



panorama NEWSLETTER ISSUE 2007/ 2

From TheEditor's desk

For the last few months I have been receiving mailings about seminars, workshops, and training sessions for a variety of things, especially archives, libraries, and museums. Many relate to administration, care of collections, the complex problems of digitization, and the endless problem of finances. In all this is a consistent theme on how to do more with less, which to me sounds great but in practice seems unlikely. For most of us, it seems to cost more simply to maintain what we have where we are.

At its inception in Suva, 1981, PARBICA was given a generous donation by The Asia Foundation to provide all of us attending a number of practical and useful publications. When the conference ended, I recall being pleasantly surprised that we had about USD\$350 extra (I was told by ICA Treasurer Alfred Wagner that it was the first such ICA branch organizational meeting that did not immediately need supplemental funds from ICA).

Among the publications (surely, there is a list somewhere) were a few books whose cost made them unavailable in quantity. It

was decided that we could have a simple lending library, headquartered at the National Archives of Fiji, and the \$350 would be a start at paying the cost of mailing. My recollection is that perhaps two people asked to borrow a book or books, and the project was abandoned.

Since that time and when reviewing some of the readings required with some seminars, many new and better books have been published. And their cost has necessarily increased. Without even making a list, I would estimate that just to provide a basic library for, say, twenty Pacific archives would cost a minimum of USD\$1,750 each, or roughly about the cost of airfares for a PARBICA conference.

It struck me that perhaps it is time to rethink the idea of establishing a lending library, one that could be kept current and useful, and be an attractive benefit for all PARBICA members. Give it some thought and bring your suggestions to Noumea. It just might work out to be a way of doing more with less.

SEE YOU AT
PARBICA 12
IN
NOUMEA, NEW CALEDONIA, 1 - 6 October 2007

CONTENTS

Information on PARBICA 12	p. 2
Karina Taylor: Digitisation to increase access ...	p. 4
In Memoriam: Hans Booms	p.12
Opeta Alefaio and Losena Tudreu: News from National Archives of Fiji	p.13
Recordkeeping for Good Governance Toolkit	p.16
News, Updates, Events	p.17

Twelfth Conference of the Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives 1-6 October 2007, New Caledonia

INVITATION

On behalf of the PARBICA Bureau and the Government of New Caledonia, we extend a warm welcome to you to participate in PARBICA's Twelfth Biennial Conference from 1 to 6 October 2007 in New Caledonia. PARBICA 12 provides an opportunity for the archivists and records managers of the Pacific Islands region, Australia and New Zealand to renew professional contacts and share experiences with others who often work in isolation. We look forward to welcoming you in Nouméa.

Mme Marie-Noëlle THEMEREAU
President
Government of New Caledonia

Mr Setareki TALE
President
PARBICA

Archives without Boundaries: Cooperation and Shared Solutions

We must cooperate to succeed in developing robust systems that can sustain good governance and document the memory of the world in the digital age. This conference aims to bring together the archivists and records managers of the Pacific to discuss how we can work in cooperation – across geographic, professional and cultural boundaries.

Conference objectives

Knowledge gained at our conferences is taken back to the islands of the region by participants to inform their work and to provide in-country training for other archives and records staff. PARBICA 12 is an opportunity for:

- *Training and professional development in areas identified as most necessary by PARBICA's members*
- *Strategic planning for the next two years of PARBICA's work to improve the conditions of archives and recordkeeping in the Pacific*
- *Presentation of results and discussion of next stages for PARBICA's current projects*
- *Collation and presentation of statistics and reports on Pacific Archives*

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Conference Program

Monday 1 October

AusAid Pre-Conference Workshop: Recordkeeping for Good Governance

- Sound management of records is a fundamental pillar of good governance. This two-day workshop will train participants to promote and implement good recordkeeping in their countries using the new PARBICA Toolkit that will be launched at the conference.

Tuesday 2 October

AusAid Pre-Conference Workshop: Recordkeeping for Good Governance

Dinner and Customary Welcome in a Village

Wednesday 3 October

Opening Session: Archives without Boundaries

- Official welcomes from the New Caledonia Government, the International Council on Archives and PARBICA and opening presentations on cooperation in the Pacific region and in the archives world

Latest Developments & Current Issues in the Pacific

- Results of Pacific Statistical Survey and Reports 2006-2007, and discussion of current challenges and achievements

Professional Visits to Museum and Tjibaou Cultural Centre

Thursday 4 October

Workshop 1: Archival Basics

- An introduction to the basic principles and practices of archives administration for newcomers to the field or those who would like a refresher

Workshop 2: Digital Archiving

- In the digital environment, archives and records services have to manage digital records and provide digital access. This workshop will focus on how to achieve this in low resource environments and possible shared solutions.

PARBICA Public Evening Talk at Tjibaou Cultural Centre

Friday 5 October

Archives without Boundaries - "We Are What We Remember"

- Panel discussion on how Pacific institutions can support traditional oral memory and expand the meaning of 'archives' through their programmes.

Cooperation and Shared Solutions

- Sessions and discussions on experiences with cooperation to support archives in the region and areas for future collaboration.

Closing Presentation

Evening Reception and Exhibition Opening at New Caledonia Archives

Saturday 6 October

PARBICA General Business Meeting

Digitisation to increase access to archives in the Pacific Islands: A case study in Fiji

by Karina Taylor

Editor's note: This article has been published without its accompanying endnotes. The complete article with endnotes is available from the author. The article presents a summary of the questions asked during the research undertaken. For a full questionnaire contact the author.

In August/September of 2002, I travelled to Fiji to conduct interviews for my postgraduate programme, the Masters in Library and Information Studies (MLIS). My research project sought to investigate whether the technology available in the digital age was a viable option for increasing access to archives held in the Pacific Islands, using Fiji as a case study.

Archival institutions have continually grappled with the issue of providing access to their collections. These issues can include the location of some archival institutions in relation to their researchers and the fragile state of many collections. In response, archives have used various forms of technology to enable users to view items in their collections. As a community, we are particularly familiar with microfilm and more recently, online catalogues to help overcome these problems.

A further development, digitisation, (the scanning or taking digital photos of archival documents and making them available online, on CD or on a desktop) is starting to be explored by the archival community, and my research focused on this technology.

Benefits of digitisation

Pacific Island archives are located in a relatively isolated part of the world, which can cause problems for researchers in Pacific Island studies. The main problems are the cost and time needed to travel to the institutions to view the archives. If collections were available online, these problems would be reduced. Researchers would be able to view the collections in their own country and even in their own home, saving them time and money. For example, the Digital Archives Collection at the University of Hawaii allows researchers to view some of their collections online, saving researchers the trip to Hawaii.

However, the issue of preservation must be raised. Digitisation is seen by the archival community as a possible tool for increasing access, but that creates its own preservation issues. Although the original materials may be handled less, the new digitised material is unreliable in the long term. For example, digital material is more delicate than paper or microfilm and there are further issues of technological obsolescence.

Technology and skills are needed for a digitisation project to work. At the most basic level, a scanner or a digital camera, a reliable computer system and dependable access to the Internet is required. In addition, staff need training with the new technology. All of these factors cost time and money for an archival institution considering a digitisation project.

The goal of my research was to find out firstly, whether digitisation was a feasible option for the Pacific Islands and secondly, what possible benefits were there for the institutions if they chose digitisation. I decided to focus on access rather than preservation benefits, as this is a slightly different topic and there were size limitations to this research to be considered. The case study approach was also chosen due to the above reason of size limitation to the research. Fiji was chosen for the case study country due to having "well established archival institutions, a well functioning museum and being the base of the University of the South Pacific."

I chose to interview people in Fiji, rather than send them questionnaires. This was mainly due to my understanding that Pacific Island cultures are traditionally oral cultures and that I would get fuller, more detailed answers to my questions if I asked them in person. Further, I could have the opportunity to view the archives and gain some perspective on the

situation and the issues the institutions face.

I hoped to gain answers to my problem statement “whether the technology available in the digital age is a viable option for increasing access to archives held in the Pacific Islands” by asking the following questions of archival institutions in Fiji:

1. What does your institution’s collection consist of?
2. What is your main user group at present?
3. What are the current forms of access to your collection?
4. What degree of access does your institution have to the Internet?
5. What do you understand by the term ‘digitisation’?
6. Have you read any literature regarding digitisation projects of archives?
7. Do you see digitisation as a feasible option for the Pacific Islands or your institution in particular?
8. (a)What could make it easier to digitise?
(b) What could make it harder to digitise?
9. Who do you see would benefit the most from this technology increasing access to the archives in your collection?

Section One - Status of archives in Fiji

I took these questions with me to Fiji and put them to staff in the five major archival institutions: the National Archives of Fiji, the University of the South Pacific, the Reserve Bank of Fiji, the Oceania Marist Province Archive, and the Fiji Museum. Following is a summary of their holdings, their access tools and their user groups.

National Archives of Fiji



National Archives of Fiji, 2002

The National Archives of Fiji works under a mandate (the Public Records Act of 1970) to take into custody all the records of government activities. These records include the British and American Consular records of the Fiji Government from the 1850s/60s up to 1875 and the three previous governments in Fiji that governed from 1871-1875, manuscripts from prominent individuals, records from private institutes, churches, and monographs received through legal deposit.

At present, archives are housed and managed in buildings in Central Suva. These buildings were not originally built for archives and this causes some issues. There is, however, an air conditioning system in place.

Microfilm is the primary tool used for both preservation and access. Finding aids are also available to help deal with access issues. Tertiary students and land researchers are the main users of the collections.

The Fiji Museum



Fiji Museum's Archive Room, 2002

The Fiji Museum was first conceptualised in 1904, through the donation and purchase of artefacts. The focus of the Museum is to research, document and present historical artefacts. The small archive collection includes diaries and documents which compliment the Museum's collection of artefacts. The archives are of a secondary function to the museum, however they have been organised to some degree and the building has air conditioning installed.

Microfilming of documents in association with PAMBU (Pacific Manuscripts Bureau) and copying of oral history recordings have been made to help with preservation and access issues. The museum also has a website which provides researchers with a general idea of what is available at the Museum.

There is a wide variety of users of the archives: students, archaeologists, palaeontologists, anthropologists and archivists.

University of the South Pacific



The University of the South Pacific, 2002

The main library was set up in 1969 and the current building was opened in 1988. Housed in the library is the Pacific collection, which holds documents relating to the South Pacific, the Pacific Music Archive, oral history papers and microfilm from the Pacific Manuscript Bureau. The collection also holds research materials from Pacific Island scholars, and the institutional records from the University of the South Pacific. The current form of

access is through a publicly available inventory. However, the staff felt that the collection would not hold much interest for researchers, due to its specialist nature.

The collection is kept in an air-conditioned environment, but not in archival material storage boxes. In addition, there are issues surrounding the preservation of the tapes from the Pacific Music Archives.

The Reserve Bank of Fiji



The Reserve Bank of Fiji, 2002

The Reserve Bank of Fiji opened in 1975 and the archives were established as part of a records management project in 1999. The archive holds "records on monetary policy, economic forecasts, currency circulation, financial institutions, financial markets, issues covering both domestic and external markets, insurance and control matters including records from the Colonial era.

At the time of this visit, the archives were in the process of being established and

thus were primarily an ad hoc collection of papers. However, a retention and disposal policy was being initiated, and an archives room with air conditioning had been found.

Users are mainly internal staff, as many of the documents are confidential to the public. Access to the collection was been created through the TRIM records management software.

Oceania Marist Province Archive (OMPA)



The More Current Archives of the Oceania Marist Province, 2002

The Oceania Marist Province was established on the 28th of October 1898 and was based in Sydney, Australia. It included eight Pacific Catholic Dioceses of Noumea, Port Vila, Suva, Apia, Tonga, Honiara, Wallis-Futuna and Kieta. When the administration moved to Suva in 1971, all pre-1898 holdings were shipped to the general archives in Rome and all post-1898 materials were transferred to Suva.

The archive consists mainly of correspondence between the missionaries and people in management of the area, books, copies of laws or publications, scriptures, catechisms and hymn books; also, financial records, Catholic population statistics, biographical data, local languages and photographs (Rogers 1992, 56).

The archives were organised, boxed and inventories created by past Archivist, Father Theo Kok. The inventories and some of the collection are available on microfilm in Australia and New Zealand and the general archives in Rome. The main user groups are historical and religious researchers.

Section Two – Digitisation questions

After establishing what the holdings and current methods of access are at the archival institutions in Fiji, I asked staff questions relating to digitisation to establish whether digitisation was a feasible option in the Pacific Islands.

Question Nine – Who do you see would benefit the most from this technology increasing access to archives in your collection?

The five groups interviewed all saw the benefits of digitisation. However, the approach of each institution in answering this question seemed to vary according to the holdings of the institution, as this related to their user group which digitisation would benefit.

For example, the University of the South Pacific and the National Archives of Fiji saw international researchers as those who would benefit the most from their collections being digitised; whereas, the Reserve Bank saw people interested in the economic history of Fiji being those who would benefit the most.

Question eight – What could make it easier and what could make it harder to digitise?

There was a basic general understanding of the technology of digitisation. The University of the South Pacific had even undertaken its own digitisation project of photographs in their collections. However, for the majority of the institutions the major problem seen with digitisation was the issue of funding. As Fiji is a developing country there is very little money allocated to the archives sector. And there were bigger priorities like housing and protecting the collections to be considered before an expensive and untested option like digitisation could be considered.

It was asserted that a needs assessment would have to be carried out on the digitisation issue. For example, are there enough researchers to justify a digitisation project? And would there be public support

for this type of spending? Especially when there are issues like health and education to consider in a developing country like Fiji.

The other major obstacle was the ICT facilities available in Fiji. When this research was carried out, there was a general dissatisfaction from the majority of the institutions regarding the ICT services available. Internet access was expensive, unreliable, and generally only available at a low-speed making downloading a problem.

Question four – What degree of access does your institution have to the Internet?

From all the institutions surveyed it was found that there was a range of computer facilities available, ranging from a single computer linked to the Internet at the National Archives of Fiji to the USP having a dedicated line. These factors would all affect a successful digitisation project, as there would be a need for reliable internet and equipment. However, in the interviews it was again reinforced to me that ICT and archives were not a priority for funding when there are more urgent needs for the country to deal with, like health and education.

Solutions

This research established, through investigation into the situation for Fijian institutions holding archives, that digitisation was not a feasible option at the time. This was mainly due to Fiji being a developing country, as well as the inadequacies of the existing ICT infrastructure. The question now is what would need to happen for digitisation to be a viable option in the Pacific Islands?

Funding for a digitisation project

A simple answer to this question is money. However, it is unlikely in the near future that the archives will receive increased funding from the government. And if they did, the money would be spent first on better housing for the archives.

Therefore, funding for a digitisation project would need to come from an outside agency or organisation. There are Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) like UNESCO that help with projects which fulfil one or more of their five principal functions. Also, there are non-profit organisations like the Pacific Manuscripts

Bureau (PAMBU), which will be discussed later.

The other option for acquiring funding from a source other than the government, could be to receive sponsorship from a corporation that manufactures the technology required for digitisation, i.e. scanners, digital cameras. The idea behind this would be to bolster the profile of the company through advertising related to the project.

Upgrading the ICT infrastructure

The ICT infrastructure in Fiji would need upgrading and to become more affordable. At the time of this research, Fiji only had two ISPs (Internet Service Providers), which results in a lack of competition in the industry. The service was expensive, slow and unreliable. For a digitisation project to be successful a reliable Internet connection is required to mount the digital images and for the continual maintaining of the site.

Again, outside funding would probably need to be sourced for an upgrade in services to be achieved. UNESCO was already funding ICT development projects in the Pacific region and in other developing countries like Africa and India, so they could be a possible source of funding.

Peters has outlined that other Pacific Islands like Tuvalu got corporations to invest in their ICT infrastructure. This solution leaves Tuvalu in an exclusive deal with one company and it remains to be seen whether this will be a benefit to a small island nation. So this may not be an ideal option for upgrading facilities.

Comparisons with other Pacific Islands

The study concentrated on the Fijian Islands as a case study for investigating whether the economic, social and geographic situation in the Pacific Islands would support the digitisation of their archives. A brief overview of the situation in other Pacific Island nations was provided to explore whether any other countries in the area are in a better position to undertake a digitisation project.

The Island nations explored include Tonga, the Solomon Islands, Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), the Marshall Islands, Vanuatu, Niue and the

Cook Islands, as these are islands in relatively similar economic situations.

ICT

At present, Internet access in the Pacific Islands is generally based on a national infrastructure where one company is the sole Internet Services Provider (ISP); with the exceptions of the Cook Islands, which has three ISPs, and Tonga and Samoa which both have two ISPs. This does not allow for a great deal of competition in the market, and insures expensive and reduced choice in services provided. In comparison to Fiji, this seems a very similar situation and would pose similar problems for islands to participate in a digitisation project.

Solutions to improve ICT in the Pacific region

Studies have been made on the ICT situation in the Pacific. The Pacific region has been identified as one of the regions in the world that has fallen behind in terms of ICT development. It is feared they will suffer from what is now being phrased as the 'digital divide', a concept described as a "technological abyss between those that have computer and Internet access, and those who do not."

So what has been done to resolve this issue? At the time of this research the South Pacific Commission (SPC) had produced the "Draft Pacific Island Regional Information and Communication Technological Policy." This policy had the ambitious vision of "information and communication technology for every Pacific Islander." The SPC investigated possible solutions and suggested a series of strategies to be adopted. Including, training people in the education sector, retaining people, creating opportunities for Pacific Islanders to participate in the global community, investigating different technologies for providing alternative and better ICT access and putting in legislation to encourage these strategies to grow.

These suggestions were supported by Peters in her thesis on the Digital Divide in the Pacific. And since the time of this research, other solutions have been discussed like the UNESCO ICT education projects. But there continues to be a problem of providing adequate and affordable ICT facilities to the Pacific Islands, which would allow a digitisation project to go ahead smoothly.

ICT facilities in archival institutions

From the 2001 PARBICA Biennial Survey, it was found the majority of archival institutions have one computer available to them, which is primarily used for administration. With the exceptions of Niue, Samoa and Vanuatu, institutions holding archives had some Internet facilities available to them. But what also needs to be kept in mind in regards to this factor is the status of ICT in the Pacific, (as discussed above) which can hinder the use of these facilities.

Economic resources

The case study of Fiji revealed that it is still a developing country without the economic resources to embark on a digitisation project, when there are issues like health and education to consider and when the priority for an archive would be better housing.

Historical events like the impact of colonialism and environmental factors like the lack of natural resources on many islands and their susceptibility to natural disasters put the majority of Pacific Islands in a similar situation to Fiji economically. The majority of Pacific Islands have similar problems and rely heavily on foreign aid and loans to survive. In this situation, archives are low on the priority list for a government, when there are more pressing needs to consider.

Economic situation of Pacific Island archives

A general viewpoint that came out of the interviews with the institutions holding archives in Fiji was that archives were not a particularly high priority for government spending. This was backed up by the 2001 PARBICA survey, where funding of archives by government was also surveyed. For Fiji US\$125,268 or 0.026% of the government budget was spent on archives. For the other archival institutions, the archives budget ranged from US\$12,515 to US\$101,080, with the average amount being spent on archives being, US\$41,443.25. Therefore, what was spent in Fiji on archives in 2001 was above the average amount being spent on archives in the Pacific region. Drawing the conclusion that if Fijian archival institutions did not feel they had enough economic resources available to embark on a digitisation project, neither would other Pacific Island archives with less funding.

Therefore, in terms of ICT facilities available to most Pacific Islands and the lack of economic resources available to archival institutions, this comparison confirmed that Fiji was a good case study to use to provide an example of a "typical" Pacific Island.

Other possibilities

This research established that the digitisation of archives in the Pacific region was not a viable option, a conclusion reached through an investigation into the institutions holding archives in Fiji. This revealed there was inadequate funding of archives and unsuitable and unreliable ICT facilities available. A comparison was made with other Pacific Islands, which proved Fiji was a reliable case study from which to draw the same conclusion; digitisation was not a suitable option for Pacific Island archives. I therefore decided to explore other options, which could help increase access to the archives held in the Pacific Islands

Microfilming

Microfilming is a preservation and access tool, which has been used in archives for over 75 years. It was discussed earlier in this paper, that digitisation is not considered to be an effective solution for the preservation of archives, as digital materials raise their own preservation issues. However, microfilming has been used for preserving archives, and has proven to be an effective measure to increase the lifespan of archives if kept in appropriate conditions.

Like many archival institutions, the National Archives of Fiji have a microfilming unit for preserving rare documents and those which are used frequently. One of the main focuses of this programme is the microfilming of newspapers. These are a good source of information for historians, and are used frequently. But they are printed on paper which deteriorates relatively quickly, and are therefore a good candidate for microfilming.

Coupled with the issue of preserving archives is the problem of providing access to the materials. It has been concluded in this research that digitisation is not a viable option for increasing access to archives in the Pacific. However, microfilming is a technology which has been used and could continue to be used

to address the issue of providing access to archives.

Once a microfilm has been made, copies can be made and distributed to other institutions or researchers. This has been done by some of the institutions in Fiji. For example, microfilmed copies of the OMPA inventories are available in the National Archives of Australia, the Alexander Turnbull Library in New Zealand, and also in the general archives in Rome.

An important organisation for the microfilming and distribution of microfilmed archives in the Pacific is the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau (PAMBU). PAMBU is a non-profit organisation established in 1968, with sponsors from universities, the National Libraries of Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America. The organisation works with the aim to locate and preserve archives, manuscripts and other unpublished or semi-published material through microform. It targets, archives which are at particular risk to deterioration. These risks include "adverse climatic conditions, insect infestation, or civil unrest." PAMBU also distributes microfilm copies through subscription and direct sales, increasing access and "providing valuable sources for academic research, where the geography of the Pacific would otherwise make access to the originals difficult and expensive."

Many institutions in the Pacific already use microfilming as their preservation and access tool, and this is assisted greatly by the help of PAMBU. If digitisation is not a feasible option for the Pacific region at present, microfilming could continue to be the best option available for increasing access to the archives held in the Pacific Islands.

Electronic Finding Aids

Another option for increasing access to archives held in the Pacific region was brought to my attention while conducting the interview at OMPA. The interviewee showed me examples of how the Archives of the Diocese of Wallis and Futuna and the Archives of the Catholic Diocese of Port Villa, Vanuatu had produced an electronic copy of their finding aids.

The electronic copies of the inventories from these archives led me to consider an idea, which would be relatively

inexpensive for archival institutions to undertake. An institution could produce electronic copies of their finding aids and put them on their institutional website. This option would allow researchers from anywhere in the world to see whether the institution held what they were looking for before travelling to the Pacific. This would accomplish one of the main aims of digitisation in this research, saving the researcher time and money. This option could potentially be viable, as all of the institutions holding archives in Fiji have some access to the Internet, and many have an institution website.

There would be some funding needed for a project like this. However, the level of funding needed would be relatively minimal compared to the funds required to undertake a digitisation project. This option would not provide the same level of access to archives as digitisation, but it would be a good interim option.

Conclusion

This article summarises the main points of my MLIS research project conducted in 2002, which investigated the viability of digitising archives held in the Pacific Islands, using Fiji as a case study.

First I explored the benefits of digitisation in terms of increased access, reducing costs and time for researchers if Pacific Island archives are digitised. A summary of the holdings, access methods and user groups of the five major archival institutions; the National Archives of Fiji, the Fiji Museum, the Reserve Bank of Fiji, the University of the South Pacific and the Oceania Marist Province Archives was provided to show the resources available in Fiji.

These institutions were questioned to investigate whether they saw digitisation as a viable option and what issues hindered a digitisation project. These issues mainly included a lack of funding for archives and having an inadequate ICT infrastructure to support a digitisation project. The strongest viewpoint raised by the institutions interviewed, was that archives received very little funding due to Fiji being a developing country. As a result they had problems with housing and preserving materials, which would take priority over a digitisation project.

I compared my results to other Pacific Islands who are in a similar developmental status to Fiji, concluding that Fiji was representative of the Pacific when it came to ICT facilities and economic resources for the country and the archival institutions. From the interviews in Fiji and this comparison with other Pacific Islands, I concluded that digitisation is not a feasible option for the Pacific Island archives at present, due to funding constraints and the lack of reliable ICT facilities.

With this conclusion reached, I decided to explore other options for increasing

access. I suggested that microfilming could continue to provide the Pacific Islands with an answer for increasing access to their archives, particularly with the help of PAMBU. I also suggested putting electronic finding aids on the Internet. At the time this research was completed, I hoped further options would emerge in the future for digitisation projects to become more of a reality in the Pacific region, allowing for an assessment of whether digitisation fulfils its promise of increasing access to the archives held in the Pacific Islands.

Post-Script – PARBICA September 2005

In September 2005, I was lucky enough to attend the PARBICA conference in Nadi, Fiji on 'Recordkeeping for Good Governance'. This was a great opportunity to catch up with people I had met as part of this research and very encouraging to hear updates from the institutions, particularly the National Archives of Fiji.

The National Archives of Fiji has since received funding from the Fijian government for a new building to house their archives, which was a particular problem when I visited. It has also received funding from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) for a digitisation project and equipment.

Another positive development was the emergence of more funding agencies like the Endangered Archives Programme sponsored by Arcadia. Tuvalu had carried out a preservation pilot project, which also involved the digitisation of archives.

From the ICA mailing list:

In Memoriam

It is with great sadness that the International Council on Archives passes on the news that its former President and Honorary President Mr Hans Booms died on 16 April 2007 at the age of 82.

Mr Hans Booms was elected Vice-President of ICA in 1980. In this capacity he presided over the organisation of the International Congress on Archives in Bonn in 1984. He was elected President of ICA from 1984 to 1988 and made Honorary President in 1988.

As President of ICA, Hans Booms used his acknowledged authority to make an important contribution to the building of improved professional understanding across political divisions. As an archivist with recognised competence and as President of the Federal Archives of West Germany he was actively involved in the development of archival theory, in particular in the field of appraisal of archival sources.

His kindness and personal interest will be fondly remembered by his many friends on the international archival scene.

The International Council on Archives and the worldwide professional archival community owe Hans Booms considerable gratitude.

News From The National Archives Of Fiji: Brand New Building For The National Archives

by *Opeta Alefaio and Losena Tudreu*

Fiji will have a brand new Archive facility by years end! The final phase of construction is scheduled to commence soon, and National Archives staff are eagerly looking forward to seeing the finished building.

“It’s a big step for us, big progress!! In terms of space it will be bigger, so more records can come in. It will be more secure for our records, and then there is the prospect of working in a new environment because we will be out of this old building,” says Elenoa Delailakeba Assistant Archivist who has been with the National Archives for twenty years.

At the beginning of the year there was some concern that the project might not proceed as planned. Fortunately those fears proved to be unfounded. Apprehension over the state of the building currently housing the National Archives, however, was very well founded.

Built almost a century ago to cater for Governments printing department, the old building does not have facilities for storing

records in newer format such as audio visual, electronic, and digital records. Nor was it built to withstand the load of row upon row of fully laden compactuses.

To compound this space has run out, leading to the storage of records in government offices in conditions that are not conducive to recordkeeping “Best Practices.”

The new custom designed and purpose built facility will house a loading dock, conservation laboratory, micrographic laboratory and records storage facilities on the ground floor. The second floor is designated for all records storage. The third floor which has less floor space consists of office space, a conference room, computer room, sick room, toilets, and storage for confidential, and audiovisual and electronic records.

With these provisions, the Fiji’s archival heritage will receive the care and conditions necessary for their survival, and access in the future.



Public Works personnel putting up the frame of the new building

News From The National Archives Of Fiji: National Archives Implements Retrieval System

by *Opeta Alefaio and Losena Tudreu*

The National Archives of Fiji (NAF) in close collaboration with the Japanese International Co-operation Agency (JICA) has been able to establish an automated search facility for researchers called the National Archives Retrieval System (NARS).

The aim of the system is to make conducting research of NAF records easier for the citizens of Fiji, and other interested individuals. According to Librarian Salesia Ikaniwai researchers have cut down their search time markedly.

“It has definitely shortened the time taken as opposed to doing the same search manually through the indexes. Researchers make search easier by keying in specific subjects which also allows us to determine exactly what kind of information they are looking for.”

The project commenced in 2002 with the arrival of Senior JICA Volunteer Misako Kojima, a computer expert from Japan

whose task it was to initiate a database and retrieval system as well as pass on her knowledge to NAF counterparts. In 2004 she was replaced by Misako Kojima who further developed the system, and transferred her knowledge to a group of counterparts who continued to oversee the project after her departure in 2006

Through these two Senior Volunteers the Archives has also received 12 computers, including a large server to enable the retrieval system.

In order to make NARS as relevant as possible, the most frequently used records were entered first, these are the Land Records, Indian Immigration, Her Britannic Majesty’s Consul for Fiji and Tonga, Cakobau Ad interim and Provisional Governments, and the Colonial Secretary’s Office records. Input and checking of records is a continuous process and so far 28,049 records are in the system.



National Archives of Fiji officers entering data into the Retrieval System

More News From The National Archives Of Fiji: Fresh Impetus For Recordkeeping In Fiji

by *Opeta Alefaio and Losena Tudreu*

On September 8th 2006 amendments to Fiji's Public Records Act were gazetted, ending a two year journey to improve recordkeeping legislation, and giving Fiji a fresh impetus at bringing its records under control.

Enacted in 1970, the Public Records Act (PRA) *Cap. 108* of the Laws of Fiji proved to be increasingly inadequate, especially in the face of the rampant technology boom of the last two decades. So, to strengthen Fiji's recordkeeping regime it was necessary to update the legislation's definition of records to include electronic and digital records.

Speaking in support of the Act before it had become an act former parliamentarian Simione Kaitani, in his role of acting Chair of the Sector Standing Committee on Administrative Services said "The information received from the Government Ministries and Departments that wrote to the Committee confirms the views of the Government Archivist that guidelines are needed for how records are to be managed in the computer age."

"The loss of public records due to the use of email and storage of records on individual computers within Government offices signifies the importance of this Bill, which hopefully will lead to the continued preservation of the States records."

Apart from broadening the legislation to include records in special format, the main

aim of amending the PRA, was to embrace a more holistic approach to recordkeeping. This means taking into account the entire life cycle of records, where focus had previously been on the end phase of a records life.

To enable this, the Minister responsible for the Act is given the capacity to regulate the administration of public records and archives all through government. This enhances the security and better preservation of public records, while providing leeway to meet the specific needs of bodies and agencies.

The head of the National Archives of Fiji, the Government Archivist has also been granted the power to conduct searches of government agencies which fail to return archives temporarily lent them, and authorizes him to take a more active role in the administration of public records throughout government.

In addition, penalties for damaging or losing public records have been substantially increased to encourage the proper care of records.

More importantly, the passing of this legislation establishes a foundation on which to establish a government policy on records and regulations and procedures on records management. This will support records managers day to day work, and ensure that proper records are created, and managed as best possible.



Users in the Search Room of the National Archives

Recordkeeping for Good Governance Toolkit

PARBICA and the National Archives of Australia (NAA), with financial support from AusAID, have been working on a project to develop a generic suite of tools that promote universal best practice principles and approaches to good recordkeeping in government administrations throughout the Pacific.

The outcome of the project will be to work towards an improvement in the state of recordkeeping in Pacific island government administrations in order to underpin public sector efficiency and accountability, to help ensure Pacific island governments are meeting their legal obligations and to help protect the rights and entitlements of the citizens of these territories.

Stage one of the Toolkit project was a workshop held at the NAA Brisbane Office

on 19 and 20 April 2007. At this workshop delegates representing nine Pacific countries met to discuss the outputs of the project.

It was decided that the Toolkit should be a modular 'manual' providing archivists and record creators and managers with the tools required to promote and guide better-practice recordkeeping. To augment the Toolkit, it was agreed that a prefatory brochure be developed. This brochure will highlight to the heads of government departments, agencies and organisations, both the importance of good recordkeeping and also their recordkeeping responsibilities.

For more information about this important project, please visit the Projects page on the PARBICA website at: <http://www.parbica.org/projects.htm>



Workshop participants from l to r, Jacob Hevelawa (National Archives of PNG), Semiti Ravatu (Forum Secretariat, Fiji), Evelyn Wareham (Archives New Zealand), Albert Tu'ivanuavou Vaea (King's Department, Tonga), Tukul Kaiku (University of PNG), Mere Veitayaki (Reserve Bank Fiji), Opeta Nau Alefaio (National Archives of Fiji), Mila Tulimanu (National Library and Archives of Tuvalu), Naomi Ngirakamerang (National Archives of Palau), Dani Wickman (NAA), Amela Silipa (Ministry of Justice, Western Samoa) and Mark Semmler (NAA). Not pictured, Cheryl Stanborough (Yap State Archives).

News - Updates - Events

2007 SEAPAVAA Conference and General Assembly

Establishing Memory: Building an Archive for our Great Grandchildren, the 2007 conference of the South East Asia Pacific Audio Visual Archive Association (SEAPAVAA) will take place in the capital of the Kingdom of Cambodia, Phnom Penh, from August 20-25.

Registration for the conference is now open.

The conference will explore and debate the challenges of building and protecting national audiovisual memories.

Symposium and workshop topics will include collection development and management strategies, ethics and policy issues, the reinstatement of materials from abroad, economical storage solutions, digital standards, and developing and implementing low cost digitisation systems.

Check their website at www.seapavaa.org or email to seapavaa@yahoo.com

International Conference on the History of Records and Archives

ICHORA4, Perth, Western Australia 3-5 August 2008

Minority reports: Indigenous and Community Voices in Archives: The general theme of this conference explores issues relating to the history of recordkeeping by and about Indigenous peoples, migrant communities, minority communities, forgotten and disappeared communities. This includes historical and contemporary responses by these groups to recordkeeping by dominant communities. This conference also welcomes discussion on the impact and histories of the destruction of archives relating to the above communities and peoples, and the role of records in human rights contexts, including slavery and reconciliation.

This conference is timed to be directly after the ICA Congress in Kuala Lumpur, and just prior to the Australian Society of

Archivists Conference, Perth, Western Australia 7-9 August 2008. A call for papers for the Australian Society of Archivists Conference will be made in a few months. For further information in the meantime please contact Dr Karen Anderson k.anderson@ecu.edu.au

E-Archivaria launched

In January the Association of Canadian Archivists launched E-Archivaria. The full collection of *Archivaria* issues, #1 to #61, is now accessible on the Web in digital format as PDF files. The great majority of the collection is open and freely available to the archival community and public. The issues are available at <http://archivists.ca/publications/e-Archivaria.aspx>

Archival legislation in the Cayman Islands

In March the Legislative Assembly of the Cayman Islands has unanimously passed the National Archive and Public Records Bill, 2007 into law. The Act provides the Cayman Islands National Archive with a new legal mandate for all its functions, while at the same time defining a framework for record keeping in the broader Cayman Islands Public Sector.

Some of the key provisions of the law include: Creation of a high level Records Advisory Committee to review disposal and access issues; powers of the National Archive to set, monitor and report on record keeping standards; powers of the National Archive to authorize the disposal of public records; obligations on the part of public agencies to make and maintain full and accurate records; penalties for knowingly destroying or altering public records; various provisions for the National Archive's cultural/heritage functions; the establishment of the National Archive as the legal deposit library for the Cayman Islands.

RMAA's Pacific Region Special Interest Group launched

In April 2007 the Records Management Association of Australasia (RMAA) issued a statement announcing the successful launch of their Pacific Region Special Interest Group. The group was launched on 29 March 2007 at a seminar held in Suva, Fiji. The group's mission is the research and promotion of knowledge and expertise in those areas of best practice that will help organisations and their people to achieve higher levels of motivation, productivity and competitive advantage. It will provide a forum for records and information management professionals to develop and share records and information management knowledge.

A full report on the work of the Association is being published in the August 2007 issue of IQ.

For a full statement on the launch visit www.rmaa.com.au or contact Kate Walker, Chief Executive Officer, email: kate.walker@rmaa.com.au

Papua New Guinea Records and Archives Special Interest Group formed

In May the RMAA announced the formation of the Papua New Guinea Records and Archives Special Interest Group (SIG) designed to support association initiatives and advance the records and information management industry. Jason Korn, is the President of the recently formed RMAA Papua New Guinea Records and Archives Special Interest Group. The group was initiated by Jason and supported by a majority of participants during three consecutive workshops conducted by Mr. Sam Kaima last year 2006. The RMAA will be a source of assistance and advice to move PNG RAMA forward.

Educational Directory Update

We are pleased to be able to provide you with further information on courses available in archival education and related fields.

Australian National University

Centre for Science and Engineering of Materials
College of Engineering and Computer Science
The Australian National University
Canberra ACT 0200 AUSTRALIA

System Approach to Management of Government Information: for further information contact Dr Z H Stachurski, Director

Zbigniew.Stachurski@anu.edu.au

<http://engnet.anu.edu.au/DEpeople/Zbigniew.Stachurski/links.html>

Qualification: Postgraduate Status Diploma/ Certificate

Content: The course has been developed in consultation with National Archives of Australia. It is aimed at middle to senior management and IT systems managers, as well as administrators involved in material science and technology, information management or public administration. It addresses all aspects of records management and preservation of archives in a systems approach.

Pre-requisites: No information supplied.

Duration FT / PT: No information supplied

Available in Distance Mode: No information supplied

Open to International Students: No information supplied

Professional associations recognising this course: No information supplied.

Charles Sturt University

Telephone: +61 2 6338 6077

Facsimile: +61 2 6338 6001

Email: inquiry@csu.edu.au

Web (for future students): www.csu.edu.au/study/

http://www.csu.edu.au/courses/postgraduate/audiovisual_archiving_gc/application_det.html

Qualification: Graduate Certificate in Audiovisual Archiving

Content: The course consists of four subjects developed jointly by The National Film and Sound Archive and Charles Sturt University. It provides formal, university-level education for personnel working in the audiovisual archiving industry.

Pre-requisites: No information supplied.

Duration FT / PT: 1 year

Available in Distance Mode: Available in distance mode only

Open to International Students: No information supplied

Professional associations recognising this course: No information supplied.

The University of Melbourne

The Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation

University of Melbourne VIC 3010, AUSTRALIA

http://www.culturalconservation.unimelb.edu.au/courses/photon_intensive.html

Faculty / Division: Faculty of Arts

Qualification: Postgraduate Certificate in Arts (Photographic Materials Conservation)

Content: The course will bring leading international experts to Melbourne to teach four week-long intensive subjects that cover the theory and practice of photographic conservation. The subjects may be taken as stand-alone workshops; or together to lead to the formal qualification. The first subject, 'Preventive Care of Photographs and Film', is scheduled for July 2007, and is expected to attract a wide audience consisting of conservators, photographers, archivists, librarians, registrars, and curators. The three subsequent subjects will be targeted at mid-career conservation professionals and will be technically based. As such, these subjects will be taught in small group format.

Pre-requisites: Undergraduate degree in cultural materials conservation, or relevant equivalent, with a grade average equivalent to H2B (70%). Students without an undergraduate degree, but with extensive professional experience in a directly relevant field may apply. On completion of the course these students will exit with the award of Graduate Certificate.

Duration FT / PT: The course will be offered in intensive 1 week blocks. The program is to be undertaken as four intensive subjects run over four semesters. Each subject is worth 12.5 points.

Available in Distance Mode: No

Open to International Students: Yes

Professional associations recognising this course: No information supplied.

Short Courses in the Asia Pacific Region

Australia

National Archives of Australia also offers short courses for record-keepers. At present NAA is reviewing the courses on offer. The current focus of their training program is a one day workshop titled an Introduction to Records Management in the APS. Please refer to <http://www.naa.gov.au/recordkeeping/training/modules.html> for more information.



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"Hope is the other side of history."

Marcia Cavell, University of California, Berkeley,
Dept of Philosophy

PARBICA website – www.parbica.org

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