

PARBICA Secretary General's Report

General Assembly, PARBICA 20

7 November 2023

Introduction

The Secretary General's role is to plan and coordinate activities, administer Bureau meetings, manage memberships jointly with the Treasury, and maintain relationships with members. This report provides an overview of some of the highlights from the last two years (2021-2023).

This has been my first term as the Secretary-General of PARBICA. I joined the Bureau in November 2021.

Bureau

PARBICA is a regional branch of the International Council on Archives (ICA) managed by an elected bureau of volunteers. During the two-year term the Bureau has met regularly online via Zoom and Teams.

Bureau members were elected and confirmed by the General Conference online via Zoom, on 1 November 2021. The Bureau membership for the term 2021-2023 has included the following representatives:

President: Ms Julian Chonigolo (Solomon Islands) April 2023 – current

Ms Amela Silipa (Samoa) August 2022 – April 2023

Mr Noa Petueli Tapumanaia (Tuvalu) 2021 – August 2022

Vice-President: Mr Timoci Balenaivalu (Fiji) April 2023 – current

Secretary General: Mrs Natalie Vaha'akolo (New Zealand)

Treasurer: Mr David Swift (Australia)

- Member:** Ms Amela Silipa (Samoa)
- Member:** Mr Opetia Alefaio (Fiji/ Australia)
- Member:** Ms Kari James (Australia)

We are grateful to those who previously served in the role of President, and co-opted members for their support. I would also like to acknowledge the Bureau for their flexibility to fill vacated roles and to enable the work of the Bureau to continue.

Membership

The membership report is covered in the Treasurer's report.

Highlights of this term

My first term as PARBICA Secretary General has been one of continuous learning and activity to serve our members.

The term started with the first ever PARBICA conference being held online via Zoom in November 2021. This was due to Covid-19 making it difficult to meet in person.

Meeting online is increasingly becoming the 'norm' and while it's unfortunate that we couldn't meet in person at PARBICA 19, and again this year, the upside is how technology has enabled us to meet online and connect more easily across our wide network of members and share knowledge and stories from our own parts of the world.

Co-operation and Advocacy

During this term PARBICA launched a new guideline on 'Implementing Access to Memory (AtoM) in the Pacific' in the Recordkeeping for Good Governance Toolkit. The guideline was launched on the PARBICA website in April 2022.

The purpose of the guideline and user guide is to assist archives and records management staff across the Pacific to understand how best to approach the implementation of description and access using an online hosted software.

Access to Memory (AtoM) is a free and open-source web application that enables standards-based archival description and access to an institution's repository. The software was originally developed by Artefactual Systems in collaboration with UNESCO and the International Council on Archives (ICA) to encourage broader international representation in the archival and records management space.

We would like to thank UNESCO Memory of the World Committee for Asia and the Pacific, the ICA and the project team comprised of Joshua Ng, New Zealand, Jan Hutař, New Zealand and Ross Spencer, Germany, for their invaluable contribution in delivering this product.

Representation

PARBICA has been well represented internationally over this term.

In September 2022 our president (Ms Amela Silipa) represented PARBICA at the ICA 9th Annual Conference in Rome. The theme of the conference was 'Bridging the gap' and how archives play a fundamental role in this.

The conference was a great opportunity to connect with colleagues and bring a Pacific perspective to some of the discussions. Amela did a great job representing us and I believe her participation at the conference helped 'bridge the gap' between our far-flung part of the world and organisations and networks on the other side of the world.

In August 2023 our current president Ms Julian Chonigolo was elected to the Forum of National Archivists (FAN) Steering Committee as the Asia and Oceania member. The role of the Forum of National Archivists (FAN) is to develop high-level strategic responses to the contemporary challenges of managing archives. Congratulations Julian on your election and thank you for being a great advocate for our pacific countries.

Following on from this achievement, Julian successfully applied for an ICA Bursary which greatly assisted in allowing Julian to travel to Abu Dhabi for the ICA Congress in October 2023. **Julian has covered this in her president's report.** Other members of PARBICA also travelled to the ICA Congress and it makes me proud that our pacific members were there to represent their organization and the pacific.

Reflections on next steps for PARBICA

The next term (2023-2025) sees us well and truly facing the deadline to have audio-visual materials on magnetic tape digitised. There is international agreement that magnetic media that has not been digitised by 2025 will likely be lost forever. Tape degradation, obsolete playback equipment, a shortage of spare parts and a decline in relevant expertise all mean that the end of routine or large-scale transfer from magnetic tape is fast approaching.

We have consciously built this year's conference around this and have specifically included a workshop on AV media to offer some guidance on how to respond to this issue. This must be a priority for PARBICA and our pacific nations over the coming 2 years.

The PARBICA conferences are a great way to share our stories and experiences. Despite barriers over the past few years, we have been fortunate that technology has allowed us to meet online for PARBICA 19, and now this conference, PARBICA 20. However, there is nothing better than being able to meet in person and make those face-to-face connections with each other. The Bureau is continually thinking of ways to enable this and is working on some tentative plans to make this happen over the next two years. We will keep you posted.

Beyond our biannual conference I would love to see our connection and communication grow and hope you have found the emails I've been forwarding from the ICA and other related organisations useful. It has been through these emails that I've been fortunate to make connections and communicate with some of our members. It has been a highlight of this role for me.

I hope that I can continue to serve our network over the coming term and look forward to working alongside you all.

Natalie Vaha'akolo

Secretary-General, PARBICA