



# Pacific CONNECTION

Issue 16, June – August 2008



IN THIS ISSUE: PCF turns five • Building a new Fiji • Journos call for media freedom

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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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ISSN: 1176-7278

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Produced by Context Ltd on behalf of the Pacific Cooperation Foundation. Editors: Jonathan Schwass, Ann Howarth.

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Cover: Some *Pacific Connection* covers since the creation of the PCF five years ago.

## Friends of the Foundation membership

The Pacific Cooperation Foundation's work would not be possible without support from the private as well as the public sector. For this reason, we offer an opportunity for those with an interest in the Pacific region to become 'Friends of the Foundation'. Friends receive: invitations to all PCF events and functions; and a copy of our quarterly magazine, *Pacific Connection*.

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This issue marks the fifth anniversary of the PCF's launch at Government House, Wellington, in August 2003. We look back at the path we have trodden and forward to where we want the PCF to go over the next five years and beyond.

Our chair, Neil Plimmer, looks to the development of the PCF's new themes – to greater engagement with Melanesia and with communities and civil society organisations. He foresees increasing engagement with Pacific Island communities in New Zealand, expansion of the PCF's networks with the universities and museums in the Pacific, and notes a major PCF conference in mid-2009 to address future directions for New Zealand's relationships with its Pacific neighbours.

Our founding chair, Michael Powles, reflects back on the PCF's 'childhood' and identifies roles for a mature PCF in supporting those working for improved governance practices and in monitoring the growing influence of China – in particular for the enormous opportunities China can bring to the region.

Rae Julian, recently retired executive director of the New Zealand Council for International Development, reflects on the wide range of issues the Pacific region has faced in the past five years, and former board member Teresia Teaiwa challenges us all to 'walk the talk' and seek real understanding of Pacific issues rather than mere knowledge of them.

Academic Vijay Naidu and former Papua New Guinea High Commissioner to New Zealand Lucy Bogari – both firm supporters of the PCF from its inception – provide us with some insightful comments on the prospects for the wider Pacific and the Melanesian sub-region.

The PCF's Annual Pacific Address for 2008 was given by the greatly respected Fijian high chief, Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, former Vice President of Fiji. Ratu Joni provided large audiences in Wellington and Auckland with a masterly analysis of the Fiji political situation and offered his own solutions for the way forward for Fiji. We have included highlights from the text of his address in this issue.

It is a great pleasure to conclude this editorial with the news that the PCF was given a \$450,000 boost in government funding for 2008/09 in the 22 May Budget as part of an overall increase of \$1.95 million over the next four years. With increasing private sector funding as well, this will enable us to grow into a healthy maturity and to build on the firm foundations laid in our first five years.

Vince McBride  
Chief Executive

Founding Partners:



# A 'fresh voice on Pacific matters'

By the Hon Anand Satyanand PCNZM, QSO  
Governor-General of New Zealand

Patron of the PCF

Greetings in the languages of the Realm of New Zealand in English, Maori, Cook Island Maori, Niuean and Tokelauan – Greetings, Kia Ora, Kia Orana, Fakalofa Lahi Atu, Taloha Ni. And had I been offering these greetings face-to-face, I would have added greetings in New Zealand Sign Language as well.

As Governor-General and Patron of the Pacific Cooperation Foundation, it is with pleasure that I provide this message to the organisation's fifth anniversary edition of *Pacific Connection*.

The greetings I have given reflect how very much New Zealand is part of the Pacific and the Pacific is part of New Zealand. In addition to those peoples that form part of New Zealand's direct constitutional family – the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau – it has strong ties with many other Pacific nations. New Zealand and Samoa, for example, share a long-standing Treaty of Friendship, the only such treaty either nation has signed with another.

While I was born in New Zealand, as one whose grandparents were born in India and migrated to Fiji, and whose parents were born in Fiji and moved here, I am keenly aware of the concerns of migrants and New Zealand's connections with the peoples of both areas. In addition to being the Patron of the PCF, I am also Patron of the Asia New Zealand Foundation.

As a nation inhabited for about 1000 years, New Zealand is a nation of migrants, and the last census revealed that about seven percent of New Zealanders, or about 266,000 people, have Pacific origins. Given that, it is with pleasure that I add greetings in Samoan, Tongan, Fijian, Kiribati and Tuvaluan: talofa lava, malo e lelei, ni sa bula vinaka, kam na mauri, and talofa.

All these links were amply illustrated when I had the pleasure of opening a major exhibition at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in October last year. *Tangata o le Moana* traces the origins and fortunes of New Zealand's Pacific immigrants from those who arrived by canoe, by ship and by aeroplane.

Given my ancestry and my past life as a lawyer, judge and ombudsman, I retain many family and professional links to the Pacific. My wife Susan and I have also travelled extensively



*Hon Anand Satyanand PCNZM, QSO,  
Governor-General of New Zealand.*

throughout the Pacific as tourists and have many good friends throughout the region.

In my first two years as Governor-General I have also travelled widely throughout the Pacific to reinforce New Zealand's links with the region. I have visited Samoa, Niue, the Cook Islands and Tokelau, and each of these visits has been preceded or followed by community receptions at Government House in either Wellington or Auckland. I also travelled separately to both Samoa and Tonga to attend the funerals of the Head of State of Samoa, His Highness Malietoa Tanumafili II, and the King of Tonga, His Majesty Taufa'ahou Tupou IV.

In the five years since the PCF was launched at Government House it has worked assiduously to enhance relationships between New Zealand and Pacific. As an independent body, the Foundation offers a fresh voice on Pacific matters by distributing information and independent commentary. It has developed strong networks with governments, community groups, universities, businesses, the media and non-governmental organisations that have allowed it to broker important outcomes.

As Governor-General of New Zealand I congratulate the Pacific Cooperation Foundation on reaching its fifth birthday and on its many accomplishments to date.

No reira, tena koutou, tena koutou, kia ora, kia kaha, tena koutou katoa. ●

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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.

# Looking back, looking forward

The PCF's first five years have been both steady progress and a roller-coaster ride, writes PCF chair Neil Plimmer.

The early years combined a concentration on getting 'runs on the board' with building the organisation. There are now plenty of successes – each year's annual report is able to recite a new list – and the organisation is established with that risky set-up phase well behind us.

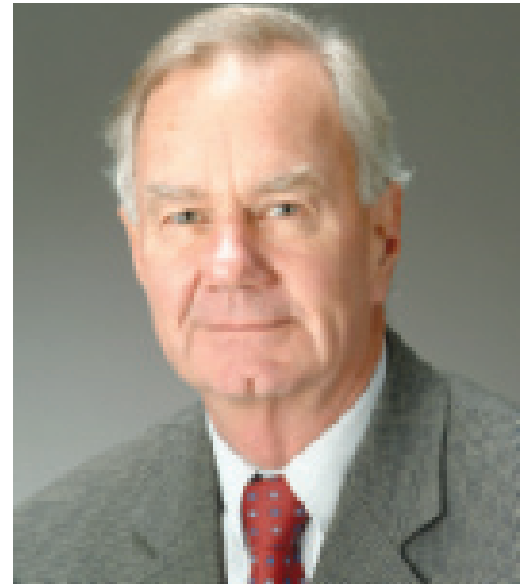
After five years we are now comfortable with our core framework, goals and organisation, within the bounds of the funding available, even though ongoing work to improve our governance and performance is always with us.

Each of us can produce a preferred list of achievements and here is my short list of the top five:

- A huge increase in New Zealand media coverage of Pacific Island issues, and a resulting improvement in New Zealanders' understanding of these issues. This activity has been underpinned by our media visits programme, by our quarterly flagship publication *Pacific Connection* and by extensive seminar and speaking programmes. Our sponsorship of a Pacific Issues category in the Qantas Media Awards has seen the number of entries grow from just a few to more than 30. There is a genuine interest now in Pacific Island developments and a maturity about this country's public responses.
- The development of a strong base for extending this informed awareness through the education system. PCF achievements here range from CD and print material for school teachers to a database of New Zealand academic research on Pacific Islands subjects. Regular interaction with the academic community has focused on encouraging New Zealand universities to do more teaching and research on Pacific issues.
- The completion of the 'Pacificbizonline' website, with its high potential to expand two-way trade between New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, and its supporting training programmes, as well as the *Pacific Agricultural Traders' Handbook* or 'PATH' tool for agricultural traders – all designed to increase Pacific Island exports to New Zealand.
- Our major conference in 2006 on the Future of the Pacific Labour Market, which pointed to solutions to the perceived problems surrounding temporary labour mobility and helped pave the way for the New Zealand Government's temporary work scheme for Pacific Island workers, the Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme.
- Our expanding linkages with Pacific Island countries: a variety of activities including our Treaty of Friendship academic exchange with the National University of Samoa, our annual guest Pacific lecturers representing the leadership of Pacific Island countries, and our networking with NGOs from the Pacific Islands at the annual Civil Society Forum are all contributing to this.

But a fifth anniversary is a time to look ahead. Our decision to explore particular themes over two-year periods or longer casts light on this. One theme is to put a spotlight on New Zealand's linkages with Melanesia and review the state of New Zealanders' understanding of that region of the Pacific. This will result in projects that widen these linkages and open our eyes to a rich and complex part of the world.

A second theme is reviewing how we can help strengthen the role of communities and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) across the Pacific. This is complex, and accordingly has been launched by a scoping exercise that has, amongst other



PCF chair Neil Plimmer.

approaches, identified leading players in the field and potential partners. Over two to three years the PCF will engage with Pacific Island and New Zealand NGOs to build capability at this level of society.

I expect our networks with the Pacific Islands to intensify markedly over the coming years. We have two in New Zealand: the Academic Network of university teachers and researchers in Pacific Island subjects, and the Museums' Network of museums with strong collections of Pacific Island materials. We will steadily expand these into the Pacific, engaging with academics, tertiary institutions and museums, and then look to developing other networks that engage New Zealand and Pacific Island institutions and people.

A key event in mid-2009 will be a major conference, with high-level participation from around the Pacific, to examine New Zealand's interface with the region and discuss future directions for our relationships with our Pacific neighbours.

Until recently the PCF's activities in New Zealand have not placed a particular emphasis on the Pacific Island communities resident in this country, although their representatives have certainly been involved in a number of PCF activities. I anticipate a steadily increasing engagement over the next five years. These communities can help us with developing linkages with Pacific Island countries, with formulating appropriate policy approaches and with growing the awareness and meaning of New Zealand's own identity as a Pacific Island nation.

At an organisational level, the PCF will certainly expand its own capabilities and impact. It has operated for its first five years with annual budgets of less than \$1 million and a dedicated staff of four – and just recently, five. We are in the process of a quantum leap to reach \$1.5 million. I would expect that, as awareness of our role grows, the next five years will see us reach a budget of \$2 million a year, with an enlarged reach and reputation.

New Zealand will be dealing with an increasingly complex and challenging Pacific Islands region over the next five years. Throughout that time the PCF will be working hard to understand the issues and the changes, and to make its mark in the overall New Zealand engagement with this special part of the world.

By our tenth year, the Pacific Cooperation Foundation will be a widely-recognised and well-respected leader in its field. ●

# Helping to lift the NZ game

By Michael Powles, PCF founding chair

Congratulations to the PCF on your fifth birthday! We should now pat you on the head, make sandwiches for your lunchbox, and send you off to school. And as we do so, it's a prerogative of those who conceived you (or at least of you) to reflect a little on why you were brought into the world and indeed what kind of a world you are going to face as you get older.

When I first argued the case for a Pacific Cooperation Foundation it was because of a strong feeling that New Zealand as a whole needed to lift its game in its own neighbourhood. A respected journalist had remarked to me a year or two earlier that the South Pacific was only of interest to most New Zealanders as a place for cheap tropical holidays. That single comment provided the incentive to keep going in the early stages when at times it looked all too difficult. Still today, the Foundation's first goal is fostering understanding of the Pacific on the part of all New Zealanders and New Zealand's identity as a Pacific nation.

I believe that will remain fundamentally important for the Foundation. But the world doesn't stand still and it is in this area of national identity and affinity for the Pacific that I think the situation has improved significantly. Numbers of factors have contributed, including for example having a Maori foreign minister who gets on with Polynesian leaders in the Pacific, a foreign service operation in the region that seems to be more professional than in my day, a rising profile on the part of Pacific

Island New Zealanders and, last but emphatically not least, the effective work that the PCF has done, particularly in getting the New Zealand media out into the region.

Back in 2003, *New Zealand Herald* Pacific affairs columnist Tapu Misa wrote that she detected "a dynamism here, creativity, humour, as well as cohesiveness – and a sense of connectedness with the rest of Oceania that may well end up being our saving grace". I'm not sure that many pakeha people would have endorsed that comment at the time she made it. Today I think a lot more would. People like journalist Colin James are expressing similar thoughts. But for some time our sense of Pacific identity will still be a fragile plant. It will be a key role for the Foundation in the years ahead to keep nurturing it well.

Looking into the future I see two other areas in which the PCF will need to be increasingly involved. First, many Pacific Island governments are struggling to improve governance standards. Some realise that without effective governance standards the delivery of critical government services is rendered ineffective. Even worse, the credibility and functioning of governments themselves is seriously impaired.

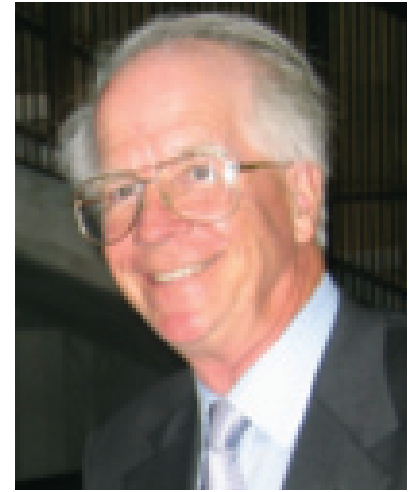
Earlier this year, I chaired a conference in Apia on human rights and the Pacific media. (It was organised by the PCF and the Human Rights Commission jointly, and funded by NZAID and the United Kingdom.) I was appalled by some of the stories told by working journalists about the obstacles created by some governments in the region to prevent them doing their jobs properly. These ranged from physical harassment to refusals to disclose information to which the public would have a right in most jurisdictions. (It gave point to the rather cynical advice to young reporters from a veteran BBC journalist: "When interviewing a politician, keep one question in the forefront of your mind: 'Why is this lying bastard telling me this particular lie at this particular time?'" )

But I don't believe the answer in the Pacific is for aid donors to impose governance standards by means of heavily conditional aid. This might seem to produce short-term results but it's unlikely to change anything in the long-term. Nor should New Zealand berate its neighbours on the principles of good governance. I believe there will only be a long-term solution when there is indigenous support, based where possible on local culture and tradition, for what we would call good governance practices. The PCF can have a significant role in helping those, both in government and outside it, who are keen for support to enable them to work for improved governance practices. We need to remember, too, that the Pacific's own leaders have spoken powerfully, in their Pacific Plan, of their Vision for the Pacific:

*We seek a Pacific region that is respected for the quality of its governance, the sustainable management of its resources, the full observance of democratic values and for its defence and promotion of human rights.*

Another role I see for the Foundation in the years ahead is monitoring the growing influence of China in the region and finding ways of assisting Island governments and peoples to adjust to the changes that will take place as China gradually exerts more influence and Western powers less. Change is always unsettling. But while there will be challenges there will also be enormous opportunities, including in the fields of seabed mineral extraction (look at Australia) and wider economic stimulation.

Happy Birthday, PCF, grow strong. There's a lot of work ahead! ●



PCF founding chair Michael Powles.

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# In search of understanding

As the PCF turns five it is timely to reflect on its first Strategic Goal: 'fostering understanding of the Pacific on the part of all New Zealanders and New Zealand's identity as a Pacific Nation'. So writes Victoria University senior lecturer in Pacific Studies and former PCF board member **Teresia Teaiwa**.

In an era when political leaders and captains of industry are emphasising the need to transform New Zealand into a 'knowledge economy', the architects of the PCF's mission, vision and goals have emphasised 'understanding'. Knowledge and understanding are not the same thing; the latter grows from the former. If we want to understand the Pacific and New Zealand's identity as a Pacific nation, we have to be prepared to interrogate the knowledge, information and facts before us.

Diverse and complex as they are, the Pacific and Pacific people constantly demand to be understood from different angles and perspectives. But in an election year the range of meanings that the New Zealand public is likely to seek for questions about them typically gets narrower and narrower. The Pacific and Pacific people in New Zealand become political footballs, and all the knowledge, understanding and goodwill that exist cannot seem to withstand the surge of nationalist and anti-immigrant sentiment that election campaigns in this country thrive on.

The level of media attention recently granted to the Clydesdale Report on Pacific migration to New Zealand (which under normal circumstances would have been treated as yet another unremarkable academic exercise) is instructive. When some 900 words of an approximately 9000-word conference paper presented poorly processed and under-analysed information about the effects of Pacific 'immigration' to New Zealand, the media turned those 900 words into their headlines. And the headlines read, "Pacific migrants 'drain on economy'."

There is so much fact, so much information and so much knowledge that we can draw on to counter the sort of willful ignorance that produces both the headlines and the research. We can question why a paper written in 2008 is citing social status reports from 2002 when 2006 census figures are available. We can criticise Clydesdale's lack of attention to ethnic-specific disaggregated social indices that show that certain Pacific ethnic groups are actually doing very well in New Zealand. We can note his only fleeting recognition that Niueans, Cook Islanders and Tokelauans are citizens of New Zealand, and insist that he acknowledge that more than 50 percent of Pacific people in New Zealand are New Zealand-born and therefore citizens. We can point out that his argument sloppily blurs the distinctions that do need to be made between migrants and citizens.

We can ask why he hasn't addressed the Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) policy introduced by the Labour Department in 2007. Through the RSE scheme, permits are provided to citizens of several Pacific nations to work in the New Zealand horticulture and viticulture industries, which otherwise would be experiencing chronic labour shortages. We can remind

Clydesdale of the embarrassing trade imbalance between New Zealand and Pacific Island nations. We can ask him to account for the fact that the GDPs of some Pacific Island nations rely on remittances from hard-working Pacific people in New Zealand.

So many facts, so much information, so much knowledge – yet still, so little understanding. But Clydesdale is here today and gone tomorrow. He's not staking out a future for himself as an expert on the Pacific, and this is perhaps his saving grace. What we should be worried about are those people who do cast themselves as experts and authorities on the Pacific.

New Zealand should count its lucky stars it hasn't yet produced a local version of Australian development academic Helen Hughes, who has consistently produced pessimistic assessments of Pacific economies. Under the Howard regime, she was considered an expert voice on the Pacific even though her analyses failed to account for historical traditions and the contradictions of the policies of developed nations in relation to the developing world.

But complacency will get us nowhere, and, while it may sound trite, I do believe that education is the key to understanding. You might expect that as a university lecturer in Pacific studies I would say this. But I'm not so arrogant as to believe that universities and schools are the only valid sites of education in our society. The media, of course, could be more educational, but commercialism is ultimately the driver there.

To close, I would like to share some thoughts on the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa's new permanent exhibition, *Tangata o le Moana: the story of Pacific people in New Zealand*. This, in my opinion, is an educational effort that goes a long way to increasing both knowledge and understanding of the Pacific and New Zealand's identity as a Pacific nation.

*Tangata o le Moana* traces Maori historical and cultural links with other Pacific Islands; documents early travels by Pacific people to New Zealand (did you know a Rotuman named 'Saturday' travelled with early English traders in New Zealand in 1840?); follows the expansion of New Zealand's imperial and colonial interests in the Pacific Islands; honours the contributions of Pacific soldiers to New Zealand's military efforts; reflects on the experiences of 20th century migrants; and highlights trends in cultural borrowing and fusion. Lots of information and facts and, when encountered in the setting of the museum, lots of space for reflection.

When my Pacific Studies students have visited *Tangata o le Moana* as part of assignments for their courses, their responses have been overwhelming. Some who have Pacific heritage say the exhibition has not changed how they understand their place in New Zealand, but it has added to their knowledge of their history and culture. Many of the palagi and some of the Pacific students say the exhibition has exponentially increased their knowledge and dramatically changed their understanding of the relationships between New Zealand and the Pacific. For me, it is a privilege to live and work in such close proximity with this exhibition, and it is an honour to work with students who constantly reaffirm the value of positioning oneself not as a 'knower', but as someone who seeks to understand.

The challenges for the PCF are in developing and strengthening the conditions for achieving understanding. Radical educationalists tell us that knowledge is always either a colonial or neo-colonial enterprise. But understanding is a cooperative one. Here's to more cooperative futures in New Zealand and the Pacific. ●



Dr Teresia Teaiwa of Victoria University.

# The civil society journey

The progress made by New Zealand's Pacific-focused civil society organisations in the five years since the creation of the PCF is encouraging but uneven, writes former Council for International Development (CID) executive director **Rae Julian**.

First, a point about definitions. More often than not, CID is described as representing non-government organisations (NGOs) – not-for-profit bodies with a formal structure, including a body of members or supporters, which are registered in some way. This is a very narrow description, especially when applied to the Pacific, where there are relatively few indigenous NGOs.

In this discussion I will use the wider definition of 'civil society organisations' (CSOs), which is more applicable in our setting because it includes NGOs, church-based and community groups, business organisations such as chambers of commerce, trade union groups and media organisations. New Zealand NGOs have been relatively slow to adopt this wider acronym.

In 2003 CID had 56 member organisations. Most of these were 'traditional NGOs'. They were run by pakeha, at least half were either church-based or with an underlying Christian ethos, and many were very small, with volunteer workers only. They worked mainly with partners in Africa or South Asia with a focus on community development. There were a few larger organisations – such as World Vision, Save the Children, Oxfam, Volunteer Service Abroad, Caritas and Christian World Service – with paid staff including specialised programme officers.

By 2008, there had been a major change in the composition of CID. There were now two Maori organisations, Te Korowai Aroha Aotearoa and Te Ora Hou, and Pacific Island members including The Family Centre, O Le Lafitaga, Pasifika Mana Social Work and Niu Development. There were also a growing number of organisations representing other ethnic groups, most of whose members had come to New Zealand as refugees and wanted to support their compatriots in their troubled homelands. Groups from Iraq, Somalia, Sudan and Sri Lanka came into this category. Along with the trade union and university groups mentioned earlier, there was a farmers' organisation and women's organisations such as Zonta and the Girl Guides Association.

Between 2003 and 2008 the Pacific Cooperation Foundation had come into being, bringing a timely and valuable contribution to a new national focus on the Pacific. NZAID had been established as a semi-autonomous agency in 2002 and had embarked on a series of policies as a foundation for its international work. It formed a close association with the CSOs, consulting on its policies and strategies and including them in many activities. NZAID's principal area of interest was the Pacific and by 2008 many of the CID members had adopted a similar focus.

A close relationship has now developed between the Pacific CSOs and those in New Zealand. This has manifested itself in individual partnerships and by providing a Pacific civil society voice at international meetings, especially at the annual civil society forum held immediately before the Pacific Leaders' Forum. The Pacific CSOs are recognised as agencies to be consulted and included in regional events.

Turning now to the changing role of New Zealand CSOs in the



*Former CID executive director Rae Julian.*

past five years: in 2003, development work was their main activity, but some had already recognised that it was not enough to assist partners at the community level. They acknowledged that if the overall goal was the eradication of poverty, then changes needed to happen at government levels as well. This led to the growth of combined advocacy with the New Zealand Government through campaigns such as Point Seven<sup>1</sup> and Make Poverty History, and support for the Millennium Development Goals.

The work with Pacific partners also changed for many organisations. Increasingly those organisations saw their role as empowering, supporting a rights-based approach to development that focused on helping people in developing countries realise their rights. For CID, this meant partners were assisted to attend major training events and contribute their perspective on the theme and develop common approaches.

Where to next for the New Zealand CSO community? There is still much to be done. Recent reports of major food shortages in sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia illustrate the challenges. New Zealand is not contributing its fair share to poverty eradication. In 2007 the Government gave 0.3 percent of Gross National Income to official development assistance, with a pledge to reach 0.35 percent by 2010 – still only half-way to the target.

This is election year and current polling is showing that there could be a change of government. The National Party has made no commitment to Point Seven, and the Party's policy discussion paper on foreign affairs<sup>2</sup> indicates that poverty eradication may not be its underlying philosophy.

Advocacy is essential, not only within the comfort zone of supporters but also to perceived opponents. The election campaign is an excellent opportunity to build support within the MPs' constituencies. The 92 CSOs could be a powerful body if they activated their own supporters from churches, trade unions, iwi and ethnic groups to demonstrate that Point Seven and the other goals of Make Poverty History (fair trade and debt cancellation) will influence their decision on election day.

The links with the Pacific CSOs must be maintained and strengthened. This is a major area of progress, but more work is needed. The voice of Pacific civil society is not yet included in the Forum communiqué, and the Pacific regional NGOs still do not work together closely and with one voice. Their voice is muted at international forums. Capacity building and support are needed for core activities as well as projects.

These are long-term as well as immediate challenges. Other issues must also be added to the advocacy and activity agenda, including climate change, gender inequality and human security.

Progress has been made during the past five years but there is great potential within the NZ CSOs to do more. It would be a sorry state in 2013, if we were to look back over the preceding 10 years and could not report major changes that we helped to bring about. ●

<sup>1</sup> A campaign to encourage the Government to increase its annual budgetary contribution to Official Development Assistance (ODA) to reach the internationally agreed target of 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) by 2015, with interim targets.

<sup>2</sup> [www.national.org.nz/files/0\\_0\\_FA\\_lowres](http://www.national.org.nz/files/0_0_FA_lowres)

# The Pacific Cooperation Foundation



## ... five colourful years



*This page, pictured clockwise from top left: PCF programme manager David Vaeafe with Qantas Pacific journalism award winner Paea Wolfgramm; the Governor-General of New Zealand, Hon Anand Satyanand PCNZM, QSO, with PCF administration manager Florence Aiono (2007); Fiji Broadcasting Corporation students at the Wellington Radio Training School in 2007, from left Rodney Dan, PCF executive director Vince McBride, PCF programme manager Tina McNicholas, Niru Nalini Nand (seated), Reenal Chjandra Deo and Alexder Lionati Pene; Oceania Dance Theatre, Fiji, at the Culture Moves! international dance conference performance showcase in Wellington (2005) (photo Colin McDiarmid)*

*Opposite page, pictured clockwise from top left: PCF chair Neil Plimmer, then Associate Minister of Pacific Affairs Luamanuvao Winnie Laban, PCF executive director Vince McBride and PCF founding chair Michael Powles at the launch of 'Pacific Futures', a book of essays edited by Mr Powles (2006); one of the first PCF Media Graduate Placement Programme journalists, Duncan Wilson, with 'Islands Business' editor Laisa Taga (2005); another of the first PCF Media Graduate Placement Programme journalists, Jonathan Dow, with staff of the 'Fiji Times' (2005); Vanuatu orchard and vineyard workers in Central Otago (2007) (photo Southland Times); loading Albacore tuna (2007) (photo Dev Nadkarni).*

# Whither the region ...

The fifth birthday of the PCF is an opportunity to take stock not only of the role of the organisation, but also of the Pacific itself. *Pacific Connection* sought views from several contributors on where the region is going; first, University of the South Pacific development studies specialist **Vijay Naidu**, who suggests a cautiously positive prognosis.

Pacific islanders have shown an admirable resilience in coping with rapidly changing circumstances, largely not of their making.

In this era of globalisation many Pacific Island countries (PICs) continue to have significant value for geo-political reasons and for natural resources, including marine resources, that are to be found in their territorial boundaries. Together they constitute a reasonably sized market for products and services, and because of their resource endowments and comparative advantage in tourism, they continue to attract investments in these sectors. For some of them, the export of people and the receipt of remittances have become a survival strategy. For all of them, the information technology revolution has definitely reduced their isolation and remoteness, creating new commercial opportunities and making other networking possible.

Regionalism has been hitherto a product of two contradictory motives: a means of corraling Island states so they can be controlled by former colonial powers; and a strategy for small Island states to work together to meet common challenges. Regional cooperation has served the region well in many areas and there is considerable scope for further gains. The Pacific Plan does provide some positive guidelines and objectives for Island states. However, given their vulnerability to economic shocks and environmental hazards, there is an urgent need for more supportive responses from Australia and New Zealand and other regional powers, as well as multilateral institutions.

The one size fits all neo-liberal model and unbridled commercialisation does not sit well with Pacific social structures and cultural values. It has brought major problems to human security and social stability in Oceania. PICs are confronting significant challenges that emanate from the interaction of external and internal factors. These include the forces of globalisation; a free trade-related reform agenda; demographics including urbanisation and the youth bulge in many states; rising sea level and other environmental changes; employment and livelihood generation; economic inequality; poverty; and issues relating to governance and leadership. This region will fall short of achieving all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015.

Economic growth has been elusive and social development has stagnated while environmental degradation has continued apace. Most PICs have youthful populations and, with little prospect for employment and livelihood, they can pose serious threats to social stability. Urbanisation is both rapid and widespread but is not accompanied by land tenure reforms, infrastructural development, improved services, or better housing and employment. Urban and peri-urban areas, with their mushrooming squatter settlements, have become 'time bombs' ticking away. In the cases of Honiara, Nuku'alofa, Dili and Suva, explosions have already occurred and are likely to recur.

Ethnicity and uneven development provide a volatile mix in societies still steeped in tribal



*USP Professor Vijay Naidu*

cultures. Fiji has experienced four coups and there have been open conflicts in Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

Direct colonialism continues in the region. In some PICs, local leaders and their public office-holding and town-dwelling counterparts have benefited from rapacious logging, mining, fisheries and even tourism activities as recipients of bribes and beneficiaries of corruption.

Both Australia and New Zealand pushed neo-liberal economic reforms on PICs in the 1990s, adversely affecting the equilibrium (however, 'low grade') of these societies. It has been argued that reforms in Solomon Islands state were a contributing factor in the debacle there, and all the talk about 'comparative advantage' and trade seems to be quite foolish in the light of rising global food prices.

The resilience of Pacific countries will be strengthened if there is greater empathy and willingness to share the benefits of development enjoyed by the 'big brothers', Australia and New Zealand. Alternatively, Pacific island countries can turn to Europe, the United States, China (and Taiwan), Japan and South Korea. From the perspective of Pacific Island countries, there remains a degree of choice about who their friends will be.

Instead of the negative framing and 'blame the victim' syndrome reflected in Australasian discourses about the Pacific, there needs to be empathy with the complex and varied realities of these small states. There is certainly a place for constructive criticism and genuine partnership. Elements of these can be seen in New Zealand's recent policies with respect to seasonal labour migration and development assistance.

Pacific states need considerable capacity-building to address the internal and external challenges that they are facing. Instead of hard-nosed self-interested bargaining in trade deals between very unequal 'partners', there ought to be serious consideration for island states' many development needs.

With improved infrastructure, human resource development, increased productivity in agriculture, more value-added productive activities and much-improved services, as well as possibilities for labour migration, the Pacific Plan vision of a peaceful, democratic and prosperous Pacific region will become possible. This will be beneficial for all who share this corner of the world. ●

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# Spearhead a positive force in region

**Lucy Bogari** was Papua New Guinea's High Commissioner to New Zealand when the PCF was launched in 2003. Now working for the PNG Government back in Port Moresby, she considers the years since – and current trends – from a Melanesian perspective.

Five years have already crept up on us, and yet I recall the launch of the PCF quite vividly. For a milestone event in the life and history of New Zealand's engagement with the Pacific Islands regions of Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia, it seemed rather low-key. I remember wondering at the time whether this was a reflection of New Zealand's interest in the Pacific region, or just the rather unassuming New Zealand style of doing things. I have since come to value this kiwi quality, which we all very often need in understanding one another as we collectively grapple with issues that challenge us in the Pacific.

Over the past five years, the PCF has provided, in an unassuming way, a vehicle for creating more awareness of, and engagement with, the three Pacific Islands regions. Its efforts can be seen as complementary to the expanded official New Zealand engagement with the Pacific. The PCF has been a champion of expanded engagement by New Zealand from her traditional Polynesian diplomacy to a wider level, in particular with Melanesia.

A number of extra-regional events and developments with direct or indirect consequences for the region have taken place in the five years since the PCF's inception. These include:

- Developments in the multilateral trading system that have compelled the parties to the Cotonou Convention<sup>1</sup> – which include the Pacific Island members of the Pacific Islands Forum – to redefine their relations.
- A heightened threat to global security, which has caused spill-over regional effects, including the arrival of boat people and a related increase in trans-border criminal activities from Asia into the Pacific islands.
- The effects of climate change, which have manifested themselves more acutely than ever before.
- An increase in the number of unscrupulous commercial opportunists from neighbouring Asia. This is a direct result of declining supply of natural resources in their home countries, particularly in the forestry and fisheries sectors.

The impacts of these events in the Pacific are felt in varying degrees in individual states as well as within different subregions. The impact on Melanesia has perhaps been more profound and complex than elsewhere. The socio-economic and political context of Melanesia is more challenging because of its geographic and demographic size, ethnic diversity, and more importantly, its natural resources endowment.

The challenges of extra-regional events on Melanesia pose both threats and opportunities. How Melanesia responds to these challenges, (whether they are seen and dealt with as threats or opportunities) in turn poses challenges to regional cooperation.

The Pacific Islands Forum's Pacific Plan, the brainchild of New Zealand, is the blueprint for cooperation to assess and develop possible responses to the probable challenges in the region. The



*Former Papua New Guinea High Commissioner to New Zealand,  
Lucy Bogari.*

success of the Pacific Plan is fundamentally dependent on the commitment to its implementation by all stakeholders.

It is a global phenomenon that wherever large entities exist, smaller entities will mushroom within them. The United Nations, the world's pre-eminent body is a prime example. So, too, in the Pacific, within the Forum, there exist a number of small groups. One of these – the Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG) – has a more formal character than the others.

The Melanesian Spearhead Group consists of the Melanesian members of the Forum, plus New Caledonia, which is an observer. The broadening of its agenda and consolidation within the past five years, simultaneous with the launching, development and early implementation of the Pacific Plan, provides threats and opportunities for regional cooperation within the Forum framework. Recent consolidation of the MSG in the face of external challenges should have a positive spillover effect on the Forum.

The leadership within the Melanesian Spearhead Group has stated on a number of occasions that MSG members are playing, and will continue to play, a constructive role within the Forum. This position continues to be put to the test by situations in MSG member states where national and Forum positions have diverged.

In Melanesia, as in other Pacific Island regions, 'wantokism' (tribalism, or whanau) often plays an influential role in positions one takes on issues. The challenge to wider Pacific cooperation, as envisaged in the Pacific Plan, is to ensure that the regional cooperation architecture has an appropriate place for the smaller groups within it. This may offer an opportunity for cooperation to rise above 'wantokism' and make hard decisions based on universally accepted principles.

The consolidation of the MSG in the past five years creates a new dynamic in regional diplomacy. I am confident that through her recent enhanced engagement with Melanesia, New Zealand's unassuming qualities will produce kiwi-MSG diplomacy that engenders positive pay-off in terms of regional cooperation. ●

<sup>1</sup> The Cotonou Convention is between the European Union and former European colonies in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. It governs trade and development cooperation relations.

# Building a new Fiji

This year's annual PCF guest lectures in Auckland and Wellington were given during May by former Fijian Vice-President Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi. His words appear here in slightly edited form.

Where does one begin? If we accept that four coups in the past 20 years have blighted our progress as a nation, what is the alternative? There is, as yet, no common vision to which we can all commit. Nor is there an identity that we all share and affirm together. Beyond a collection of polyglot communities with an uneven sense of being citizens of Fiji, there is still a lack of shared values and unity. The fissures in our midst are a historical legacy. However the time for blame, whether it is our long-departed colonial masters or ourselves, has gone. We are responsible for perpetuating these divisions ourselves. How are we to create a new society with a renewed sense of purpose and commitment from the old?

Let us begin with developing a vision; a vision that articulates the nature of the society we feel represents the best of us. Our identity as citizens of Fiji is the practical reflection of this vision. In creating this vision, the voices of the people – the ordinary men and women of our country – must be heard. People's opinions could be obtained by various means: a tribunal soliciting opinions, fora held across the nation to hear what people had to say, or through established structures such as provincial and advisory councils. From these submissions, we could then distil what would best reflect a consensus.

Together with this initiative, there must be a conscious effort by our new leaders (whoever they are) to adopt a 'no victors, no vanquished' policy. There is no place for these kinds of feelings because they simply prolong division and dissension. Those who assume power must initiate a process of reconciliation and engagement. Careful thought and wide consultation among civil society and the faith communities will be required to ensure that what is envisaged is workable and broadly acceptable. We have examples of the Truth Commission in South Africa and similar commissions in South American states such as Chile to consider.

It would be foolish of me to deny the existence of ethnic feelings in our society: people are more comfortable with their own. However there are initiatives that could be undertaken to re-establish a sense of fairness and reinforce social cohesion. These include ensuring the merit principle is closely adhered to in the public service, with allowances for ethnic balance where necessary. This must apply to statutory corporations as well. Care must be taken to ensure the awarding of scholarships is open and transparent. Where affirmative measures remain in place, they must be monitored, open to public scrutiny, and have measurable guidelines as well as time lines. Appointments to statutory boards and corporations must be carefully screened by the relevant authorities. The military must become more reflective of the general population in its composition. And I echo calls made by Finance Minister Mahendra Chaudhry and Defence Minister Ratu Epeli Ganilau on previous occasions that consideration be given to the Vice Presidency being held by non Fijians. The collective purpose of these actions is to re-establish confidence in there being a level playing field.

Much of the issue of vision and identity relates to the ambivalence of Fijians about those concepts. In challenging Fijian institutions such as the Bose Levu Vakaturaga (the Great Council of Chiefs), the Methodist Church and the Soqosoqo Duavata Ni Lewenivanua Party (the SDL Party of deposed Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase), Commander Bainimarama has provided opportunities for reflection and soul searching. The Fijians themselves need to be heard on those issues. Their leaders have a responsibility to listen and discern what it is they want. In what form do they wish their indigenouness (and all that attaches to it) survive? My preoccupation has not been with form and hierarchy, but with the values of kinship, reciprocity and mutual respect that provide a bridge to the other communities. These are qualities that can be harnessed to enhance the vision we seek.



*Former Fijian Vice-President Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi*

The stated aim of the interim regime to remove the present electoral system is welcome because there is little doubt that it has reinforced ethnic patterns of voting. The concerns of some Fijians who resist any change because it would remove their ethnically entitled seats is understandable, but mistaken. The preponderance of Fijians in the population, coupled with Indo-Fijian emigration, will ensure Fijian numerical superiority in the next elections, however boundaries are drawn. The concern now is the protection of minorities. Whether they are Indo-Fijian or from other communities, they must be guaranteed a voice in Parliament. The only system that assures that outcome is proportional representation, and this is what we need to be thinking about.

Elections themselves may not solve any of our underlying problems, but that is not their purpose. Elections create the basis for legitimacy. They are a mandate from the electorate to begin the process of re-establishing democratic governance. The next elections will have to be held under the present electoral system, but subsequent elections could be held under an amended Constitution.

In spite of the divisions that have been exacerbated by the December coup, it is absolutely critical that the next government be one of national unity. The Constitution envisages a multi-party government, but this point could be altered to allow for more flexibility. The imperative for such a government is self-evident. At a time when our country has been fractured as never before, it needs a government with which the entire nation can identify. It is a tragedy, in hindsight, that we lacked the courage and the statesmanship to form such a government after the upheavals of May 2000.

We need national solutions to our problems and a government with a broad mandate to consolidate and deal with the issues decisively. Re-establishing mutual trust and confidence between the Government and the people, as well as between communities will be a continuing preoccupation. Restoration

of the economy and of our relationships with both Australia and New Zealand are critical. Economic growth has averaged two percent for the past decade which is inadequate to cater for employment opportunities, infrastructure, health and social services, as well as alarming levels of poverty and related social ills. Definitive solutions still evade the landlord-tenant relationship in relation to native leases. All these issues require political will and commitment so they can be dealt with in an integrated manner.

There is a legitimate concern about the absence of an opposition should there to be a government of national unity. It is important to remember that this new government will have heavy responsibilities to meet and high expectations to live up to. Not only will it have to restore trust and confidence in the institutions of state as well as in the community, it will also have to build the economy and deal with rising levels of poverty and degradation. We have become accustomed to thinking in terms of an opposition in the Westminster form of government. Under our Constitution, there is provision for sector committees on various aspects of government. Given the appropriate understanding and agreement among the political parties, these committees have the potential to function as a check on the executive. What is required is a redrafting of the Standing Orders of the House and Senate to reflect these changed circumstances. An element of good faith is required here – one must hope that the major political parties will not use their numbers to sabotage these arrangements.

The immediate concern is the role of the military. They have been at the centre of the four coups we have had. Their pronouncements since the 5 December 2006 coup do not suggest any dilution of their assertion that they are the guarantors of stability and order. To deny them any participation in national affairs for the foreseeable future would be unrealistic. But clear protocols need to be developed between the Government and the military. Regular consultations need to take place, as do discussions about the size of the military. A considerable portion of the national budget is allocated to the military.

The starting point must be the question of immunity. It is an issue that divides those who opposed the 2006 coup, but it is a matter of realpolitik because without it the military will not engage, let alone negotiate. Perhaps, however, the nature of the immunity can be discussed, because there are certain military

officers who must be held accountable for some of the serious human rights abuses that have taken place. I accept the argument that this approach may encourage future coups, but it is a risk we must be prepared to take. The room for manoeuvre is slight and this potential threat will have to be addressed over the long term. The answer will lie in the strengthening of democratic institutions and civil society, as well as in the inculcation of democratic values in the community. Part of those developments must include greater engagement with the military in understanding its proper role in a liberal democracy.

There is also the challenge of building a democratic culture. The idea needs to be inculcated in the hearts and minds of the people. Part of the problem is that the chattering classes themselves are ambivalent about the concept, as can be seen in the 2006 coup. Too often, principle has been sacrificed for political gain. As long as this continues, the military will be nurtured in their misconceptions.

The creation of a democratic culture is a gradual process that will require the concerted efforts of all sections of our society. Introducing more horizontal structures and accessible forms of authority, whether in the traditional sphere or the religious organisations that play an influential part in our lives, would reinforce the process. It will also take the empowerment of people within their own communities; allowing them to develop the capacities to be assertive and questioning of authority. This would be achieved by encouraging people to participate in decision-making and in the discussions surrounding them. Civil society has played, and is playing, a significant role in this empowerment, giving voice to those who otherwise would not be heard. While there has been a split between those who supported the coup for reasons of social justice and others who recognise indivisibility of rights (political, economic and social), there is no denying the increased prominence to social issues that civil society advocacy has provided.

In fashioning not so much a new Fiji as a better one than we already have, the real challenges before us do not lie in the actual economic, social and political problems that we face, although they are in themselves considerable. Those will always be there in one form or another. The real challenges arise out of the barriers we have erected and perpetuated for one reason or another. They have created these distances between us as members of the various communities that comprise Fiji. Time and again they have been manipulated for advantage by one side or another. In the latest twist, the spectre of ethno-nationalism was used to justify the coup.

I believe we can dismantle these barriers, because I still believe in our country and its people. In spite of our vicissitudes, there has been minimal violence. There continue to be reservoirs of goodwill, in spite of all that has happened. They, together with the actual practice of the democratic principles we all affirm, will be needed if we are to put in place a vision and identity that belongs to all of us. This will allow us to break the cycle of instability that has been our albatross for the past two decades. ●

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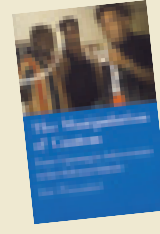
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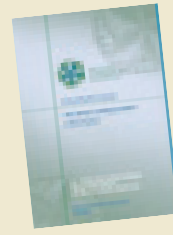
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# Without fear or favour



Speaking at the Pacific Media and Human Rights Summit is Dr Judy McGregor, EEO Commissioner, New Zealand Human Rights Commission. In the centre is PCF founding chair Michael Powles, and on the far left is the head of news and current affairs for Maori Television, Wena Harawira.

Participants in the Pacific Media and Human Rights Summit, held in Samoa in April, voiced grave concern about violence and intimidation directed at Pacific media workers in the course of their jobs.

In the Summit's final communiqué, media and NGO representatives from around the region said the right of journalists to work without fear of abuse, intimidation and violence was fundamental to democracy. They raised serious concerns about: political interference in editorial decision-making, the lack of resources available to some Pacific media to inform the public and constraints imposed on journalists by some Pacific governments in seeking access to, and information from, government officials.

The Summit communiqué said the media had a unique responsibility to be aware of the international human rights instruments and conventions to which Pacific nations belonged. It reaffirmed the special status of the right to freedom of expression, which enables all other human rights to be promoted and protected, and called on Pacific states to urgently adopt freedom of information legislation.

The communiqué also said that, without commitment to training and development and adequate resources, Pacific media would struggle to discharge their duties and responsibilities, no matter how committed individual journalists might be.

The summit, which aimed to examine the challenges facing the media, was organised by the New Zealand Human Rights Commission and the Pacific Cooperation Foundation, and was part of an NZAID project 'Developing human rights competency and expertise within Pacific news media organisations'. The project funded the attendance of Polynesian participants, while Melanesian participants were funded by the British Government's Foreign and Commonwealth Office's public diplomacy fund.

Participants included representatives of newspapers and broadcasting and journalism organisations in Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu. They were joined by representatives from NGOs, including the Samoan NGO umbrella SUNGO.

Presenters included former BBC environmental reporter Alex Kirby, Maori Television head of news and current affairs Wena Harawira, Radio New Zealand CEO Peter Cavanagh, UNICEF Samoa representative Afamasaga Toleafoa, PNG FM general manager Peter Aitsi and Newsline news editor Cherelle Jackson.

The Summit's presentations and communiqué are online at [www.pcf.org.nz](http://www.pcf.org.nz).

## Qantas awards for Pacific reporting

A Tongan Olympic silver medallist and a New Zealand TV producer are winners of the Pacific Cooperation Foundation's 2008 Qantas Media Awards.

Olympian Paea Wolfgramm took the PCF Pacific Island issues columnist award for his piece titled 'Happy to Serve', published in *Spasifik* magazine, about the late Samoan Head of State, Malietoa Tanumafili II, and future Pacific leaders. This is the second time that Wolfgramm has won the PCF Pacific Islands issues columnist award. He took the prize for the first time in 2006 (see photo page 9).

Agenda TV Wellington producer Duncan Wilson won the PCF's Pacific Islands issues reporter category for his story 'Whose Fiji is it anyway?' published in *The Listener* in March 2007. His story looked at Fiji's political upheaval as part of a wider conflict over traditional authority and race relations. While this is the first Qantas Media Award for Wilson, he was the PCF's first media graduate placement recipient back in 2004, when he spent a month working in Fiji for *Islands Business* magazine (see photo page 8).

## PCF funding boost

The Pacific Cooperation Foundation won an extra \$1.95 million in funding over four years in the 22 May Budget, bringing total government funding for the period to \$5.5 million.


"Increased funding for the Pacific Cooperation Foundation will ensure it is better resourced to contribute to efforts to improve New Zealand relations with the Pacific, and to enhance New Zealanders' appreciation of Pacific issues," Foreign Minister Winston Peters said.

PCF chair Neil Plimmer described the increased funding as a welcome indicator of the Government's commitment to strengthening New Zealand's linkages with Pacific Island countries. "It is also a welcome reinforcement of the role of the PCF in expanding such linkages," he said.

The funding would be spent on media visits to cover important Pacific issues, training for both New Zealand and Pacific media, developing business connections, promoting two-way trade, and fostering debate on key issues affecting New Zealand and the Pacific, Mr Plimmer said. It would also be used to encourage teaching and research into New Zealand-Pacific Island subjects, expand networks between New Zealand professionals and their Pacific Islands counterparts, promote capacity building for NGO and community-based organisations in the region, and to develop PCF work on Melanesia.

Further funding was being sought from the private sector and other sources, Mr Plimmer said.



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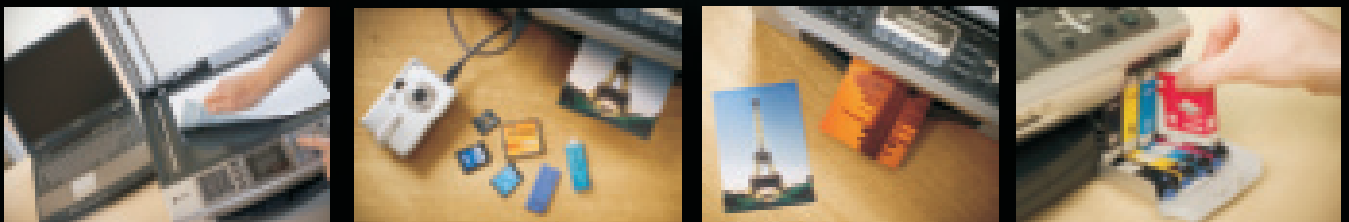
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