



The Director, National and Community Broadcasting,
Department of Communications and the Arts, Canberra, ACT, Australia

Submission to the Review of Australian Broadcasting Services in the Asia-Pacific.

PACIFIC MEDIA CENTRE [Auckland University of Technology, Auckland, New Zealand]

This submission may be made public.

Introduction

The Pacific Media Centre as part of the School of Communication Studies within Auckland University of Technology is directly engaged with Pacific islands communities, providing media services, training and education for practitioners, conferences and colloquia which bring together participants from academic or media settings to discuss and analyse key issues, with an overall objective to assist with communication and media development, especially in cultivation of civil society.

Some detail on the scope of activities and outputs of the PMC:

- **[Pacific Journalism Review](#)**, NZ's only SCOPUS ranked communication studies research journal and the flagship publication on AUT's Tuwhera research Open Access [platform of eight university journals](#), and **[Pacific Journalism Monographs](#)**, with a commitment to Indigenous and vernacular media research:
- **[Bearing Witness climate change project](#)**: For Pacific and other diversity students to carry out an experiential project in Fiji in partnership with AUT's *Te Ara Motuhenga* and the University of the South Pacific.

Continuing over the past three years, the latest team completed a documentary in June 2018, *Banabans of Rabi: A Story of Survival*.

- **Pacific Media Watch freedom project:** A programme carried out in collaboration with the Paris-based Reporters Without Borders. This annual position provides an opportunity for a Pacific or other diversity student to gain professional experience (paid work 10 hours a week) in an Asia-Pacific and global context.
- **NZ Institute for Pacific Research (NZIPR) collaboration:** One or two students a year are selected for a media internship to work with the institute to further public awareness and knowledge of Pacific media research. Facilitated and supervised by the PMC.
- **Publication of Asia Pacific Report:** A news and current affairs website devoted to “diversity” issues and topics ignored or shut out by mainstream with a unique content sharing agreement with Radio New Zealand.

As observers and actors in the field, at this Centre we have enjoyed active associations with the overseas broadcasting services of Australia and New Zealand, and currently have a content sharing agreement with Radio New Zealand Pacific (formerly RNZ International) and the objective of this short submission is to affirm the importance of these services.

Statement

A research article by Dr Matt Mollgaard (2016) from our affiliated School of Communication Studies at AUT succinctly set out the important functions of Radio New Zealand International (now RNZ Pacific) as one such service in the region shared with Australia:

Radio New Zealand International plays a pivotal role in sourcing and reporting reliable information for audiences in the Pacific Islands, New Zealand and elsewhere. It is a proudly independent news service, claiming to suffer little or no direct interference in its operations or outputs from the New Zealand government, even when this reporting could be seen to be potentially damaging to New Zealand’s international diplomatic efforts. They are also an exemplar of democratic media freedoms in a region that has too few examples. This role is arguably as important as any attempt to turn the service into a ‘mouthpiece’ of the New Zealand government, however tempting that might be. Funding an accurate, fair and reliable

news service in the Pacific is an appropriate application of New Zealand’s ‘soft power’ approach to international affairs—demonstrating the benefits of a functional, dynamic and open democracy with a trade-based economy reliant on solid transnational partnerships and good international governance. Added to this ability to project preferred political settings into the region is RNZI’s role in supporting journalists from Pacific countries in their efforts to provide accurate and timely information and to develop their journalistic practice. This ‘capacity building’ helps to strengthen local media outlets in the Islands, further enhancing democratic developments in the region. The critical involvement of a free, informed and engaged media is a continuing challenge for most nations of the Pacific. New Zealand has a significant and critical presence in the media of the South Pacific, which enhances the security and stability of the whole region.

(Mollgaard, 2016)

In his historical review, Dr Mollgard took into account the impacts of “digitisation” on communication, mandating the use of new channels and forms of service, as well as political impediments: hostile interest-group activity against public media generally, and associated budget restraints. Ultimately the rationale for providing service and obtaining valid influence on the part of the host broadcaster country was seen as remaining durable.

Working links between PMC and RNZ Pacific exist through professional links with the broadcasters and through our formal licence to republish part of the valuable output of their service and for them to draw on our content.

We know that the New Zealand broadcaster, like ourselves, has noted the withdrawal of Radio Australia services, after several decades of habitual collaboration and fruitful broadcast of varied, different products.

The current situation has weakened the thin link that many parts of the South Pacific region have with the “outside world”, and has impelled the New Zealand broadcasters to feel they must stretch their resources to do more, to “make up for” what has been removed.

We must respectfully state that in several aspects, withdrawal of Australian broadcasting from the South Pacific is a sorry loss to people and cultures – as we

know them well from the accumulation of studies and from our own media production exercises at this Centre.

As Dr Mollgaard observed, services such as RNZ Pacific and Radio Australia, the salient examples in our region, have always demonstrated great propensity to stimulate democratic life and uphold media freedoms, while advancing national interests, whether to enhance diplomatic positions (far more often the case than not) and “bottom-line” considerations such as good trade relations.

Regular reporting by the broadcasters has supplemented and assisted national development assistance, through contributing to knowledge about needs and option aid, and through publicising and illustrating the outcomes of programmes.

Conclusion

The present submission is made to impress upon the inquiry that restoration of Radio Australia services and other ABC services that may be made accessible in the South Pacific region, would be highly positive.

It would be most widely welcomed in the island countries, valued, and made good use of as in the past, with assuredly benefits to the originating media service and to Australian interests.

It would compensate for loss, due to reduction in services, being attributed most widely in the region to a sad error – “there must be some terrible mistake”. Where RNZ Pacific has been developing its services well (notably in moving to convert its force of citizen correspondents to regular journalist-stringers, and in putting far more material online, including transcripts of programmes and an effectual comprehensive service of scripted news briefs), it cannot compensate for the loss of RA in the region. It has always lacked the corporate strength of the ABC behind the broadcasting operation, in terms of depth of resources, and also the overall audience reach of the larger broadcaster.

As previously indicated, at the Pacific Media Centre we believe these observations to be sound and reasonable, founded on our accumulation of expertise and regional knowledge, and the respect for cultures which we seek to uphold.

The PMC would be pleased to oblige should any further information or elaboration of our position be sought.



Professor David Robie
Director
Pacific Media Centre (PMC)
Auckland

31 July 2018

Acknowledgement: The Pacific Media Centre would like to acknowledge and thank the collaboration and assistance of Brisbane-based research associate and member of the *Pacific Journalism Review* editorial board, Dr Lee Duffield, in preparing this submission.

Reference documents:

1. About Radio New Zealand Pacific, (RNZ Pacific publication, n.d.)
www.radionz.co.nz/international/about

Radio New Zealand Pacific (formerly known as RNZI) broadcasts in digital and analogue short wave to radio stations and individual listeners across the Pacific region. Around twenty Pacific radio stations relay RNZ Pacific material daily, and individual short-wave listeners and internet users across the world tune in directly to RNZ Pacific content. The RNZ Pacific signal can sometimes be heard as far away as Japan, North America, the Middle East and Europe.

Our website provides a comprehensive Pacific news service with the very latest Pacific stories and an extensive online news archive. Also available are transcripts of daily Pacific current affairs programme *Dateline Pacific*, a live audio feed, and on-demand and podcast audio for our programmes.

Flagship daily current affairs programme *Dateline Pacific* is widely listened to across the region and is also broadcast by the BBC Pacific Service. The World Radio Network (WRN) an international broadcaster operating out of London - also broadcasts RNZ Pacific material throughout the US, Europe, Africa and

Asia.

RNZ Pacific broadcasts primarily in English but bulletins in selected Pacific languages can be heard in breakfast sessions.

RNZ Pacific news and programmes can also be heard in New Zealand on Radio New Zealand National, *Tagata o te Moana* on Saturday afternoons and *Dateline Pacific* as part of *Late Edition*.

The service was named 2007 International Radio Station of the Year by the Association for International Broadcasting (AIB). RNZ Pacific also won the Most Innovative Partnership category recognising the way it works with local Pacific media.

Former awards have included Commonwealth Broadcasting Association Rolls-Royce Awards for Excellence.

2. Mollgaard M. (2016). Radio Pacific International: Reporting the Pacific in tight times, *Pacific Journalism Review*, 22(2): 103-116
<https://doi.org/10.24135/pjr.v22i2.72>
3. Pacific Media Centre Brochure 2018 (attached).
“The Pacific Media Centre is the only media research and resource centre of its kind in Aotearoa/New Zealand and has a strategic focus on Māori, Pasifika, inclusive and diversity media and community development. It is part of the AUT School of Communication Studies.”



Pacific Media Watch

Twenty two years of Pacific regional media freedom, ownership, ethics and human rights reports have become a Creative Commons digital depository as part of the new PMC Online website. PMW also provides a daily news outlet for AUT postgraduate students writing on Asia-Pacific media affairs. Final year Bachelor of Communication Studies student Leilani Sitagata is the PMW reporter for 2018.
www.pacmediawatch.aut.ac.nz



Human rights and Pacific violence

Peace journalism, human rights, development and domestic violence research have been gaining recognition for social change communication research paradigms in the Asia-Pacific region. Rahul Dev Bhattarai, originally from Nepal, and Pauline Mago-King from Papua New Guinea are among our team.



Pacific research media collaboration

The Pacific Media Centre is collaborating with the NZ Institute for Pacific Research to provide journalism, multimedia and profiles about Pacific researchers and projects. Postgraduate digital media student Sri Krishnamurthi is carrying out the project this year. Fiji-born Sri has extensive journalism and media management policy experience with more than 20 years as a journalist with the NZ Press Association.
www.nzipr.ac.nz

Independent Pacific news, analysis and commentary



Asia Pacific Report is a regional "hub" partnership venture between the PMC

and Multimedia Investments Ltd (publishers of *Evening Report*). Students on the postgraduate Asia-Pacific Journalism paper publish their multimedia news portfolio on this site.
www.asiapacificreport.nz



2018 'Bearing Witness' on climate change project

Hele Ikimotu and Blessen Tom travelled to Fiji in April 2018 for a series of multimedia reports on climate change. Their mission included a trip to Rabi island, a subject for their forthcoming documentary.

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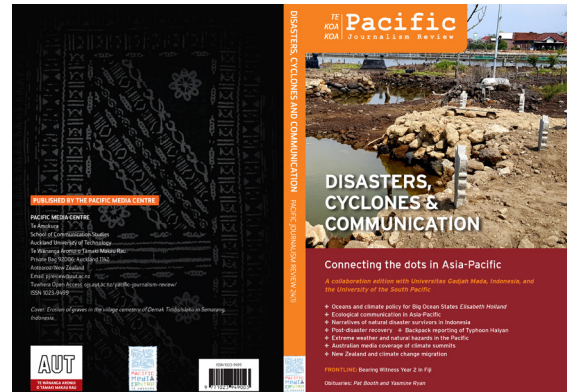
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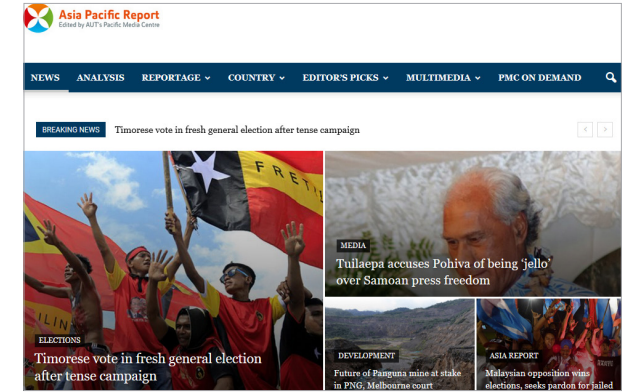




Professor David Robie, Director



Pacific Journalism Review



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Pacific Media Centre activities include:

- Pacific Media Watch Nius and digital media freedom project
- Book, journal and research publication
- Asia Pacific Report news and current affairs
- EveningReport, LiveNews, Foreign Affairs and The Daily Blog websites
- Public seminars
- TOKTOK newsletter
- Pacific Journalism Review research journal and Pacific Journalism Monographs
- NZ Institute for Pacific Research collaboration



Director: Professor David Robie

PMC Advisory Board Chair: Associate Professor Camille Nakhid



Dr Sylvia C Frain
SRIF postdoctoral researcher

PACIFIC JOURNALISM REVIEW

ISSN 1023 9499

Pacific Journalism Review, founded at the University of Papua New Guinea in 1994, is a peer-reviewed research journal covering media issues and communication in the South Pacific, Asia-Pacific, Australia and New Zealand. Since 2002, the journal has been published by AUT and the Pacific Media Centre. In 2010, *PJR* won a global Creative Industries Award in Beijing.

More information: ojs.aut.ac.nz/pacific-journalism-review/



Del Abcede
PJR designer and TOKTOK newsletter editor.

Partnerships

- Asia New Zealand Foundation, Wellington
- Asian Congress for Media and Communication Centre (ACMC), Taipei
- Asian Media Information and Communication Centre (AMIC), Manila
- Asia-Pacific Human Rights Coalition (APHRC)
- Evening Report, LiveNews and Foreign Affairs, Auckland
- International Federation of Journalists (IFJ), Brussels
- Kaniva Tonga, Auckland
- Little Island Press, Auckland
- Pacific Islands Media Association (PIMA), Auckland
- Pasifika Foundation, Hawai'i
- Radio New Zealand Pacific, Wellington
- Reporters Sans Frontières, Paris
- Scoop Media, Wellington
- Taimi Media Network, Nuku'alofa
- University of Santo Tomas, Manila
- University of the South Pacific, Suva
- Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)

PACIFIC MEDIA CENTRE PUBLICATIONS

- *Conflict, Culture & Conscience: Photojournalism and the Pacific Media Centre 2007-2017*, edited by Jim Marbrook, Del Abcede, Natalie Robertson and David Robie. AUT Pacific Media Centre (2017). ISBN 978-1-927184-45-5
- *Watching our Words: Perceptions of self-censorship and media freedom in Fiji*, by Ricardo Morris. *Pacific Journalism Monographs No. 6*. (Series edited by David Robie). Pacific Media Centre, Auckland.
- *Pacific Way: Auckland's Pasifika community diaspora media*, by Michael Neilson. *Pacific Journalism Monographs No 5*. (Series edited by David Robie). Pacific Media Centre, Auckland. ISBN 978-1-927184-35-6
- *Eyes of Fire: The Last Voyage of the Rainbow Warrior*, by David Robie. Little Island Press and the AUT Pacific Media Centre (2015). ISBN 978-1-877314-46-3
- *Don't Spoil My Beautiful Face: Media, Mayhem and Human Rights in the Pacific*, by David Robie. Little Island Press and the AUT Pacific Media Centre (2014). ISBN 978-1-877484-25-4
- *Dreadlocks: Oceans, Islands and Skies*, edited by Mohit Prasad. University of the South Pacific and the Pacific Media Centre (2013). ISBN 978-1-927184-02-8

