face in the course of their work? Examples?*

The *Samoa Observer* often faces defamation cases and the public is not aware of what that means. The editor plays his part in editing. Often politics is involved behind the scenes and a common subject of expression of opinions. A television programme every Sunday influences the public. I'd rate about 90 per cent of viewers watching the programme, *Vaa o Manu*. It is mainly talks about sensitive church issues and about politics.

*Q: How well resourced are Fiji news media for computer-assisted reporting (CAR)?*

I'm not familiar with the *Observer's* system but CAR is gradually progressing in Samoa. Where I am working there is no internet access and software used is incomplete and old. I feel pity about the standard of knowledge in our newsroom. Resources are very limited.

*Q: Does the Samoan Government support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

The Samoan Government is in full support of journalism training. This is exactly why our own J-school was established — to teach our own students in the Samoan context.

*Q: Any other media issues or comments you would like to canvas?*

I hope to study again — perhaps in New Zealand or Australia. I'd like to see the level of journalism in all organisations to be fairly treated and to never disguise the code of ethics. In addition, we still need more professional journalists in the Pacific today, no matter what gender.

### 43. PROFESSOR ANDREW HORN

***Professor of Literature and Head of the Department of Literature and Language, University of the South Pacific, 1986-1996. Email interview in Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, USA, 6 March 2002. Emailaddress: [ahorn@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:ahorn@fas.harvard.edu)***

*Q: A series of questions were asked about the genesis of the Journalism Programme at the University of the South Pacific. Professor Horn responded with the following information and the attached extracts from USP documents on his computer disks?*

I've only just retrieved my old computer disks from storage. They will have whatever information I possess. I'll try to mine these at the weekend, when I have a moment.

As for one of your central questions--how did France get involved? — the French government had for some time sponsored a very low-intensity French language programme at the Fiji Centre (in Suva), with a young French volunteer, who had no contact with any teaching department.

Two things then coalesced:

- When the Commonwealth, and especially Australia and NZ, suspended projects in Fiji after Rabuka's first coup, France saw the opportunity to develop greater contacts in the Anglophone Pacific and, thus, greatly increased its Fiji activity. Indeed, French PM Pierre Rocard even landed in Nadi to award Rabuka the Legion d'Honneur. It was made known to the University that new French aid for selected projects would be considered. Both USP and the French saw advantage in supporting media education in the region. From this eventually emerged the Journalism diploma and degree.
- The USP Senate agreed--quite soundly and belatedly, and much to the distress of then Extension Director Marjorie Crocombe — that all academic programmes had to come under teaching departments. This brought both the rudimentary Journalism offerings

and the even more rudimentary French courses within a newly defined Department of Literature and Language (formerly English) and a newly defined School of Humanities (my much-resisted recommendation to replace the misnomer of the earlier School of Education).

For the rest of the story, I'll have to wander about in old memos. Unfortunately, I only have records dating from when we first brought Macintoshes into the Department. Before that, everything had been typed. I dutifully left all typed memos neatly filed in my office when I left, but the then new Head of L&L manifestly had no interest at all such things, so they were probably scattered over the Lami dump. Sic semper gloriam.

In a later message, on March 9, he sent the following:

David,

Did you receive my message sent earlier this week, with something of an account of French involvement in the USP Journalism programme? (If not, I've copied it, below.)

I have now scoured my disk-preserved material on Journalism, which amounts to far less than I had thought.

I have excerpted the items related to Journalism from several sources: Annual Reports, two Triennial projections/requests, several memos. I do, of course, have the complete texts of all of these, but there seemed little point in sending them. You may, indeed, already have some or all of this.

Please do let me know if I can help any further.

Best regards,

Andrew.

#### 44. DR MICHAEL KING

***New Zealand Author and Historian. Journalism Lecturer at the University of Papua New Guinea for the Lahara in 1976, Port Moresby. Emailed interview at Opoutere, New Zealand, 23 June 2001.***

***Email address: [jungking@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jungking@xtra.co.nz)***

*Q: What motivated that first batch of 1975/76 UPNG journalism students to get a tertiary qualification?*

Some of them were doing the journalism diploma to get it under their belt and were then going to decide whether they would actually use it for journalism, or whether they would opt for some kind of public service job using their diploma. And remember this is the year after independence so the rate of nationalisation of jobs in the public service previously held by expatriates was very rapid. And I seem to remember, without now being able to recall the specifics, that that's what happened to at least a third of the class in the following two years —that they went into non-journalism public service jobs.

*Q: Were any eyeing a political career at that stage?*

Yes, there were two people who came into that category. One was eyeing a diplomatic career, and I understand he did go into the diplomatic service, but I can't tell you who it was unfortunately. And the one who was interested in a political career was in fact the brightest one in the class. But we lost him before the end of the Lahara session because he got accepted to do a degree in Queensland.

*Q: Papua New Guinea is the only country that I have experienced where some student journalists see a journalism qualification as a stepping stone to a political career. What do you think is the reason for this?*

I suppose I would have to put it down to the fact that — certainly in 1976 — opportunities were opening up at a far faster rate than there were people prepared or able to take

advantage of them. And I guess the communicable skills of journalism were seen as transferable to politics. And they were.

Two of the guys we had in to speak to the journalists at a press conference were John Momis, from Bougainville, and Albert Kiki, who was the Deputy Prime Minister to Michael Somare. (We tried to get Somare but couldn't.) When the students talked to those two, they really showed as much interest in the path to politics those men had taken, as in current policy matters. So I suppose this was very much in their minds.

*Q: And of course, Sir Michael Somare himself had been a former broadcast journalist for the NBC before entering national politics. Could he have been a role model?*

It could well be. I had actually forgotten this, but it could well have been something they were aware of.

*Q: Could you tell me about the dynamics initial trip of the PNG journalists to Wellington Polytechnic and the UPNG programme came about?*

It went something like this: the teaching year began in early February 1974. We had left as journalists and tutors in December the previous year without any hint that there was going to be such a course. When we turned up for work in January, we were told that the whole thing had been set up and the students were coming. My recollection is that it was set up at such speed — because it was formalised between the two prime minister's departments — and we as tutors were not asked about it at all. Chris [Cole-Catley] may have been consulted. Our reaction was that we were not thrilled because we had not been asked. And we were also not thrilled in that we thought there were going to be obvious difficulties in bringing a group of young people, not only to a country with which they were unfamiliar, but with a whole urban situation with which they were unfamiliar. Most of them had come out of villages. They had not even lived in a place like Port Moresby.

But we all agreed that it was the kind of thing that New Zealand ought to be involved in, and we would do our best to make it work. And we did do our best to make it work. But it was pretty disastrous.

It was pretty disastrous for two reasons, as I remember:

- Some of the students had very poor English language skills, which meant that they weren't even able to take in the content of the lectures, let alone get started on exercises and stories in English.
- The other problem arose out of being relocated without any sort of preparation. They had huge problems just dealing with day to day problems and some of them got into quite serious difficulties. One of the girls got pregnant, and a lot of the boys got into fights.

[Jack Metta incident].

We were all journalism tutors. We had all come out of journalism and we had no experience of teaching people across a cultural frontier.

*Q: The whole experiment seemed to be an extraordinary brave move at the time, given the size of the group and also that there were not many PNG journalists. Also, another issue, wasn't it a far-sighted move for New Zealand to go on to establish the pioneering journalism school at UPNG?*

There was a recognition on the part of the Labour Government — whether it came from Norman Kirk, or from Foreign Affairs, I don't know — could actually makes friends in the Asia-Pacific region by having more future leaders educated in New Zealand. These were the people who were going to be influential in their own countries, and they would have a benevolent view of New Zealand. That 1974 course arose out of that context.

But we all unanimously then said to the powers that be: if New Zealand was going to make this contribution with future journalists coming out of non-English-speaking environments, then it was better to carry the tutors to the countries, rather than taking the students out of their own culture and environment. So it may be that we all had to make that mistake to be confident and unanimous about that viewpoint.

I agree that the move to set up the UPNG programme was enlightened. It seems to be one of those things that arose out of that particular time. I don't think those sorts of programmes

would have been set up under the previous National Government which just did not have enough interest — did not care enough — about the region.

When Kirk came in the climate immediately changed. Kirk not only had an interest, and a real feel, for foreign affairs, but he also had a genuine interest in region — in the Pacific in particular.

*Q: Where did Ross fit in at this stage?*

Ross wasn't part of our team at Wellington Polytechnic. Was he in television by that stage?

Yes, he was. He had gone from radio current affairs to television current affairs. And he was recruited for the UPNG from television.

*Q: How did that come about?*

I am not one hundred per cent sure about this, but I think the course was set up and then the position advertised throughout the New Zealand media. And I think Ross just suddenly decided, this is something I'd like to do. Ross came from this strong student background who wanted to do things in Third World countries and had a special sense of responsibility to the Pacific region. And I think that this was the frame of mind when he applied.

Once he got the job, he then contacted me to see if I would come up for the Lahara. One of the reasons Ross invited me was partly that we knew each other and got on well. But it was also because Ross actually had no specific experience in journalism training. While I don't think for a minute that he was at any disadvantage in the first year on his own, he contacted me at the end of 1974. He said that one of the reasons he wanted me to come was to bring some of the programmes that we had been using at Wellington Polytechnic so that he had a wider range of options. Also, remember all his experience was with broadcast, radio and television, not newspapers. So it was useful having someone over there with a newspaper background. Ross needed an arsenal of teaching techniques that would work.

The other general approach outside of that was that we tried to make the course as much like real newsrooms as possible. And that was partly why students were sent out to bring back stories three or four times a week. Plus we would try to bring people in from the

outside for our press conferences, and if the university had a conference one of us would nose around to see who was there. It was to get people accustomed to asking people questions relevant to journalism.

*Q: The UPNG journalism programme laid a strong basis for journalism education in Papua New Guinea and a generation of journalists have been educated. How do you see this legacy ?*

That's true, and I'm really delighted to hear that because at the time that I was there, this was all idealism. That's exactly what everybody hoped would happen, and that's really why everyone was aiming as high as they were. The whole idea of putting into the context of university education still ran counter to the perceptions of the New Zealand journalism industry at that stage that you best learn about the job on the job. And I would have thought probably among the network of existing working journalists in PNG at the time, too. But I'm not really sure about that.

I can remember we got a bit of scoffing from the journos at the *Post-Courier* and the NBC, and these tended to be expatriates, and almost all Australians, and they weren't especially complimentary about:

- training journalists in a university context, and
- about the idea of training indigenous journalists in a university context.

There was a surprising amount of racism still there among the old expats, and some of them included the journalists. That was something Ross and I were kind of aware of, and worked around, and attempted not to provoke. It didn't apply to Geoff Heard, we didn't see any of that from him at all, but it was from some of his more cynical colleagues really.

*Q: Would it be fair to say that the NBC, or the National Broadcasting Commission as it was then, was a trailblazer for building a foundation for journalism training in those days?*

I guess it was, but I don't really know or remember it enough to say whether it. They certainly had a commitment to it, and that was one of the reasons, at least at the level of officialdom, they put themselves squarely behind the course and were hugely supportive.

Ross Stevens had considerable charisma, as well as having considerable integrity. He made a huge impact on everybody — the students in one direction, but also all the people he had to deal with in officialdom, either in the Office of Information, the NBC, or the university. He just had a kind of naturally authoritative and diplomatic manner. I have got absolutely no doubt that one of the reasons things moved with such momentum was that he had absolutely the right set of qualities for doing that job.

By the time I got there too, he was speaking Tok Pisin. I don't know if he had that before he went to PNG, or if he had done that in the first year. And some Motu. The fact that he had made that effort too, was an indication of how committed he was to the job. It actually gave him a facility to talk to indigenous people across the cultures because of Tok Pisin being the lingua franca, whereas anybody else in his position would have had to rely on an interpreter.

So Ross's stature, commitment and expertise were an enormous factor in the whole thing working.

*Q: How many years was he actually there? The information I have at present is conflicting. The NZ Government funded the course for three years, but it appears to me Ross was there for a further two years or so employed by the university. Was this so?*

Seonagh would probably be able to tell you that.

He was such an extremely likeable man. It was one of those awful things. It was a year after Robin Morrison had died of cancer. Somehow, it seems that the really nicest and the most good-hearted people who get knocked out with something like that prematurely, rather than a few people who we could all think of that we wouldn't mind disappearing off the planet. But Ross certainly wasn't one of them.

*Q: Apart from that time you were up there, did you have much contact with Ross while he was there?*

No, not really. He did want me to come back, and I said that I might. But all this happened in the year that I was disconnecting myself from teaching and journalism to actually try a

career in fulltime book authorship, and in fact it was immediately after that that I was working on my first major book, which was the *Te Puia* biography. So I kind of kept the door open. But as each year rolled around and Ross said, 'Can you come back for the following year?', each time I said no because I was too heavily involved in a book. I really rather regretted that because I had a very good time there, and Ross and I got on very well with the situation.

But by that time my professional interests had turned away from journalism. So it just didn't happen. And then we just got back in touch when he came back to New Zealand, but that was just the normal course of events, bumping into each other, and talking about stories. He sometimes did things that I had some expertise in, and vice versa. So we kept loosely in touch, but we never again talked about journalism training in PNG or those years.

*Q: Over the years, the UPNG programme lacked the resources that were really needed for a growing journalism programme. What were your recollections about this?*

Basically, we had classrooms, and it was chalk and talk. The NBC provided radio equipment for Ross to do radio things, and tape recorders on loan. The *Post-Courier* provided complementary copies of the paper every day. And that was all we really had. There was certainly nothing in the way of facilities that one would have expected later, like video and film, or anything of that sort. But I don't know at that stage whether there was anything that felt that we wanted that we didn't have. We were able to get anything. For example, when I got a series of relevant films from New Zealand, we managed to get a projector from somewhere else to use. I think you could say that we were not conspicuously well resourced at the time, but we didn't particularly notice because it was a very low-tech operation.

*Q: What were the numbers like when you taught in the 1976 Lahara?*

Twenty-three, which later went up to 24. They were all admitted to the journalism programme. The groups that we had were ideally small. When you have got a group under

25, you can actually give individual attention. That is harder as the groups get bigger. And in a group like that some need individual attention and others don't.

*Q: I notice from the names that you gave me earlier that you had had quite a big team at the Wellington Polytechnic journalism programme in 1975/76. How many students did you have then, and what was the ratio to staff?*

We averaged at that stage about 50 students a year and four tutors. We used to have half a day working with the whole class, and half a day with the tutor working with about 12 to 14 people. There was a formula that applied right through polytechnic education at the time, and it was to do with staff-student ratios and to do with the number of contact hours each week. We were always having to match what we were doing within an institutional format, whether it was relevant or not. And sometimes we felt it wasn't relevant.

And the thing that Chris [Cole-Catley] most objected to was the fact that we would get these technical education inspectors to come in and inspect us who had no background in journalism. Like they might be electricians or plumbers. She would show her disapproval by saying to the class, as soon as the inspectors would walk into the classroom, "Right, out you go now and find a story!" All the students would disperse and the inspectors would be left there, looking bewildered.

It was one of those strange situations with the newspaper industry that had attached itself to this system that had been evolved to deal with quite a different kind of education. But it was in the process of becoming a more widely vocational training than it had been originally.

In those days, we did rather better in placement [for trainee journalists] than the Canterbury postgraduate course because I think at that time there was still a lot of anti-academic prejudice within the newspaper industry in particular. And also, there was a feeling about whoever the lecturer was then. It was before Brian Priestley, he was an ex-*Guardian* journalist and he was a very good man. But in the eyes of most New Zealand newspaper colleagues, in particular those responsible for training, he was seen as too academic. They

felt he was training the students to write *Guardian* leaders when they should be first of all trained to chase fire engines and ambulances, and that kind of thing.

So, at that stage, as far the industry was concerned we had the advantage. It was more difficult for the postgraduate diploma people from Canterbury to place them. But what we did, occasionally, was quite a good compromise. We did encourage university graduates who were interested to come in to do the polytechnic course, so it wasn't as if all the graduates automatically went through Canterbury. Some of our best students were people who had graduated and then come in to do our course to give themselves the vocational skills.

*Q: On the basis of your experience as a former journalist and journalism educator, and in recent years as an author and historian, how do you think journalists are best trained and educated?*

I don't know that I've got any useful, or informed, or up-to-date views, to communicate, David. But I was very interested in the 1970s because I had gone on to the *Waikato Times* after doing an arts degree — lucky to get a job because there was a proprietor there, Phil Harkness, who actually believed in employing graduates. I was actually appalled at how poorly trained most of the people I was working with were. Poorly trained because of an absence of any kind of training programme, just learning on the job. And I was aware that we were doing all kinds of wasteful things because people weren't trained — like having to rewrite stories from certain reporters.

So that was one of the reasons that I went into Wellington Polytechnic because I felt that New Zealand newspapers wouldn't come of age until there were proper training programmes. And at that stage I think the only paper doing anything formal was the *New Zealand Herald*, which for a while ran its own in-house training programme. Then there was the Wellington Polytechnic course, and then the AIT course, and then others, which followed.

I was very idealistic about it and worked very hard at it for three or four years. But then I kind of lost my idealism because of the fact that most newspaper editors — and it was mostly newspapers I was dealing with, not broadcast people — didn't really care what sort of people we sent them. There were about 40 newspapers we were dealing with and most of them said, "Send us a couple of young men," or "Send us a couple of girls, or couple of boys, that will do us". They weren't interested in seeing these people beforehand, or looking at their work record. There were only two editors in the whole country actually used to come to the course and interview people for jobs. One was Arthur Strang, from the *Clutha Leader*, and the other was a guy called Brian Bremeson, from the *South Waikato News*. Everyone else relied on us to send them somebody. I just couldn't believe that they cared so little about the calibre of their staff that they would do that.

So that, plus the fact that I was by then getting more and more interested in working with books, kind of steered me away from those particular set of preoccupations.

The only continuing involvement I had after that was with Gary Wilson when he was the NZ Journalists Union training officer. And I worked with him on his pre-employment programmes for Maori and Pacific Island students and I was happy to get involved in that because I could see that the Maori were still not being represented in the New Zealand media in the percentages that they should be. And anything that gave them an additional rung on the ladder seemed very important.

But again I was continually disappointed in the way the industry treated those programmes, so I just really turned away from all that. Gary Wilson wouldn't have had any direct connection with the PNG programme, but he was a very decent guy and a very good teacher. And I don't know that he was valued as much by the industry as he should have been either. In fact, it was felt that he went on and on about things, particularly about Maori and Pakeha equity in New Zealand newspapers. The media were rather hostile to that particular message.

**Excerpt from communication to David Robie from Michael King, 22 June 2001:**

On 3 January 1976 I wrote to the family:

"All the people I'm working with whom I've met are really good folk -- Literature Department at University, Department of Information people and National Broadcasting Commission. The last two are the primary local sponsors of the course. And of course the two people I'm most immediately involved with, Ross Stevens and Janet McCallum, are friends from way back. We have 22 students, 20 PNGs and two Solomon Islanders [who were actually from Rennell]."

On 16 January:

"I get up sixish in the mornings, coolest part of the day, to do the bulk of my preparation and marking. Classes begin at 8am. Everybody dresses casually (shorts, T-shirts and jandals) which is a relief. The teaching day runs through to 4pm. We're giving the group lectures on the principles of journalism, followed by immediate relevant exercises which we sub, correct, grade and get back to the class as quickly as possible. We also get them to report any functions that turn out to be on around the university or in town, and we invite people into the class for interviews and press conferences. This week there was an assembly of the Pacific Conference of Churches with over one hundred delegates from all over the region. We generated some good work on the back of this and I brought Bishop Finau from Tonga into the class.

"The numbers are up to 23 now. They're a bright and energetic bunch, with a mixture of German, Catholic, Biblical and Melanesian names (Ottos, Pius's, Gideons, Tangalabos). Their English is proficient on the whole and they're eager for work. It's fun teaching them."

On 5 February to Phyllis Gant:

"The students' standard of expression in English and comprehension varies. Some are very competent, a few are struggling. Often their use of English is of an archaic or confusedly colloquial style. Certain that one of them was not following what I said, I asked him, "Do you know what 'anticipate' means, Otto?" "Oh yes," he said, "it means to await most longingly." Another, Gideon, described a friend to me as "one of the nicest fellows I've ever walked across." And John, in an attempt to be vivid, said of the death of somebody's mother: "The hand that rocked the cradle has kicked the bucket." Ross and I have to be careful to speak slowly and to avoid New Zealand colloquialisms. he speaks Pidgin and I am learning, in an attempt to extend my capacity for communication. The group gets one hour of remedial English each day from Janet."

And there are a variety of references also to Luke Sela (Dept of Information) and Geoff Heard (in charge of NBC training). None of this "colour" especially helpful for your purposes, I'm afraid.

Best wishes, Michael

## 45. SHAILENDRA SINGH



***Lecturer in Journalism at the university of the South Pacific; former editor of The Review news magazine, Suva, Fiji Islands. Emailed Interview in Suva, Fiji Islands, 31 March 2003.***

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*Q: Three journalism schools based at universities — University of Papua New Guinea (J-programme founded 1975), Divine Word University (1984), and University of the South Pacific (1994) - have produced graduates for the media industry for most of the past quarter century. The youngest programme, USP is the only truly regional provider with 43 graduates employed by 15 news media organisations in the Pacific. What are the benefits, if any, that you can see being offered in the region?*

The dearth of trained/experienced journalists in the region is all too apparent and the impact of this on the quality of journalism produced is obvious so training opportunities allowing journalists to upgrade skills is to be welcomed.

*Q: What is the state of journalism education in the Pacific today? What are the main factors influencing journalism training/education and what are the challenges?*

There are three universities, including USP, providing journalism education. Samoa has started teaching journalism at [its national] polytechnic. PINA and other institutions are providing short-term courses. The Fiji Institute of Technology's diploma course has yet to start. Recently have some media companies started providing in-house training, but not all. PINA provides short-term training courses. But the state of journalism education is at a pretty low level. USP has a three-year structured double-degree course and a two-year diploma course and comparatively better facilities than other institutions. Finance is a barrier. At USP, lack of facilities and finance are stalling the programme from expanding and increasing intake to accommodate all who would wish to take up journalism. It's a chicken-egg situation — USP will not invest in journalism facilities because the programme does not have the numbers; the programme cannot increase intake because it doesn't have the facilities to do so.

*Q: Is journalism education important and why are so few journalists in the Pacific actually educated (outside of PNG where 73% of journalists have a tertiary qualification)? How should journalists be prepared for their careers?*

Journalism education is important — the consequences of the lack of education are all too evident in the media in Fiji. Laws and ethics are breached regularly. [There is a] lack of skills and sophistication to tackle complex issues. There is no investigative reporting. Few journos are educated because it's not on the top of the priority lists of governments or the industry. Recently a *Fiji Times* ad calling for journalists cited experience — but not academic qualifications — as a requirement. Working journalists studying at USP don't get any financial support from employers, nor time off or encouragement, according to those we have spoken to.

*Q: In your experience, how do Fiji Islands and Pacific news media organisations believe journalists should be prepared for their career?*

My personal experience in 1989 was that the cadet reporters' position was advertised saying training would be provided. Reality: Not a single hour of training was provided in the three-

month's probation [period that] I was there. We were not even briefed before being sent out to do a story. It was sink or swim. Those who are able to learn on the job — and quickly — survive, others don't. The feeling seems to be that on-the-job training is best. But no on-the-job training is provided; you learn from other reporters, who themselves don't know all that much. A lot of mistakes are made which is seen daily even today. Reporters lose credibility — is it any wonder journalists are held in such low esteem in Fiji? This explains the deterioration of the standards in Fiji. Only now has the industry started to take notice.

*Q: Many Pacific societies are male dominated, yet in the last survey under this project, there was a slight majority of women journalists in PNG, and a slight minority of women journalists in Fiji. Why has journalism become a desirable career in the Pacific for women, given the many cultural obstacles?*

Fewer men than women see journalism as a viable career option with wages for journalists generally low across the region. Some female journalism students I spoke to say journalism will give them much more of a voice than they would have ordinarily and they hope to use this to raise issues of concern to women.

*Q: How would you rate the performance of graduate journalists in your experience in comparison with their age group peers in the newsroom who have had no formal training/education? Advantages? Disadvantages?*

Sometimes there is too much expectation of new graduates. If they don't immediately perform to these lofty expectations, they get ridiculed. On the other hand, graduates are not highly regarded in some newsrooms because they don't have experience. My experience is that a graduate reporter, once he or she has gained some experience and confidence will be less likely to make a lot of the mistakes we see nowadays. Particularly ethical breaches, and potentially defamatory stories. Journalists with education learn faster, and are easier to work with.

*Q: Are concepts such as 'Fourth Estate' and 'watchdog' important for Fiji Islands and Pacific journalists?*

Extremely important, reason mentioned above.

*Q: How important is the notion 'development journalism' in the Fiji Islands and the Pacific? How is it defined, and is it practised in the region?*

Development journalism should be part of the curricula. It could be key to nation building in a region such as ours. You don't see development journalism practised or given much emphasis. I'm not sure if the concept, its benefits and why it is needed in our region are well understood.

*Q: How well informed do you think news media audiences are in the Fiji Islands?*

Quite well informed since collectively, print, radio TV, and online media cover the majority of the population. Out in the rural areas and outlying islands, the Government run radio station is the only media so information can be one-sided, particularly in the vernacular. There is not much analysis of news and issues so the depth of the information passed to public is questionable.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in Fiji and the Pacific (status)?*

In Fiji they are not very highly regarded. Too many errors have been made [so] the public is sceptical and suspicious. Lack of balance in articles is also evident and this is not being missed by the public. Politicians from all sides have a habit of blaming journalists for everything. Sometimes there is appreciation for the work they do. The exposure of some financial scams (National Bank of Fiji, agriculture) created a lot of public debate. Some letters to the editor thanked journalists for their role in raising exposing the issue.

*Q: Do you believe journalists/media have an influence on public opinion in Fiji?*

Yes they do. The former SVT government was dogged by reports of corruption and lost to the Labour coalition in 1999. The Chaudhry Government, in turn, received a lot of negative press in one particular newspaper in stories written by one particular reporter. This I believe added fuel to Fijian suspicions/prejudices about an Indian Prime Minister. The Qarase regime is aware of the influence of the media, has engaged a PR firm, takes out full-page adverts to publish his major speeches, government policies.

*Q: What is your view of the salary/wages structures for journalists? Is there adequate provision for a career path?*

The salary/wages are too low. Effects:

- A disincentive for people to join/stay in profession, explains high turnover;
- Low starting wages doesn't attract the brightest and the best;
- No incentive to work hard, take pride in work (explains mistakes in reports);
- No incentive to further educate yourself, education unaffordable on wages (this explains high number of journo without tertiary qualification).

One of the biggest mysteries is how after all these years there isn't even a salary structure in place at most leading media companies. This is a serious indictment of the media companies.

*Q: Why are some journalism graduates choosing other careers in preference to working with a news media organisation?*

Very simple, the pay is better, much better; lot of scope for career advancement.

*Q: Do you believe the news media should be regarded as a watchdog, or should it be thought of as another business?*

Any news media has to make money but not necessarily by comprising its watchdog role. Society should see media as watchdog but should be aware of the commercial pressures it faces so as to be able to form their own independent judgements also instead of believing everything they read, see or hear.

*Q: What is the actual situation in Fiji today?*

Because Fiji is a small market with a handful of large commercial advertisers (including government), pressure is sometimes applied to the media. Government has in the past withdrawn advertising from both the *Daily Post* and *The Fiji Times*. Advertorials and supplements are a major revenue source for the newspapers also. The shareholding structure of the *Daily Post*, the *Fiji Sun* and Fiji TV and the commercial and political pressures these bring has further blurred the line between the media's watchdog role and its commercial

objectives. Fiji media is probably in a bind trying to fulfil its obligations to its shareholders and its responsibilities to the larger society. It's not an easy balancing act.

*Q: Should freedom of the press reflect free expression for the media, or free expression for interest groups (the public)?*

Ideally, a balance should be found.

*Q: Is investigative journalism encouraged in Fiji? How is this demonstrated?*

Not encouraged. It seems to have been put in the 'too hard to do basket'. Talking to reporters, the emphasis is instead on churning out three-four stories a day. This is how performance/productivity of reporter is judged and how he/she is rewarded.

*Q: How well resourced are Fiji news media for computer-assisted reporting (CAR)?*

Still behind the times. Internet connection/access is low to begin with. Those who have it are faced with a very slow system. Things that are considered standard reporter's tools — laptop, digicam etc, reporters do not have. The newsrooms have computers but not nearly enough. Software is not regularly upgraded. *The Fiji Times*, however, can afford to and has invested in computers to improve efficiency as it means savings for the company.

*Q: Is culture a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

Yes it is. It is used to intimidate journalists. It is used as a means to justify a lot of wrongdoing. Cultural traits like respect for elders, showing deference to chiefs, not questioning those in authority are obstacles for journalists in small societies and are abused by those in power.

*Q: Is religion a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

God's name is often invoked to justify all kinds of things, including the coups, racism, corruption etc. God's name was also used to justify the agriculture scam with the warning by Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase that the wrath of God would be on those who tried to discredit a Fiji Government during debate in Parliament.

*Q: Does the Fiji Government support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

It says it supports journalism training, but it does not provide material or financial support, just verbal support.

*Q: How much political pressure do journalists face in the course of their work? Examples?*

Considerable political pressure. In fact, this has been the case since independence. Most recent example: Fiji TV's *Close-Up* current affairs host, Riaz Sayed-Khaiyum was accused by Information Minister Simione Kaitani of being politically biased in favour of Indian parties and being racist after showing a tape in which Kaitani was whipping up a crowd with anti-Chaudhry Government rhetoric, which critics said were seditious statements.

*Q: How much does rivalry between Pacific media organisations — such as PINA and PIBA, and PINA and USP — impact on journalism training and standards? What are the issues and how can they be resolved?*

This leads to division of resources, skills, duplication, waste of resources (eg FIT/Samoa journalism schools duplicating what is already provided at the universities). The effect of this is reflected by the fact that despite so much money being pumped into journalism education over the years, very little improvement (as Richard Naidu pointed out in one USP Journalism Advisory Committee meeting).

Probably the major one is competition for funds. Personalities are also involved. Donors have to be transparent in calling for applications and providing funding. The proposed amalgamation of PIBA/PINA seems to be move in the right direction. By the same token, one has to question the need for more journalism schools when USP as the regional institution is well set-up, has a proven record, qualified lecturers, institutional support (eg Vice-Chancellor's stand on special status of journalism programme in good governance), strong structure, qualifications that are recognised internationally and the capacity to cater for regional needs.

*Q: Is there a need for more professional journalists' associations (or unions) at the level of working journalists without management representation to lobby for better pay and working conditions, and professionalism?*

Definitely: A look at the journalism salaries and the rate at which they have moved or not moved upwards proves this point like nothing else.

## 46. PETER JOHN AITSI

**Chairman, PNG Media Council; General Manager, PNG FM Pty, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Aged 34. Emailed in Port Moresby, 18 June 2001.**

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*Q: From the perspective of the PNG Media Council, what are the successes and challenges facing the media industry over journalism education and training?*

The main challenge I feel is the focus of the media industry on the importance of training. This is backed up with an industry commitment, both from the organisation as well as the individual, to become professionals.

*Q: What is the state of journalism education in PNG today? What are the main factors governing journalism education/training?*

I have maintained a view for a long time that PNG journalists are great at the technicalities of their trade, but they don't seem to go beyond that. Our current institutions pump out one dimensional people — they don't fully comprehend that what they are taking on is not just a "job", it's a way of life. We are very good at doing our "jobs" but beyond that there are very few of us who have a long-term commitment.

*Q: PNG has traditionally enjoyed the highest proportion of university educated journalists in the region with a generation of journalists being educated. Virtually all current editors and news directors are products of UPNG and DWU tertiary journalism programmes. To what extent might PNG be a model for the rest of the Pacific?*

I agree that we do have the highest numbers, but I believe there have only been two that have been truly masters of their craft — the *Post-Courier's* Luke Sela, and Word Publishing's Anna Solomon. Once again, I feel some of the attractions of the success of the various arms of media in PNG have lured a large number of people to take on the

journalism programmes. Sometimes it's all the glitter and the lights without sometimes the understanding of the full potential that a career in media can mean.

*Q: The Post-Courier has long played an important role in supporting the two journalism schools through grants for equipment and printing training publications. Now it has established its own training facility that it has made available for training through the Media Council. Is this a positive example of how media organisations in the region can be more proactive about training cooperation?*

I definitely think this is an area the region can look at PNG and learn from. At the end of the day, the media industry is so small in our countries, the manpower movements rotate, so a unified training approach benefits all the members.

*Q: Is journalism training in the Pacific too dependent on overseas aid donors and programmes?*

Yes and no. Yes, we receive a lot of training funds from overseas donors but it encourages us to provide and promote more training opportunities for our people. The key element is to work as a partner with the donor so that you have an input into the course and materials provided.

*Q: How will the establishment of the PNG Media Council's complaints tribunal contribute to the raising of standards and professionalism in PNG?*

It will provide a clearly visible means to which the public can interact with media should they have any disputes. The rulings will also be used as benchmarks for other journalists.

*Q: Are concepts such as "Fourth Estate" and "watchdog" important for PNG and Pacific journalists?*

Yes, I mentioned this at a workshop on children's rights held at UPNG. We are a developing country. When corruption occurs, the direct result is the loss of services in health, policing, education etc. This has a direct impact on our communities. It means life or death. The media is one of the few means for the public to express their concerns and views. We have a duty because we too live in these communities.

*Q: How important is the notion “development journalism” in the Pacific? How is it defined, and is it practised in the region?*

My understanding is that it means journalism covering issues to encourage nation building. I believe there is a place for it and it is practised. However, it must not become a machine for government propaganda. It must work for the good of the community.

*Q: How well informed do you think news media audiences are in Papua New Guinea?*

The audiences are relatively well informed. They are hungry for information. Most of the time, at the middle to upper class levels, it comes through rumours. I must add that the bottom end seems to pick up these rumours very quickly, but sometimes facts become hard to get across.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in Papua New Guinea?*

I believe the attitude to journalists is accepting. At the moment the public sees them as people who gather and report news stories. There are a few who will be considered journalists, and command a level of respect.

*Q: Do journalists and media influence public opinion in Papua New Guinea?*

Hard to say. I think a lot of our reporting is reactive, so we are reinforcing public sentiment. However, on certain issues, yes I think reporters also galvanise public opinion. But the fire, I believe, must already be smouldering. We simply rekindle it.

*Q: What is your view of the salary/wages structures for journalists? Are media organisations giving adequate provision for a career path?*

Hopefully, the Code of Ethics and other elements introduced to the industry will lift the level of professionalism, both with individuals and organisations, giving all a platform to look at salary structures based on performance and return.

*Q: How serious is the problem of staff turnover and the loss of trained journalists to other fields, such as public relations?*

PNGFM has suffered very little of this type of departure. I would say it is more serious in other companies, and I am unsure about the level of the impact on their business. I believe

some of the departures may be related to the issue of whether we are creating “jobs”, or giving people careers.

*Q: Do you believe the news media should be regarded as a watchdog, or should it be thought of as another business?*

I believe we in developing countries must balance both. The companies cannot exist if they do not make profits. We have social obligations to assist our communities. I believe this is an unwritten understanding. It is also in our interest to assist in the improvement of our communities. We live here, and our children and their children live and die here.

*Q: Should freedom of the press reflect free expression for the media, or free expression for interest groups (the public)?*

The media should represent the wellbeing of the public.

*Q: How important is investigative journalism as a measure of the media’s commitment to its “watchdog” role?*

Very important. However, sadly only a few of PNG’s journalists have the level of support and experience to consistently carry it through.

*Q: Do PNG news organisations encourage investigative journalism? How is this demonstrated?*

Some organisations do encourage this and it is supported with budgets and training.

*Q: How well resourced are PNG news media, including your organisation, for computer-assisted reporting (CAR)?*

Most organisations are now very well-equipped, including PNGFM. As technology moves on, so will our need to bring up our skills to meet it.

*Q: Is culture a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

Yes, because of the regional issues. But I believe this is being overcome with the blending of people through inter-marriage and urban living. I think what will appear more and more is a common desire for change, particularly as their lifestyles decline.

*Q: Is religion a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

Yes, in two ways — anything anti-Christian is shouted down, and anyone exposed claims to find God and is forgiven.

*Q: Does the PNG Government support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

It doesn't support it to any great lengths in the institutions. However, it doesn't obstruct it through the Media Council.

*Q: How much political pressure do journalists face in the course of their work? Examples?*

I believe there is a level of pressure, some direct, some implied. Some examples include payment of tickets to facilitate coverage, drinks after a press conference, direct direction not to publish or broadcast with threats of legal proceedings etc.

*Q: Any other issues or comments you would like to raise?*

For the media to truly deliver its full potential in the development issues for our country, the people working within the media industry must first come to grips with the careers they have chosen and commit themselves to the principles that should go with it.

**PNG Media Council members:**

*Media (full) members:*

EM TV  
Kalang FM100  
National Broadcasting Corporation (NBC)  
PNG FM  
Post-Courier  
The National  
Word Publishing

*Associate members (media):*

AAP  
ABC  
DWU  
PNG advertising agencies (1 rep)  
PNG Women's Magazine  
UPNG

*Community members:*

Catholic Bishops Conference  
Caritas PNG  
National Council of Women  
Transparency International PNG

## 47. ULAFALA AIAVAO

**Media Adviser, Forum Secretariat. Samoa/Fiji Islands. Aged 41. Emailed interview by in Suva, PNG. 9 June 2001.**

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*Q: From the perspective of the Pacific Islands Forum, what are the successes and challenges facing the media industry over journalism education and training in the region?*

The Pacific Islands Forum has undertaken a number of regional initiatives in the area of good governance, accountability, transparency and openness, including the Forum Economic Action Plan 'Eight Principles of Good Governance', and the Biketawa Declaration on good governance and guiding principles. The Forum sees the on-going promotion of good governance principles as a challenge for media and other sectors to pursue and highlight. The media plays a very important role in making the community aware of processes and events that affect their livelihoods, how they can help to shape these processes, and to be better able to decide what is in the public interest.

*Q: What is the state of journalism education in the Pacific today? Which are the main factors governing journalism training/education?*

Journalism education is increasingly important for the industry, given the growing complexity of issues and events that media are expected to understand and analyse in a meaningful way. The growth of the 'global village' via features such as the Internet and satellite feeds also impacts on the dynamics between media and its audience.

*Q: PNG has traditionally enjoyed the highest proportion of university educated journalists in the region with a generation of journalists being edited. Virtually all current editors and news directors are products of the UPNG and DWU tertiary journalism programmes. To what extent might PNG be a model for the rest of the Pacific?*

Many elements of the PNG model can be adapted to suit national circumstances elsewhere in the region. A strong education background, coupled with solid practical experience, is useful in

terms of analysis, interpretation and the making of “judgement calls”.

*Q: Samoa has current plans to introduce a polytechnic-based journalism course especially designed for media incumbents who seek formal qualifications part-time. Does this plan have a chance of succeeding where the Fiji Journalism Institute course in the 1990s, and the Certificate in Journalism course at USP in the 1980s failed? What are the lessons from the past?*

Investment in practical and relevant media training courses should be welcomed. Such courses contribute towards the development of career paths for those wishing to further their interest in media and communications. The design of such courses would benefit from strong input from the industry, employers and the public. This would provide clear directions and expectations, relevant training and broader-based support.

*Q: Is journalism training in the Pacific too dependent on overseas aid donors and programmes?*

Overseas donors recognise the need for the development of a vigorous and independent media, with a strong professional and ethical foundation. Part of the reason for overseas donors having an interest in this area is that Pacific media cite training as a key element for assistance programmes. Many smaller Pacific Island countries, with correspondingly small media industries and limited resources, find it difficult to maintain funds for in-house training of personnel whether they be media or other professions. Some media outlets have tried to generate local funding for small-scale training of their own.

*Q: The Forum Secretariat's role in the recent PIBA conference which made a positive contribution in getting a wide range of media and civil society bodies together has built on earlier efforts to promote regionalism. To what extent are rivalries between groups such as*

*PINA, PIBA and USP detrimental to the development of higher professional standards in the region, and what are potential solutions?*

The conference called for urgent talks between PINA and PIBA towards a possible merger, (partly to address questions of efficiency and avoid duplication), which have been discussed for a decade. Some element of rivalry is inevitable in an industry that thrives on developing a diversity of information sources, although there are many areas where the parties can cooperate and work together. This requires further dialogue between the parties involved.

*Q: Are concepts such as “Fourth estate” and “watchdog” important for Pacific journalists?*

Given the use of modified versions of the Westminster system and democratic principles in the region, related concepts such as the Fourth Estate and a watchdog role for the media are important for Pacific journalists.

*Q: How important is the notion “development journalism” in the Pacific? How is it defined, and is it practised in the region?*

Fourteen of the 16 Forum members are developing countries, formally known as Forum Island Countries. The notion of development journalism, in as far as it applies to issues of common interest to developing countries, is a very important area.

*Q: How well informed do you think news media audiences are in Pacific nations (some detail on the variation between countries would be appreciated)?*

Smaller, more compact countries with more manageable communications and information platforms (e.g. most Polynesian countries) generally have an easier task of informing their populations because they are generally easier to access. More widespread, or larger countries (e.g. most Micronesian and Melanesian countries) need to factor in demographics, literacy, information platforms and geographic remoteness when trying to reach their audiences.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in the Pacific, by politicians and the public?*

As a necessary element in understanding issues of public interest.

*Q: Do you believe journalists/media have an influence on public opinion in Pacific countries?*

Yes.

*Q: If there is influence, how important is it in the forming of public opinion?*

Very important in making the public more aware of matters of public interest.

*Q: What is your view of the salary/wages structures for journalists? Are media organisations giving adequate provision for a career path?*

The salary/wages structure is typically low in almost all Pacific countries. Many entry-level positions are taken up by school leavers with limited experience, and it is up to individual commitment and initiative to take that interest somewhere. The growing trend towards tertiary level education of media personnel will help to develop stronger career paths, as well as a higher public profile for media as a career.

*Q: How serious is the problem of staff turnover and the loss of trained journalists to other fields, such as public relations?*

Staff turnover is common in the Pacific Islands media industry, as well as other sectors. Internal, or external, brain drain is a long-term feature of the Pacific workplace. This is encouraged by the fact that many trained media have the opportunity to move on to better working conditions.

*Q: Do you believe the news media should be regarded as a watchdog, or should it be thought of as another business?*

It has a history, and a role, in both.

*Q: What is the actual situation in most Pacific countries today?*

Many Pacific countries enjoy a diversity of media as well as freedom to operate in a vigorous manner.

*Q: Should freedom of the press reflect free expression for the media, or free expression for interest groups (the public)?*

Freedom of expression in the interests of the public.

*Q: How important is investigative journalism as a measure of the media's commitment to its "watchdog" role?*

All journalism is investigative to varying degrees.

*Q: Do Pacific news organisations encourage investigative journalism? How is this demonstrated?*

They should. Through investigative pieces to build up public awareness of key issues that are important to the community, particularly with regard to the use of public funds and facilities, as well as other processes and events that affect the public.

*Q: How well resourced are Pacific news media for computer-assisted reporting (CAR)?*

More media are including CAR in their resource base as an important work tool.

*Q: Is culture a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

Not necessarily, depends partly on the training of the journalist and the ability to work through obstacles.

*Q: Is religion a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

It doesn't have to be. Handling of some aspects might need be managed in a sensitive manner, but can still be handled in a useful and informative manner.

*Q: Do Pacific governments support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

*What are the implications of the Biketawa Declaration for Pacific media issues in relation to democracy?*

Journalism education and training generally falls under Human Resource Development plans and are therefore seen as areas deserving support. The Biketawa Declaration promotes guiding principles and good governance, which coincides with a large body of work carried out by the media. The media is an essential component of good governance.

*Q: How much political pressure do journalists face in the course of their work? Examples?*

Journalists recognise that they will face pressure during the course of their work from all

sorts of power bases (political, religious, other media, public, NGOs, etc) that recognise the power of publicity.

*Q: Any other issues or comments you would like to canvas?*

A strong independent media, with a solid professional and ethical foundation, is an essential component of good governance.

## 48. ASHA LAKHAN

***Freelance Journalist and Media Consultant; former Senior Journalist on the Fiji Times, Suva, Fiji Islands. Emailed interview in Suva, 17 February 2003.***

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*Q: Three journalism schools based at universities — University of Papua New Guinea (J-programme founded 1975), Divine Word University (1984), and University of the South Pacific (1994) - have produced graduates for the media industry for most of the past quarter century. The youngest programme, USP is the only truly regional provider with 43 graduates employed by 15 news media organisations in the Pacific. What are the benefits, if any, that you can see being offered in the region?*

The benefits are obvious – the graduates of these schools are coming out armed with at least the basic media skills such as the ABC of news reporting and more specialised skills required by radio and television reporting. It saves editors and newsroom management time and effort teaching the rudiments of reporting to cub reporters. Being a journalism graduate also gives would-be reporters a sense of professionalism. It makes them see journalism as a committed career rather than just another job. The schools pay particular attention to media ethics and journalism and the law, which is a great advantage for those who intend to take up journalism seriously.

*Q: What is the state of journalism education in the Pacific today? What are the main factors influencing journalism training/education and what are the challenges?*

In the case of Fiji, I feel compelled to mention that in my opinion journalism education here is being handicapped by internal media politics/attitudes and in-fighting among media personnel. Also organisations such as PINA tend to operate as a closed shop – so that benefits only seem to go to those who are part of the clique.

*Q: Is journalism education important and why are so few journalists in the Pacific actually educated (outside of PNG where 73 per cent of journalists have a tertiary qualification)?*

*How should journalists be prepared for their careers?*

I think the first answer above tackles this first half of this question. Why are so few journalists actually educated? I believe historical factors play a role in this. Until recently there were no journalism schools in Fiji – and so those who joined tended to do so straight after high school. By the time many of the others acquired tertiary education, they had the skills to take up other careers such as teaching, secretarial or administrative jobs which also tend to pay better. Perhaps also because the general attitude to journalism is that all a good reporter needs is good writing skills and/or a good command of the English language.

Journalists with a good all-round education with particular exposure to disciplines such as languages (English for Fiji) social studies, history and geography, and political studies are essential. An understanding of economics and business concepts would be an added advantage because of the tendency in Fiji — as I believe in other Pacific Islands — for reporters to do general reporting rather than do specialised beat-coverage. I believe attitudinal training is also very important: a good reporter needs to have a nose for news; to be inquisitive and questioning; to have the ability to analyse situations and read in between the lines so to speak. I think a healthy interest in public administration/ community affairs/environment is a must.

*Q: In your experience, how do Fiji Islands and Pacific news media organisations believe journalists should be prepared for their career?*

Do they really give this much of a thought? Just a week or so ago Fiji editors decided they will hold regular workshops to discuss important national issues. In my view their priorities are somewhat misplaced. They should be giving priority to holding workshops to discuss more pressing media-related issues such as media ethics, laws of libel, accurate reporting, media impartiality and balanced reporting, training – all of which are problem areas here.

What is their attitude to preparing journalists? Pretty haphazard, I think. I doubt if there is any real commitment to training, in Fiji at least. Take for instance *The Fiji Times*. In my time, I saw no real commitment to training. From time to time they show interest in financing, to an extent, part-time courses at USP for those who might be interested but this has never been actively encouraged.

A lot more emphasis is given to in-house training which is also pretty haphazard. In recent years, in-house training is a guise under which expatriate staff are recruited to work here because of constraints placed by Government policy on localisation of posts. So weekly training sessions are held – but they are nominal only.

*Q: Many Pacific societies are male dominated, yet in the last survey under this project, there was a slight majority of women journalists in PNG, and a slight minority of women journalists in Fiji. Why has journalism become a desirable career in the Pacific for women, given the many cultural obstacles?*

I think there is a certain amount of glamour associated with the job which tends to attract women. Perhaps the cultural obstacles are one reason why there is such a high turnover rate in journalism as a career. Although women get attracted not many of them last the distance in frontline journalism because of the demanding hours etc. Those who stick it out tend to gravitate to jobs within journalism that are less demanding in terms of hours and commitment.

The other reason must be pay. Pay is low and therefore not likely to attract males who have to build a career with good prospects because of their family obligations. Women generally are regarded as supplementary income-earners, not the primary provider for the family.

*Q: How would you rate the performance of graduate journalists in your experience in comparison with their age group peers in the newsroom who have had no formal training/education? Advantages? Disadvantages?*

The few graduate journalists I worked with in my time, didn't appear to have any particular advantage over non-trained journalists at the time. But I would generally say that they have

the advantage of knowing the basics and therefore tend to move more quickly to senior reporting than their peers with no training.

*Q: What is the essential role of the journalist in the Pacific?*

I believe in the Pacific, more than anywhere else, the journalist's job is not only to inform but also to educate. The basic role of the journalist anywhere in the world is to disseminate news and information in as fair, impartial and balanced a manner as possible.

In Pacific Island states, I believe the journalist carries the added responsibility of educating much more than they would in sophisticated western societies. Our people, on the whole, are mostly rural-based, not as well educated or exposed to the world at large. More importantly, a lot of western concepts such as democracy, constitutions, individual rights, public accountability and ethics which dominate modern thinking are foreign concepts to them and need to be explained.

For example, one of my main gripes with the Fiji media is that they failed, in their duty, to explain Fiji's 1997 Constitution to the people. Important issues such as the electoral system, the multi-party cabinet system, the Social Justice chapter, the Bill of Rights etc should have been explained, opened up for public debate and discussion by the media so that people get to understand not only the content but the motivation behind these important provisions.

The same applies to significant legislation etc which should be well publicised by the media, which should then invite discussions on these subjects. The media's duty to inform and educate in a multiracial society becomes even more onerous.

As a concept, media freedom is well understood and zealously guarded by the media here but what is not so well appreciated is that these freedoms can only exist in a climate where democratic concepts and institutions are respected, and are strongly rooted.

Furthermore, in multicultural societies such as Fiji and even in other Pacific Islands where cultural norms are different from those of the western world I believe the media ought to show some sensitivity. While cultural traditions should not be used as an excuse to justify wrongdoing, defiance of the law or activities that impinge on the rights of others in society,

there may be a case for the media to tread more cautiously than they would in a more homogenous society. Again Fiji in 1999-2000 is a case in point. I believe that as a media we were more circumspect in 1987.

*Q: Are concepts such as "Fourth Estate" and "watchdog" important for Fiji Islands and Pacific journalists?*

The watchdog concept is well understood and recognised but the Fourth Estate is not. Reporters in the Pacific, and again I'm referring more to Fiji, are not given the same recognition in society that they enjoy in western democracies. At least not any more.

*Q: How important is the notion "development journalism" in the Fiji Islands and the Pacific? How is it defined, and is it practised in the region?*

You don't see too much of it here. There is some concession made to it from time to time but I believe, nothing of any significance.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in Fiji?*

I believe the same respect is not there anymore. There are a number of reasons for this:

- The daily media in Fiji is heavily coloured by racism and politics. Top editorial positions are no longer based on merit. If you look around, you will find most media organisations (if not all) are headed by editors who have not proved themselves, who do not have the necessary qualifications and who 12 years ago would never have been considered for those posts. This is partly a result of lack of experienced media personalities but largely it is due to racism and politics.
- No doubt media bosses will vehemently refute this but this is the reality in our country. There is also a strong gender bias. Your statistics show more female reporters than male – yet not a single top media job has gone to a female: they are made features editor, business editor, supplements editor etc but not the editor!
- My second point is that if the editorial bosses are not up to the mark, this is reflected in the output of the organisation. There is very little (if any) good investigative journalism

in Fiji today – and I think the reason for it is largely because of a lack of good leadership, motivation, competence at the top.

- Go back 10 years: Vijendra Kumar, Nemani Delaibatiki, Jale Moala were all local editors who stood out in experience, competence, in their ability to handle issues in a multiracial society. These editors commanded respect, they understood news and could lead their team. Something I cannot say for the present batch.
- In Fiji's present political climate, you could take this from 1987 onwards, it is very difficult for reporters to maintain objectivity and remain neutral and impartial. This was clearly seen at *The Fiji Times* 1999-2000; and in some cases at the time of the May 2000 coup when certain reporters showed clear sympathy with the terrorists and their rebel forces.
- In a situation where there is blatant discrimination and denial of political rights, even reporters who may appear to give a semblance of impartiality are really not so.
- You also have the other situation where because the political climate is so volatile and sensitive, a reporter who may be doing an honest job in exposing certain wrongs, may get branded as being political or biased when this may not be the case. Because of such attacks, reporters tend to be very cautious in handling stories, no matter how genuine, that may originate from 'the wrong side of the political spectrum', so to speak.

*Q: Do you believe journalists/media have an influence on public opinion in Fiji?*

Yes, I think they have a very strong influence on public opinion in Fiji and this is why the media has to be accurate, balanced and impartial at all times.

*Q: What is your view of the salary/wages structures for journalists? Is there adequate provision for a career path?*

Pay is low — very mean for most of the media organisations particularly so when one considers the nature of the job, the long hours journalists put in and the fact that they work week-ends as well.

*Q: Why are some journalism graduates choosing other careers in preference to working with a news media organisation?*

I think mainly because of lousy pay.

*Q: Do you believe the news media should be regarded as a watchdog, or should it be thought of as another business?*

I believe in the watchdog concept.

*Q: What is the actual situation in Fiji today?*

The watchdog concept is being somewhat undermined by the invasion of politics and perhaps even racial bias in the newsroom. Having said that, I must admit there is still some valiant attempt at exposing wrongs, corruption, abuse of public funds and so on. I think the real problem is that journalists seem to lack the killer-instinct – even if stories are done – they are rarely followed up with a desire to get to the crux of the matter.

*Q: Should freedom of the press reflect free expression for the media, or free expression for interest groups (the public)?*

Freedom of the press is great but it should be exercised responsibly. What we have seen developing in Fiji in the past couple of years is free expression for certain interest groups.

*Q: How important is investigative journalism as a measure of the media's commitment to its "watchdog" role?*

Very important but we don't see much of this in Fiji these days. The Fiji media appears to have developed what they call "face to face" where they pose questions to public personalities on certain issues and quote the answers verbatim.

## 49. DEBBIE SINGH

***Freelance Communications and Media Consultant; former editor of Pacific Islands Monthly, Suva, Fiji Islands. Aged 36. Emailed interview in Suva, 25 January 2003.***

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*Q: Three journalism schools based at universities — University of Papua New Guinea (J-programme founded 1975), Divine Word University (1984), and University of the South Pacific (1994) - have produced graduates for the media industry for most of the past quarter century. The youngest programme, USP is the only truly regional provider with 43 graduates employed by 15 news media organisations in the Pacific. What are the benefits, if any, that you can see being offered in the region?*

USP has a wider mandate, being an education provider to the whole of the Pacific Island region. The way I see it is that any type of relevant journalism/communication training can't be a bad thing, particularly in Fiji where the standard of journalism leaves much to be desired. However, curricula, while covering the basics of journalism, must also be current, foster an understanding of regional and global issues and be development-focused. Ideally, the end result should be that students acquire the ability to provide in-depth analysis of issues and situations from a development perspective, question injustices and other social and human rights issues and in some way, foster greater tolerance among the community on sensitive issues. I am not overly familiar with the current USP curricula as regards the above but its coverage and influence of the whole Pacific Island region via its students provides it with a wide outreach, that if utilised effectively and appropriately, could produce far-reaching results.

*Q: What is the state of journalism education in the Pacific today? What are the main factors influencing journalism training/education and what are the challenges?*

I cannot speak for journalism education in the Pacific. However, the Fiji situation warrants some comment. There is a dire need for basic journalism training in newsrooms in Fiji, which is where most "journalists" receive their training. Basic things such as the five "W's" are not answered when writing a story, neither is the story structured using the pyramid model. If these basics of journalism are not practised in newsrooms, it is unsurprising that stories usually contain the wrong information, are grammatically incorrect, sensationalised, not analysed and "structured" all over the place. In addition, radio news people and some television anchors need lessons in diction and speech to enable the rest of the population to understand what they are trying to say. There is little or no analysis of news and issues, nor is there a focus on development journalism, essential to any developing country.

*Q: Is journalism education important and why are so few journalists in the Pacific actually educated (outside of PNG where 73% of journalists have a tertiary qualification)? How should journalists be prepared for their careers?*

Yes, it is important. Fiji's journalism programme at the USP is only young, thus the bulk of Fiji's journalists are educated on the job. The best preparation for anyone who wants to be a journalist is to get a tertiary qualification. However, this process must also include a lot of hands-on experience, which would enable the person to decide on the medium that they wish to pursue, and may also end any illusion that non-serious students may have about journalism being a glamour-filled career.

*Q: In your experience, how do Fiji Islands and Pacific news media organisations believe journalists should be prepared for their career?*

Judging from past experience and the high staff turnover in newsrooms, most Fiji news media organisations feel that on-the-job "training" or hands-on experience is the quickest, cheapest option. This "quick fix" enables daily news delivery in spite of the standard or whether or not one can understand what is being reported. However, international and

regional organisations are quite particular about tertiary qualifications and while some still accept X number of years in experience, many seek a tertiary qualification in the first instance. However, I think that time and financial resources permitting, a few Fiji journalists would like to obtain a first degree.

*Q: Many Pacific societies are male dominated, yet in the last survey under this project, there was a slight majority of women journalists in PNG, and a slight minority of women journalists in Fiji. Why has journalism become a desirable career in the Pacific for women, given the many cultural obstacles?*

For myself personally, journalism was something that I always wanted to do. As far as I was concerned, writing was what I loved, and it was something that I was good at, thus a career in writing was something that appeared inevitable. Obstacles of many kinds will always exist for women whether it is in a career or in the home. And this issue cannot be condensed into a few paragraphs. In the Pacific, culture is perhaps the major barrier to the equal and just development of women — half the region's population. However, girls are now increasingly being given opportunities for education and in turn the power to make career choices. Social realities also mean that families cannot afford to exist with just one bread winner, thus more women are entering the paid workforce and tripling their workload, as opposed to being unpaid, unappreciated home and family managers. Despite advances however, culture and patriarchy continue to persist to work against the development of women and girls. The unfortunate reality is also that these barriers will always exist until boys and girls are treated equally and the structure of the family unit, so important in the Pacific Island region, becomes more just and equal. In the meantime, women must learn ways to work around patriarchy and culture in order to achieve their personal and professional goals.

*Q: How would you rate the performance of graduate journalists in your experience in comparison with their age group peers in the newsroom who have had no formal training/education? Advantages? Disadvantages?*

Tertiary educated journalists will always have the edge over their peers of the same age with no formal training in terms of their basic knowledge of issues and their reporting of them. However, one cannot entirely knock experience (lots of experience) as this also develops one's critical/analytical thought process which makes for better audience reading/listening. However, it is up to individual journalists to keep themselves well informed as tertiary qualifications cannot guarantee this, nor can years of newsroom experience.

*Q: What is the essential role of the journalist in the Pacific?*

To approach coverage of the news with an analytical, critical, responsible and open mind with development as its main focus.

*Q: Are concepts such as "Fourth Estate" and "watchdog" important for Fiji Islands and Pacific journalists?*

Yes, so long as they are not over done and egos and power to control information and influence opinion do not get in the way.

*Q: How important is the notion "development journalism" in the Fiji Islands and the Pacific? How is it defined, and is it practised in the region?*

I am unaware of how development journalism is defined in the Pacific in general. However, it is definitely not practised in Fiji at the minute. Again, this goes back to the need for training and education curricula to include current trends and needs in journalism, as well as more hands-on training programmes in newsrooms centered around the concept of development journalism. Incentives or awards for journalists who report on issues from a development perspective would be a way of encouraging its usage.

*Q: How well informed do you think news media audiences are in the Fiji Islands?*

Media audiences vary among countries and regions. So do levels of literacy, geography and infrastructure — all factors which affect access to information. I think it would be dangerous to say that media audiences in Fiji are ill or not informed. They do have a knowledge of global and national issues. However, a certain percentage of the Fiji

population would gauge their interpretation of events from the way it was reported via the media, making it increasingly important for reportage to be informative, truthful, analytical and balanced, particularly as regards sensitive racial issues. A positive observation is that more people are writing informed, questioning and vocal letters to editors demonstrating their understanding of issues and situations. Again, in order for media audiences to become fully informed, journalism and coverage must target as wide an audience as possible, making development journalism absolutely necessary.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in Fiji and the Pacific (status)?*

Journalists, like anyone else, are given respect and credibility if it is earned. This is my perception from a Fijian and Pacific perspective. If one is a man, it is of course easier to be taken seriously initially. However, the proof of the pudding is in the eating which brings me back to my initial comment that respect and credibility are earned.

*Q: Do you believe journalists/media have influences on public opinion in Fiji?*

To a certain degree, yes.

*Q: What is your view of the salary/wages structures for journalists? Is there adequate provision for a career path?*

Salaries for journalists are woeful to say the least. Raw "journalists" are hired straight out of school and in turn paid extremely low wages for the hours they work. This in turn, leads to sub-standard journalism which in turn leads to a misinformed, frustrated public. Media organisations jump on the bandwagon and offer inconsequential salary increases to lure staff who have had a trickle of experience from other media organisations, leading to staff swapping and the proverbial revolving door syndrome so common to newsrooms in Fiji. From a professional perspective, it also means journalists are starting all over again in usually a different medium ie. print journalists becoming radio journalists overnight, still minus the experience.

*Q: Why are some journalism graduates choosing other careers in preference to working with a news media organisation?*

Salary is a major factor in this. As mentioned earlier, many regional and international organisations insist on a first degree for Communication Manager/Officer jobs that sometimes pay four times as much as newsrooms for a graduate. This is in addition to more structured hours, travel expenses, health and life insurance and education, housing and other allowances.

*Q: Do you believe the news media should be regarded as a watchdog, or should it be thought of as another business?*

This is somewhat Catch 22. Of course, the media is a business. However, in its efforts to be a commercial enterprise, it should not lose sight of what should be its primary role, which is the dissemination of accurate information in a democratic and responsible manner.

*Q: What is the actual situation in Fiji today?*

Personally, there is a definite racial divide, although maybe not as obvious as in post-coup 2000. Democracy still has a blurred definition, unemployment, corruption, violence, crime and abuses of human rights in general continue to exist and grow. Violent crimes are on the rise and the state of the economy is quite stagnant. On the surface, there appears to be more tolerance among the two major races, the Fijians and the Indo-Fijians. However, this is quite superficial and the Fijians continue to remain bitter towards the Indo-Fijians.

*Q: Should freedom of the press reflect free expression for the media, or free expression for interest groups (the public)?*

Press freedom must first reflect responsibility. There can be no freedom of any kind without responsibility. I think free expression should not be limited to either the media or interest groups such as the public. Ideally, a balance must exist in order for any type of media freedom to be worthwhile. The media, whilst speaking its truth, must also accurately and (hopefully) fairly report the facts, whilst attempting to analyse a particular event/situation, in order for the public to become better informed. A better informed public, will of course lead to a more opinionated, questioning one. A balance, in terms of free

expression must exist however, in order to target all audiences and sections of the community.

*Q: How important is investigative journalism as a measure of the media's commitment to its "watchdog" role?*

Due to the lack of proper, formal media training and experience, coupled also with a slightly blurred definition of what investigative reporting really means, the Fiji media tend only to attempt to report the "facts" as they see them. Whether it be due to tight deadlines, staff shortages, lack of training and so forth. Media bosses do not encourage training again due to staff and time shortages, thus the majority of journalists do not practice investigative journalism. On the other hand, however, the more seasoned and experienced reporters do reflect a degree of investigation in their stories. Many of these more seasoned reporters, however, are section heads and editors, and thus have a bit more time on their hands, away from the daily hustle and bustle of newsroom life. So they have more time for a story with more meat substance. Coverage of the coup in 2000 was fast and furious, with all news organisations wanting to get their big stories, but little analysis existed in write-ups after the event. Fiji TV One's *Close-Up* current affairs programme is a good one to watch as it demonstrates a good degree of investigative reporting and research on the part of the journalist/host. It is also a good source of information for the public at large each week.

*Q: Is investigative journalism encouraged in Fiji? How is this demonstrated?*

I can't answer this.

*Q: How well resourced are Fiji news media for computer-assisted reporting (CAR)?*

Don't know.

*Q: Is culture a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

Yes, I think so. Journalists in the Pacific definitely have a less aggressive and softer approach to reporting the news than their counterparts in countries such as Australia and New Zealand. They lack the 'get up and get it' attitude and tone down questions, which also hinders how much information one receives. Again, research and a sound prior

knowledge of an event plays a major role and journalists must have these in order to effectively cover the news. This is of course a confidence booster as well, as one is less likely to be taken for a ride/fool if one is well informed.

*Q: Is religion a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

I don't think so. I think culture would be the stronger one in terms of the approach and thus the amount and type of information journalists gain access to.

*Q: Does the Fiji Government support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

To my knowledge, they do neither. They criticise what they deem to be inaccurate and irresponsible reporting designed to 'destabilise the country', yet do not give journalists enough accurate information in order to combat these problems. I think constructive criticism is warranted as a first step, with perhaps encouragement of some training as a next step.

*Q: How much political pressure do journalists face in the course of their work? Examples?*

Can't say as I feel the situation would vary and there can be no blanket statement, without evidence, here.

*Q: How much does rivalry between Pacific media organisations — such as PINA and PIBA, and PINA and USP — impact on journalism training and standards? What are the issues and how can they be resolved?*

I don't know about the extent of rivalry between the organisations but I can definitely say that egos all round tend to get in the way of sound, professional judgement and hinders work at hand. I would need a better understanding of the issues in order to comment further.

*Q: Is there a need for more professional journalists associations (or unions) at the level of working journalists without management representation to lobby for better pay and working conditions, and professionalism?*

Yes.

*Q: The AusAID Pacific Media Initiative (PAG) project has been described (by a specialist Australian journalist covering Pacific affairs) as the "best dollar value" of any aid donor-sponsored media training programme in the Pacific, while a contrasting view is that the project is too dominated by the agenda of one particular regional media organisation, PINA, and is driven by "bias, unfairness and wastage of funds". How effective has journalism training aid been, and what is your analysis of the review process and the future?*

I cannot comment in great detail here as I do not have enough information on the subject. However, I would agree that a variety of organisations need to be involved in any training initiative in order for it to be successful.

*Q: Any other media issues or comments you would like to canvass?*

The need for more capable women to be appointed to editorial positions in newsrooms; the way gender issues are reported in the media — particularly in the insensitive coverage of rape and incest issues — the perception by some (mainly males) that female journalists are not as capable/aggressive as men in terms of daily reportage of issues.

## 50. INGRID LEARY ('ATU)



***New Zealand freelance TV producer/presenter (with TV3). Creative director, Frankly Speaking; former Journalism Lecturer at the University of the South Pacific (1998-1999), Daily Post 'Media Watch' columnist and previously Executive Director, Fiji Television. She has conducted several media law and other journalism courses in the Pacific. Aged 35. Emailed interview in Auckland, NZ, 12 January 2003.***

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*Q: Three journalism schools based at universities — University of Papua New Guinea (J-programme, founded 1975), Divine Word University (1984), and University of the South Pacific (1994) — have produced graduates for the media industry for most of the past quarter century. The youngest programme, USP is the only truly regional provider with 43 graduates (a total of more than 55 graduates have come out of the programme) employed by 15 news*

*media organisations in the Pacific. What are the benefits, if any, that you can see being offered in the region?*

Journalism training that teaches trainees news media analysis as well as practical skills. While much emphasis is put on the importance of hands-on training — and no doubt this is imperative — I consider one of the most valuable benefits to come out of organised training [education] is an analysis of the role of media and its relationship with good governance, freedom of speech, human rights and executive power. Only a genuine understanding of what is at stake can give journalists the will and wisdom not to bow to the considerable pressures placed on media freedom in the South Pacific, by governments, commercial enterprises and even by non-government organisations. For this reason, the courses need to be taught in genuinely non-partisan fora such as universities and polytechnics, rather than through UN or other NGO courses, or government-sponsored courses, which are all open to claims of hidden agendas. The courses also give young journalists the confidence to pursue their stories in the face of social, cultural and political pressures where they might otherwise relent.

*Q: What is the state of journalism education in the Pacific today? What are the main factors influencing journalism training/education and what are the challenges?*

The biggest challenge for journalism educators is encouraging the few who do have formal training to stay in the media industry. Pay rates are generally very low compared with other vocations, and many promising journalism graduands have taken up more lucrative careers in teaching, economics etc. Another challenge is the sheer size of the media industry in the Pacific, which like any small community, is fraught with politics. I believe small powerbrokers within this community have sometimes hijacked funds allocated for training to pursue their own agendas, or have at least made decisions not always based on what will best serve journalism education within that community.

While it is important for the industry to make its own decisions regarding funding allocations, it is critical that in future the system used have more transparency and that as far as possible, funds are spread across several bodies so that no one industry group effectively holds a "balance of power" when it comes to journalism training decisions. These are issues for well-meaning NGOS, such as Ausaid and the UN organisations, to work through if they want their funds to be used in the most effective manner.

*Q: Is journalism education important and why are so few journalists in the Pacific actually educated (outside of PNG where 73 per cent of journalists have a tertiary qualification)? How should journalists be prepared for their careers?*

Journalism education is very important. Some skills, including interviewing, writing and news judgment, can certainly be "learned" on the job. However a trained journalist has a head start in all these areas, as well as the confidence to proceed in legally tricky situations. They are in my experience more aware of ethical issues arising from story gathering and publication and therefore more likely to make responsible journalistic decisions. They bring more credibility to the industry as a whole and therefore protect the media from political interference, which in Pacific Island countries is a constant threat. They are also able to respond better when having to justify a story to the public at large or to a media council.

*Q: In your experience, how do Fiji Islands and Pacific news media organisations believe journalists should be prepared for their career?*

I don't really know.

*Q: Many Pacific societies are male-dominated, yet in the last survey under this project (2001), there was a slight majority of women journalists in PNG, and a slight minority of women journalists in Fiji. Why has journalism become a desirable career in the Pacific for women, given the many cultural obstacles?*

Not sure. Maybe because women in the islands seem to have better literacy skills — and don't seem to bow to social/cultural pressures when story-gathering — than their male counterparts. Maybe also that because formal training is not required, literate women who don't have the means to become educated can nevertheless carve a niche for themselves. Plus as journalism is a relatively low-paying job, maybe men who would otherwise become journalists are more attracted to more lucrative careers.

*Q: How would you rate the performance of graduate journalists in your experience in comparison with their age group peers in the newsroom who have had no formal training/education? Advantages? Disadvantages?*

The answer to this depends very much on the level of literacy they had when they came into the programme. Most people who can "make the cut" in a newsroom are relatively good writers, whereas many of the journalism students struggled with basic journalese. So saying, some of the untrained newsroom journos were in such hot pursuit of their story they rarely double-checked facts, took and quoted sources at face value, didn't probe behind superficial stories to reveal deeper issues, and often seemed blinded by the sensationalism of a story without considering the effects. My comments relate particularly to Fiji Television and the *Daily Post*. Often these problems are symptomatic of age, not just lack of training, and a certain gung ho culture within the younger groups of journos in media organisations.

*Q: What is the essential role of the journalist in the Pacific?*

Voice of those who do not have a voice in the other three estates.

*Q: Are concepts such as "Fourth Estate" and "watchdog" important for Fiji Islands and Pacific journalists?*

More so than for other more developed countries where there is generally greater regard for human rights, and more transparency and accountability in the system. Plus central government

and NGOs have much more power than in developed countries, therefore needing greater "watching" by the media.

Q: How important is the notion "development journalism" in the Fiji Islands and the Pacific? How is it defined, and is it practised in the region?

I don't know what this means.

*Q: How well informed do you think news media audiences are in the Fiji Islands?*

As well as could be expected given the circumstances. Given the small size of the market, it is positive to see several newspapers continue to thrive. And newspapers rather than broadcast media do seem to be the main source of news.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in Fiji and the Pacific (status)?*

I'm not sure.

*Q: Do you believe journalists/media have an influence on public opinion in Fiji?*

Absolutely. They are part of public opinion. It would be interesting to study how much the media was influenced by NGOs, including UN organisations, in their pre-election coverage which led to [the election of] the Chaudhry government. If Fiji was "so ready" for racial harmony and an Indian government as seemed to often be the message from the media, why was there such a backlash afterwards? Would the transition from the former Constitution to the current one have been so smooth without the constant messages of assurance from the media? Contrary opinions were, less frequently, published but portrayed as "fringe" opinion by indigenous "radicals" etc with the constant implication that mainstream Fiji — whatever that is — embraced the 1997 Constitution even when it was effectively, rightly or wrongly, radically redistributing power.

*Q: If there is influence, how important is it in the forming of public opinion?*

Huge — but it is always interesting to see how traditional opinion (ie tradition, custom etc), often not expressed through the media, can prove just as strong.

*Q: What is your view of the salary/wages structures for journalists? Is there adequate provision for a career path?*

Pay rates are very poor. That's the number one problem for journalism in the Pacific, and could ultimately spell the end for freedom of expression/human rights in the region. [Pay scales] should be equivalent to lawyers, as the associated social responsibilities, and skills required to perform the job, are just as great.

*Q: Why are some journalism graduates choosing other careers in preference to working with a news media organisation?*

Because they don't get paid enough!

*Q: Do you believe the news media should be regarded as a watchdog, or should it be thought of as another business?*

Both. Important to acknowledge both, so as to also acknowledge the pressures of story gathering that come from the political and commercial sectors. Also, to remember that news, while informative, must be entertaining to maintain an audience. Many news gathering organisations — particularly Fiji TV with the added challenge and advantage of being an essentially visual medium — forget this.

*Q: Should freedom of the press reflect free expression for the media, or free expression for interest groups (the public)?*

Both.

*Q: How important is investigative journalism as a measure of the media's commitment to its "watchdog" role?*

Very important. Unfortunately the hardest to fulfill commercially (need extra skills, time, resources) and politically (often a legal minefield, more pressures not to publish etc).

Subsequently very little is done in Fiji.

*Q: Is investigative journalism encouraged in Fiji? How is this demonstrated?*

No.

*Q: Is culture a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

Yes. The smaller the community, the harder it is to expose scandal, and to defy cultural taboos of keeping things quiet.

*Q: Is religion a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

Not sure. Probably — especially when it comes to church-related investigations involving money/impropriety. The churches themselves seem pretty open though when it comes to discussing sexuality, HIV/AIDS etc, which is positive.

*Q: Does the Fiji Government support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

Obstructs. Eg it doesn't apparently consider New Zealand journalism trainers to be "of the region." It would prefer less qualified local trainers to highly qualified and experienced NZ trainers/educators. Constantly trying to shoot the messenger by threatening regulation etc, instead of promoting more/better training.

## 51. PHILIP CASS

***Papua New Guinean-born Australian journalist and academic. Lecturer in Journalism, College of Communication and Media Sciences, Zayed University, Abu Dhabi, (formerly Lecturer in Journalism at the University of the South Pacific). Audiotaped interview in Suva, Fiji Islands, 19 July 2001.***

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*Q: Would you outline the genesis of the Journalism Programme at the University of the South Pacific from your recollections. What was the background to it getting going and the rationale for it?*

I joined the programme in 1995. USP had advertised for a position the year before and took absolutely forever to get a reply and in the meantime I had gone on to Port Moresby to work as chief sub on the *Times of PNG*. I came back from Port Moresby and while I was recovering from a particularly unpleasant tropical bug, the personnel department phoned over Christmas and basically said would you like the job? My son actually accepted on my behalf. And I flew off in February. I wasn't interviewed. I guessed I walked into the thing a bit blind. As I understand it the programme was in its second year. François Turmel had been there the year before to get things under way. I was brought in basically to add the more academic subjects.

*Q: Were these first-year students that you were teaching? Wasn't there a preparation year before the programme began?*

Actually, François had been there two years, one year to prepare the programme. I had them when were second years.

As I understand it, the programme was an initiative of the French Government — it offered the funding to establish a journalism programme as part of its policy of establishing ties and

promoting itself in the Pacific, as other countries do. The programme, as I understand it, was funded by the French Foreign Office, or its equivalent, through the École Supérieure de Journalisme in Lille, which supplied François who was ex-BBC World Service. And the French had supplied funding. There was partial funding for my position of about F\$40,000 which was sucked up in a couple of months, which I shall come to later. I believe that also the French Government had donated a substantial amount of money for the purchase of equipment and for funding necessities. I have heard varying figures between F\$100,000 and F\$250,000. All of this money, to my understanding, had disappeared. It had simply been sucked up by USP. No, I say I understand these were rumours, gossip, hearsay — certainly I would say common belief among quite a few people at USP that whatever amount the French Government had given for equipment and other purchases had simply been appropriated by the university.

Certainly my experience was that some months after I was there I was called in and informed sorrowfully that all the money that had been allocated for my expenses had been used up and they weren't sure when they would actually be able to pay me. Which was unsettling to say the least, but I was cheerfully informed that they would simply take money from some other aid programme to pay me.

I know that François had enormous difficulties with funding, trying to get reimbursement for his expenses — he had enormous difficulties getting people to actually sign off on documents. There was a period when the responsible people in finance kept evading him with various excuses. This was a problem. François used to get quite frustrated. Being the gentleman he never quite blew his top, but I know that he was quite angry about it.

The French Embassy did continue to provide money, but I know again from talking to François that quite often the money seemed to travel in an absurdly circuitous route from the Élysee to Lille and out to the Embassy and back again before François could get it. François told me later on, when we met up in London in 1998, there was a period when he discovered that he simply

hadn't been paid for some months. He had been drawing money out of the bank and his bank balance kept getting lower and lower. And when he investigated he discovered that no money had been paid into his account because of hold-ups and there was this continual crisis every year about whether we would get funding, about whether we would be paid. I think this contributed in the end to my decision to leave because I was being paid just a straight local wage and there was always uncertainty about whether the course would continue. I guess this was my missionary era. It was very unsettling and made it difficult to make long term plans.

*Q: Could I just clarify that about a "local salary". Weren't you paid out of the French funding according to the USP salary guidelines?*

It was about \$30,000 a year. I mean it was part of the usual USP structure, but there was nothing extra like in some places, such as at the University of Papua New Guinea where there is an international market allowance on top of the basic salary. I don't what the situation is now.

*Q: Still the same.*

I wanted to come to USP. I wanted to go and work back in the Pacific. But the wages were not that great. This is something USP is going to have to address if they want to attract people with their wage structure. However, having said that, I think largely due to François' tenacity and his willingness to put his own money into the project continually was what kept things in spite of the financial crises caused by this peculiar system of French payment. (I was strongly suspicious that the first two editions of *Wansolwara* came out of François' pocket.) Many people believe — and still do — that the university had misappropriated fairly substantial French aid money that was supposed to have gone to the journalism programme and was unwilling to use what was left to reimburse François in a timely manner.

*Q: There seems to have been a history of unfortunate incidents all the way through from the time the programme was launched. Isn't this so?*

Yes, there seems to have been a ... [Interrupted by phone call].

*Q: How important is journalism education in a country such as Fiji?*

Very important. There has been for too many years in the Pacific a reliance on short-term training courses. And while these are good in imparting technical skills in helping journalists brush up their professional skills, this is quite a different matter from education. The purpose of journalism education is to produce journalists who can think basically. Journalists with a wider knowledge of history, politics and geography — all the things that hinge on the way a country runs or affects the way a country runs. And if you have journalists who are educated in the professional skills but as well as come out of university with a wide range of understanding of academic matters and ways of researching different ideas about the way the world works, with a better understanding of all the forces that affects the way that our society develops, then they can only be better journalists. There is a battle still in some countries between those who believe that journalism and journalists is just a matter of learning how to write the inverted pyramid and those who understand that journalists must be reflective practitioners, in other words journalists who not only write but can think about their writing, who can interpret, who can understand how things really happen.

I spent three years working in England after I left here [from USP] and we had a continuing battle at my university with the National Council for the Training of Journalists (NCTJ) that is the industry based organisation in the United Kingdom, which in many cases oversaw, approved, or ratified university journalism courses. The English Association for Journalism Education (EAJE) at its 1998 conference in London voted overwhelmingly not to have anything more to do with the NCTJ because they were regarded as dinosaurs. I remember being particularly horrified by hearing one NCTJ official saying that all a starting journalist had to do was 100 words shorthand a minute and to obey orders. Now to me that was absolutely revolting, it was anathema to everything I have always believed.

I think there are still many people in the Pacific, particularly older entrenched journalists, some of them expatriates, who still believe that is all a journalist has to do — to be able to obey orders and take notes rapidly. And that's not enough. Journalists who are young people, who entered the industry and who have been brought up with those beliefs are being shortchanged because they can't do anything better and they're not being given the vision to see that they can change the media works and operates. And that they can report more effectively for their readers. Journalists have to serve their readers, not just their proprietors. And if all they can do is write in an inverted pyramid and report he said this, and he said that, then they are not in a position to explain to their audience what's going on. Now that may well suit certain entrenched interests, particularly those who fear change, those who fear the new styles of journalism and who want to cling to their power base.

The other aspect of this also needs to be looked at very, very closely: we have had here in Fiji the farcical situation with the Fiji Journalism Institute (FJI) which is not operating, a great deal of aid money has disappeared. We have this situation to anybody looking at it from the outside, and I would hope from the inside, that so much of what passes for training has been so seriously compromised by the fact that quite often large amounts of aid money have been taken purportedly for the purpose of training journalists, given with all good intentions by European countries, Australia and New Zealand, and the United Nations and various other bodies.

Nobody knows where the money is and that can only serve to bring such institutions and that kind of training into complete disrepute.

The other problem with the training programmes is that quite often the people that go on them and overseas trips and what have you are often not the people who need them. They're people who are being given an overseas trip as a reward for good service, or long service, or for being a friend of the editor. There is a log of anecdotal evidence to show that the same names keep turning up time and time again on these training programmes. Instead of going to young people,

it might often go to somebody who is on their third or fourth all expenses paid trip to New York or Copenhagen , or Auckland or somewhere like that. The only way to combat that situation is to have something like the journalism programme at USP where young people who want to enter the industry, where young journalists or journalists in the middle of their career who want to obtain professional qualifications and academic standing can come in and do a degree or diploma as USP offers without having to rely on maybe two weeks there or five days there, or being the lucky one who is selected to go on an overseas trip.

*Q: I would like to pick up on a comment that you made about shorthand in the United Kingdom context. This is a statement that has been made at time by industry people criticising USP because shorthand isn't taught at the university. In fact, many journalists in the industry do not have it and it wasn't taught comprehensively at FJI when it was still going. Would you like to comment about that?*

Well, I don't do shorthand. I never have. We didn't do it at my university when I was doing my degree. When I was a cadet journalist in Australia I was supposed to do it, but the courses were on at night in the TAFE college and I was rostered on as the night journalist. Frankly, I saw more value in chasing ambulances and doing police rounds than in learning Pitman.

I think there is also a problem with shorthand in the Pacific in so far as shorthand is based on English. Now let's face it, for some of our students English might be their fifth language. I'm not sure frankly how culturally relevant it actually is. The fact is that most journalists anyway use their own short forms. If you look at somebody's shorthand notes there is probably a mixture of Pitmans, short forms, abbreviations, and whole words. I don't think it is necessary. Journalists should be able to take good, rapid notes in whatever format.

There is a counter argument that says that all a journalist has to take these days is a tape recorder — but you're also taking notes. I've seen some young journalists in Australia go off, do an interview with the tape recorder running and not take notes and then spend two hours

running the tape backwards and forwards simply to find out what the person said. That is ridiculous. It is simply good note taking and a good memory. More importantly though, if you're taking notes you learn to listen to what the person is saying — to hear what the person is saying. Too often you can get into a situation with print journalism, where it's like a TV interview where they sit down and just point the microphone and they ask their ten cent questions and they don't use the answers because they're not really listening to them as clues to other questions they might ask.

Yes, shorthand. This is probably deeply offensive to many people, but I think the notion that a journalist has to have shorthand is a fallacy. It is a bit of a Luddite attitude.

*Q: What about the notion that journalism courses such as USP, UPNG and DWU should be moderated by media industry?*

I believe that the universities should lead the industry, not be constrained by them. I see nothing wrong with people from the industry coming in to be advisers, or coming in to give guest lectures. University programmes should, as far as possible, have a good working relationship with the media. I think this is essential. But the notion that a university course, which should be far ahead in thinking techniques and training, should be told what to do by somebody who might have done their training twenty or thirty years ago, or no training at all, is absolutely wrong. To reiterate that point: the university must lead. Too often what happens is people on newspapers, or TV stations or on radio get used to doing things in a particular way and they think that is the only way, and they're resistant to innovation.

If you have a situation where they are ever placed in a position where they can dictate what is being done then that is appallingly dangerous for the university because it may constrain the students to ideas, modes of expression, ways of doing things that may be a couple of decades out of date. Certainly a good relationship, but to be controlled by the industry would be absolutely wrong. Advice yes, controls no. And if the advice is wrong, then yes ignore it.

*Q: What is the reality today in the Pacific? Are universities at the cutting edge?*

Well, I certainly think that at USP there is a very vibrant programme. I have been back this week and I am quite impressed with the way the programme has expanded since I left four years ago. We must be doing something right because I know that the students that I taught are now in fairly high positions. They're all doing very well — some in the media, some in organisations where they use their journalistic skills for PR, for communication. The fact that they have been able to leave USP and enter the industry at these levels and do so well is an indication that how well the course here is doing.

At UPNG, we have had the tragic situation where the course was closed down as part of cost-cutting measures by the vice-chancellor has been revived in a somewhat altered, some might say butchered, form. But UPNG has been there a long time and its graduates are all over the media and I think the PNG media has benefited from the fact that those graduates there and the media has for a long time accepted and supported the notion of graduates coming in and has recognised the skills they bring to the workforce.

Now Divine Word, I haven't been there for ten years, and when I was there it was the Divine Word Institute not university so I am quite out of touch with what has happened there. But there again the Divine Word journalists were always highly regarded, and some of the best journalists came out of Divine Word and I expect will continue to do so.

Apart from the public universities UPNG and USP there isn't really anything major in the Pacific. And, of course, USP is the only fully regional university. Divine Word was a parochial institution, but USP continues to be the only university that really caters for the whole region. There are smaller courses available in some of the former and still American territories in Micronesia, and there is some limited journalism education in the French territories. But really UPNG and USP remain the leading ones and I think they have done a good job providing very high levels of education. It is a pity, however, that certain parts of the media in Fiji have failed

to look at Papua New Guinea and to see the example that has been set there and to understand this is the way forward, as it is in the rest of the world where the media is developed.

*Q: Some sections of the media in Fiji have in fact been billing DWU as a "regional university". In a recent edition of Pacnews bulletins about the forthcoming PINA convention in Madang, the report indicated it would be partially hosted by the "regional university" of DWU. But on a recent visit there, I found only one student journalist from outside PNG (she was from the Solomon Islands). Talking to the university president, he was telling me that DWU has plans for expanding the programme and they are looking at probably 120 students in Communication Arts in about two years. This would be remarkable in a Pacific context ...*

That would depend where they came from. I would imagine that as a Catholic institution, Divine Word could draw from Vanuatu where the Catholic Church has a very strong presence. They might well attract students from the Solomon Islands. Now if they were able to complement the region in this way that would only be a good thing. Divine Word might well also attract students from the Philippines given the connections between the DW missionaries and the Philippines and PNG. That could well be quite interesting given that Word Publishing does *The Independent*. That particular style of journalism — development journalism — derives very heavily from the Catholic Church's social justice mission and from the social justice theories developed by the Jesuit missionaries in the Philippines through the Marcos years and, of course, in South America where they have been at the forefront of liberation theology and the role of the church in fighting against corruption of the fascist governments. Historically, the Divine Word missionaries have had a very strong commitment to communication for promoting development. I think that this is actually a very good thing. Word Publishing has been for a long time at the forefront of investigative and developmental journalism in Papua New Guinea. In many academic articles I have often held up Word Publishing as an example of what can be done in this area in promoting social justice and

promoting awareness through the media. I think it might actually be a very good thing if this kind of journalism was more widely known and more widely incorporated in the media elsewhere the Pacific. So in that sense I think there could be a good thing ... I'm not sure that there will be 120 journalism students in two years, perhaps it will take them much longer. But I think the particular philosophies that drive that university and the kind of journalism represented by Word Publishing ought to be more widely spread, especially in countries where you don't have the alternative viewpoint. Countries where you have the Murdoch dominated press, or Pacific territories where there is Robert Hersant, or Robert Hersant, or Robert Hersant. Where you have what are essentially large transnational corporations (TNCs), which have their own agenda. I think it is good that you have an independent voice that encourages local journalism and encourages people to be aware of the environment, social means and needs for — what we say in PNG — the grassroots to be given a voice. I don't imagine, for instance, that if it hadn't been for Word Publishing — and I guess we're talking here about Father Mihalic — I can't imagine that the *South Pacific Post*, or the *Post-Courier* as it became, would ever have considered anything like *Wantok*. It simply wouldn't have done it because it wasn't economically viable. And I think that's one of the great strengths of that particular type of journalism. That's down the track. Now whether Divine University will become purely or totally a regional university, that remains to be seen. I would like to think that ultimately all the universities in the Pacific would be regional. UPNG, USP and Divine Word would all take on the notion that they can train journalists from across the Pacific and that they can develop — and I have pointed this out in articles — a very specific and special Pacific form of journalism. I have described it elsewhere as a second wave of developmental journalism [in the Pacific], which owes not very much to the traditional African and Indian model of developmental journalism. But I have suggested that there is a very special kind of journalism developing here where thankfully the traditions of the free press and the infrastructure that surrounded that

survived the transition to independence in the Pacific countries and that developmental journalism notions have been incorporated into that. You'll have to help me with this, the former Minister for Information in Fiji — not in the last government but the one before...

*Q: Ratu Josefa Dimuri in the Rabuka government?*

Yes, Ratu Josefa. He talked at some length about the need for the media to be aware of the fact that in the Fiji context while they had to report the commercial news, actually it would be really good that if they let go of that a bit and realise that a straight story about what the government was doing for the villages, the people out in the hinterland, new roads and things like that, was actually a good story because it would allow people to see what the government was doing in developing the nation. Now that's something that is actually possible without turning the papers into simply propaganda sheets — that's a role that they can fulfil.

*Q: However, Ratu Josefa, himself a former journalist, was charged as a fellow traveller during the coup upheaval last year and a journalism trainer and prominent journalist in his own right.*

*Jo Nata, is at present a prisoner on treason charges on Nukulau Island for his alleged role.*

*What are the implications for journalism when you have such prominent people who are associated with a new style of journalism if you like — Jo Nata was characterised with his investigative writing — who are involved in the suppression of democracy?*

I see it as a great tragedy. It is an unfortunate situation when people have allowed their factional interests to override their professional concerns. I would also say, however, one might suspect, one might question whether either of those gentlemen actually would see any contradiction in what they have done. I think that might be the tragedy. It's also something I have experienced in PNG: people can hold ideas and ideals, which to an outsider might appear to be totally contradictory, and yet they might switch from one to the other without seeing any contradiction or problem.

If either of those two gentlemen were involved in the utterly reprehensible events of last year — I don't think actually a coup, a putsch — by baldy George [Speight] and his men, that's a tragedy, but it shouldn't take away from the fact that they were speaking quite sensibly about journalism and they were demonstrating it through their own work. No matter how much they were involved in the events last year. However much they may have been involved in the putsch last year, the fact is that their ideas and their work in that particular compartmentalised, blocked off part of their minds, is still valid.

*Q: How would you actually define this "new style" of Pacific journalism?*

What I would perceive is that there a number of trends. These are accentuated mostly by, as I have said, in Word Publishing's major publications *Wantok* and *The Independent*, what used to be the *Times of Papua New Guinea*. What I think has happened is that in the Pacific's two largest democracies Fiji and Papua New Guinea — we can still hopefully consider Fiji as a democracy because we're having an election — the transition to independence was relatively peaceful, the metropolitan structures remained largely intact, the media remained largely intact, and along with that remained the commitment to the traditions of a free press and the belief that the media remains the guardian of the people, as it should be. Now that's quite different from what happened in Africa and India where the transition to independence was quite violent in many cases and where the press became divided between the anti-independence colonial press and the newer papers that grew up with independence, the more revolutionary kind of papers. In the Pacific what happened was that the transition was quiet. The momentum after independence that carried people along in so many countries and what has happened in so many places, as in Fiji and Papua New Guinea, is that situations have got worse as the ideals and the dreams of independence have failed to materialise. What has happened then is that these concerns of ordinary people about issues like education, public health, roads, education for women, women's rights and the environment have grown up and these have become gradually

incorporated as day to day concerns in the mainstream press. So there is no great surprise that you find papers in the Pacific writing about things such as the peculiar predilection of the French exploding atomic bombs in our backyard. Lobbying on the reefs and the turtles, those kinds of issues, are mainstream. Despite the coups here in Fiji, suppression of the media and what have you, I won't say collusion, but the acquiescence in some quarters to the 1987 coups, the press were able to get back on their feet and remain committed. The exposure of the loans scandal in 1995 and 1996 by *The Fiji Times* and *The Review* wouldn't have been possible without a free press and without a press that was also committed to protecting the interests of ordinary. They even went so far as to name Ratu [Sir Kamisese] Mara as one of the people who borrowed large amounts of money and did not repay them.

When the press takes on an educational role or the press is aware that it has a duty towards ordinary people, informing ordinary people — and not just making money, or putting in another three fullpage ads from Hari Punja, or Courts, or somebody — then that is in a sense developmental. It's not developmental in the sometimes revolutionary, strident kind that derived in Africa, or India. It's not the God — how shall I put this? somebody once defined developmental journalism in the traditional sense as being endless pictures of Julius Nyerere kissing tractors. That hasn't happened here, thank God. But I did a piece of research a few years ago with Father Diosnel Centurion from Divine Word and we were hoping to replicate the study that looked at the Asian press, which let's face it is not the freest in the world. And the indicators that we were looking at were simply that if a newspaper talked about education, talked about women's rights, talked about the environment, this was in itself actually developmental because what it did was bring these ideas to the forefront and keep them in the readers' minds. It's didn't have to be revolutionary. What it did do, however, was by placing these ideas in the mainstream it made people aware of them and, hopefully, made them talk

about them. And if you "raise the consciousness" of the masses that these ideas exist and should be debated then you help society.

If, for instance, you never ever talk about education because it is boring, then education ceases being important. If you never ever say, 'It would be really good if in traditional societies people didn't perform clitorectomies, or very female, or babies, or beat their wives up" then that is developmental. If you write stories that say chopping down trees may be a bad thing, then that's developmental. What has happened is that in the Pacific people have become aware of these concerns and they have become integrated into the mainstream [media]. I think there is a danger that if people see issues like this as being something that is only reported in the Greenpeace newsletter, or something like that, then they're going to go, "Oh yeah, right, French atomic bombs, reefs, turtles, the environment — that's a Greenpeace thing, that's nothing to do with us". Whereas if it is the mainstream it becomes everybody's concern.

Since the coups, the press has continued to keep the issues alive through reporting, sometimes in a muted way. This in a sense is developmental journalism. Developmental in the sense that it develops the readers by making them think — by saying that these issues are not just for hairy NGOs, not just for your ratus to talk about, this is for you to talk about.

There was that great AusAID programme [Pacific Media Initiative — PMI] that you and I were both involved in. It was part of the Australian Government's good governance scheme — let's make the happy Pacific Islanders run their countries properly. One may have been a bit cynical about their aims, but the fact that we have elections, no matter how chaotic the politics are — and they are certainly less chaotic than in Papua New Guinea, the fact that they happen, that the press reports about them and keeps people informed, and talks about the reasons, that's developmental. It is far more developmental than say so many Western papers. I have been in Abu Dhabi watching the British elections on Sky News and where so much of it boiled down to who is going to win his baseball cap backwards today, or will Cherie Blair bring the baby

along. That's not developmental, in fact that's anti-developmental. That's reducing politics and people's lives to a sideshow whereas if the people are really talking about the issues of corruption and the things like that that matter to people, then that develops society. And quite frankly there is far of that than in many Western papers, even what are touted as the so-called liberal broadsheets of the UK, like the *Guardian* or *The Independent*.

*Q: During this survey I have been carrying out in the Fiji and Papua New Guinea news media, one of the qualitative questions deals with notions of developmental journalism. And what it has found is that few of the journalists, particularly in Fiji, could say what it is. I find this astonishing, particularly in the case of PNG, where I taught for a number of years about developmental journalism and the notions of "transition journalism" between the process of radical and revolutionary journalism and the evolution into developmental journalism. Some of the definitions that did come out is that developmental journalism is actually "education for journalists". One journalist on the Daily Post swore to me, "Yes, yes, that's what it is" because one of the ministers defined it as such, saying that what journalists in Fiji needed was better education. And so this stuck in her mind. What you have outlined as a particular style of developmental journalism in the Pacific, and yet journalists themselves don't seem to have a clear perception of what they are doing. Why is this?*

The last bunch of journalists that I worked with were at *The Independent* in Port Moresby and they seemed to have a very clear view of what they were doing. Maybe not as clear as some of the more experienced journalists. Anna Solomon, for example, what have a very clear idea and of what she expects her journalists to do. Here in Fiji, I'm not so sure. But I actually think journalists in Papua New Guinea are actually ahead in some ways than those in Fiji. That maybe because of the proximity to Australia, or it maybe because of the training there at UPNG, which started so much earlier. It maybe because people are more aware of what is

happening. However, it maybe because PNG has such a different social structure where people aren't bound by their chiefs and work independently.

As an outside looking in, it could be that still because of a lack of education — there still hasn't been a major impact by educated university trained journalists on the media — there is still a corporate instinct, if you want to put it that way, which says that all you have to do is tell the story and not worry about interpreting or looking for issues. That could be a problem that journalists are not encouraged, or don't have the time to say this is happening — why? What's going on, let's investigate. Yes, there have been some very good investigative journalists here in Fiji. You mentioned Jo Nata. But perhaps we still have a situation in Fiji where those people are the exception, when in fact they should be the rule. That situation will change. It has to change as long as the programme continues at USP and those kind of people are pumped into the community, they are pumped into the local media. Maybe it will take a couple of years. The changes come when the editors are prepared to give people a bit of rope, a bit of head to go and do their own thing. The real change come when — let's put a hypothetical case — when Stanley [Simpson] is editor of *The Fiji Times*. The real change will come when Jese [Temo] decides the Bible Society is going to put out its own Christian ecological newspaper. The change will come when Tomasi [Raiyawa] goes back to become head of PR for the Government. That's what we are looking for.

The real change comes when you have journalism students and you give them something like *Wansolwara* and they have that experience for a couple of years doing that, and they leave university with that experience and all those ideas — this is the difference between education and training: training gives you technical skills, education gives you ideas. When they leave university they know there is the possibility that they don't have to spend the rest of their careers as journalists doing 100 words [shorthand] a minute and obeying orders. They leave university thinking, "Hmmm, I can and I should be the editor of the local paper", or even better

when they think, "Hmmm, there is a niche market out there and I'll start on my own paper, or my own TV programmes or my own website". And that's when you give them the idea that is possible for them to do this, then that's when the real change takes place. There is an old saying, I think it is an American one — it would have to be American: freedom of the press belongs to the owners of the press. With the new technology that we have, all sorts of possibilities are opened up

## 52. JALE MOALA



***Subeditor, the Southland Times (NZ); a former Editor of Fiji's Daily Post, Islands Business magazine, The Fiji Times and Pacific Islands Monthly magazine, and senior journalist on the Fiji Sun, Suva, Fiji Islands. Aged 49. Emailed interview in Invercargill, NZ, 9 April 2003.***

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*Q: What is the state of journalism education and training in the Pacific today? What are the main factors influencing journalism training/education and what are the challenges?*

Contrary to some overseas views, the state of journalism education in the Pacific Islands is quite good. I am not familiar with training offered at Divine Word University and the

University of Papua New Guinea but I know that before I left Fiji in June 2000 the University of the South Pacific programme was doing very well and producing some good journalists. The best of the USP graduates were very good. The Pacific Islands News Association also had a journalism training programme that was dealing with training at a different level directed at working journalists to sharpen their skills. The Fiji Journalism Training Institute ran some programmes before ceasing in 1999 because of poor management.

There is universal support in the region for journalism training. Training is available both locally in the region and overseas. Because of this more and more journalists in the region are getting trained and qualified. But while diversity has been an advantage it has also become an obstacle to the development of training programmes. This is so in terms of:

*1. Funding:* Funding is the greatest problem. Even the two universities UPNG and USP rely on funding for the existence of their journalism programmes. Outside of these universities, most of the funding comes from UNESCO and Ausaid and organisations like PINA have to compete for this funding. The governments of Britain, USA, Germany and New Zealand also provide funding for journalism training. Some private organisations, mainly the Murdoch-owned *Fiji Times* and *Post-Courier* newspapers, can afford their own training programmes and do run in-house training seriously.

*2 Competition:* In some cases training programmes have tended to compete against each other instead of working as a team. The best example of this was in Fiji where the USP programme and the PINA programme worked apart rather than together. Both programmes would have achieved more if there was cohesion and consultation. In my view, USP should have been providing the main training programme with its certificate, diploma and degree courses. PINA should have been focusing on further training in the workplace. Yet it didn't seem to acknowledge the role played by USP in journalism training in the region, a fact underscored by

its part in a move to set up a diploma course at the Fiji National Training Council, an obvious duplicate of training offered at USP.

*3 Personality clashes:* There have been many cases when the region failed to gain maximum benefit because people running different training programmes became polarised through personality conflicts and could not work together to share often scarce resources.

*Q: Is journalism education important and why are so few journalists in the Pacific actually educated (outside of PNG where 73% of journalists have a tertiary qualification)? How should journalists be prepared for their careers?*

Historically, journalism has mostly been a non-academic profession. In the past, all journalism training was done in-house on the job, and it was not necessarily a bad thing. Many people went into journalism straight after high school and then went through a form of cadetship under the tutorship of editors and chief-subeditors. Some journalists, in the Pacific and elsewhere, went through this kind of training and become great journalists without ever having had a tertiary qualification.

Today, the market has changed, the newsroom has changed, the audience has changed, the issues have changed and university education has become more accessible than, say, 30 years ago. This is especially true in the Pacific Islands where, before UPNG and USP, the only way to get a university education about 30 years ago was to go overseas, not something people going into journalism could afford at that time.

Papua New Guinea has a higher percentage of journalists with tertiary qualification because the UPNG journalism training programme had been running better, longer than the one at USP.

Many things affect people's ability, or inability, to acquire tertiary qualifications but as incomes improve more and more younger people are able to get university education. Journalism is not always a first-choice career mainly because of poor pay. But in recent times the profile of journalism has improved, pay has improved and therefore more graduates are looking at

journalism as a career. Things like the war in Iraq, for example, have given journalism a higher profile and a very visible leading role in world affairs. These things will attract people into the profession.

*Q: How should journalists be prepared for their jobs?*

I am always a firm believer in the principle of not always hiring journalism graduates into the newsroom. I have always believed that a good newsroom is one with a diversity of views and training. This can best be achieved by hiring people of different training. I mean would hire graduates but they would not all be journalism graduates. If I could I would hire non journalism graduates and then teach them journalism on the job. This way I would have people skilled in other areas learning to be journalists.

*Q: In your experience, how do Fiji Islands and Pacific news media organisations believe journalists should be prepared for their career?*

Pay is the greatest obstacle to developing journalism in the region and how organisations view career preparation and development range widely and wildly. Some organisations prefer to hire people already qualified and some prefer to hire people with no qualifications for training on the job. It depends a lot on what sort of training is available in-house and the kind of people attracted by the pay offered.

*Q: Many Pacific societies are male-dominated, yet in the last survey under this project (2001), there was a slight majority of women journalists in PNG, and a slight minority of women journalists in Fiji. Why has journalism become a desirable career in the Pacific for women, given the many cultural obstacles?*

When I joined the *Fiji Sun* newspaper back in the 1970s, there were two local women in the newsroom. One of them was a graduate of USP and she left not long after she started because she found a better-paying job somewhere else. In recent times women have held senior positions in newsrooms in Fiji and increasingly women are being attracted to journalism in

greater numbers. I have often asked myself why the change. I don't know the answer. It may have something to do with the number of women coming out of universities. One thing I know for sure is that the unpredictable and long hours journalists find themselves in are no longer a deterrent to women. Women are competing very strongly with men in the job market and the fact they have made big inroads into the media industry may be more widespread than we know because they are also breaking new ground in once male-dominated sectors like the military, police, finance and politics.

*Q: How would you rate the performance of graduate journalists in your experience in comparison with their age group peers in the newsroom who have had no formal training/education? Advantages? Disadvantages?*

It depends on what we call formal education. If high school education is formal education then it is hard to see anyone in the newsroom without formal education. But obviously there is an advantage in having a university graduate compared to a high school graduate. A university graduate has more formal education and therefore has better interpretive and analytical experience than a high school graduate with little or no newsroom training. Starting from scratch, I could get a university graduate running in top gear in six months or less. It could take me twice as long, or longer, to get the same output from a raw high school graduate.

*Q: What is the essential role of the journalist in the Pacific?*

The role of the Pacific Islands journalist is to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing else but the truth.

*Q: Are concepts such as "Fourth Estate" and "watchdog" important for Fiji Islands and Pacific journalists?*

Yes they are because to tell the truth is to be a watchdog. I think that journalists are key instruments of change in the region. But having said that, I must emphasise that with truth

comes responsibility and a journalist who lacks responsibility will not tell the truth. Watchdog is a big word many of us don't even understand. Do we know what we are a watchdog of? Are we a watchdog of the people or for the people? I think that at the end of the day it is not so much our ability to bark and bite that makes us better watchdogs but it is our ability to know how to bark and bite.

*Q: How important is the notion "development journalism" in the Fiji Islands and the Pacific? How is it defined, and is it practised in the region?*

This is a notion much preached but hardly practised. In a region with a media industry that is fiercely competitive, development journalism is perceived as not providing the sort of issues that sell. Too much of our news is based on politics and crime, and I must admit that I, too, was guilty of being too focused on political news, although I didn't give crime prominence. At one time many funding agencies were giving away scholarships and money for developmental journalism and because of that it became quite a selling tool: you want a scholarship, you say you want to study developmental journalism.

*Q: How well-informed do you think news media audiences are in the Fiji Islands?*

As well informed as any other journalist in the world, I guess. We become experts in what we cover. Do American journalists know more about the Pacific than we know about America? The greatest weakness I find is the lack of interest in reading among journalists in the region, or in Fiji at least. Journalists are not reading books, newspapers and magazines. They are not reading the work of their peers and in many cases they are not even reading their work.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in Fiji and the Pacific (status)?*

Not as well as they deserve to be.

*Q: Do you believe journalists/media have an influence on public opinion in Fiji?*

Yes, all the time. It is always important because as I have said, journalists in the region help bring about change in the way people think, the way people talk, in culture and in perceptions.

*Q: What is your view of the salary/wages structures for journalists? Is there adequate provision for a career path?*

Salaries/wages can be better but they are comparable to the civil service, which may not really be a good gauge for comparison because the workload, and now increasingly qualifications, are not the same. There is a career path for those who work hard.

*Q: Why are some journalism graduates choosing other careers in preference to working with a news media organisation?*

Some get better money elsewhere, some can't take the workload and the long hours. The media industry (journalism) is not that big when compared to other industries/professions so there are not many places available for people to fill.

*Q: Do you believe the news media should be regarded as a watchdog, or should it be thought of as another business?*

It is first a business than anything else. It must first become a good business before it can develop in being good anything else. There has been too much emphasis on training journalism as an institution and not enough on training journalism as a business because at the end of the day that is what it is, a business. Journalists are nothing more than salespeople trying to sell stories to sell newspapers or radio or television programmes. Unless we can sell, we can't survive.

*Q: Should freedom of the press reflect free expression for the media, or free expression for interest groups (ie the public)?*

Freedom of the press is about being free to tell the truth, nothing more, nothing less. This freedom is freedom from fear to tell the truth in a responsible and truthful manner.

*Q: How important is investigative journalism as a measure of the media's commitment to its "watchdog" role?*

This is another fancy name like developmental journalism. Investigative journalism is all right if you can afford it — that is if you have the people trained to do it, you have the resources to run it and you have the courage to defend it. In the hands of the wrong people investigative journalism can be costly for an organisation. In any case, you don't need to be embarking on investigative journalism to be a watchdog. By simply reporting fairly and truthfully you keep people on their toes.

*Q: Is investigative journalism encouraged in Fiji? How is this demonstrated?*

It is desired and encouraged but in most cases the media organisations in Fiji don't have the resources for it.

*Q: How well resourced are Fiji news media for computer-assisted reporting (CAR)?*

Some are good and some are bad.

*Q: Is culture a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

Culture is a big obstacle in the Pacific Islands because journalists are expected to first abide by cultural considerations before abiding by journalistic ethics. The demand on journalists to be culturally and religiously sensitive can be overwhelming. However, many journalists have managed to overcome this obstacle and do operate independently and objectively.

*Q: Is religion a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

Religion is like culture in the Pacific Islands and both can be obstacles to reporting. But these obstacles are being overcome and religion, especially, is becoming a great source of news.

*Q: Does the Fiji Government support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

It supports it.

*Q: How much political pressure do journalists face in the course of their work? Examples?*

There is always political pressure, especially when the Government is a great source of news.

Pressure can be applied in many ways. The case of the *Taimi 'o Tonga* is a good example. In

Fiji, the threat of withdrawal of advertising had been used. Many governments in the region have also threatened to bring in tougher media laws.

*Q: How much does rivalry between Pacific media organisations - such as PINA and PIBA, and PINA and USP - impact on journalism training and standards? What are the issues and how can they be resolved? What will be the impact of the PINA and PIBA merger?*

The rivalry, as I have said, is bad for journalism training, especially when organisations undertake empire building. The merger between PIBA and PINA can be good in terms of consolidation of resources. However, it must be understood that while PINA represents mostly the independent media, PIBA represents mostly state-owned media. Hopefully when it comes time to make a stand, on issues of press freedom for example, there will be one voice.

*Q: Is there a need for more professional journalists associations (or unions) at the level of working journalists without management representation to lobby for better pay and working conditions, and professionalism?*

Journalists need a strong union to fight against exploitation.

### 53. PATRICK CRADDOCK



***Former Senior Audio Producer, Media Centre, and Associate Journalism Lecturer, University of the South Pacific; and currently Executive Producer, Radio Mozambique, Maputo, Mozambique. Emailed interview in Maputo, 11 March 2002.***

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*Q: USP is a relatively new journalism school with just six years of graduates (55 for the Pacific region) so far. From your observations, what has been the impact, if at all, of educated journalists embarking on a career?*

There is a clear impact on the region. Fiji media companies – print, TV and radio have employed journalists from the USP journalism school. Vanuatu TV has at least one journalist of the USP school on their staff. But there are problems – journalists in several Pacific

countries are notoriously poorly paid. The Fiji print media are among the worst payers. High school pupils get jobs on the local newspapers and work for a miserable salary. Editors and owners are reluctant to pay a reasonable salary for a journalist with three years training and a USP degree. Until the salary problem is addressed and journalists are recognised as belonging to an honourable profession and rewarded with decent salaries it is right and proper that many newspapers should have poorly researched, poorly written and poorly word proofed articles on their pages.

*Q: Is journalism education important and why are so few journalists in Fiji actually educated?*

*How should journalists be prepared for their careers?*

Journalism in the South Pacific has a short history. I recall being in Solomon Islands a few years ago. The newspaper was a cyclostyled newsheet of several pages that was published about once a week. So many politicians view journalists as workers who can be told what to say. Tonga has an abysmal record of dealing with criticism from within its boundaries, and the ongoing saga of Mike Field with Pacific politicians speaks for itself. I think Pacific politicians show little respect for media. If a journalist gets offside of authority — a politician can effectively destroy the work environment for the journalist. The Pacific is a huge place geographically, but it's one helluva small place when you land in any one of the many small Pacific countries. Journalists need training in reporting skills, ethics, writing skills and access to internet research. It takes time, money and expertise — but we do have expertise at the UPNG and Divine Word in Papua New Guinea and the USP in Fiji. And PINA can play an important role too by running regular workshops for practising journalists.

*Q: What is the essential role of the journalist in the Pacific?*

To report, seek varied opinions and analyse the development of the South Pacific countries. It sounds grand — but I want the media to look critically at their own countries. Take Fiji. When the coup with George Speight took place in Suva — some reporters said he was the next Prime

Minister or President, because he told them he would be. He was a terrorist. How many journalists said that? Any journalist worth his or her salt and their editor must now look closely at how they reported that tragic time in Fiji politics. And what is happening today in Fiji must also be reported and analysed in depth. Is it?

*Q: Are concepts such as "Fourth Estate" and "watchdog" important for Pacific journalists?*

No comment.

*Q: How important is the notion "development journalism" in the Pacific? How is it defined, and is it practised in the region?*

Development journalism is not well understood. For me, it means contributing to the progress of a country – economic, social, education, culturally and so on. In that sense it is a reporting job and means giving accurate information. The task for the journalist is to say I will identify key issues and look at them in relationship to the poor, middle class and rich people of my country? I do believe it's difficult to make this type of reporting interesting to the public unless editors let their journalists travel to villages around their country. I have an appalling story in my memory of a journalist who worked in agricultural broadcasting in Fiji. His way of reporting development issues was to tape record the boring speeches of civil servants and politician when they opened a workshop. At the Media Centre of the USP I listened to an audiotape where a Fiji cabinet minister thanked UNESCO, UNICEF and other esteemed agencies for their support. The journalist did not ask one question or comment on the speech other than to identify the speaker and the name of the hotel where the workshop was taking place. For me, this particular and lazy journalist defined development journalism in negative terms!

*Q: How well-informed do you think news media audiences are in Fiji, other Pacific countries?*

They are informed by Government of what it wants the public to hear, but the audience are not given much background information of the why and wherefores of Government policy. For

example, when the 1997 Fiji Constitution was being considered there was little discussion, as I recall in the media about the details and clauses within that Constitution. Seen with hindsight, it was an appalling case of journalists and editors not doing their work and explaining the details of the Constitution to the public. I must repeat a favorite theme of mine — journalists get stories by looking for them within their community. I have been in newsrooms in Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu where journalists waited for the Government press releases to pour from fax machines. It seemed to me at the time that if there were no faxes, there was no news. Maybe I'm exaggerating this story, but only a little.

*Q: Do you believe journalists/media have an influence on public opinion in Fiji?*

Yes - if they write well and get their facts correct.

*Q: If there is influence, how important is it in the forming of public opinion?*

I would like to believe the media can inform and help people make up their minds on issues – but it's a thought of mine, only that, and it's unproven!

*Q: What is your view of the salary/wages structures for journalists? Is there adequate provision for a career path?*

I've commented on that. Salaries are poor when you consider that a trained graduate journalist from the USP can earn more as a first year Primary teacher than as a journalist.

*Q: How important is investigative journalism as a measure of the media's commitment to its "watchdog" role?*

I think investigative journalism requires time, money and experience. The present structure in the Pacific works against quality reporting. And the smallness of the society means it is difficult for a journalist and his sources to remain "secret".

*Q: Is culture a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media? If so, why?*

I have heard of cases where the culture of a person working in media has inhibited them from doing their job.

*Q: Is religion a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media? If so, why?*

I suspect so, but I have no proof. It's the old story of working in a small society and the local reporter putting on self-imposed chains.

*Q: How much political pressure do journalists face in the course of their work? Examples?*

Already commented on.

*Q: Any issues or comments you would like to canvas?*

The philosophy of broadcasting and ethical issues such as: independence, fairness, coverage of difficult issues such as political corruption seemed to be beyond the comprehension of many of my radio journalism students at the USP. Many students knew they would work for government. Several commented they would have to do as they were told or they would lose their jobs. When we explored a hypothetical issue such as the discovery of corruption by a Government official, many students said it was sad, and they disapproved but that was the way the Pacific was? When we further extrapolated the issue in discussion as to what they would do when they became editors and chief reporters, they said they would have to think about it for a long time!

One other comment – so many of the USP senior staff were silent during the turbulent days of the Sleight coup. I recall [Professor] Vijay Naidu and [history/politics] Jonathan Frankel speaking to the media. Maybe there were a few others, but certainly at the top of the USP administrative ladder there was a long silence. I saw it as a perceived fear. It was followed by an attempt of senior administrators to gag the journalism program. When young journalism students in a university find that their leaders have frozen feet and vocal amnesia in a crisis, what lessons do they learn?

## 54. DR TREVOR CULLEN



***Lecturer in Journalism, School of Communication and Multi Media, Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia. Head of Communication Arts, Divine Word University, Madang, Papua New Guinea, 1996-1997. Age 45. Emailed interview, Perth, 31 January 2002.***

I arrived in Port Moresby on 31 October 1995 to begin a two-year contract as Press Officer for the Catholic Bishops Conference (CBC) of Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands and to teach Communications at Bomana Major Seminary. Previous to this appointment, I had been working at the Vatican in both the press and radio departments. During my first week in PNG, I received a phone call from the President of Divine Word Institute (DWI), Fr Jan Cuba, asking if I could help at DWI since they were short of teachers in the Communications Arts (CA)

Department. I contacted the head of CBC and he said he had no problems with this request and my transfer to Madang. In fact he thought there was a greater need at DWI than at the Seminary.

So I moved to DWI in December 1995 signed a two-year contract and began teaching the following month. I still continued to work as the Press Officer for the CBC. By April 1996 I was appointed head of the Communications Arts (CA), replacing Fr Frank Mihalic who, due to his age, was keen to lessen his workload.

The CA department offered a two-year diploma course and the staff consisted of myself and Fr Frank who taught all the journalism and communication courses. Other teachers taught English literature, English language, politics and economics as a way to broaden the knowledge of the students. There were two classes: year 1 and year 2 with roughly 15-20 in the first year and 10-12 in the second.

**Some problems:**

English was a second or third language for the students. As a result, a number of students struggled to achieve even a basic standard of written English and teaching journalism was frequently reduced to instructing students about how to write simple, clear and grammatically correct sentences. In consultation with the dean of studies and other staff members, it was decided to raise the grade for English in the CA department from grade C to B. This came into operation at the end of 1996 and there was no immediate or noticeable fall in applications for the course. I was unable to monitor in a proper and scientific manner whether or not this change helped raise the standard of written English.

Many students were too young or undecided about a career in journalism. I suggested early on (but without support) that journalism should be a post-graduate degree where the students come with a higher level of maturity, knowledge and motivation. There will, however, always be a

place for young journalists who decide to leave after receiving their diploma. However there should be available resources to help those who want to achieve higher journalistic qualifications.

Towards the end of 1997, I argued during an academic staff meeting that the name of the department - Communication Arts - should be changed to Journalism since the main aim and thrust of the course was to educate and train journalists for the industry. The President shelved the idea saying that the change of name would occur at a later stage. As far as I know this has not happened.

Work experience was an essential part of the CA program and after much debate and resentment between members of the academic committee, it was decided that the students would start their six-week work assignment towards the end of the second semester instead of at the end of the first semester. The main reason for this change revolved around complaints from news editors and reporters that first-year students knew little in terms of reporting and interviewing skills.

The quality of teaching at DWU was a problem. This was mainly due to the fact that many teachers were volunteers who offered their services for two to three years for meager financial returns. Therefore it proved difficult to criticise, let alone reprimand, a volunteer who failed to meet academic standards. In fact, there was no credible complaints procedure. Interestingly, the academic qualifications of the teachers were never published during my time at the university. I expect one reason for this was that many of them were probably poorly qualified. This may have changed since my departure. However, as far I know, DWU still relies heavily on volunteer teachers.

The only person who was keen to introduce a degree in 1998 was Fr Czuba. I constantly expressed my doubts about starting a degree course without a professionally approved academic programme and properly qualified staff. But he was in a hurry and had every

intention of starting in February 1998, regardless of what was in place in terms of a programme or staff members. I think he thought the program would just evolve as time progressed which strongly suggests a hit and miss approach. To this day I wonder whether the degree they offer, like the former one, has any credibility outside PNG. Having said that, they are linked in some way to one of the Australian universities.

During the last months of 1997 I worked hard to find more trained staff for the CA department. Before I left DWU, I had managed to recruit two VSO volunteers to begin teaching in January 1998.

My contract with DWU ended in December 1997. I did not renew it because I had secured a scholarship from Queensland university to begin a doctoral research on press coverage of HIV/AIDS .

## 55. JONE DAKUVULA



***Research Director of the (Fiji) Citizens Constitutional Forum (CCF) and a noted news media columnist on topics such as human rights and social justice, Suva, Fiji Islands. Aged 52. Emailed Interview in Suva, 17 January 2003.***

***Email address: [ccf@connect.com.fj](mailto:ccf@connect.com.fj)***

*Q: Three journalism schools based at universities — University of Papua New Guinea (J-programme founded 1975), Divine Word University (1984), and University of the South Pacific (1994) — have produced graduates for the media industry for most of the past quarter century. The youngest programme, USP, is the only truly regional provider with 43 graduates employed by 15 news media organisations in the Pacific. What are the benefits, if any, that you can see being offered in the region?*

The benefits offered to the region:

- Journalists with graduates qualifications with skills and knowledge of modern tools for effective journalism i.e. computers, internet, theories, ethics, application.
- Pacific media can employ journalists who are qualified, do not need much further training and have potential to develop the breadth and depth of journalism service and standards.
- If employed outside the media, these trained journalists can be positively influential in the employer organisations' appreciation of the roles and uses of the media.

*Q: What is the state of journalism education in the Pacific today? What are the main factors influencing journalism training/education and what are the challenges?*

Journalism education has developed well in the Pacific in the last two decades, starting with graduates from PNG and recently USP. On the job training through PINA has also developed. The challenge now is to employ more journalism graduates, especially in the *Fiji Times* and private radio stations. The days of recruiting high school graduates and training them on the job or on PINA organised short courses should soon be over, if more graduates are employed. They can also take over the management of the news media from expatriates who seem to have an interest in keeping journalist wages low and keeping out graduate journalists.

*Q: Is journalism education important and why are so few journalists in the Pacific actually educated (outside of PNG where 73per cent of journalists have a tertiary qualification)? How should journalists be prepared for their careers?*

Journalism education is important. Journalists should have a broad social science education at university before specialising in journalism. Those who started their careers as cadet journalists would benefit from an employer policy to allow them time for university studies.

*Q: In your experience, how do Fiji Islands and Pacific news media organisations believe journalists should be prepared for their career?*

It seems to me Fiji and Pacific media are still stuck to the tradition of training journalists on the job. While this is important, the attitude should change and it can if more graduate journalists are employed by the news media.

*Q: Many Pacific societies are male dominated, yet in the last survey under this project, there was a slight majority of women journalists in PNG, and a slight minority of women journalists in Fiji. Why has journalism become a desirable career in the Pacific for women, given the many cultural obstacles?*

There is probably a majority of women journalists in the Pacific because it is low paid and also men do not see it as a career that leads to promotion to higher paid jobs.

*Q: How would you rate the performance of graduate journalists in your experience in comparison with their age group peers in the newsroom who have had no formal training/education? Advantages? Disadvantages?*

From my little experience with journalists in Fiji, graduate journalists have a better understanding of the position of NGOs and what NGO priorities are as news. They are also more professional in their relationship and one can actually discuss things with them off the record. I can also see that some USP graduates have begun to write more in-depth articles on issues but the writing is a bit too academic. They need to develop a more accessible style but this will come with experience. Graduate journalists are also more conscious of ethics whereas non-graduates are less aware of the Code of Conduct.

*Q: What is the essential role of the journalist in the Pacific?*

The essential role of the journalist in the Pacific is to report/write accurately, with balance about local news in order to inform people and to make people demand accountability for wrongs or injustices that are published. The other important role of the journalist is to keep monitoring those in political power and other people in power such as commerce, NGOs etc. Journalists have to become more self-critical and avoid becoming merely reporters of what

important people say. The latter is very easy to happen in the Pacific where journalists tend to accept what people tell them and do not see the need to investigate further. There is too much 'respect'. Recently, none of the news media reported the NGO Coalition submission over *the Family Law Bill* because we told the parliamentary committee it was wasting public funds prolonging its sittings.

*Q: Are concepts such as "Fourth Estate" and "watchdog" important for Fiji Islands and Pacific journalists?*

Yes, the concept of the media as an independent watchdog in the Pacific is important.

*Q: How important is the notion "development journalism" in the Fiji Islands and the Pacific? How is it defined, and is it practised in the region?*

In the Pacific, I understand "development journalism" in a very broad sense, that is it is reporting or writing on issues that are important but not usually covered. We need journalists to broaden and deepen people's knowledge and understanding about their societies and the outside world. We need, for example, more coverage of issues important to people in rural areas but also articles about the activities and practices of businesses and government departments etc. Development journalism as far as the Pacific media is concerned, I believe, should mean development of peoples knowledge of all activities that impinge on their daily lives.

*Q: How well-informed do you think news media audiences are in the Fiji Islands?*

On the whole I do not think the news media audiences in Fiji are well-informed especially people who live in the rural areas. In the rural areas their main source of news is the radio. However people today are better informed than people 30 years ago, or even 10 years ago because of television.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in Fiji and the Pacific (status)?*

Journalists in the Pacific are not well respected (except for a few radio journalists who have national audiences and are very influential in forming people's opinion on current issues.

Relationships between politicians and print media and TV journalists are sometimes ones of distrust. NGOs, too, sometimes distrust certain journalists.

*Q: Do you believe journalists/media have an influence on public opinion in Fiji?*

Yes, journalists/media have significant influence on public opinion, especially radio journalists who act as commentators in talkback programmes. They tend to pander to audience prejudiced views.

*Q: If there is influence, how important is it in the forming of public opinion?*

The news media is important in shaping the image or the issues through which governments are perceived for example. The media often decides what are the issues of interest to the public. In a multiracial society such as Fiji, issues are often interpreted through racial/ideological frameworks (ie religious, cultural and political ideologies), which can arouse extreme feelings of fear, paranoia, hatred, distrust etc. This can become the basis for political mobilisation and protests, which can result in lawlessness and violence. We saw that after the election of the Chaudhry led government after May 1999.

*Q: What is your view of the salary/wages structures for journalists? Is there adequate provision for a career path?*

I have answered this question above.

*Q: Why are some journalism graduates choosing other careers in preference to working with a news media organisation?*

Because of the low pay but now with increasing number of unemployed graduates, trained journalists have no choice but to accept the low wage to be employed.

*Q: Do you believe the news media should be regarded as a watchdog, or should it be thought of as another business?*

The news media is both a business and a watchdog. In a small society like Fiji, the news media can be easily pressured by advertisers to play less of the watchdog role. This way a lot of interesting activities are not covered by the news media. A lot of self-censorship can happen.

*Q: What is the actual situation in Fiji today?*

On the whole, I think the news media in Fiji has been reasonably good as a watchdog but they tend to be ineffective and inconsistent because they tend to jump from one issue to the next. We do not have journalists who can take time to explore and explain some issues in depth.

Sometimes I think they are intimidated by politicians or influenced by the managers of the news media to stop pursuing certain issues because of unknown pressures. Often they are just too busy going from one assignment to the next and have no time to research.

*Q: Should freedom of the press reflect free expression for the media, or free expression for interest groups (the public)?*

The freedom of the press under the law is the freedom of the media to publish reports, articles and opinion and also the obligation of the media to make this freedom meaningful as much as possible for the public by allowing the public views of all sides to be expressed accurately and fairly in the news media. Freedom of expression is not unlimited as defined in the Constitution and defamation laws. Too often the print media in Fiji get away with publishing wrong information that is defamatory

*Q: How important is investigative journalism as a measure of the media's commitment to its "watchdog" role?*

As I said earlier, we do not have investigative journalists in Fiji. This is vital if we are to enhance the watchdog role. CCF has tried to contribute to this role through articles, letters and press statements from CCF that contain information the *Fiji Times* has not known, or that challenges the present Government's version of certain events. So often you will read fuller reports of our press statements in the *Daily Post* and the *Fiji Sun* and nothing in the *Fiji Times*,

or small report by a journalist who probably rang up the minister etc and publishes a response but there is no reference to CCF. Often letters from the CCF to the *Fiji Times* are not published at all, or converted into a "report" by a journalist without permission of the CCF (see attached letter to the publisher of the *Fiji Times* as latest example).

*Q: Is investigative journalism encouraged in Fiji? How is this demonstrated?*

I do not think investigative journalism is encouraged in Fiji because feature articles are usually quite boring. Articles from academics such as Dr Wadan Narsey, Dr Jonathan Frankel and even CCF members are more interesting because they are well informed. 'Investigative' articles published in the print media in Fiji are the ones written by people who are not journalists. I hope that graduate journalists now employed in the media will be encouraged to get into investigative journalism.

*Q: How well resourced are Fiji news media for computer-assisted reporting (CAR)?*

I don't know and I can't answer this question.

*Q: Is culture a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

Yes, culture can be a constraint in a small society in the investigative role of a journalist. However it should not be a major obstacle if the journalist is accurate, balanced and sensitive.

*Q: Is religion a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

I don't think religion is major obstacle to the investigative role of journalists if you mean the religious belief of journalists. But some religious organisations (such as the Methodist Church) are distrustful of journalists. Religious organisations in Fiji are not seriously investigated because we do not have the journalists with the time and interest to do this.

*Q: Does the Fiji Government support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

I am not aware of any obstruction from Government to journalism education and training in Fiji. As for active support, I am not aware of that also.

*Q: How much political pressure do journalists face in the course of their work? Examples?*

I can only speak for CCF if you can see us as a "political" organisation. We do occasionally complain to journalists or editors when we think we have been misrepresented or certain things we said and that we considered important are not reported (from our press statements). Sometimes (with the *Fiji Times*) our press statement is not used but later we read an editorial then expressing what we said as the editors' view! We don't complain about that! Our complaints can be regarded by the journalist as "political pressure" although we do not see it that way. It will be different if a minister or senior civil servant complains. This could be easily interpreted as "political pressure". Or from businesses. I can recall Mere Samisoni (Hot Bread Kitchen) threatening to withdraw all advertising from the *Daily Post* because of something I wrote. The publisher, Taniela Bolea, told me (back in 1995) I can only guess that journalists are sometimes pressured by their bosses who receive telephone calls from politicians and business people.

*Q: How much does rivalry between Pacific media organisations — such as PINA and PIBA, and PINA and USP — impact on journalism training and standards? What are the issues and how can they be resolved?*

I think PINA and PIBA regarded the USP Journalism Programme as a threat to their programmes and interests in monopolising journalism training in Fiji. They probably see that in the long term USP may be able to provide short courses and workshops for working journalists as part of the programme it offers and that could mean sources of funds for these programmes could divert to USP. With you, it became a person rivalry issue, especially as you were the product of training on the job but then came to Fiji and posed a threat to that tradition and the interest of journalists who did not attend university.

The issue can be resolved through dialogue between USP Journalism Department and PINA/PIBA with a view to integrating the PINA programmes into the USP programme so that journalism training for employed journalists is partially taken out of the control of news media owners. This would mean people like Peter Lomas being employed by USP to run these short

courses/workshop, which can be the means for improving the skills of graduates, working journalists and the avenue for cadet journalists to consider getting higher academic qualifications. The attitude of Peter Lomas and Co. has to change and USP has to recognise and accept the qualifications of people who do not have degrees as teachers. Needless to say, now that you are no longer their *bête noir* at USP, a more cooperative relationship with PINA and PIBA could develop.

I think international funders would be more comfortable funding a regionally integrated programme of journalism training in the long term that is quite independent of employers control.

*Q: Is there a need for more professional journalists associations (or unions) at the level of working journalists without management representation to lobby for better pay and working conditions, and professionalism?*

I think there is a need for a more professional journalists union. This could be given impetus if one stream of journalism training is taken out of employers control. So long as employers control the training and therefore the prospects of advancement of journalists, the less inclined working journalists are to form an effective trade union. Journalists in Fiji deserve to be better paid because they constitute one of the most important professions in a democracy.

*Q: The Ausaid Pacific Media Initiative (PMI) project has been described (by a specialist Australian journalist covering Pacific affairs) as the "best dollar value" of any aid donor-sponsored media training programme in the Pacific, while a contrasting view is that the project is too dominated by the agenda of one particular regional media organisation, PINA, and is "riven by bias, unfairness and wastage of funds". How effective has this aid been, and what is your analysis of the review process and the future?*

I don't know how much has been spent on PINA in the last seven years and I am not really in a position to assess the programme's effectiveness. I think the PINA programme will be more

professionally run if it is integrated in the USP Journalism Programme as a sort of specialised refresher programme for working journalists in the region because USP is a regional institution with a broad focus.

*Q: The Fiji Times, in particular, portrayed the Chaudhry Coalition Government as antagonistic towards the media and painted the then prime minister as a much greater threat to media freedom than the current PM, Laisenia Qarase. Also, the refusal of the then Government to renew the visa of editor-in-chief Russell Hunter was portrayed in a "threat to media freedom" terms. In hindsight, how would you interpret the Chaudhry Government's relationship with the Fiji news media and how would you compare this with previous Alliance governments, Rabuka and now Qarase?*

The problem with the *Fiji Times* relationship with the Chaudhry government was a number of senior journalists such as Hunter, [Margaret] Wise, [Netani] Rika etc took the 'campaign' against Chaudhry personally. Rika declared war right in the first month of the new Government.

The appointment of Rajendra Chaudhry certainly exacerbated the situation because of Rajendra's combative and dismissive approach in defence of his father's government. I do not think the Chaudhry Government was a greater threat to media freedom than any other previous government. During Ratu Mara's days, the news media in Fiji was quite tame. They were never as boldly critical of the Mara Government as they were of the Rabuka, Chaudhry and Qarase governments. Rabuka was the best in handling the news media because he was quite open and relaxed. In fact too accessible! The news media was far more critical of the Rabuka Government than of Chaudhry or Qarase. Rabuka was hated by some for his politics but liked by journalists as a leader. Ratu Mara was aloof. Qarase I think is the most professional in his approach, but ineffective and unconvincing, mainly because his unconstitutional position and the endemic corruption of his administration undermine his messages.

Mahendra Chaudhry was the worst in his handling of the news media (this apart from the reprehensible attitude of the *Fiji Times*). The problem was he chose the wrong people (Rajendra and [Lekh Ram] Vayeshnoi) to handle his media relations, when the political priority should have been to get his message across to Fijians who were being aroused. Chaudhry completely underestimated the depth of feelings and the nature of the threat posed by Fijian nationalism. Being the 'numbers man', he was too complacent and thought that having an overwhelming number of Fijian MPs in his Coalition was safeguard enough.

## 56. REGGIE DUTT



Reggie Dutt (foreground) in the Wansolwara newsroom.

**News reporter, Fiji Television; Journalism Gold Medal graduate, University of the South Pacific, 2001. He travelled as a Pacific delegate to the Commonwealth Journalists' Association conference at Abuja, Nigeria, 2001. Aged 23. Emailed interview in Suva, Fiji Islands, 16 January 2003.**

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*Q: Three journalism schools based at universities — University of Papua New Guinea (J-programme, founded 1975), Divine Word University (1984), and University of the South Pacific (1994) — have produced graduates for the media industry for most of the past quarter century. The youngest programme, USP is the only truly regional provider with 43 graduates (a total of more than 55 graduates have come out of the programme) employed by 15 news media organisations in the Pacific. What are the benefits, if any, that you can see being offered in the region?*

I can comment with authority on the benefits at USP. The USP Journalism Programme:

- Helps to multi-skill the journalist so he can adapt from print to online, to broadcast media.
- Is strong on ethical journalism issues.
- Helps journalists gain a stronger grasp of media law.
- Encourages analysing the issues that need reporting

*Q: What is the state of journalism education in the Pacific today? What are the main factors influencing journalism training/education and what are the challenges?*

I am not so sure about the universities in Papua New Guinea but on the whole USP has been doing quite well. The programme was developing as a very good one but the departure of David Robie puts a huge question mark on its future. I believe the commitment is lacking from the university as well as governments to see the programme grow. Funding is a major problem. Also there is very little support from the mainstream media in Fiji. The main reason for that was/is/will remain personal agenda/dislike/etc for the former co-ordinator.

*Q: Is journalism education important and why are so few journalists in the Pacific actually educated (outside of PNG where 73 per cent of journalists have a tertiary qualification)? How should journalists be prepared for their careers?*

I believe it is important as it produces a well rounded journalist at the end of the day who is in touch with all journalistic issues (especially ethical). But I believe journalism cannot be wholly taught in a classroom. More importance should be put on practical experience (as at USP). There is also a need to adapt the curricula to the changing needs of society and the media industry in general.

*Q: In your experience, how do Fiji Islands and Pacific news media organisations believe journalists should be prepared for their career?*

Mostly in-house training, if any at all!!

*Q: Many Pacific societies are male dominated, yet in the last survey under this project, there was a slight majority of women journalists in PNG, and a slight minority of women journalists*

*in Fiji. Why has journalism become a desirable career in the Pacific for women, given the many cultural obstacles?*

I have a belief that a lot of journos don't have any designs to be journos to start with ... but a lot of them find themselves with a notebook and a pen pushed in their face just because they can't find any other employment. But then again, I think women are attracted to journalism because it gives them the power to write and speak out about issues they wouldn't normally be able to.

*Q: How would you rate the performance of graduate journalists in your experience in comparison with their age group peers in the newsroom who have had no formal training/education? Advantages? Disadvantages?*

It's hard to generalise the performance of graduates in the media — from what I have seen and experienced, it usually comes down to the individual journalist. If the work environment is favourable with ample opportunities for the graduate to utilise his capabilities and expand himself, the graduate has flourished in his work. Naturally the performance is better. At the same time, if the graduate is put into a tight corner with cynicism attacking his every comment/move/idea/input, it becomes difficult for the graduate to perform. You take the bones out of a man, and all you're left with is jelly!! Graduates are usually more informed about the globalised world, are abreast with new technology, more professional in their work, [have a] better sense of ethics, awareness of media laws and in the case of USP graduates, can usually adapt to any media be it print, radio, TV or online!

The disadvantage of having a degree is that sometimes you are shunned by peers/superiors who think you're after their seats!!

*Q: What is the essential role of the journalist in the Pacific?*

Simply to give a balanced view of what is happening and what is newsworthy.

*Q: Are concepts such as 'Fourth Estate' and 'watchdog' important for Fiji Islands and Pacific journalists?*

I believe it is important in any society — but I don't think it is taken very seriously in Fiji. Individual journalists like to think of themselves as the public watchdog — but it's self belief that doesn't last very long. Especially when any good work they do in exposing corruption in government etc does not get the desired, and most times the just, result/outcome. The public's attitude itself is to blame — most of the time, people just turn a blind eye to investigative work done by journalists. The other point is that there are just way too many interest groups that have a stake in the major media organisations. Is it important, yes! It is being practised, very little.

*Q: How important is the notion 'development journalism' in the Fiji Islands and the Pacific? How is it defined, and is it practised in the region?*

I must admit I am having a hard time defining this concept. I remember Ingrid [former USP broadcast lecturer Ingrid Leary-Atu — see interview 50] pointing to an Agriculture Ministry information officer, saying he was an example of a 'development journalist'. His job includes making documentaries and informative programmes for farmers around the country. Now if that is a definition to go by, then it is important because a lot of farmers depend on him for vital information on crops.

*Q: How well-informed do you think news media audiences are in the Fiji Islands?*

I think they are quite well-informed and, considering the number of news organisations, they usually get a wide range of news stories being covered from different perspectives.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in Fiji and the Pacific (status)?*

There are some journos who people hold in high regard and respect a lot. There are others who are seen as trash. Basically, it depends on how the journalist performs — if he does well, he gets respect.

*Q: Do you believe journalists/media have an influence on public opinion in Fiji?*

Yes, they do but not to the extent that it would make too much of a difference to society in the short term.

*Q: If there is influence, how important is it in the forming of public opinion?*

I don't think it is very important. It has its place, but it's not entirely responsible for what people think.

*Q: What is your view of the salary/wages structures for journalists? Is there adequate provision for a career path?*

There is no structure to begin with. The salary is much lower for journalism graduates if you compare [them] say with teachers/accountants and other similar graduates. If there is any provision for a career path, I don't see any right now. How else would you explain the high rate of turnover in media organisations?

*Q: Why are some journalism graduates choosing other careers in preference to working with a news media organisation?*

Money is number one. Two is respect and appreciation of their achievements and contributions. Three is no sight of a career path. Four discouragement. Five lack of opportunities ...

*Q: Do you believe the news media should be regarded as a watchdog, or should it be thought of as another business?*

Ideally, and I believe to a good extent, the news media is a watchdog for society. In fact it's one of the reasons why I became a journalist. But in this modern world, a lot depends on whether the media organisation can stay afloat as a business and indeed make a profit at the end of the financial year. For at least one newspaper in Fiji, advertising seems more important than news!

*Q: What is the actual situation in Fiji today?*

We're caught in the middle. I believe we're going through a transitional situation right now, where its very hard to say whether news media organisations are actually acting as watchdogs, or whether they are just there to serve the business interest of the organisations by attracting as much advertising dollar as possible. And using news as a front to disguise the organisation's real intentions!

*Q: Should freedom of the press reflect free expression for the media, or free expression for interest groups (the public)?*

Freedom of the press is freedom of expression for the media ... if freedom was to be confined to interest groups, you couldn't call it freedom, could you?

*Q. How important is investigative journalism as a measure of the media's commitment to its 'watchdog' role?*

If you don't have investigative journalism, you're not an active watchdog, are you? So if I apply that principle, it would an important measure.

*Q: Is investigative journalism encouraged in Fiji? How is this demonstrated?*

No, not at all. If you want to do it, it's on your own initiative. You have to do it in your own time, at your own cost and at your own risk! How many journalist here can do that or have the resources to do that? Hardly any!

*Q: How well resourced are Fiji news media for computer-assisted reporting (CAR)?*

Very poorly resourced.

*Q: Is culture a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

To a very small extent, yes.

*Q: Is religion a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

There are some journalists in Fiji who come from Methodist background who will play no part in any investigative work on the dealings and workings of the Methodist church in Fiji. Same goes for other religions as well. So it has to be an obstacle.

*Q: Does the Fiji Government support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

We always hear the rhetoric from ministers and parliamentarians about training for journalists and how we need to be more professional etc. But, apart from a number of scholarships for students study journalism at USP, there's hardly any other commitment.

*Q: How much political pressure do journalists face in the course of their work? Examples?*

Quite a bit. Just last week, one of the journos at work was in situation over a story on a major project in the Western Viti Levu. The story was a bit controversial – problems between landowning groups and a large developer. The journal had the story confirmed from three different sources ... and when he called the developer, who has political affiliation, to get confirmation of the rift, the developer slammed the phone – then called around to the bosses and applied enough pressure to put the story on hold! This sort of thing happens almost every day. Not always successfully .. but has an impact!

*Q: How much does rivalry between Pacific media organisations — such as PINA and PIBA, and PINA and USP — impact on journalism training and standards? What are the issues and how can they be resolved?*

A lot. As I see it, it was all personal between PINA and USP and it is personal between PINA and PIBA. How to resolve it? Get rid of the personal bickering. Co-operate and journalism on the whole will benefit.

*Q: Is there a need for more professional journalists associations (or unions) at the level of working journalists without management representation to lobby for better pay and working conditions, and professionalism?*

Yes, it would help the journos' cause for better working conditions/pay etc. It could also help to instill much needed solidarity among the journos.

## 57. TALEI TORA

***Soldier (Private) with the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) Media Cell. A BA graduate in Journalism and History/Politics from USP, she was a senior journalist and editor on Wansolwara newspaper. She currently makes military documentaries for the RFMF, Suva, Fiji Islands. Aged 24. Email interview in Suva, 29 June 2003.***

***Email address: [tjtora@yahoo.com](mailto:tjtora@yahoo.com)***

*Q: Three journalism schools based at universities — University of Papua New Guinea (J-programme, founded 1975), Divine Word University (1984), and University of the South Pacific (1994) — have produced graduates for the media industry for most of the past quarter century. The youngest programme, USP is the only truly regional provider with 43 graduates (a total of more than 55 graduates have come out of the programme) employed by 15 news media organisations in the Pacific. What are the benefits, if any, that you can see being offered in the region?*

In terms of the USP Journalism Programme, I think it's great for the regional media because the graduates are prepared for the workforce and have a good idea of what they are doing, between good journalism and bad journalism. The USP programme offers the three mediums, print, television and radio — and also online — and therefore the graduates are well rounded. Most journalists [in Fiji] come straight from high school and they learn on the job. And because of this the standard of journalism suffers, USP grads spend three years addressing the teething problems. I also think the USP programme is good because you establish contacts from around the region, one from students that they go to school with, the lecturers that they meet and the other second major that the students have to take alongside journalism.

*Q: What is the state of journalism education in the Pacific today? What are the main factors influencing journalism training/education and what are the challenges?*

The state of journalism education is really improving, especially with the introduction of more new technology and more funding coming into such programmes. This is because of the need for good governance, which states that there should be trained journalists in the media industry.

The factors influencing journalism training in Fiji involve the introduction of good governance and how it is now a receipt for aid. Therefore a trained, well-informed free media is a must. The challenges are in our case the Government (wanting to legislate the media) and sometimes senior journalists who feel that having a degree in journalism is useless — experience still counts. There is also culture (the Fijian chiefs) who, when highlighted in the media for any wrongdoing, say that the media is anti-Fijian or “trying to disrupt Fiji”.

*Q: Is journalism education important and why are so few journalists in the Pacific actually educated (outside of PNG where 73 per cent of journalists have a tertiary qualification)? How should journalists be prepared for their careers?*

Journalism education is very important because it provides students with the first learning steps and they face the teething problems well before they enter the work force. The media should not be used as a training ground, because people are affected by what they read or listen to or see on television. Journalism education ensures that the students fix these problems while they are learning and not when they actually write it in the newspaper or for any news.

So few journalists are actually educated because most do not have the time or the money to get an education and a lot in Fiji take on the attitude of their senior counterparts and think that they do not need an education after they've been working for some time. It is clearly the wrong attitude to have, there are always new things to learn. Also, like as in USP, you have to take another major so you also get to learn other areas and subjects.

I think journalists have to be very prepared for their careers because what they do write or say directly affects the lives of people in society. It is not a game, it is real and journalists can do quite a bit of damage with bad journalism.

*Q: Many Pacific societies are male dominated, yet in the last survey under this project, there was a slight majority of women journalists in PNG, and a slight minority of women journalists in Fiji. Why has journalism become a desirable career in the Pacific for women, given the many cultural obstacles?*

I think it's because women in Fiji sometimes tend — especially if they have had some form of education up to high school level— to be more socially aware of the issues that affect them, especially the rights of women and children and this is one way to right such wrongs. Women also love to write and therefore get such jobs. However, although I did not want to admit it, journalism in Fiji is very low paying. Women always tend to get such jobs in society, especially when this field of work does not require one to have anything more than a high school diploma. I don't think I have an answer for the last part of the question. But I'll give it a shot, I think the answer is similar to what I said at the top, it's because women are more aware of the issues, we love to write and of course anybody can become a journalist.

*Q: How would you rate the performance of graduate journalists in your experience in comparison with their age group peers in the newsroom who have had no formal training/education? Advantages? Disadvantages?*

I have not been in any newsroom except Fiji Television (and *Wansolwara*), but I keep in touch with all the USP journos who are in the work field. The few that tend to have the bad non performance stories to their name weren't very good at USP anyway, so it is not unexpected. On the whole, I think USP journalism graduates are doing very well and most of them in Fiji have really good jobs with a lot of them now working for NGOs. Most have become

spokespersons for their organisations (Stanley [Simpson] - ECREA, Peter [Emberson-Bain] - PCRC).

In the Fiji media, those with no formal training (especially if they are young) tend always to make mistakes that USP graduates know we should not do. I know for a fact that these young journos don't like us USP grads. I guess they feel threatened.

*Q: What is the essential role of the journalist in the Pacific?*

I think it is to keep the Government on its toes. Pacific Island governments are infamous for corruption and if was not for the media, they would get away with things. I also think the media is there to be the conscience of society over issues such as HIV/AIDS, cancer, rape and so on. I also think it is to help society differentiate between truth and rumor and to put different educated, well thought of perspectives on issues that affect society.

*Q: Are concepts such as 'Fourth Estate' and 'watchdog' important for Fiji Islands and Pacific journalists?*

Yes, I think they are very important, like what I said earlier. We are indeed watchdogs. As for the 'Fourth Estate', I see this being compromised more and more by our governments. We seem to be doing such a great job that they feel threatened, so they try to legislate us. Most Pacific Island governments are so corrupt and the media really becomes a watchdog and most times are kicked around like dogs (like how most people treat animals in the Pacific).

*Q: How important is the notion 'development journalism' in the Fiji Islands and the Pacific?*

*How is it defined, and is it practised in the region?*

Do you mean development journalism as in we help in nation-building or the development of journalism?

The first yes, I think the media is very important in nation-building. In the Pacific the media is very strong in changing people's views, and therefore can determine people's views towards nation-building.

The development of journalism, on the other hand, is also very important because there is always the need to improve the standard of information. Also technology is always changing and there are new and better ways to transmit information. The media must be ahead on this, before others who want to do no good for the industry get it first and transmit garbage journalism.

*Q: How well-informed do you think news media audiences are in the Fiji Islands?*

I think they are pretty well-informed. We are now in the age of the internet and it is making waves in Fiji, even the Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF) web site is frequented quite regularly by the locals. There is also the choice of medium which is now available and I know that people make use of them, television, print, radio and internet.

*Q: How are journalists perceived in Fiji and the Pacific (status)?*

The public don't tend to like journalists. They reckon we are whistle blowers and — like they say in Fiji — 'journalists try to disrupt the country and are always against the Government'. But naturally such comments come from people who are not very smart anyway. However, these are the exact people who put the wrong people in Government when it comes to voting and who can tend to support such events as the coup. At the middle class level, journalists are considered quite alright — and must be smart because they write about all different things.

*Q: Do you believe journalists/media have an influence on public opinion in Fiji?*

Yes, I do believe that we influence public opinion. Recently on Fiji Television's *Close-Up* programme, they have been getting people to vote by mobile text on their opinions on some issues and up to 1000 people can text in during the show. Also, the letters to the editor are increasing more and more and talk back shows seem to also have a great impact. This is evident also in the growing support for social issues such as HIV/AIDs and how people turn up to support the marches through town.

*Q: What is your view of the salary/wages structures for journalists? Is there adequate provision for a career path?*

I believe that we should start on about a \$9,000 a year (that is more than enough for a young journalist) and it should increase upon performance. Some of our graduates had no idea of anything when they joined the programme and still have no idea when they graduate and therefore it doesn't really matter if you have a degree.

No, I do not think there is adequate provision for a career path because it takes so long to climb the media ladder.

*Q: Why are some journalism graduates choosing other careers in preference to working with a news media organisation?*

The media organisations do not pay well and nowadays NGOs are looking for media officers with journalism degrees so why not work for them and get paid \$21,000 instead of the \$6,000 to \$7,000 in the media.

*Q: Do you believe the news media should be regarded as a watchdog, or should it be thought of as another business?*

As a watchdog, it is important for people to know that we are on their side and that is what we do. We need to have that independence, yet not be seen as a business making money out of news.

*Q: What is the actual situation in Fiji today?*

We are the watchdog who might lose its Fourth Estate position if the Government legislates the media. Right now, the dog has bitten the governments behind and they seem to have stalled their decision to legislate us for a while – but for how long, I think they're hoping it will all die down like everything else.

*Q: Should freedom of the press reflect free expression for the media, or free expression for interest groups (the public)?*

I think both, we are the watchdog and there are issues that we must highlight. However, we are also the voice of the public. I think there should be a balance, not one more than the other.

*Q: How important is investigative journalism as a measure of the media's commitment to its 'watchdog' role?*

It is very important, especially if one wants to get to the bottom of the story to turn over all the stones. Sometimes in Fiji, a scam is uncovered and everybody goes, 'Oh no!'. And then it dies down, no journalist actually digs deeper into the story. There are also many barriers to doing investigative journalism in the Pacific, we are too bound by culture and there is a strong coconut wireless, someone is bound to find out what you're up to and do you in and then it's all downhill from there.

*Q: Is investigative journalism encouraged in Fiji? How is this demonstrated?*

I'm not sure if it is encouraged, because most major stories are released by whistleblowers. We somehow tend to be in the on-the-spot news business.

*Q: How well resourced are Fiji news media for computer-assisted reporting (CAR)?*

I know that the USP journalism newsroom definitely needs more computers, but for other newsrooms, I'm not too sure. I know that all newsrooms have computers, at least two to three people per PC. It seems to get the job done.

*Q: Is culture a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

Yes, of course it would be, culture is the biggest obstacle because it has such a hold on people. It really shouldn't matter to journalists but we are bound by it and most times if we write about chiefs (in a bad way) we are considered anti-Fijian or to be disrespecting the chief and the vanua. Also we all tend to be related in the islands, what if you do some investigation and you find out its your family, the village and your whole clan involved and then eventually you yourself and intertwined into it by actually having been at the meeting or given some money to fund it.

*Q: Is religion a major obstacle to the investigative role of the news media?*

I don't think so. Most journalists tend to keep religion out of their work. But in Fiji it can, the Methodist Church is quite disruptive. Most people in Government and really the rest of Fiji are Methodists and as much as the church says it keeps out of politics, through its members it creates obstacles for journalists. So, yes it is a big problem.

*Q: Does the Fiji Government support or obstruct journalism education and training?*

I think it is indifferent and does not care much. It is more interested in legislating the media instead of educating the media so that the standard improves.

*Q: How much political pressure do journalists face in the course of their work? Examples?*

They face a lot of political pressure. Sometimes when they write something bad about the Government they are said to be Labour supporters and vice versa. Also the Government thinks that journalists should only write good things that happen in Fiji (to promote nation-building and reconciliation) and by reporting on bad things they are only trying to disrupt the nation and are not interested in reconciliation. For example, when the Minister of Information stated that this was one of the reasons why the Government wanted to legislate the media. I think he said it in the Media Council Editors Forum, hosted by *The Fiji Times*.

*Q: How much does rivalry between Pacific media organisations — such as PINA and PIBA, and PINA and USP — impact on journalism training and standards? What are the issues and how can they be resolved?*

Mostly it affected the students who have nothing to do with the personal battles that are going on. The cronies picked on us for absolutely no reason, bringing disrepute to the degrees we were to attain and nearly ensuring that no-one would employ us. I didn't understand then. I don't understand now and really I don't want to understand. I think it is all pathetic and just a bunch of cronies arguing among each other when there is enough media to go around for all of them, funny thing is it's the expats not the locals.

*Q: Is there a need for more professional journalists associations (or unions) at the level of working journalists without management representation to lobby for better pay and working conditions, and professionalism?*

Of course there is, but who has the guts to do it? Also most journalists don't seem to feel as much about the pay provisions as we [university graduates] do.

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