



# Pacific CONNECTION

Issue 17, September – November 2008

The magazine of the Pacific Cooperation Foundation



The region on show:  
Pacific collections in NZ

IN THIS ISSUE: Pacific Arts Festival • Melanesia Symposium • Urwin and Aukuso: humble giants

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# Editorial

This, the 17th issue of *Pacific Connection*, is being published as New Zealanders look forward to spring replacing a very wet winter almost everywhere in the country – except the catchment of the South Island hydro lakes.

But compared with many countries of the Pacific, New Zealand has little to complain about when it comes to the provision of basic services. Most of us have ready access to power, water, sanitation, high-quality communications, free public health care and many other services. Indeed, we take most of them for granted except when there is a rare failure.

Despite the absence or limited provision of many of these services, and the real hardship and suffering this causes, Pacific people are still able to sing and dance and express themselves joyfully in many aspects of their lives. This edition of *Pacific Connection* features images from the 2008 Pacific Arts Festival, held in American Samoa, which celebrated the best in Pacific arts and cultures, and exemplified the importance of these high human qualities in the life of Pacific peoples.

We also feature articles on museums around New Zealand and focus on a PCF project that will bring together information about our Pacific collections, so that it will eventually be available to all countries of the region. This is a long-term endeavour, but one that will help to maintain links between our modern populations and the cultures and traditions from which we have come over the centuries.

You may also notice that this edition of *Pacific Connection* has a new look. Our aim is to bring readers more content in the coming year, and the new style gives us more space for articles – we hope you like it.

Vince McBride, Chief Executive

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The Pacific Cooperation Foundation, a registered charitable trust, is an independent public/private partnership that acts as a catalyst to increase understanding and strengthen relationships between New Zealand and its Pacific neighbours.

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Cover: Festival of Pacific Arts, Pago Pago, American Samoa, July 2008. Photo: Julia Brooke-White.

# Museums network promotes Pacific heritage

Promoting Pacific culture and heritage through exhibitions is a key goal for the New Zealand Pacific Museums Network, writes network facilitator and Pacific Cooperation Foundation (PCF) programme manager David Vaeafe.

Long before Pacific peoples started migrating to New Zealand in the 1950s, missionaries and other travellers were exploring the region and bringing back artefacts for their private collections, which in turn they donated to local museums.

This vast collection of Pacific cultural heritage is something we need to celebrate because it makes up an important part of New Zealand's history and its identity as a Pacific nation.

Discussion with New Zealand's major museums led to the formation of the New Zealand Pacific Museums Network (NZPMN). Initial membership started with half a dozen institutions spread from Auckland to Dunedin. It now stands at 14, and includes members from as far north as Paihia and south to Invercargill, as well as a regional Pacific museum organisation based in Port Vila, Vanuatu. The network meets annually and has set some

key projects to work on in the coming years. These include a Pacific collections survey covering all artefacts held in New Zealand museums (see story below) and an internship programme to build skill capacity amongst museum staff in the Pacific. The network's key objectives are to:

- » Strengthen the capability of New Zealand museums and their Pacific Islands collections and to improve the museums' ability to display and project these collections.
- » Increase New Zealand's awareness and understanding of Pacific Islands' cultures through access to these collections.
- » Strengthen linkages between New Zealand museums and those in the Pacific Islands to improve the ability of Pacific Islands peoples and states to retain their culture in their indigenous environments.



David Vaeafe

NZPMN members are: Pompallier Mission, Auckland War Memorial Museum, Waikato Museum, Puke Ariki Museum, Pataka Museum, Wellington Museum of City and Sea, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Alexander Turnbull Library, Museums Aotearoa, Canterbury Museum, Otago Museum, Southland Museum & Art Gallery, the Pacific Islands Museums Association (based in Vanuatu) and the Pacific Cooperation Foundation.

## Surveying our hidden treasures

Tucked away in museum and art gallery storage rooms around New Zealand are thousands of Pacific artefacts that tell of a rich history little known by many Kiwis.

To help understand and take stock of who has what in terms of Pacific artefacts and collections, the New Zealand Pacific Museums Network (NZPMN) has commissioned a survey of all Pacific artefacts and collections throughout New Zealand.

Network facilitator David Vaeafe, with the Pacific Cooperation Foundation, says the first survey of Pacific cultural material in New Zealand museums was in 1980, commissioned by the New Zealand National Commission for UNESCO and the Art Galleries and Museums Association of New Zealand.

"This work was carried out by Roger Neich from the National Museum of New Zealand at the time [now Te Papa] and it identified that there were a total of 57,051 Pacific artefacts held in 29 New Zealand museums and institutions. In the past 28 years their collections have either grown or diminished, some even shifting to other museums.

"It is important for the network to take stock of these collections and where they are now, so updating the initial work is the first step for this project."

The Pacific collections survey is a three-phase project – updating the information, adding detail and digitising the collections. The result will be a searchable computer database.

Masters museum studies student Chloe Searle, from Victoria University of Wellington, is to undertake the work.

Mr Vaeafe says the history behind the acquisition of some of the Pacific collections in New Zealand museums is a story in itself.

For example, what is referred to as the Oldman collection was purchased in 1948 by the New Zealand Government from London dealer William Oldman. His collection consisted of Maori and Pacific artefacts, which were divided up among the four metropolitan museums. Each received different parts of the collection as follows:

- » Auckland War Memorial Museum – Society, Austral, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, New Hebrides and Santa Cruz Islands.
- » National Museum – New Zealand, Marquesas, New Caledonia, Bismark Archipelago and Admiralty Islands.
- » Canterbury Museum – Hawaii, Easter, Mangareva and Solomon Islands.
- » Otago Museum – Cook, Micronesia and New Guinea Islands.

More common material from the collection was allocated to provincial museums.

"There are some interesting facts in the initial survey – the Otago Museum has 15,640 Pacific artefacts, of which the majority are from the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea.

"At the other end of the scale, the Te Awamutu Museum has just 141 pieces, mainly from Solomon Islands, Fiji, Cook Islands, Samoa and PNG," Mr Vaeafe says.

"Not many people realise that Otago Museum has such an extensive Melanesian collection, and that it is a permanent exhibit."

He says the survey will provide valuable information for the network, and enable its members to identify potential material for exhibitions and share their knowledge with other institutions.

"There have been a number of Pacific exhibitions in New Zealand recently and in the future we hope to have at least one or two each year."

*For further information on the New Zealand Pacific Museums Network or the Pacific Collections Survey Project, see [www.pcf.org.nz](http://www.pcf.org.nz) (click on the 'What We Do' tab), or contact David Vaeafe, Pacific Cooperation Foundation, ph 04 931 9390, email [david@pcf.org.nz](mailto:david@pcf.org.nz).*

# Auckland: actively acquiring

A large and significant part of the Auckland War Memorial Museum's ethnographic collection is its Pacific material. Islands right across the Pacific are represented, from Rapanui in the east, the Hawaiian Islands in the north, Irian Jaya in the west and Aotearoa, New Zealand in the south, writes the museum's Pacific collection curator Fuli Pereira.

Auckland Museum houses New Zealand's leading ethnology collection, as well as European, Asian and New Zealand applied arts, and botanical, marine, land vertebrate and invertebrate specimens.

Several significant collections are held in the Pacific ethnology department. One of these was brought together by James Edge-Partington, who in 1879, aged 25, embarked on his first voyage from Britain to the Pacific and personally acquired the pieces in his collection. Apart from his extensive travels within Australia he also visited Fiji, Tonga, Samoa and New Zealand.

In 1924, Edge-Partington's collection of approximately 2500 pieces was purchased in England by a brother and sister, and presented by them to the museum in memory of their father Dr TW Leys, who had had a long and distinguished association with the Auckland Museum.

William Oldman brought together another of our important collections, but unlike Edge-Partington, he never travelled to the Pacific. Instead, he assembled his Pacific collection in England while working as an artefacts dealer.

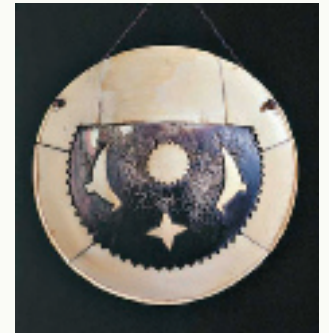
Oldman became very knowledgeable about Pacific artefacts, and set aside some of the best pieces for himself. In 1948 the New Zealand Government purchased the Oldman collection and distributed it among the main New Zealand museums.

One of the strengths of the Pacific collection is the Melanesian material. Early Auckland was an

important port for companies with commercial and trading interests in the Pacific, and a significant post for various Pacific missions. Within this context Auckland Museum acquired collection items almost directly from the field.



An interesting Melanesian collection is that brought to New Zealand in the 1950s by Russell Bond, a missionary with the Unevangelised Field Missions in Dutch West New Guinea, now known



*Left: figure from Raivavae, Austral Islands. It is part of the Oldman collection, and is in Taiwan at present with the Vaka Moana exhibition. Above, top left: moai kavakava, Rapanui, Easter Island. Top right: 'Dani necklace' from the Baliem Valley. Above: Fijian breastplate of whale's teeth ivory and black-lipped pearl shell cut and shaped to fit together – the lashed joins can only be seen from the back.*

as Irian Jaya. The museum acquired around 100 pieces from Bond, all from the Baliem Valley.

Bond's collection constitutes a 'first contact' collection. By the early 1950s the Dutch administration had not yet brought the Baliem Valley 'under control'. The area, at an altitude of 6000 feet, is interior New Guinea Highlands, and at the time there were tribes totalling an estimated 80,000 people.

Having been given permission to enter the area, the staff of the Unevangelised Field Missions were the first Europeans that many of the people of the Baliem Valley had met.

Apart from collections brought together by interested individuals, Auckland Museum has actively acquired, and so developed, its own significant collections. For example, the tapa, shields, jewellery and canoe collections are some of the most extensive in this part of the world. Some of these pieces are part of the collections mentioned earlier, but most were acquired from other donors or vendors.

Our goal is to make our collections and information about them as accessible as possible. To this end, we publish books and articles on our collections, and continually upgrade our databases, which can be accessed at the museum, as well as sets of collection data that are published online when possible.

The staff at Auckland Museum have worked hard particularly over the past few years to increase the number of visits to the museum by Pacific people, with a lot of success. I very much hope this trend continues.

## Finding the perfect home

Established in October 1852, the Auckland Museum was one of New Zealand's first museums. It moved around several locations in the Grafton area to accommodate the growing collections, before fund raising began in 1918 for the construction of a permanent building.

An international design search was won by a New Zealand firm, and the neo-classical building that emerged sits on Pukekawa hill, to the east of the city. The official opening and consecration ceremony for the Auckland War Memorial Museum was held on 28 November 1929. It is considered one of New Zealand's finest heritage buildings.

In 1994, Stage I of a refurbishment and seismic strengthening programme began, coupled with redevelopment of the permanent galleries. This was completed in 1999. During the redevelopment, the majority of the museum's world-class collections were housed in a warehouse across town. Stage II began in 2000. New extensions increased the museum's floor area by 60 percent and provided better collection storage, exhibition workshops and educational facilities. Stage II was completed in December 2006.

A feature of the new building is its atrium, with a suspended extension clad in Fijian kauri and the design based on Pacific kava bowls. It is a clear statement of Auckland's and New Zealand's place in the Pacific.

# Te Papa: representing visual culture and history

The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa focuses on the histories, art and, increasingly, the visual culture of Pacific peoples in New Zealand, writes senior curator Pacific cultures Sean Mallon.

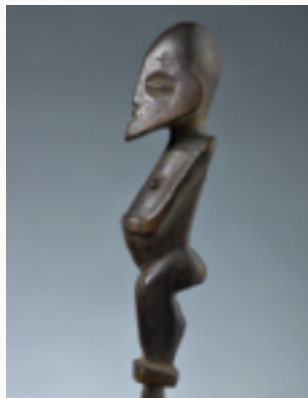
It is only since 1993 that Te Papa has managed its Pacific treasures as a separate collection. For most of the institution's history, Pacific items formed a significant part of what was called the Foreign Ethnology collection. As currently defined, the collection consists of about 13,000 items and includes both historical and contemporary material from the Pacific Islands, including Papua New Guinea but excluding Indonesia, the Philippines and Australia. An exception is made for the Torres Strait Islands, part of Australia but culturally more aligned to Papua New Guinea. There is now an important focus on the histories, art and material cultures of Pacific peoples living in New Zealand.

The Pacific collection has been shaped by changing institutional and curatorial priorities, which have in turn been influenced by the history of New Zealand as a Pacific nation, the roles that New Zealanders have played in the Pacific islands, and the migration of Pacific peoples to New Zealand in recent decades. What began as a comparative collection of ethnographic 'specimens' – in other words, objects collected in the scientific study of peoples and cultures – has broadened to include contemporary works by known artists. This expansion of the collection's scope has tended to blur the boundaries between the Pacific, Maori, history and art collections.

The nucleus of the collection is a small but important group of items acquired by the Colonial Museum in the nineteenth century. These include objects given by British administrators in the Pacific, such as Sir Arthur Gordon and the Marquess of Normanby, and the gift in 1872 by the Rarotongan chief Te Aia of his splendid cloak.

Among the acquisitions of the twentieth century, two important components stand out. The first is a series of four separate gifts, between 1912 and 1962, of Maori, Pacific and Native American items associated with the voyages of English navigator

and explorer James Cook. In 1912, Lord St Oswald unexpectedly presented his family collection to the Dominion of New Zealand. Not all the St Oswald collection derives from Cook's voyages, but it includes such treasures as the cloak and helmet given to Cook by the Hawaiian chief Kalani'pu'u. In 1955, the Imperial Institute gave the Colonial Museum a significant collection of items associated with Cook. This had been in the possession of Queen Victoria and had been given to the institute by Edward VII. Cook himself may have given these items to George III after his second voyage.



In 1948, the New Zealand Government purchased the Maori and Pacific collection of the London dealer William Oldman. The collection was divided on indefinite loan among the four large New Zealand metropolitan museums, with small amounts also going to smaller public museums. Known then as the Dominion Museum, Te Papa received the bulk of the Maori, Marquesan, New Caledonian and Admiralty Island components of the collection, together with small numbers of items from other island groups. Because these items had passed through various sale rooms in Britain, they often lack detailed information on their origins or historical context, but their quality is outstanding.

Since the early 1990s, collection development



Above: Niuean hiapo (tapa cloth), 1800s.

Left: Female figure c.1800s, attributed to the Cook Islands.

at Te Papa has increasingly aimed to represent the visual culture and history of Pacific peoples in New Zealand. The scope is broad and ranges from contemporary high art and fashion through to new forms of weaving, tivaevae and tapa that migrants have brought with them to New Zealand. Complicating this changing curatorial focus is the fact that many island-based communities have become transnational in nature as a result of developments in telecommunications, air travel, email and print media.

Migrant communities throughout the world can now retain a sense of connectedness that transcends national boundaries. This is reflected in material and intangible forms – for example, a mat or quilt made by Tongan women in Los Angeles may be sent to Tonga as a gift and later brought to New Zealand to celebrate an important family event. In the same way, kava drinking in New Zealand-based Tongan communities involves the importation of kava from Tonga, but there are various local manifestations in terms of how it is valued culturally and consumed.

As Te Papa develops its understanding of the global connections Pacific peoples are making with each other and the world, its collections will continue to grow in ways that record these stories.

[www.pacificresearchonline.com](http://www.pacificresearchonline.com)



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We invite you to use Pacificresearchonline to search for a wide range of subject matters, publications, scholars and research projects related to the Pacific region.

A partnership project between the Pacific Cooperation Foundation and the Build Research Capacity in Social Science Network.

# Museum of Wellington: significant exhibitions

By Brett Mason, director of the Museum of Wellington City and Sea.

Over the past five years the Museum of Wellington has developed two significant temporary exhibitions on Pacific subjects, as well as its Pacific content on permanent display.

In our permanent exhibition *Telling Tales – Wellington's 20th Century* we tell two important Pacific stories. The first explores the 1960s migration wave with its 1966 story *South Pacific City*, illustrated by artist Michel Tuffery. *Fale in the City* explores the beautifully constructed Congregational Christian Church of Samoa – *Ekalesia Fa'apopotoga Kerisiano I Samoa* in Newtown that opened in 1984. In the first of these stories we are commenting on how Pacific peoples established themselves into New Zealand life, and with the fale, how its structure amongst the surrounding European houses added a distinctly Samoan presence to the local skyline.

In June 1884, the Union Steamship Company ran the first tourist cruise from New Zealand, visiting Fiji, Samoa and Tonga. The photographer Alfred Burton of Burton Bros, was onboard the *Wairarapa* for the trip and it is his photographs that were exhibited in *Innocents Abroad*, our 2006 New Zealand International Arts Festival exhibition, a collaboration with the museum and the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

For *Innocents Abroad* we drew together for the text three voices – the colonial, Pacific and the curator's viewpoint. The Pacific writers were Larry Thomas, playwright and filmmaker of Fiji; Momoe von Reiche, poet and artist of Samoa; US-based

poet Dan Taulapapa McMullin, writing on American Samoa; and on Tonga, academic Dr 'Okusitino Mahina with his daughter, Te Papa's Pacific curator Kolokesa Mahina-Tu'ai.

The exhibition was developed on the concepts of time and space through a blending of Polynesian and European exhibition practices. To achieve this, Samoan-born architect Albert Refiti created a sense of 'paradise' through a fale or bure-like structure in a space painted bright yellow. A soundscape by Plan 9 re-interpreted ship sounds, and Pacific sounds and music plus a scent of coconut added to the effect. *Innocents Abroad* had a substantial catalogue including an essay by New Zealand-Samoan poet Tusiata Avia.

For the visitor, the experience went beyond romantic exoticism to explore the realities of life in the South Pacific in 1884 – the British, German and American colonial aspirations in the region at that time, and today's Pacific viewpoint of this era. After its time at the museum, *Innocents Abroad* was toured by Te Papa to eight venues nationwide.

In 2007 the museum, in collaboration with the Musee de Bourail, in Noumea, created *War in Paradise* for the New Caledonia-New Zealand season. Little is also known by New Zealanders of New Caledonia, their closest neighbour. Also little is known by New Zealanders of our participation

in the Pacific arm of World War II. For example, people were surprised to hear that New Zealand had 20,000 members of the armed services pass through New Caledonia during the war.

The story of the Third New Zealand Division in New Caledonia was told through a selection of official photographs and extracts from the division's unofficial history series. However, *War in Paradise* was not an exploration of war but rather the soldiers' experiences and notions of the place they were in. In particular, it considered how the soldiers related to the local people – Kanak, French, Indonesian and Vietnamese – and coped with living in 'the Paris of the Pacific' while preparing to confront the Japanese.

Alongside the historic images was a fresh look at Bourail and the New Zealand War Cemetery and Memorial in New Caledonia through recent photographs by Paul Thompson. Once again, we created an installation for the visitor combining the old and new imagery and setting a revelatory environment and a unique view of life in a Pacific country during a time of war. The soundscape played popular music from the period, with both New Zealand and American favourites, and a taste of French. A mingling of Kanaka chants was blended into the ambient music that transported the visitor to New Caledonia of the 1940s. *War in Paradise* was a finalist in the inaugural Museums Aotearoa awards for 2008 in the innovation category by contributing to best practice, and demonstrating excellence, relevance and vision. It is to be exhibited at the Auckland Museum in 2009.

The Museum of Wellington City and Sea is continuing its engagement with Pacific communities through Access Radio, with three of its community radio shows due to play in November 2008. One of the programmes is 'ZCO Tonga', and the community will have the opportunity to populate the *Welcome* exhibition with objects and stories, as well as to broadcast their show from the museum for a month in December.

*From left: PCF programme manager David Vaeafe, chief executive Vince McBride and Samoan High Commissioner HE Asi Blakelock, at the opening of Innocents Abroad.*



# Otago Museum: collection continues to grow

The Otago Museum has a long history of collecting Oceanic artefacts, writes Moira White, curator – humanities.

The Otago Museum was established in 1868 and has occupied its present site on Great King Street, Dunedin, since 1877. Its collections of Oceanic artefacts, displayed in our Pacific Cultures gallery, are internationally significant.

The first staff member with anthropological training began work in January 1919. Henry Devenish Skinner, a recent graduate of Cambridge University, was appointed assistant curator with special responsibility for the ethnographic collections. In the Museum's 1902–03 annual report, then-curator William Benham wrote of these collections, "The accommodation in the Museum is, of course, inadequate to allow more than a small number of objects to be exhibited, and this is unfortunate, for, to the ordinary visitor, this department is of considerable interest".

By the time Skinner retired in the late 1950s he had achieved the establishment of an extremely important collection of Oceanic artefacts. He was aided in this by the generous establishment of a fund for the purchase of ethnographic material by local businessman Willi Fels, an impressive network of individuals working in the Pacific, and the consistent goodwill of the inhabitants of Otago.

Skinner initially gave a high priority to the purchase of material from Polynesia, feeling a greater sense of urgency about this area compared with elsewhere due to the smaller number of artefacts on the market.

Four wooden Easter Island (now Rapanui) figures were the first purchases under the terms of the Fels

Fund. Later acquisitions included a fish vertebra and obsidian-eyed carved bird, a *moai tangata moko* (carved wooden image), and long and short examples of both the Rapanui dance paddles and clubs. Our trachyte (volcanic stone) moai is one of a very few of these iconic statues held outside Easter Island and the only one in Australasia.

Another, ever rarer (although damaged), stone figure on display comes from Pitcairn Island – it is believed to be the only example still in existence. We also hold the pintle and gudgeon (used to hold the rudder onto the boat) from the *Bounty*, purchased from Parkin Christian, which attract their own audience of enthusiasts, and a whalebone tapa beater that relates to the Tahitian wives of the *Bounty* mutineers who landed on the island.

From French Polynesia we have a superb Austral Islands drum and material from the Marquesas Islands that includes u'u war clubs, human hair ornaments and a bone tattoo needle and tiki given by Mary, Dora and Esmond de Beer.

The Cook Islands collection is a particular strength of the Otago Museum and includes a number of Rarotongan staff gods (one still with tapa wrapping), a mace god from Mangaia and smaller intricate figures from Mitiaro, a chief's seat from Aitutaki and numerous staff weapons. When the New Zealand Government purchased William Oldman's personal collection of Pacific artefacts to share among New Zealand's metropolitan museums in 1948, the Cook Islands was an area from which Otago had first choice and the excellence of our collection reflects this.

Another important part of the Oldman collection material at the Otago Museum is material from Micronesia. Among the most significant of the Melanesian collections are those from the Solomon Islands. A series of gifts in the 1920s from the Rev Charles Elliot Fox of artefacts from the island of San Cristobal includes bowls, weapons, adzes and excavated Spanish pottery fragments that were later found to be connected to the sailors from the lost 1595 expedition to the area.

Other Solomon Islands highlights include wooden Santa Cruz figures (one turmeric-coated and still wearing most of his original clothing and ornaments, and another showing a standing male and female pair), an almost complete barava (openwork plaques made from fossilised clam shell) from Choiseul and an Ulawa canoe house carving collected by the Rev Walter Ivens showing an *adaro ni matawa*, or sea spirit.

Our Vanuatu collection has been built up from a number of sources, many of them missionaries with an interest in anthropological matters. The Rev Bowie, for example, gave the Otago Museum a carved wooden post from an Espiritu Santo men's house, and other material including pudding knives and textiles from the Banks Islands was donated by the Rev Durrad. We also have examples of tree fern grade figures and a painted slit gong from the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Although small, our New Caledonian collection includes a pair of door carvings and a roof finial from a great house, which are also Oldman collection pieces.

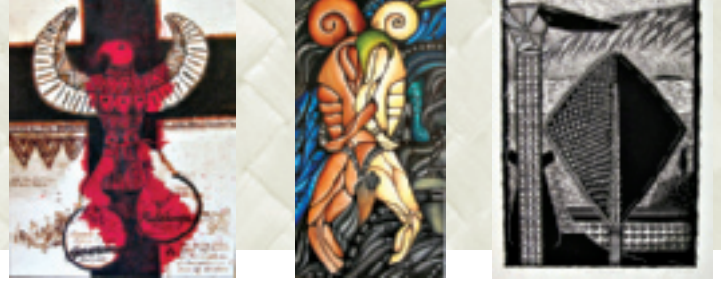
Among highlights from Papua New Guinea are a number of New Ireland malangan works, a Hermit Islands canoe carving and Willi Fels' personal collection of lime spatulas. In addition, we have a significant group of Lapita material on display from Professor Glenn Summerhayes' excavations at Kamgot, Anir, on loan from the Papua New Guinea Museum and Art Gallery.

Our collection continues to grow and enable us to tell new stories. A painted Louisiade Archipelago canoe prow and mankuris decorated with beading formed from red plastic tubing, Vanuatu bags made using plastic raffia fibre and a pearl shell pendant from Papua New Guinea strung on a European shirt front are among recent acquisitions that demonstrate the continuation of traditional forms that have been modernised through the use of new materials.

*Easter Island moai, on display at the entrance to the Pacific Cultures gallery, on the first floor of the Otago Museum.*



# 'Niu space' catches creative energy



Connecting New Zealand communities, artists and businesses with the Pacific through art is the mission of Auckland gallery owners Marilyn Kohlhase and Bridget Marsh.

Their o'kaiocanikart Gallery in the downtown Langham Hotel complex is one of very few galleries in New Zealand – or indeed the Pacific – specialising in high-end Pacific art.

It was set up in 2006 as a 'niu space' that was neither quite a gallery nor quite a shop. Emphasising its multifaceted intentions, the name combines the ideas of 'okai' (OK), 'kai' (food for the soul) and 'kart' (internet shopping) – as well as 'art', 'ocean' and 'kairos', the Greek concept of time and space.

Though crafts have an important place in the life of Pacific communities, they are not what the gallery is about, Kohlhase – a New Zealander of Samoan descent – says.

"We specialise in the fine arts – sculpture, paintings and lithographs, and we have some weaving from master weavers including Maori."

The gallery's catchment is the whole Pacific, including New Zealand – but only the work of indigenous artists is displayed.

That reflects the fact that the gallery is about more than art. Kohlhase is a long-time advocate for the Pacific with a strong interest in economic and community development.

"There is extraordinary talent and ability in the Pacific but I have the theory that the creativity of the Pacific is still latent."

Opportunities for developing a creative talent are relatively few in the Islands, she says, and in New Zealand young, intelligent Pacific Islanders tend to be channelled towards the professions even when they may have real creative ability.

The one field where that does not apply so much is sport, where Pacific flair has made a dramatic impact on New Zealand society, Kohlhase says. Providing opportunities for Pacific artists to display and sell their work is one way of making creative enterprise more viable.

She says there is large demand for Pacific art from palagi New Zealanders, as well as corporate buyers and what she describes as the "brown middle class". And there is a strong level of international interest, too, assisted by the o'kai gallery's location in the precincts of a large upmarket hotel – which also supports the gallery as its patron.

The growing interest in the art of the region is sparked by what Kohlhase sees as the unique qualities of Pacific artists – innate flair, coupled with the ability to 'make do' with limited materials and resources. And within New Zealand many artists are migrants, or the children of migrants, and this gives them a different perception from more established communities of the society they live in


Pacific art is evolving, too. Kohlhase says intermarriage between Pacific communities, and with Maori and palagi, is creating new types of expression altogether. "This mixture of bloods contributes to a real sense of excitement about what might come next," she says.

While much Pacific creativity may be still latent, Kohlhase sees strong signs that the situation is changing fast. "This is a very rich time in Pacific communities. The first Tokelauan play is being written. There are Cook Island plays, and Tongan visual arts and opera singers coming into their own. Kiribati art is strong."


These are just a few of many examples of burgeoning Pacific creativity, Kohlhase says, and o'kai intends to be a part of it. Already the gallery shows works of artists from a good range of the Pacific Islands: Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Cook Islands, Tonga and Fiji, as well as New Zealand. "Part of my dream is to have arts from every Pacific nation in our gallery."

Below from left: Marilyn Kohlhase and Bridget Marsh. Above from left: 'King is God' by Kulimoe'anga Maka – dye on ngatu; 'One people, one ocean, one hope' by Ledua Peni – acrylic on canvas; and 'Tairiri Mangaia' by David Teata – ink on paper.





New Zealand's niu space  
representing solely  
artists of the Pacific



*Urban Connection*  
2008 acrylic on canvas by Ellie Fa'amauri

Established to promote and sell  
the art of Pacific people  
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# Melanesia Symposium

29-30 SEPTEMBER 2008, WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND

## *Tok Talanoa: Pathways to the Future for Melanesia and New Zealand*

Solomon Islands photos: David Vaeafe.



*Tok Talanoa* is the first in a series of Pacific Cooperation Foundation (PCF) initiatives aimed at fostering better understanding between Melanesia and New Zealand.

The purpose of the forum is to look at how New Zealand could improve its engagement with Melanesia, and to hear from Melanesian people about what they see as key issues affecting their region and how New Zealand might respond to those issues.

The event is expected to attract a wide range of policy makers, academics, researchers, NGOs, private sector representatives, artists and others interested in the people and cultures of Melanesia. The symposium features a dynamic group of speakers from the public and private sectors and from communities across the Melanesian sub-region.

The opening begins with a reception, including Melanesian cultural performances and art exhibition, and a keynote address by Sir Rabbie Namaliu, former Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea.

Day two of the symposium will be a full day of plenary sessions on four themes:

- » Political and Regional Relationships
- » Economic Issues
- » Security and Governance

» Cultural, Artistic and Spiritual Linkages.

Each plenary will include ample time for open discussion and/or debate on the papers presented.

Keynote speakers include:

- » Sir Peter Kenilorea, Speaker of the Solomon Islands House of Representatives
- » Mrs Hilda Lini, first Vanuatu woman to be a Member of Parliament, and nominee for 1000 Global Women for Peace
- » Mr Kaliopate Tavola, former Fiji Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade and former Lead Negotiator for Pacific-ACP countries in trade negotiations with the European Union
- » Mr Bernard Narokobi, recent former Papua New Guinea High Commissioner to New Zealand.

*Tok Talanoa* is being held Monday and Tuesday 29-30 September 2008 at the Mercure Hotel in Wellington, New Zealand. For more information and to register, see [www.pcf.org.nz](http://www.pcf.org.nz) (click on Melanesian Symposium under the What's New heading).

## Art exhibition: *Taim bilong Melanesia*

The Pacific Cooperation Foundation (PCF) and the Papua New Guinea High Commission are sponsoring an exhibition, to be held in conjunction with the Melanesia Symposium, that will showcase the contemporary visual arts of Fiji, Papua New Guinea, New Caledonia and the Solomon Islands.

The exhibition features works from leading Papua New Guinean artists Daniel Waswas, Larry Santana and others; emerging Solomons-based visual artists who were at the Auckland Pasifika Festival 2008; Ellie Fa'amauri,

Bachelor of Visual Arts from AUT, Auckland; and Fijian-based artists Jeki Lagi, Mason Lee and other graduates from the Oceania Centre at the University of the South Pacific. The exhibition is curated by Sue Smales of Websters, Wellington, with Marilyn Kohlhasse of o'kaiocanikart Gallery, Auckland.

- » The exhibition opens at Websters, Cruickshank St, Kilbirnie on 19 September and at the Mercure Hotel, Willis St, Wellington, for the Melanesian Symposium on 29 and 30 September. It then returns to Websters until 11 October.

The Festival of Pacific Arts has been held every four years since 1972. It is widely recognised as a unique opportunity to promote preservation of the Pacific's cultural heritage, cultural exchanges and regional unity. It has also become one of the largest gatherings of Pacific peoples. A diverse range of art forms was showcased at the 2008 festival, including visual, performing, culinary, literary and traditional healing arts.

Up to 27 Pacific countries and territories participate in the festival. They are American Samoa, Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Belau (Palau), Cook Islands, Easter Island, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji Islands, French Polynesia, Guam, Hawaii, Kanaky (New Caledonia), Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Norfolk Island, Northern Mariana Islands, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Wallis and Futuna.

Solomon Islands will host the 11th Festival in 2012.

# Festival celebrates, nurtures diversity

By Jennifer Shennan

Amelika Samoa proved a gracious host for the 10th Pacific Arts Festival in Pago Pago in July. These quadrennial gatherings of many Pacific nations, to share history and celebrate identity, are always affirming, and the resources and logistics, with 2000 participants attending for a fortnight, hugely impressive.

The dramatic ridgeline and forested swoop of mountainsides form a natural amphitheatre backdrop to Pago Pago harbour, making a strong impression on a first-time visitor. A re-read of Somerset Maugham's short story *Rain*, set there close to a century ago and dealing with the incoming presence of missionaries and colonisers, reinforces the achievement that, despite introduced forces and changes, almost all land has remained in Samoan control and ownership.

Locals rose to the festival committee's challenge to "tidy up and make beautiful" the whole area. Sticks of coconuts cheekily painted pink, purple, blue, even silver and gold, with a sprouting green shoot waving from the top nut of each pile, were everywhere. Tree trunks and rocks wrapped in bright lavalavas, and numerous local buses (that is, vans converted and colourfully decorated with feathers, fans and flowers) made a festive air.

The opening ceremony, in the Veterans' Stadium at Tafuna, was the first evidence of the extent of local participation – a huge combined choir and many youth groups of high morale that in the coming days would share performances with visitors.

Vanuatu and several Micronesian states were unable to attend. One wonders if future festivals will prove too heavy an economic burden for some countries, and whether the central organisation,

the Secretariat of the Pacific Community, will find a way to subsidise their representation?

A stage built over Utulei Beach was an inspired setting for daily dance performances. The schedule for these remained fluid, which frustrated some but at the same time allowed for much intermingling of participants and spectators. Thus, conversations with Kati from San Christobal, Filo from Tokelau, Robert from Honiara, Sione from Tonga, Gilda from Nowra and Elena from Milne Bay, could all become part of the festival experience. There was also a food and farm fair, where Torres Strait Islanders performed dances from an agricultural fertility ritual in a moving context the performance stage cannot usually provide.

The closing ceremony took up the festival's theme of *Su'a'ula a le Ativasa* (Weaving the Oceanic Garland). A thousand women in white enacted this motif around the stadium, followed by a choreography of males in a massive fire dance that held its own against a following fireworks display.

There were exhibitions of traditional and contemporary art, with New Zealanders – Joanne Tito's photographs on harakeke paper, and Carla Ruka's and Manos Nathan's work in ceramics – making a striking presence. A new feature of a children's art exhibition was well received, and it was notable in all the exhibitions that Norfolk



# se arts, culture

Island (not an obvious presence at previous festivals) contributed impressive work, with clear environmental awareness in a number of individuals' vision, particularly Margarita Sampson's evocative *Lei of Lament*.

Two local television stations screened extensive coverage of the performances and exhibitions, and of fale in the craft village where tapa/siapo, weaving and tattooing were demonstrated. They also interviewed participants in the story-telling, literary, film-making, healing and culinary arts sessions. Pacific-wide satellite television coverage was a first, and programmes edited from this material were to be broadcast in New Zealand on Maori Television from August 30 for a six-week series.

Solomon Islands is to host the 11th festival, and confirmed its early readiness to rise to the challenge. Its own contingent at this year's festival had heartening representation of different ethnic groups including Malaita, Guadalcanal, Santa Ana and Bellona. The tragic death of one of the group during the festival was given heartfelt expression of sympathy from all quarters. The dignified expressions of gratitude for that support were memorable.

Iosefa Enari, a Pacific artist member of the Aotearoa delegation had his short film *Gravity* screened. It opens with a young Polynesian man waiting at a New Zealand railway station on a freezing pre-dawn morning. He pulls up his hoodie and escapes into the dream world of a distant warm Pacific home. He, or perhaps an ancestor, emerges



Above: American Samoa school students perform at the Festival of Pacific Arts. Photo: Julia Brooke-White. Below: scenes from the festival. Photos: Peter Rees and James Kneubuhl.

from under a pile of pandanus mats. A single arm gesture from an ancient dance reaches out from, and towards, life in 'the liquid continent' that is the Pacific. After some time the bright sun wakes him. He has missed his train and will be late for work, but he has learned something of value – that a traditional dance can embody memory and go as 'invisible cargo' wherever its owners travel.

The Tokelau group, from Atafu, danced out a similar theme. In a typical performance, women dancing in lines exchange with rows of men, as if to say "This is who we are". They perform numerous *fatele* that begin in miniature and end in exuberance. As an ecstatic climax to the whole performance, they may abandon this form and pour out around the stage in *televalevale*, as if individuals charting their own random path before reuniting as a final group.

Here in Pago Pago, they experimented by opening the performance with *televalevale*. A radical move in their own subtle terms, this became a metaphor of canoes voyaging across an ocean, travelling to a far destination, which they reach when the familiar group re-forms, as if to say "This is where we are". Their following *fatele* were of thanks to Amelika Samoa, welcome to each of the participating countries, a story of fishing, a love story, a migration story and a farewell. Says it all, really.

Jennifer Shennan is a dance teacher and writer with research interests in world dance history and traditions, particularly of New Zealand and the Pacific. She has attended six Pacific Arts Festivals, and was leader of Victoria University of Wellington's Centre for Continuing Education group tour to the 2008 festival. Documentary material from the tour is to be deposited in the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.



# Relief likely on remittance costs

The New Zealand Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs says Pacific people sending money to family back home can expect relief from high remittance costs by next year.

Ministry chief executive Dr Colin Tukuitonga says the cost of sending money to Pacific Island nations is higher for remitters in New Zealand than for those in many other parts of the world.

"The usual pattern is that people remit small amounts frequently – perhaps fortnightly, perhaps monthly. The overall cost is onerous – particularly in relation to the low income of the average Pacific family. While remittances are being sent back in a variety of ways the average cost of doing so is up to 25 percent of the monetary value of the remittance. We believe that is way too much," Dr Tukuitonga says.

At the Pacific Islands Forum in Niue last month, New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark drew attention to a proposed change to regulations that will make it possible for people to remit money using ATM and EFTPOS networks.

The new regulation will let mainstream financial institutions run a service through which people load money on to a remittance card account in New Zealand and then have family or friends withdraw that money in the Pacific.

"We estimate costs to be between 5-7 percent. Our aim is a cheaper, safe and efficient service," Dr Tukuitonga says.

The Ministry has been working on a new approach

to remittances since a World Bank-convened meeting in Sydney last year.

Dr Tukuitonga says sending money 'home' to support relatives is very much a part of everyday life for Pacific peoples living in other countries.

Remittances to the Pacific region tripled over the past decade to reach US\$425 million, according to the World Bank, with New Zealand listed in the top 10 source countries. The World Bank says unofficial or unrecorded remittances could add at least another 50 percent to the official estimate.

"Pacific people in New Zealand are being hard-hit by increasing costs for food, petrol and other living costs, just as most other New Zealanders are. If we can reduce the cost of remittances then we are helping improve their ability to cope financially." Dr Tukuitonga says.

"We need also to remember the important contribution this money makes to recipients. Remittances provide a significant contribution towards sustaining Pacific Island nations' economies and households' overall quality of life."

Dr Tukuitonga says the Ministry is grateful for support and contributions to the project from other agencies, particularly the Reserve Bank, the Ministry of Justice, the World Bank and the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID).



The current focus on remittances is part of a broader effort being made under the Ministry's Pacific Economic Action Plan and Pacific Women's Economic Development Plan to enhance Pacific peoples' participation in New Zealand's economy. A significant component of the plans is to improve financial literacy amongst Pacific communities and help them make informed decisions about money.

## NZ-Kiribati High Commissioner

New Zealand's new High Commissioner to Tarawa is diplomat Robert Kaiwai, who will also be accredited to the Marshall Islands, Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia.

Kaiwai was previously deputy director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Middle East and Africa Division. He has worked in Taiwan and Japan, and has a background in environmental issues. Kaiwai takes up his position in September, replacing Craig Rickit who has returned to Wellington.

The Foreign Minister at the time of the announcement, Winston Peters, said New Zealand's relations with Kiribati had historically been warm, and they were greatly enhanced by President Aote Tong's visit in June for World Environment Day.

Kiribati faces some major sustainability challenges, including from overcrowding on Tarawa, and pressures on its drinking water supply, he said.

## New Pacific trade rep for WTO

The new Pacific trade representative to the World Trade Organisation in Geneva, Switzerland, says negotiations between the small island states of the Pacific and the developed countries of the world remain very complex and challenging.

Paulo Kautoke, from Tonga, who takes up the new role this month (September), says the economic partnership agreement (EPA) negotiation with the European Union (EU) is very difficult because the EU seeks free trade between EU countries and Pacific Island Forum countries.

"The problem is because we have very little to trade with Europe," he says. "When we are talking about trade, we are not talking only about goods, it also includes services and investment. If we open up our market to the EU, they have a lot to trade with us, but we have very little to trade with them."

Kautoke says negotiation is taking a long time because a lack of resources makes it difficult to run negotiations on both the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER) with Australia and New Zealand and the EPA with the EU at the same time.

He says that the EPA negotiation has been further complicated because, "the Caribbean countries have signed a similar free trade agreement with the EU, agreeing to all the things that we are still negotiating on; and secondly, Papua New Guinea and Fiji, have moved out and signed a free trade agreement with the EU, leaving the rest of the small island states to negotiate their own trade deal with the EU."

Kautoke has been the Secretary for Tonga's Ministry of Labour, Commerce and Industries since 1999, and was involved with Tonga's accession to the WTO in July 2007.

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Above: Niuean school children welcomed the Pacific Islands leaders to Niue. Below: seven of the forum country leaders leaving the stage to meet some of the hundreds of Niueans who watched the opening ceremony at Alofi, Niue's capital town. Photos: John Andrews.

## Forum dominated by Fiji's boycott

By Don Wiseman

August's Pacific Islands Forum summit in Niue was always going to be dominated by Fiji, but the region's leaders had not counted on the Fiji interim Prime Minister, Commodore Frank Bainimarama, refusing to show up.

Bainimarama claimed to be angry that New Zealand was not allowing him the opportunity to hold bilateral meetings in Auckland at the end of the summit. New Zealand told him there would be

ample opportunity to hold such meetings on Niue. New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark said Fiji's boycott of the summit offended the leaders.

The Pacific leaders had expected the Commodore to explain his about-face on a commitment to hold elections by March next year. Australia's Prime Minister Kevin Rudd said they decided on unprecedented action, demanding the interim Fiji leader hold that poll, under the current

constitution, or they would consider suspending Fiji from the regional body. They have given him several months to change his stance, with an extraordinary summit to be held in PNG before the end of the year to assess progress.

Bainimarama has claimed that he retains the backing of island leaders and that the suspension was orchestrated by New Zealand and Australia. Prime Minister Clark said this was insulting to



the leaders of the island countries. Samoa's Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi, said the Commodore was being childish, and Dr Derek Sikua, of Solomon Islands, said the other Melanesian countries had consistently encouraged Fiji to keep to its commitment to hold the vote in March.

That Niue got to hold the event was remarkable in itself. The last time the Forum was held on the 'Rock of Polynesia' was in 1978. Niue was due to stage the Forum in 2004 but Cyclone Heta intervened, wrecking much of the island's infrastructure.

The former Premier, Young Vivian, had pushed strongly for the island to host the event – not least to show that Niue was able to fulfil its obligations as a member of the Forum. But he also saw it as an opportunity to show off the island and engender pride among Niueans.

## Pacific climate change centre

The United Nations and Samoa plan to establish an inter-agency Climate Change Centre to help coordinate to help Pacific Island countries combat the impact of global warming in their region.

The new agency will focus its support on the mitigation, adaptation and reduction of the risk of disaster facing the Islands, UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon said in a message to the Pacific Islands Forum Summit meeting in Niue.

"I am very heartened that the Pacific island countries are making their voices heard on the subject of climate change," he said.

"Climate change is not science fiction. As your countries know all too well, it is real and present."

The secretary-general's statement was delivered by Noleen Heyzer, executive secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

Niue's hosting of the Forum required extensive foreign assistance, with New Zealand sending up over 100 personnel, including 50 police. The roads were repaired, the island was smartened up and Niueans took a very active part in events.

Niue's Premier and the new chair of the Forum, Toke Talagi, had wanted an accent on climate change and got it, despite the time spent on Fiji.

The leaders signed the Niue Declaration on Climate Change, which lays out a unified Pacific position on the issue for the first time.

There was some disquiet over the lack of movement on some issues – a perennial, the bulk purchase of fuel, got a shot in the arm from New Zealand's undertaking to bring together experts on the issue to ensure progress by October's Economic Ministers' meeting.

The leaders declared themselves happy with the now three-year-old Pacific Plan, but there were also grumblings about the apparent lack of progress. More than one leader talked of the need for more action and less talk.

Helen Clark said the Forum had been a little adrift in recent months, following the illness of former secretary-general Greg Urwin.

Urwin, who died just before the summit (see *obituary page 18*), was warmly remembered and honoured with a minute's silence during

the opening ceremony. He has been replaced by Samoa's Tuiloma Neroni Slade, a judge on the International Criminal Court.

Australia's Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd, attending his first Forum summit, said the Pacific was not even faintly on track to realise the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which cover issues such as poverty, education and infant and maternal health. This was why Australia was now tying its overseas development assistance to Pacific countries to measurable progress on the MDGs, he said.

For the first time in recent years the leaders made no mention of the situation of West Papua (Irian Jaya) – a move that has upset non-government organisations (NGOs) but drawn praise from Jakarta. (Forum leaders have previously called on the Indonesian Government and secessionist groups to resolve their differences peacefully and to protect the human rights of all residents.)

Apart from the oddity of the participants at the Post Forum Dialogue flying in from Auckland for the day, the meeting was notable for the absence of lobbyists or members of NGOs. They were victims of the shortage of accommodation and airlinks to the island.

Next year's Forum summit will be in Australia.

*Don Wiseman is a journalist with Radio New Zealand International.*

*Below: Niueans enjoyed welcoming the Pacific Islands Forum leaders. Photo: John Andrews.*



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# Leading from the grassroots

Pacific civil society organisations decided in August that they were no longer going to solely seek to address their concerns with leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum. However, they agreed to taking a proactive approach to making a difference in their societies, writes Cherelle Jackson, Samoan journalist and founder of the Pacific Current Affairs news service.

In previous years, Pacific civil society representatives concluded their meetings with a statement for the Pacific Island Forum leaders' meeting. But history suggests that the statements have not been heard by the leaders' gathering.

This year, Civil Society Organisation (CSO) Forum participants agreed that their key responsibility was to the grassroots communities of the region through advocating and taking action for change, not in awaiting the action of governments.

Nevertheless, the CSO body agreed that advocating and engaging for policy change in Pacific Islands Forum processes would remain an important part of its work. Closer engagement between CSO and government programmes was vital to ensure that the key development goal of sustainable livelihoods could be achieved.

Other priorities agreed at the Auckland meeting included resolving issues such as clarity in mandates, accountability, understanding the roles of civil society, ensuring its independence and guaranteeing its recognition. CSO representatives agreed that making these things happen would require capacity building and improved communication at all levels.

Energy and climate change were also high on the agenda, with CSOs deciding to move towards a regional Climate Action Network (CAN) and establish a CAN organisation in each Pacific country.

The CSO Forum recommended continued engagement with Pacific governments on the issue of climate change, including CSO representation on government delegations to international climate change negotiations, sharing of information and learning through practical projects.

Participants identified the need for CSOs to engage with and educate Pacific media about climate change.

Peace and security were also discussed, mainly with a focus on educating Pacific communities about peace and security policy initiatives. The Forum agreed that a holistic, indigenous perspective on peace-building could play a valuable role.

The CSOs resolved to call on governments, regional and international agencies and donors to invest more in health and health care systems to improve the quality of life for Pacific people and their environments, and to build collaborative partnerships with CSOs.

Human rights and self-determination were major areas of discussion. CSOs agreed to lobby Pacific Islands Forum member countries that either voted against, abstained or were absent from the United Nations General Assembly vote on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to formally support the Declaration.

Participants decided they should contribute to the livelihoods of their communities through involvement in the design and delivery of national development plans and by working towards linking community plans to district, provincial, national and regional plans and strategies.

CSOs resolved to promote values, culture, vernacular languages and spiritual development, including through sports, arts, music and dance, to ensure they were mainstreamed into Pacific education systems and curriculum development.

Trade and justice issues led to some passionate arguments between CSO representatives. The Forum decided to carry out research in these areas

to better inform CSOs prior to crucial negotiations with donors and the international community.

Representatives agreed to identify key research areas for a campaign on trade justice issues such as the impacts of labour mobility, links between trade policy and the food crisis, links between trade and land tenure, alternatives to free trade agreements, and social impact assessments.

Discussions on governance, one of the more pressing issues in the Pacific, saw CSOs decide to develop a regional communication and information-sharing strategy, along with a regional 'solidarity and alert' mechanism to support efforts at national level.

The chair of the Pacific Islands Association of NGOs (PIANGO) board, Drew Havea, said the atmosphere at the meeting was exciting.

"Everyone is passionate about the issues pertaining to the livelihood of the Pacific community."

The challenge would be taking that passion forward and implementing decisions, Havea said.

"For the next three years we want to strengthen the alliance, strengthen the secretariat in order to provide support to all countries, and at the same time give more support to create space for dialogue at the national level and the regional level."

The CSO Forum was organised by the Pacific Regional Non Government Organisations (PRNGO) Alliance.

Members comprise:

- » PIANGO
- » The Foundation of the Peoples' of the South Pacific International (FSPI)
- » Pacific Concerns Resource Centre (PCRC)
- » Council of Pacific Education (COPE)
- » Pacific Disability Forum (PDF)
- » Pacific Foundation for the Advancement of Women (PACFAW)
- » Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC)
- » Fiji Women's Crisis Centre (FWCC)/Pacific Network Against Violence Against Women
- » Greenpeace
- » World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)
- » Pacific Islands News Association (PINA)
- » The South Pacific Council of Trade Unions (SPOCTU).



*Representatives at the Civil Society Organisation (CSO) Forum 2008 in Auckland. Photo: Cherelle Jackson.*



# Pacific regionalism: a lawyer's view

*Models of Regional Governance for the Pacific: Sovereignty and the Future Architecture of Regionalism*

Editor: Kennedy Graham

Published by: Canterbury University Press

Reviewed by: John Henderson, Associate Professor, School of Political Science and Communication, University of Canterbury

This book is based on the proceedings of a symposium on Pacific regionalism held in May 2007 at the University of Canterbury.

It was organised by Dr Kennedy Graham, adjunct senior fellow in the School of Law at Canterbury University. He is also a visiting professor in international relations at the College of Europe in Bruges, Belgium, and has carried out extensive work for the United Nations and New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Dr Graham is to be congratulated on producing this useful volume. So, too, does Canterbury University Press deserve praise for the strong contribution it continues to make to publishing on Pacific affairs. This scholarly account is supported by nearly 30 pages of references, 20 tables and a useful index.

Around half of the 10 contributors are lawyers, and the book provides a legal view of the architecture required for strengthening Pacific regionalism.

Dr Roberto Ridolfi, Head of the European Commission Delegation for the Pacific, based in Suva, ranks the development of a regional legal framework as second only to political commitment as a key requirement for greater regional integration. Political scientists may consider that this reliance on the law tends to play down the importance of raw politics, and suggest that writing down aspirations will make them happen.

The book opens with a detailed and informative account by Ken Graham on models of regional governance, which seeks to answer the question: 'Is there a choice for the Pacific'? Graham

concludes that the region would be best served by an Oceanic Council.

It is interesting to recall that the late Professor Keith Jackson, of Canterbury University, in 1972 considered the option of a Nordic style Pacific Council, and concluded that the proposal was "premature". Graham's chapter suggests that this may no longer be the case, but he acknowledges that the Pacific Island states must find their own "integrationist destiny".

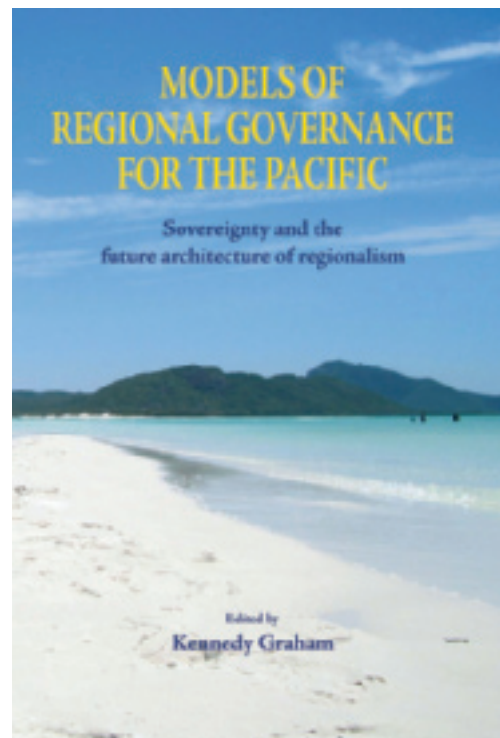
Jackson suggests: "A Pacific Union, of hitherto unknown dimensions, beckons Pacific peoples as the 21st century unfolds".

Other leading contributors include Anthony Angelo, of Victoria University, who writes on the UN Charter and regional security and seeks to answer the question: 'Is the PIF (Pacific Islands Forum) a regional organisation'? He outlines reforms needed to give the Forum a clear legal personality.

Kevin Clements, of the University of Queensland, contributes a thoughtful piece on conflict prevention and the wider implications for the Biketawa Agreement, which set up the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI).

The list of contributors would have been further strengthened by a stronger voice from the Pacific.

Nevertheless, both Graham Hassall, of the University of the South Pacific (USP), and Yves-Louis Sage, of the University of French Polynesia, make valuable contributions on governance and shared sovereignty respectively.



Above: the cover of 'Models of Regional Governance for the Pacific'. Image courtesy Canterbury University Press.

A lively foreword to the book is provided by New Zealand Labour Member of Parliament Charles Chauvel. A footnote explains that his text was adapted from the conference opening address.

A comment on page 211 indicates that the foreword was apparently to have appeared under the name of Prime Minister Helen Clark. This confusion should have been taken care of in the editing process.

Sub-regionalism is a topic requiring further attention. The Melanesian Spearhead Group is being strengthened by the establishment of a headquarters in Port Vila, Vanuatu, and the appointment of a secretary-general and secretariat. Financing is being provided by China.

Behind each of the contributions is the assumption that Pacific Island states can, and should, learn from the European experience in moving towards greater regional integration. Equal attention needs to be given to the differences. This book provides a useful stimulant to this debate.

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# Greg Urwin: humble man with Pacific at heart

Greg Urwin, the Pacific Islands Forum's former secretary-general, died in Apia, Samoa, in August. He was 62. He had been ill for eight months, suffering cancer and heart problems.

Acting Forum secretary-general Feleti Teo says the Pacific has lost a leader with the Pacific at heart.

"He was a very humble person and very sensitive to many cultures that make up the membership of the Pacific Islands Forum family."

During his time as secretary-general, Urwin, an Australian, was at the forefront of the implementation of the Pacific Plan – aimed at greater cooperation and regional solutions between Pacific countries.

He also advocated the needs of the smaller island states within the Forum and started a process for recognition of non-government organisations. He stood down in May because of ill health.

New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark says Urwin worked tirelessly for the Pacific during his career. "The South Pacific was where Greg made his home. His enthusiasm and love of our region was very evident in the way he went about his work."

Clark says she appreciated Urwin's work on the Pacific Plan and his handling of sensitive situations, such as the latest coup in Fiji.

Foreign Minister Winston Peters says Urwin was greatly respected across the region. "Greg was a strong advocate for the Pacific and his passing is a great loss."

Urwin's appointment as secretary-general in February 2004 initially caused concern, with some of the 16 Forum member states saying they would prefer someone of Pacific descent.

Speaking in an interview in 2003 before taking the reins, Urwin said "I feel very Pacific Island" and asked to be judged on his actions. He was reappointed in October 2006 after his first three-year term.

Pacific Cooperation Foundation chief executive Vince McBride says Urwin achieved a lot in the role and did it with humour.

"Greg was one of nature's gentlemen who took over the helm of the Forum Secretariat at an important point in its history, guiding the organisation through the establishment of the Pacific Plan, aimed at increasing regional cooperation," McBride says.

"As the first non-Pacific head of the Pacific region's premier policy organisation, Greg had much to prove and he was more than equal to the challenge." Many in the Pacific would miss his "easy manner and happy chuckle".

Before taking up the role Urwin was Australia's

top Pacific specialist, with a reputation for being a genuine sympathiser for a region he seldom left after going to Samoa as Australian High Commissioner in 1977 – a posting where he met his wife Penny, a widow with three children.

He also worked as Samoa's Secretary of Foreign Affairs. After a stint back in Australia the family moved to Vanuatu and then Fiji, where he served as High Commissioner.

Greg Urwin's funeral was held in Apia, Samoa. A memorial service was held in Suva, Fiji, where the Urwins lived until recently.

Pacific Leaders at the 39th Forum, held in Niue in August, formally expressed in their final communiqué their profound sorrow at Urwin's untimely passing.

They acknowledged his "commitment and outstanding contribution to the political, economic and social development of the Pacific region".

Leaders also acknowledged his strong leadership as secretary-general that led to many major achievements, including the firm establishment of the Pacific Plan and his role in enhancing the international standing of the Forum.

They noted that Urwin was a strong advocate for the Pacific and his passing represented a great loss. His significant service to the Pacific Islands Forum would be remembered by all who had had the privilege of working with him, they said.

Pacific leaders welcomed the offer by the Prime Minister of Australia, Kevin Rudd, to fund the establishment, through the Forum, of five Greg Urwin Annual Leadership Awards.

They also welcomed the announcement by the Solomon Islands Prime Minister, Dr Derek Sikua, to posthumously award the Cross of Solomon Islands to Urwin in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI).

*Tuiloma Neroni Slade has been appointed the Pacific Islands Forum's new secretary-general for a three-year term. He is the first Samoan to hold the position. Dr Slade is considered one of the top Pacific Islands lawyers, having worked as Attorney General for Samoa, head of the legal division of the Commonwealth Secretariat and as a judge of the International Criminal Court at the Hague.*

Obituary written by Maggie Tait, New Zealand Press Association (NZPA).

Left: Greg Urwin, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, October 2005. Photo courtesy NZPA/Scoop Media.



# Falani Aukuso: dedicated champion

Falani Iosefo Aukuso, a devoted son of Tokelau and dedicated servant of the wider Pacific, died in Suva on August 4.

Born in American Samoa and raised on Tokelau's Nukunonu atoll, Falani was later educated in New Zealand and trained as a primary school teacher. Following a BA in Education, Falani tutored at Wellington Polytech before returning to Tokelau as director of education in 1984. His five-year term saw significant developments in Tokelau's education system and curriculum.

In 1990 Falani took up a diplomatic position in the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, working in the United Nations and South Pacific Divisions as well as the Office of the Administrator of Tokelau.

In 1994 he returned to Tokelau as director of the Office of the Council of Faipule (Cabinet). This role changed in 2004 to that of general manager, National Office of the Tokelau Government. In this capacity Falani headed the Tokelau Public Service and was chief advisor to Tokelau's leadership as it moved to consider self-government.

With the lack of success of the February 2006 referendum to move Tokelau to formal self-government in association with New Zealand, Falani decided a time away from Tokelau would be appropriate. This took him to Suva as a deputy director-general of the Secretariat of the Pacific Communities (SPC), the position he held until his death.

"Few people have played so key a role in the development of Tokelau," Administrator of Tokelau David Payton says. "Falani's path showed him equally at home in Tokelau and in New Zealand.

He stood in both worlds but he was always a strong, true son of Tokelau. His passing is a loss not only to the family of Tokelau but to a far wider Pacific community."

"Falani was one of those very special people you meet once or at most twice in a lifetime," says Neil Walter, former Administrator of Tokelau and Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade. "He made a difference in so many ways and touched the lives of so many people. His impact will be felt in Tokelau for generations to come".

"When I first met Falani it was clear he wanted to contribute to Tokelau's future. Tokelau always remained his top priority, and he put aside a promising career as a New Zealand diplomat to return home and contribute to the future of his country and people.

"Falani will leave behind an impressive list of concrete achievements," Walter says. "The Tokelau Trust Fund, which now stands at over \$30 million and will provide future generations of Tokelauan people with economic security, was very much Falani's initiative."

The director-general of the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Dr Jimmie Rogers, says the replacement of someone who had a good clear vision of developing the Pacific, particularly small island countries, is going to be difficult.

"He has been a champion for small island states."

In a message to Falani's family, Prime Minister Helen Clark said "I met Falani on many an occasion and found him a tireless champion for the people of Tokelau. He was instrumental in converting Tokelau's relationship with New



Falani Iosefo Aukuso

Zealand into a more equal partnership and in implementing the 'Modern House of Tokelau'. He will be sadly missed in New Zealand as well as in Tokelau."

Falani's funeral was held in Tauranga on August 9. He is survived by his wife Sulu and his seven children.

*Malo Falani te tau mo Tokelau (Thank you Falani for fighting for Tokelau). Kua puna ia Tokelau ki luga i mata ote lalolagi ona ko au galuega (You have raised Tokelau in the eyes of the world because of your work).*

Obituary written by Dave Courtney, New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

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