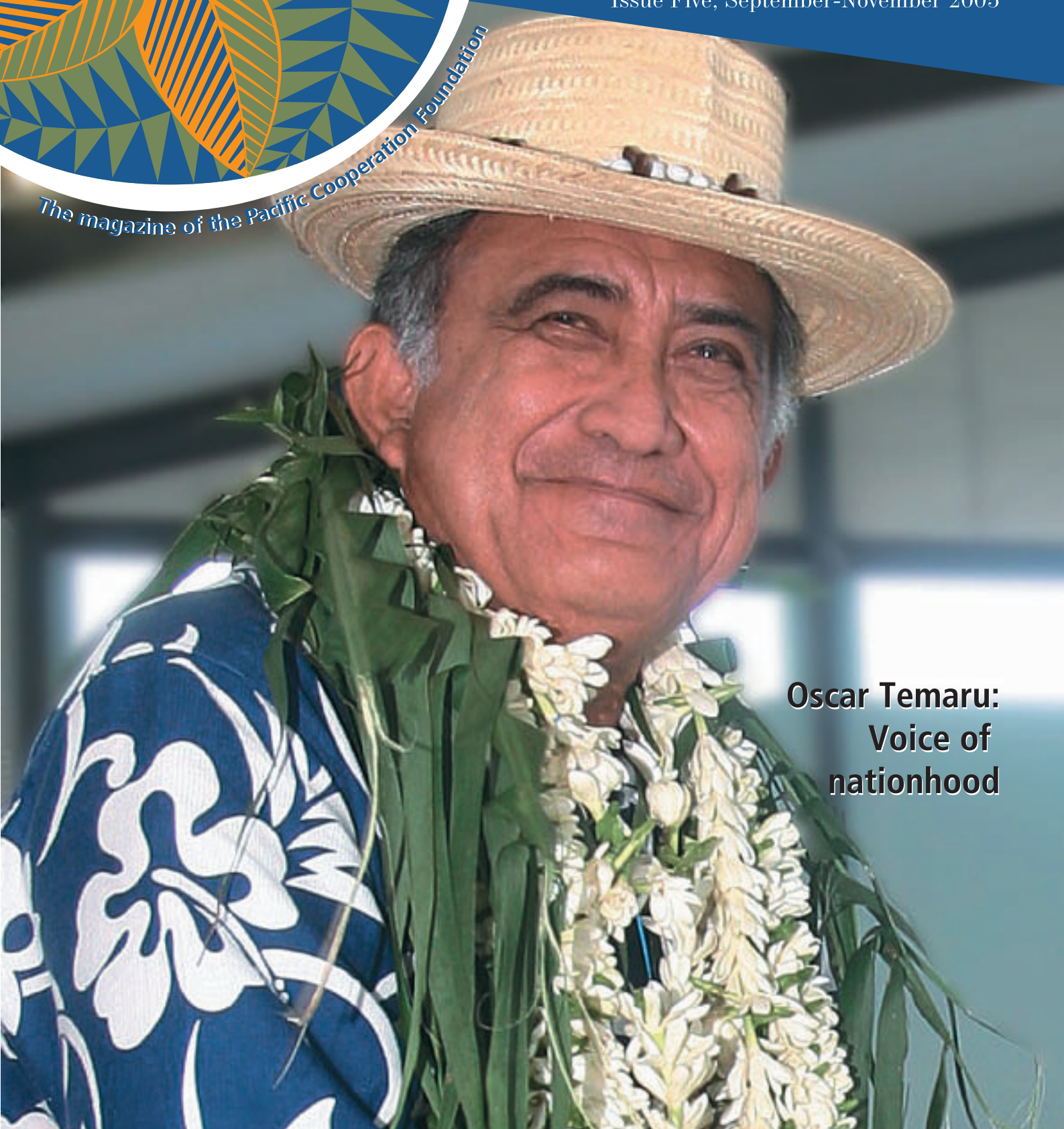




# Pacific CONNECTION

Issue Five, September-November 2005

The magazine of the Pacific Cooperation Foundation



**Oscar Temaru:  
Voice of  
nationhood**

IN THIS ISSUE: Leadership • Ona remembered • SPREP profiled • Speight of Violence

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Cover: The new President of French Polynesia – or Tahiti Nui – Oscar Tamaru.  
Photo: Office of Oscar Tamaru.

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Welcome to the fifth issue of *Pacific Connection* in which we survey a range of views and ask some hard questions about leadership in the Pacific.

We report on a breakfast meeting at which the PCF hosted the region's newest Leader, Oscar Tamaru, and feature a guest article on the death of Bougainville's Francis Ona, probably one of the region's least known and most enigmatic figures.

We also ask what's happening with the Pacific Plan, endorsed by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders in their Auckland Declaration early in 2004. Our regional agency profile features the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and its Director, Asterio Takesy from the Federated States of Micronesia. Also included is a review of the first book on the 2000 Fiji coup, written by journalist Mike Field, coup hostage and former Deputy Prime Minister Tupeni Baba and his partner Unaisi Nabobo-Baba.

I'm delighted to be able to announce that Westpac has joined the ranks of our founding partner sponsors. And we hope to be able to announce another major corporate sponsor in our next issue.

Letters to the editor are now starting to come in steadily (see page 10 of this issue). If you like what we are offering we'd love to hear that. If you don't like it, please tell us what you would like. And if there are other issues you would like us to explore please write or email us.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Pacific Connection*.

Vince McBride  
Executive Director

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# Temaru asserts Tahiti Nui nationhood

In July, newly elected President of French Polynesia **Oscar Temaru** paid his first official visit to New Zealand. During a short stay in Wellington he spoke at a well-attended Pacific Cooperation Foundation breakfast. Jonathan Schwass reports.

President Temaru urged his questioners in Wellington to refer to his homeland as Tahiti Nui, not by its official title. "There are songs about Tahiti but not about French Polynesia. That's the brand," he said.

The point was made jokingly but it came up several times and the message was clear: Tahitian nationalism is not to be denied.

An avuncular, relaxed Temaru speculated at one point what French Ambassador Jean-Michel Marlaud, who was sitting in the audience, might be making of his pitch. The Ambassador remained affably silent.

The President extended his thoughts on nationalism at the end of his speech, when he was asked about his country's ambitions regarding membership of the Pacific Islands Forum. French Polynesia had enjoyed observer status at the PIF since last year and during his last visit to Paris recently he had "talked about full membership," Mr Temaru said.

"We can do nothing as an observer. We have to have full membership, but it depends on the leaders of the PIF – it says a country has to be independent one day. That is our wish but how long it will take we don't know.

"We need support from the French Government and Pacific countries to get there. It is a normal wish of peoples everywhere to be a sovereign country."

Tahiti's fellow French territory New Caledonia – Kanaky – was further down the road to independence, the Matignon Accords process having averted civil war, he suggested.

But a Kanak member of the audience, Susanna Ounei, pointed out that in the "race" for independence, New Caledonia had the disadvantage of having a majority of non-indigenous citizens. Tahiti, on the other hand, had an indigenous majority that was likely to give it an edge in terms of national sovereignty.

Mr Temaru agreed, but noted that indigenous numbers did not necessarily equate to majority support for his government. "We have to educate, give people confidence that we can run the country," he said.



*The Pacific's newest leader, Oscar Temaru of "Tahiti Nui".*

The new President – who was elected first in 2004, then ousted by parliament before being re-elected in March this year – had notes but spoke largely off the cuff at the Wellington breakfast.

He outlined the need for French Polynesia to overcome its huge trade deficit, not only with New Zealand but also with Australia, the US and Europe. The territory currently sent only around \$3 million worth of exports to New Zealand but received nearly \$200 million in meat, fruit and other products in return. This sort of imbalance was hardly unique to French Polynesia, he said. "This is the situation for [all] small island countries." But the disappearance of the French nuclear programme and subsequent drop in investment in French Polynesia meant the situation there could no longer be allowed to continue.

Mr Temaru said there was a need to develop industries including agriculture, black pearls, noni juice, tuna farming and the export of reef fish. But the most promising source of revenue was tourism, which currently brought in around \$NZ1 billion from 250,000 visitors per year. "Our wish is to double that." Developing hotels and visitor facilities, particularly for golfers – "We want Tahiti to be a golf destination" – was an important priority in building tourism, he said.

"This is the right place to go now. We need better transport services, marketing, promotion – we have to change so many things. We have to work hard. We will see in five or 10 years what is the situation of our country."

# Wanted: a new generation of Pacific giants

Three upcoming parliamentary elections and several anniversaries – 25 years since independence in Vanuatu, 30 years in PNG and 40 years of self-government in the Cook Islands – are focusing attention on Pacific leadership, writes **PCF Executive Director Vince McBride**.

Of the Pacific leaders who took over the reins from the colonial powers, the only one still alive – and an active leader at that – is Sir Michael Somare of Papua New Guinea.

He and his contemporaries Hammer DeRoburt, Albert Henry, Tu’ipelehake, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara and Fiame Mata’afa, had the responsibility of leading their countries into independence. They were widely respected, although Albert Henry subsequently fell from grace.

Apart from Sir Michael and Fiame Mata’afa, these were the leaders who, with Prime Ministers Sir Keith Holyoake of New Zealand and William McMahon of Australia, formed the Pacific Forum in 1971 and led the region in the “Pacific way”.

More than a generation on, the successors of the first indigenous Pacific leaders are, by and large, less prominent and not so charismatic.

Is this because they are lesser leaders, or because the simpler times in which the Pacific Way was enough to navigate by have gone? Regional life has become more complicated and the business of government is now mostly organised by bureaucrats operating in a web of agencies and committees. Almost every issue discussed at Forum meetings, with the exception of the leaders’ Retreat, is scripted. There is not a lot of opportunity for leaders to stand out.

With the challenges currently facing the region, there is as great a need as ever for strong leadership. In particular, it is a key to enabling smaller states to gain greater attention and prominence within the regional framework.

Elections in Solomon Islands, Fiji and Samoa next year may change

the face of leadership in those countries. Prime Ministers Kemakeza, Qarase and Tuilaepa all face challenges and none can guarantee he will be returned safely.

Since he became Solomon Islands Prime Minister, Sir Allan Kemakeza has been constantly changing the composition of his Cabinet to foil attempts to oust him. He is also under a shadow over allegations of involvement in the overthrow of the Ulufa’alu government in 2000 and questions of financial stewardship.

The situation in Fiji shows signs of the indigenous vote once more being split. If Mr Qarase’s SDL Party again forms a coalition with the Conservative Alliance/Matanitu Vanua, he will have to commit to a nationalist agenda that would be racially divisive. But if the Labour party succeeds, Mahendra Chaudhry would be returned to power. His style of leadership has always been confrontational and would be unlikely to bring stability and prosperity to Fiji.

While I would not go so far as to say there is a crisis of indigenous leadership in the Pacific Islands, there is not exactly a surplus of able, respected and experienced individuals eager to challenge the current leaders. This applies not only in the political arena but also in business and other sectors.

Some of the most impressive leaders in the region are within civil society organisations and many of these people might abhor the thought of entering politics. Others are working for regional and international bodies, or are pursuing well-paid careers overseas. It would be greatly to the region’s benefit if some of these individuals would bring their talents home, if only for a few years, and apply them to the development of their countries of birth.

Perhaps more could be done also – including by New Zealand and Australia – to foster the development of young Pacific leaders. This might involve educational scholarships, leadership grants, secondments and travel opportunities.

The current focus on regional cooperation and integration through the Pacific Plan is appropriate. But if the Pacific Forum is to succeed in meeting its aspirations it is important that the running is not left to New Zealand and Australia.

There is a need for a new wave of strong Pacific leaders who are prepared to confront poor economic growth rates, governance issues, ethnic tensions, poverty, HIV/AIDS and security concerns of their people. It is time for individuals willing to show the way to step up and take the Pacific forward in a partnership of equals with the “big brothers” of the region.

*Giants of the region: among the “founding fathers” of the modern Pacific were Sir Michael Somare (above) – who is PNG Prime Minister today – and Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara of Fiji (left) who died in 2004.*

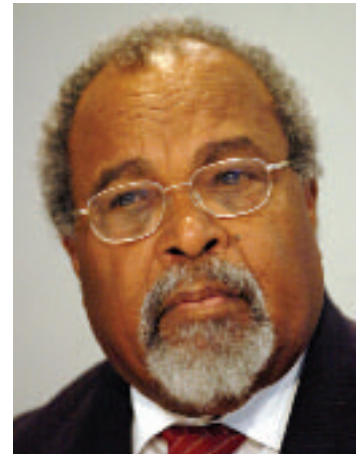


Photo: Fotopress



Photo: Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs

# Balancing tradition & modernity

Vince's McBride's argument that there is a shortage of strong, emerging Pacific leaders raises the questions: Why? And what can be done about it? Jonathan Schwass considers two perspectives from within the region.

New Zealand-based Solomon Islander Kabini Sanga is intensely interested in the particular challenges of leadership in the Pacific. The Victoria University academic has just published a well-reviewed book, *Apem Moa* (Raising the Bar), on the need for ethical, principles-based leadership in the Solomon Islands.

Of Vince McBride's thesis, he says weaknesses in leadership in the Pacific come back to weaknesses in political systems. He assesses traditional, indigenous leadership as generally vibrant, strong, effective and dependable. It existed long before introduced political systems and still has more effect than political leaders on the way people live.

"In the majority of Pacific villages, daily living is more influenced by traditional and Church leadership than by formal political structures. This was seen during the 'conflict

years' in Solomon Islands, where the traditional and Church leadership systems held each village and the country together when there was no functioning formal political leadership."

The problem, as Sanga sees it, is that the political process in Pacific Island countries too often promotes democratic and individual rights ahead of personal and community responsibility. "Its starting point is often global or democratic agenda while ignoring local knowledge, reality and wisdom."

However, the Executive Director of the Pacific Islands Association of NGOs (PIANGO), Cema Bolabola considers that the region's leadership problems do come down to skills as much as systems. Leaders are not providing the direction to allow indigenous communities to cope with the forces of global change, she says.

"Old power is being replaced by new power, and old power and related institutions are not readily accepting these changes. Old power may lack the skills required for leadership under changing circumstances, and easily becomes prey to indigenous groups that exploit old power bases for their own political ends."

She believes the situation will improve as the Pacific changes; as ordinary people move into the market economy, become better educated and more aware through mass media of the advocacy work of civil society organisations such as her own. When Pacific people become better informed they will call for more responsible leadership, she says.

Kabini Sanga, though, is not so confident about the inevitability of improvement in Pacific political systems. "My view is that there will continue to be no shortage of aspiring individuals for political office in Pacific countries. Sadly, this is unnecessarily enhanced by international donors, lenders and multilateral agencies. Unfortunately, there will be few credible leaders emerging from this process, not in the next two decades."

He argues that there needs to be a "serious rethink" about formal leadership in each national context. "The need is to appreciate afresh that Pacific communities were not clear slates upon which an introduced democratic political system could be written without problems."

"The needed change has something to do with understanding better the particular contexts of Pacific countries and applying appropriately what is known about leadership to the changing contexts."

Bolabola, too, talks about the importance of context. She says there is potential incompatibility between the "genetic right to lead" of some traditional leadership and the "acquired privilege" of the western model.

She argues for more study of the relationship between the two concepts. "Very little research has been carried out ... to ascertain if traditional leadership is compatible with the progressive concepts of good governance. Traditional leadership is the exclusive right of the few – generally male, aging and unquestionable or unaccountable, may I say." 🌸

## They said it ...

"I think a good leader should be selfless and must not put his own needs above those of others. He also has to serve to lead. People will only follow you if you can inspire them to do well, if you can serve them and lead them wisely. You must have integrity first and foremost." Ratu Epeli Ganilau, leader of Fiji's multi-racial National Alliance Party.

"I have seen that with being a leader, one side of it is the public space and on the other is the private space. By private space I mean the family. Private space is very important because it is the private space that defines what the leader would do when he is in the public space." Solomon Islands political aspirant Solomon Devesi.

"Leadership is ... a nebulous concept. We recognise and know what it is but find it difficult to define. It involves the capacity to give people direction, guidance and inspiration. It is equally clear that it is a quality that requires nurturing and mentoring. One cannot assume that, left to itself, it can manage on its own," Vice-President of Fiji, Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi.

"Leadership is contextual. Its measure of success must also be contextual. The successful political leader in New Zealand must not be the yardstick for a successful Pacific leader. 'Best practice' for leadership is more local than global." New Zealand based Solomon Islands academic Kabini Sanga.

"Good leaders are those who straddle both tradition and modernity; leaders who can be acceptable to the traditional institutions and operate under modern institutions too; leaders who appear to be sympathetic to both tradition and modernity and able to juggle the two. I think the requirements of good leaders are similar all over the world except the context they operate under." Cema Bolabola, Executive Director, Pacific Islands Association of NGOs. 🌸

# Samoaan women speak up

A new breed of vibrant, well-informed and enthused leaders is emerging in Samoa.

For the first time in its history, the country has hosted a Young Women's Parliament. Organised by the O le Inailau a Taimaitai Women's Leadership Network (IWLN), in partnership with the Ministry of Education, the March gathering was designed to increase understanding of parliamentary democracy and encourage more young women into leadership positions and political participation.

Those taking part were selected from secondary schools all over Samoa to debate the controversial motion: "That the Electoral Act be amended to provide mechanisms to ensure representation by women in Parliament in at least 30 percent of the total number of seats."

All 49 young women took the part of MPs, including the Prime Minister and Speaker of the House.

The main theme that day was women's ability to provide peace and balance to decision making in Parliament. One representative argued: "Culturally women are the peace makers, as they are the foundation and the ones that smooth things in the family. Therefore if we are brought into Parliament we will do the same. Currently the male Members of Parliament are arguing and harsh in their debates - a woman will be the voice of calmness and reason."

Others argued that if half the population were women, then half of Parliament should be women too. However the head girl of Robert Louis Stevenson Youth Academy, Danira Westurland, was adamant that: "I am a woman but I am not going to ask for special privileges because I am a woman - no, I am going to earn my seat in Parliament through merit and proper qualifications because I can."

Currently there are three women in Parliament and one woman minister. 🌸

*Cherelle S Jackson*

## Pathways, not solutions

The final statement of a regional workshop on leadership has asked Pacific Forum leaders to support and invest in "culturally appropriate leadership development initiatives".

Those taking part in the University of the South Pacific/NZAID gathering in Suva in July included public servants, business people, civil society representatives, and military and security personnel. Their goal was to consider how best to foster dialogue, research and debate about the nature of Pacific leadership and how shared understanding could help develop future leaders.

The keynote speaker was Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General Greg Urwin. He said leadership in a Pacific context inevitably involved the "combining, or clash, of the time-honoured and the introduced, the traditional and modern ways of life".

"There is no formula for the ideal model of leadership to suit our needs, certainly not one I can supply, nor can there be a one-size-fits-all approach in our region," he said. "The social fabric of our Pacific island communities is too famously vibrant to fit into neat little pigeonholes. In short, we are not that boring."

Another speaker, Fiji Vice-President Ratu Joni Madraiwiwi, said traditional leaders played an important though declining role in the region and now had to share responsibilities with political leaders, as well as church, professional and union representatives.

"There is a need for more accommodation between all of them. This can only come from more engagement and dialogue. No one party has all the answers. Tradition and religion have their place. They provide us with a sense of security, identity and well being - more so in a time of bewildering and rapid change."

Among those at the workshop was PCF programme manager Tina McNicholas. "It was refreshing to hear some of the participants define the concept of leadership in the context of their own cultures and customs - what it meant in a traditional context, how it was measured, why it worked, what were its constraints and how it could be improved and applied in today's society," she says.

"A phrase used regularly by the hosts of the workshop was 'pathways rather than solutions'. NZAID and USP are to be commended for jointly hosting this kind of forum, which probably needs to be held regularly every two or three years so those pathways can be usefully developed, and outcomes realised and monitored." 🌸

*Below: participants at the Suva workshop.*



# Plan set to dominate Forum

A key issue facing Pacific leaders when they gather in PNG during October for the Pacific Islands Forum will be the emerging Pacific Plan. **Jonathan Schwass** looks at what the Plan seeks to do.

The Pacific Plan for Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration has at its heart the idea that greater regional coordination of appropriate national structures and functions will allow small, widely-spread countries with limited resources to achieve more, faster than they could individually.

Increased cooperation would mean better linkages between national policies in issues of regional importance, such as transport. More integration could mean pooling of resources to create, for instance, a regional panel of judges or a regional financial intelligence unit. Ultimately it could mean shared political structures, though that would raise sovereignty issues and has not been put forward as a goal.

The Plan is not particularly revolutionary, but in its 18 months of existence it has become a centrepiece of regional politics and a core element of Pacific Islands Forum work.

Few have argued against its central idea of greater cooperation. But there are voices of concern about the likely shape of, and motivations behind, the Plan itself. Some academics and civil society lobbyists have argued that the



*Pacific leaders discuss the Pacific Plan in Auckland, April 2004. Photo: Fotopress*

concept sounds monolithic and Stalinist; that it will be a vehicle for Australian-New Zealand neo-liberal economic theories; that it will not focus on the real problems of ordinary Pacific people; that it is not founded on proper consultation.

Whether the criticisms can be answered will depend to a large extent on the details now being worked out at Forum headquarters in Suva. As *Pacific Connection* went to press, the draft Plan was a 60-page document explaining the notion of regionalism and then proposing specific though often vaguely expressed ("support participatory democracy") objectives. There is a strong focus on short-term achievement, reflecting a desire by leaders to cement the plan into the regional consciousness by putting early "runs on the board".

The draft has been shopped widely around the region. National consultations of varying intensity have now been held in all 16 Pacific Islands Forum member countries. The Plan has also been assessed by a Core Group of Forum leaders (the past, present and immediate future chairs) and is now being revised for presentation at the October 25-29 Leaders' meeting in Port Moresby.

The drafters have a tough job. They have to put real meat onto the Plan's bones quickly, lest regional impetus lessens and the whole idea fades away into irrelevance. On the other hand, if the Plan is seen by civil society and Pacific communities as hastily-prepared bureaucratise involving little real consultation, it risks becoming a plan without a constituency. 🌿

## PNG Forum issues

The Pacific Plan will be only one of the issues up for discussion at the Port Moresby Forum. Other subjects likely to be on the agenda are:

- *Report of the Eminent Persons' Group visit to Solomon Islands.* Fiji's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hon Kaliopate Tavola, Samoan Ombudsman Maiava Iulai Toma and Forum Secretary-General Greg Urwin visited Solomon Islands from 10-17 May. Their task was to assess the contribution made by the Regional Assistance Mission (RAMSI) and recommend ways in which the Forum could further assist Solomon Islands in its development.
- *Report of the Forum election observer team to the 15 May-9 June election of Bougainville's Autonomous*

*Government.* Fiji's Parliamentary Speaker, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, and Vanuatu's Principal Election Officer, Martin Tete, were the Forum part of a wider team that included Commonwealth Secretariat observers.

- *Consideration of a revised Pacific Islands Forum Agreement, if this can be made ready in time.* The existing agreement technically only establishes the Forum Secretariat and does not cover the whole Forum process. A revised agreement would establish associate Forum membership, opening up participation to non-independent territories.
- *Updates on negotiations with the EU.* Under the 2000 Cotonou Agreement, members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of states are entering into Economic Partnership Agreements with the EU covering market access, technical assistance, aid and political relationships. Negotiations between the EU and the Pacific ACP countries on an EPA began in September last year and are due to conclude in late 2007.
- *Other issues that may be raised in the Leaders' Retreat.* Much of the work of the Forum is achieved in the closed Retreat sessions, where anything and everything can be discussed. 🌿

# Farewell to Francis Ona



Photo: AP

By Andrew Ladley

If the reports coming from Arawa in Bougainville prove accurate and all “outsiders” were indeed excluded from Francis Ona’s funeral, then his legacy is that he was buried as he had lived: in isolation, surrounded by a dwindling group of still-armed people with rather curious views.

Ona came particularly to prominence in 1989 as a political leader, but was for much of the next 16 years hardly seen by outsiders. His original militancy was with the local landowners who wanted the copper mine closed because of its damage to the environment and its threat to the “land and culture of Bougainville”. But in the late 1980s he was joined by other pro-independence leaders and Bougainvillean soldiers defecting from the PNG army. The result was a fully-fledged political and military anti-mine secessionist movement.

At its peak, the Panguna copper mine provided some 20 percent of the GDP of Papua New Guinea and 50 percent of its foreign currency. It was also environmentally and culturally devastating. One night in 1989, the electricity pylons marching into the mountains from the power station at the coast were expertly dynamited. The mine closed instantly. This was to be a no-holds-barred war of independence, intended to drive out all foreigners (particularly all “redskins” from the rest of PNG). The prosperous mining town of Arawa quickly emptied. Bougainville plunged into conflict. The principal victims were to be Bougainvilleans, and between 10,000 and 20,000 people eventually died.

Francis Ona’s position as head of the newly militarised independence movement was always ambiguous. In part, this might have been because he was always focused on the landowners’ movement and the copper mine, rather than on the rest of the independence struggle. It might also reflect the complexity of Melanesia, which is so diverse in tribal terms that *any* claims to widespread leadership have to be regarded cautiously. It might also have been a tactic, by which the leadership kept itself shadowy. In any event, Ona retreated into his mountain village just above the mine and rejected all invitations to join the peace process restarted by New Zealand in 1997.

The outlook that had always been somewhat xenophobic, became steadily more bizarre. Ona’s followers maintained an armed roadblock – that still operates – to prevent any unauthorised persons driving up the road to Panguna. They refused to hand over their weapons in the UN-led disarmament part of the peace process. From Guava village, Ona established the independent “Mekamui” government of Bougainville, with himself as president. Later, that “republic” was apparently transformed into a “kingdom”, with himself as “king” and with a group of titled “lords” around him. They were joined earlier this year by two mysterious foreigners, apparently Australians, with appropriate “lord” and “sir” titles (they are still up there). Lots of “funny money” stories became

associated with the Mekamui leadership, including pyramid schemes in the Solomon Islands, the “Mekamui Bank” scandal operating today, and the white “business advisers”.

When I interviewed Francis Ona at Panguna mine with the Australian journalist, Ben Bohane, in July 2003, Francis had not been seen by foreigners for around seven years – and subsequently he was seen on only one or two occasions. He agreed to meet us to seek publicity for his claim that the UN, the Australians, the PNG government and his former comrades in the Bougainville independence movement were conspiring with the mining company to try to reopen the mine and reconquer Bougainville. He and his followers were hospitable and we joked and talked (though they kept their weapons close). But their story was of isolation and paranoia, cargo-cultish about the soon-to-arrive bounty from the multi-billion dollar law suit filed against the parent company of Bougainville Copper Limited in the United States, and a fantasy world of how the Mekamui government was administering Bougainville.

In May-June this year, I returned to Bougainville as an International Observer for the elections for the Bougainville Autonomous Government. Francis Ona had announced that whilst the elections were irrelevant, his Mekamui followers would not oppose them. Actually, there were attempts to prevent the voting but it went ahead peacefully. During the campaign, Ona made a surprise public appearance in Arawa, to proclaim another Declaration of Independence to a mostly empty field. Perhaps he was bitterly disappointed by the reception, but one should never be surprised by the capacity of fairytales to explain away reality.

I met some of his key followers to talk about the elections and the future. They will have been amongst those who refused to allow any non-Mekamui person to go up to Guava Village to pay their last respects, and who rejected the offer by the newly elected Bougainville Autonomous Government to hold a state funeral for a person they acknowledge as one of founding fathers of the Bougainville struggle.

So, Francis Ona was buried in isolation at Guava Village, amongst the lords and stories of Mekamui. It seems fitting.

*Andrew Ladley is the Director of the Institute of Policy Studies at Victoria University of Wellington.*



*Above: Andrew Ladley near the mine at Panguna.*

*Above left: one of the few photographs of Francis Ona, in 1990.*

# SPREP's sustainability mission

The Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) is the region's environment agency. It works not only to protect and improve the environment, but also to ensure sustainable development, writes the agency's Chris Peteru.

Many Pacific islanders would admit that living on tiny, isolated islands with finite resources, low wages, and a trade advantage tipped heavily in favour of the developed world can be tough. Efforts to turn the economic tide are hampered by fragile ecosystems and the similarity of Pacific biodiversities – taro, bananas and yellowfin tuna, for example, are exports common to most Pacific Island countries.

Generally, too, there is a lack of technology, skilled labour and efficient infrastructure, and regional transport costs are expensive. Competing Asian labour markets can produce goods more inexpensively, and have both a higher degree of "market savvy" and the ability to offer much better returns on investor capital.

In these difficult circumstances, pursuing economic advantage through exploiting resources unsustainably may seem attractive, but it is simply not a credible option. The Pacific depends on its environment: biodiversity based business provides more than 75 percent of the region's gross domestic product, 90 percent of related paid employment, 60 percent of export revenues, and a third of all government revenues.

Throughout the region, conservationists are fighting an uphill struggle to persuade people – including governments and donors – that it is in their economic interests to conserve, invest in and allocate budgets to biodiversity. What needs to be examined by the region's leaders, is how the dynamic between economics and biodiversity actually functions, and



what is required to extract the most value from the relationship," says SPREP Director Asterio Takesy.

"SPREP's role in this is to come up with functional solutions that our governments and as importantly, our communities, are confident will provide security and future possibilities."

There have been some positive signs. The Pacific Islands Forum's Economic Ministers' Meeting (FEMM) has agreed to work to incorporate environmental perspectives when national budgets and regional strategies are being drawn up.

SPREP hopes that Pacific countries might consider taxing harmful activities such as emissions from heavy transport, logging of our dwindling forests, mineral mining and cigarette imports and production. This would place the onus on consumers and the business community to pay the full environmental cost of their actions, and in theory free up millions of dollars to further the development of renewable energy systems, recycling and waste management. It is also possible that in the future, corporations, governments and other institutions might become innovators and help market "green" products.

"SPREP is committed to providing Pacific people with the hope that despite what is happening to our environment, our homelands, there will be a better day. We are stepping up," Takesy says. 🌱

## The Pacific as teacher

*Since taking over as the Director of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme in 2002, Asterio Takesy has led SPREP on path of change and progress.*

As a young lad my home was on pristine Onoun atoll, part of Pohnpei State in the Federated States of Micronesia. Surrounded by a bountiful ocean, I spent much of my early years in and around the ocean, diving, fishing, or just trawling around in our dugout canoes with family and friends. Those were the best of times and my passion for fishing has remained close.

In fact it motivated me to study marine biology at Guam University, and then led onto a career within my government. Throughout this time, I became concerned

about marine and land degradation across the region. Much of this was related to tourism development, as well as commercial and military expansion.

At some point all people must decide who they are, what they believe in and what is right. SPREP is a young regional agency endeavouring to deliver practical scientific knowledge to Pacific Islanders. I believe this is achievable on my watch and I am confident it will bring benefits to all who call these islands home.

My staff and I are very aware that there is much riding on our vulnerable regional environments and economies and how they are managed in the next few years. The remedy involves every community being willing to adapt to change. Our redemption lies in acknowledging that on earth at least, it is our Pacific Ocean that teaches the most valuable lessons in life.



# Letters to the Editor

## One Plan does not fit all

As a Pacific Islander living in New Zealand, I am always very interested – and I worry quietly – when “Pacific things” are discussed, revised, reshuffled or reconsidered in the light of past experience. I become even more worried when big words are used. Usually it means old ideas are being dressed up and I look at the “dressmakers” with even more worry.

The last issues of *Pacific Connection* have contained ongoing dialogue about the proposed Pacific Plan and the issue of regionalism. With the former, I worry because I know one size does not “fit all”. On the latter I, too, would like to ask the question asked by Michael Powles in the last issue – is New Zealand ready? And I think we should ask that with respect to Australia too. Are New Zealand and Australia – our big partners, with big interests in the Plan and the idea of regionalism – ready for it?

Over the years, people and labour power have been the main export from the Pacific Island nations to New Zealand and Australia. This will continue for a long while. As Mr Powles wrote, this is a sensitive issue for New Zealand and also, I believe, for Australia. I would like to see these two countries dealing to this issue before anything else.

Nina Kirifi-Alai  
Otago

## An unexpected pleasure

There is no doubt that *Pacific Connection* is getting better and better, and I particularly congratulate you on the recent Autumn edition.

I am especially intrigued with the developing discussion relating to an emerging New Zealand identity as a Pacific nation – as part of the Pacific Region. Having attended the address by the Samoan Prime Minister, Hon Tuilaepa Aiono Sialele Malielegaoi, I expected to read an account in your publication. Nor was I disappointed.

However, to find it in company with a particularly incisive commentary, by Michael Powles, was an unexpected pleasure.

It is clear – at least to me – that as regionalism further develops and becomes entrenched through shared facilities, laws and policies as outlined by the Samoan Prime Minister, then the clearer will become New Zealand’s identity as a Pacific nation.

Michael Powles’ conclusion: “Perhaps, then, we are beginning to recognise ourselves as a Pacific people,” is a worthy postscript to the Prime Minister’s visit and a thought-provoking concept upon which we can all reflect with profit.

Well done!

Roger Mortlock  
Brigadier (Retired)

## Please cover ECP, RAMSI

I have had the great fortune to have been receiving your magazine *Pacific Connection* from its inception. I encourage students here at Massey University to read the magazine to get a fresh contemporary take on issues affecting the Pacific today.

I myself have particularly enjoyed the timely updates on the progress of the Pacific Plan and the latest moves by the Pacific Forum provided within, though I have also greatly enjoyed learning about the vital importance of shipping lines and the future of rugby in the Pacific too!

I am writing to you, however, both to express my thanks for providing such an excellent resource and also to ask if we could perhaps see some further updates on issues such as the current status of the ECP (Australia’s Enhanced Cooperation Programme with Papua New Guinea) and RAMSI (Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands)? More specifically, the issue of policing within the Pacific is a topic of personal interest, and I would be very interested to read about the progress of the Regional Policing Initiative and so on.

Please keep up the good work. I look forward to reading the next issue.

Dr Beth Greener-Barcham  
Massey University

*Pacific Connection* welcomes letters to the editor. Please write to us at PO Box 10-467, Wellington, New Zealand, or email [pacificconnection@pcf.org.nz](mailto:pacificconnection@pcf.org.nz).

## 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 are offering individuals, families, organisations and businesses with an interest in the Pacific region the opportunity of becoming “Friends of the Foundation”. They will receive:

- Invitations to all PCF events and functions.
- A copy of our quarterly magazine *Pacific Connection*.
- Access to a Friends of the Foundation-only section on our website which will feature: a bi-monthly members’ e-newsletter, a forum section to discuss Pacific issues, and a monthly section on news from the region.

Annual membership fees (including GST) are:

Individual	\$NZ45.00
Family	\$NZ67.50
Organisation (non profit)	\$NZ337.50
Business	\$NZ562.50

To join the Friends of the Foundation, simply fill in the form in the centre of the magazine, include your membership fee, and post it back to: Friends of the Foundation, PO Box 10-467, Wellington, New Zealand.

# Pacific women nominated for Nobel Peace Prize

Thirty-six Pacific women have been nominated for this year's Nobel Peace Prize, the largest number in the history of the award.

They join 964 other women from over 150 countries nominated under the "1000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005" project initiated by UNESCO Switzerland with the support of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

The project calls for international attention to the vital role played by women from all walks of life in challenging harmful established social/cultural boundaries, institutions and ideologies and in creating and promoting peace in their communities around the world.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee will announce its decision in October. Since its inception 80 men and 20 organisations – but only 12 women – have been honoured with the award.

The 36 Pacific women nominated are: Faith Bandler, Stella Cornelius, Jo Vallentine, Zohl de Ishtar, Alexandra Gater and Kupa Piti Kungka Tjuta (Australia); Josie Sirivi, Sister Lorraine Garasu and Helen Hakena (Bougainville); Paddy Walker (Cook Islands); Maria Domingas Fernandes, Genoveva Ximenes

Alves and Maria Manuela Perreira (Timor-Leste); Maire-Bopp Allport Dupont and Unutea Hirshon (French Polynesia); Shinobu Mailo Poll (Federated States of Micronesia); Sharon Bhagwan-Rolls, Amelia Rokotuivuna (deceased), Jane Keith-Reid and Suliana Siwatibau (Fiji); Carmen Bigler (Marshall Islands); Dewe Gorode (New Caledonia); Marilyn Waring, Marion Hancock, Patricia Henderson and Pauline Tangiora (New Zealand); Gabriela Ngirmang (Palau); Freda Talao, Hilan Los and Mary Kini Papua (New Guinea); Hon Fiamé Naomi Mataafa (Samoa); Apollonia Bola Talo, Sister Cecilia Olilaeni and Sister Kathleen Kapei (Solomon Islands); Betty Blake (Tonga); Hilda Lini (Vanuatu).

For further information on the project, go to: [www.1000peacewomen.org/eng/html/nominierte/suche.php](http://www.1000peacewomen.org/eng/html/nominierte/suche.php) 🌐



*Three of the 36 Pacific women nominated (from top): Hon Fiamé Naomi Mataafa (Samoa), Maria Domingas Fernandes (Timor-Leste) and Marion Hancock (New Zealand).*

## Reflections from the Executive Director's desk

Well, here we are already in September. We have wrapped up the books on the 2004/05 financial year and looking ahead to bigger and better things in 2005/06.

The past year has seen the PCF take shape and find its feet. We spent time working out with the Board of Trustees what we should be doing and then planning how we should best go about meeting the objectives set for us. Naturally we had to invest time and energy in getting out and about and making ourselves known, and we also had to ensure we had proper systems set up within the PCF to make certain the organisation is well managed and runs smoothly. We are pleased to have established a wide range of contacts and we are delighted at the almost universally positive welcome we have received from all quarters.

The 2005/06 financial year is off to a good start. We finished 2004/05 in sound financial shape and the

Government has increased our funding for 2005/06. We also have solid commitments of private sector revenue from our sponsors for 2005/06 – and forward to 2006/07. We have some quite ambitious plans, however, so we will be working hard to raise additional private sector support for a number of specific activities. These will be announced as they are firmed up and approved by the Board.

We are well and truly past the establishment phase, and now positioned to get moving on making a difference to New Zealand's relations with the Pacific. In the year ahead we plan to undertake a wider range of events, to expand our connections and to build our networks both within New Zealand and in the wider region. As reported on page three of this issue, our first high profile visitor for 2005/06 was the newly elected leader of French Polynesia/Tahiti Nui, President Oscar Temaru, whom we hosted to a breakfast meeting. President Temaru spoke of his dreams for eventual sovereignty for Tahiti Nui and stated his hope that, in a shorter timeframe, Tahiti Nui would be able to become a full member of the Pacific Forum family. 🌐

# Two weeks on a media "movie set"



Samoan journalist **Cherelle S Jackson** spent two weeks working on the *New Zealand Herald*, a secondment arranged by the Pacific Cooperation Foundation. The following is an edited summary of her report.

I arrived at the *New Zealand Herald* on a cold Monday morning but the introductory tour felt like I was walking straight onto a movie set of a newsroom alive with the need to obtain information! Remember this is a Samoan journalist speaking - the biggest newsroom I have worked in had five computers and two phones.

Perhaps the main difference I first noticed was the easy access to information. It's a reporter's dream to have books, maps, archives and the internet at your finger tips. Another significant difference was the way reporters have a lot of freedom to move. In Samoa, some editors like a minute-by-minute explanation of a reporter's whereabouts, which can hinder the progress of an assignment.

I discovered some major differences in writing styles. I remember I handed chief reporter Jeremy Rees a story and he looked at it and said: "This is too simple; we have to assume they know what we're talking about." This was an eye opener. The style of writing the *Herald* wanted was the one I had when I stepped out of journalism training, that is, until my first editor said: "Pretend like you are writing for a seven-year-old." It took me a while to adapt back.

As a writer I also found that I didn't know the ropes in New Zealand. I wasn't familiar with the personalities, I had no concept of what the issues were, what had been written about previously, how and why, and what was newsworthy for New Zealand readers.

The *Herald's* editors were the first to tell me that the paper did not have enough Pacific coverage. I agreed with them and respected the fact that they acknowledged this. *Herald* Pacific issues reporter Angela Gregory was their window to the Pacific from New Zealand but they wanted more. They recognised that there was a need for more coverage of Pacific Islanders, as they are a prominent part of New Zealand, and of issues involving Pacific Islanders not only in New Zealand but the islands.

My two weeks with the *New Zealand Herald* re-emphasized to me that in order to be a good journalist one must be sharp, have good sources and, basically, be on top of the game. The time in Auckland was a great learning experience that has given me greater admiration for the paper and a renewed appreciation of being a journalist in Samoa.

As a result of the two weeks, I was asked to contribute to the *Herald* from Samoa, reporting on issues relating to New Zealand or of significant value to the Pacific.

I am grateful for the experience of working at the *Herald*, and thankful for the opportunity to contribute further from Samoa. I think this is a great thing for the paper as now there will be more coverage of the Pacific. It is also a great opportunity for Samoa to be exposed in the foreign media on a regular basis, if only for an awareness of where the country is in the world today. Most importantly, and perhaps selfishly, it is a tremendous opportunity for me as a journalist to expand my writing horizons, assist the *Herald*, and in some way contribute to the development of Samoa.

Thank you to the Pacific Cooperation Foundation for seeing the need for a better understanding of the Pacific by journalists, and particularly for accepting and assisting me to spend two weeks with the *Herald*. It has made a tremendous impact on my career. I hope this is the beginning of opportunities for Pacific journalists to be exposed to the New Zealand media. Thank you also to the *Herald* staff for their assistance and hospitality.

Faafetai, faafetai, faafetai tele lava le faaaloalo.

## Banaba to get New Zealand buses

Stagecoach New Zealand has donated a bus to the people of Rabi Island, Fiji, and Reef Shipping is to carry it and another bus from New Zealand to Suva. Fundraising is underway to cover the costs of the second bus, and of on-shipping both from Suva to Rabi, where there is no wharf.

For many years there has been only one bus on Rabi. Given the island's population of 4000, together with the fact that the only high school is two hours walk from some villages, that one bus has been very overworked. Recently it stopped going altogether.

The people of Rabi, known for their fishing and dancing skills, are the smallest ethnic minority in Fiji. Their original home was Banaba (Ocean Island), in Micronesia. Banaba was mined heavily by the British Phosphate

Commission, which shipped the fertiliser to New Zealand and Australia. In 1945, the land was exhausted and the whole population moved to Rabi. The Commission's promise to bring soil and trees for replanting was never honoured.

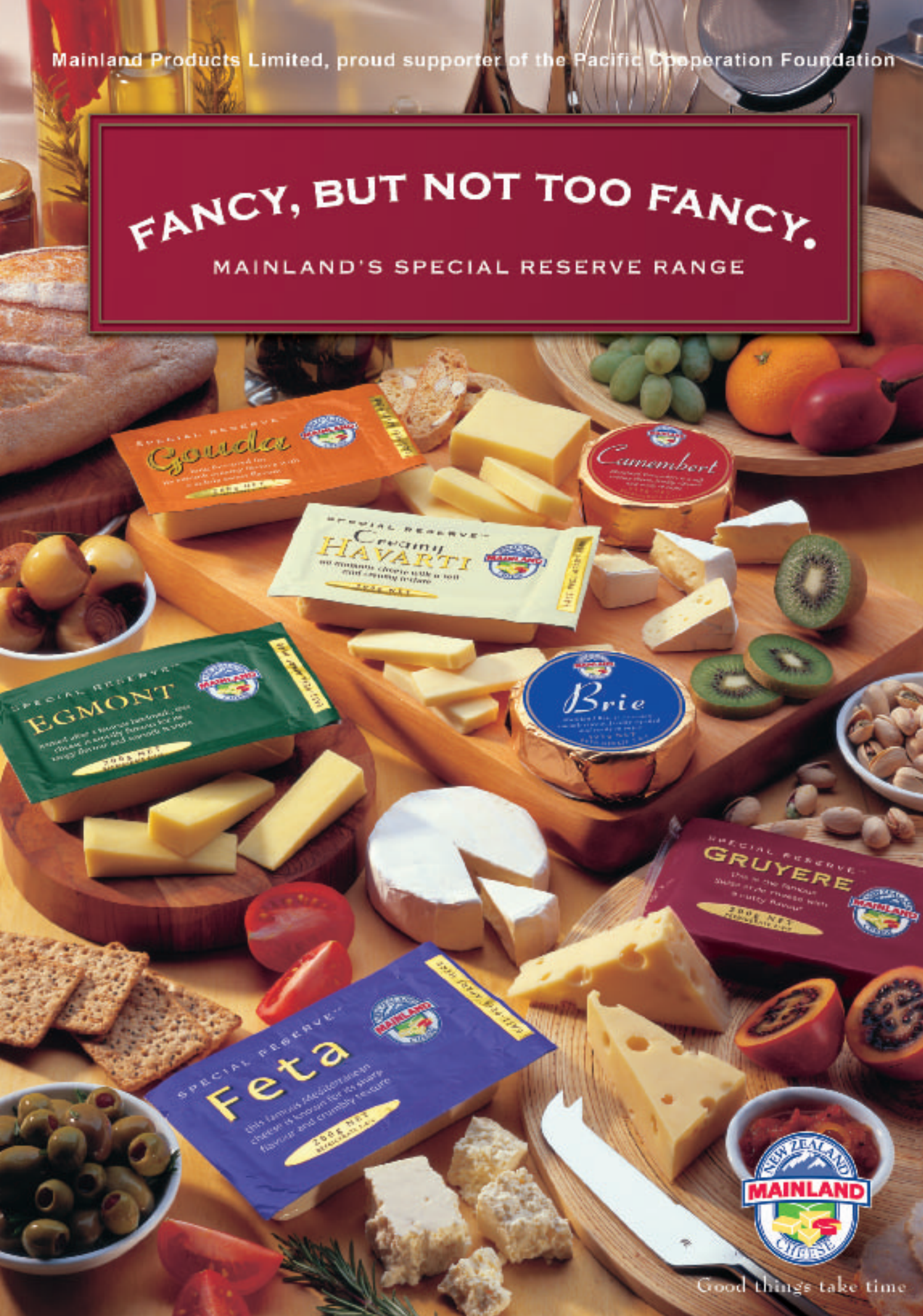
Today, the Banabans struggle to maintain basic health and education systems on an island without a cash economy, electricity or regular public transport to mainland Fiji.

Donations can be made to the Banaban Trust, c/- Jennifer Shennan, 92 Maida Vale Rd. Roseneath, Wellington, New Zealand.

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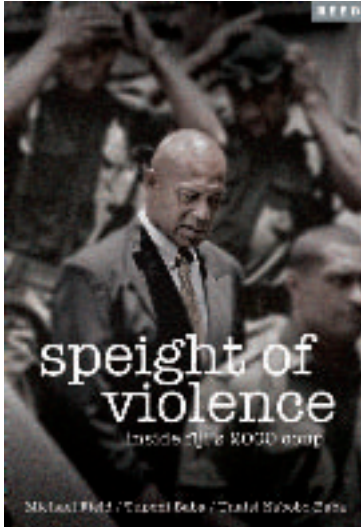
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Good things take time

# Probing the 2000 coup



## *Speight of Violence: Inside Fiji's 2000 Coup*

By Michael Field, Tupeni Baba  
and Unaisi Nabobo-Baba

Reviewed by Claire Slatter,  
Pacific NGO consultant.

I have to admit that, despite initial misgivings, I enjoyed reading *Speight of Violence*. I was put off initially by the ill-chosen cover, showing Speight

in statesman-like pose, and a title suggestive of an inside story sympathetic to him and the cause he supposedly championed.

Poorly-written opening chapters, in which grammatical errors and incomprehensible sentences proliferated, did not inspire me to keep reading and it's a pity that the book did not benefit from a good editor's pen.

Better editing might also have helped improve the content, balance and ordering of historical information. In places, the fusion of references to events and people in the past with descriptions of present institutions and practices is confusing, even for readers familiar with Fiji.

The 274-page book contains 25 chapters, some of which are just three or four pages in length. None indicates its author but it soon becomes clear whose voice is reflected in each. Except for the early chapters, the principal author appears to be Field, with contributions by then-Deputy Prime Minister Tupeni Baba and his wife, Unaisi Nabobo-Baba.

One brief chapter covers the arrival of Indians in Fiji as indentured labourers and includes references to stereotypes about Indians, their rapid population growth, fears about their political domination, and the complex arrangements for parliamentary representation put in place under the independence constitution. Not only is the chapter very selective in its representation of this dimension of Fiji's social history, with no discussion of the struggles, achievements and contributions of Indo-Fijians, but there is also an unfortunate slant to how issues are represented. This has meant that, in a few instances, the analysis of issues or events is inaccurate. An example is the authors' suggestion that post-independence debates on equal political representation entailed a claim that "Indians" were "robbing Fiji and getting rich by exploiting Fijian land that they did not pay a fair rent for" (p33). In fact, arguments about unfair rent did not emerge in public debate until the 1990s.

The rest of the book centres on the 2000 coup and its aftermath. It does not provide a comprehensive account of issues and events leading up to the coup, or even a comprehensive explanation of the coup as such. There is, for instance,

a poor recounting of the central issue of the mahogany logging contract, a matter in which Speight had both a direct pecuniary interest and, after being sacked as the Chair of Fiji Hardwood Corporation, a score to settle with Chaudhry's government.

There is in fact only a limited account of what it was about deposed Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry that apparently antagonised Fijians, although a paragraph critical of Chaudhry suggests he had few personal skills "to offset his ambitions", showed a lack of understanding of Fijian customs and values on Fijian land, and failed to consult. On the other hand, there is a fair account of the considerable achievements of his Peoples' Coalition Government in its first year of office. We are reminded that a *Fiji Times* opinion poll six months into that administration ranked Chaudhry Fiji's most popular political leader, surpassing his predecessor Rabuka.

While it is true that the book offers little genuinely new information, I found – as someone who was in Fiji when it happened – its documentation of the events as they unfolded compelling and evocative. I appreciated Field's evenhanded reporting and honest commentary. In a chapter that looks critically at the role played by the international media, he shows how overseas journalists fell under Speight's spell, attending his many press conferences and getting so close to their subject that at one point they effectively provided him with cover as he and his rebels marched towards a military post. Field's acknowledgement of the good and courageous work of some local journalists will also be appreciated by those concerned.

His strong criticism of visits by Commonwealth Secretary-General Don McKinnon, and UN Special Envoy Sergio de Mello to the parliamentary complex to meet Speight is also worth mentioning. Their visits are validly seen as tantamount to recognising Speight as a leader. The Foreign Ministers of both New Zealand and Australia also come in for some deserved criticism.

The book's documenting of the shameful behaviour of Fijian leaders who, supporting "the Cause", attended a Vanua Council meeting in the parliamentary chambers while the legitimate government was being held hostage right next door, is disturbingly reflective of the confusion between right and wrong that continues to plague Fiji.

*Speight of Violence* helps reveal the muddled perception by the key rebels of their actions as political and not criminal. They clearly expected to be recognised and rewarded, not prosecuted and jailed, and this resonates with the thinking behind the current SDL Government's controversial Reconciliation, Tolerance and Unity Bill, although there is no reference to the latter.

Despite its errors and shortcomings, the book is a good read and I would recommend it. The unusual collaboration among three people who found themselves caught up in the coup – as hostage, hostage's wife, and journalist – makes for an interesting interspersing of accounts, from the racy and more objective (if not exactly detached) journalistic analysis of Field, to the more reflective and often more subjective accounts of Baba and Nabobo-Baba.

*Speight of Violence* is published by Reed Publishing (NZ) Press, Auckland. \$34.99

# News in brief

A three-member Eminent Persons Group review of the Australian-led **Regional Assistance Mission in Solomon Islands (RAMSI)** has recommended that in the long-term Solomon Islands should become an equal partner, if not the driver of the mission.

The New Zealand territory of **Tokelau** could hold a referendum on self-government before the end of the year. Administrator Neil Walter says Tokelau's General Fono will consider a draft constitution and a draft treaty with New Zealand at its August meeting. Tokelau is also seeking Pacific Islands Forum observer status.

**Samoa's Prime Minister** has announced the end of October as the official starting date of new airline, Polynesian Blue, a joint venture between the Samoan Government-owned Polynesian Airlines and Australia's Virgin Blue. It will provide flights from Samoa to Australia and New Zealand.

**Kiribati's** Opposition leader, Dr Harry Tong, has criticised the country's local media for its "pro-Taiwan" reports, and urged it to investigate the Taiwanese embassy's substantial donations to non-governmental organisations.

**Tonga's** first registered political party, the People's Democratic Party Incorporated (PEDPIN), said its recent registration was a step toward good governance and accountability in the

kingdom. The PEDPIN was registered as an incorporated society on Friday 1 July in Nuku'alofa, Tonga.

**Saipan** (northern Mariana Islands) was voted third best destination in a recent Asiana Airlines cabin crew survey. Bangkok and Sydney took the top spots.

New Zealand's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Phil Goff, said Fiji had taken up an offer to scrutinise its controversial **Reconciliation Tolerance and Unity Bill**, but that he could not divulge what his government's advice to Fiji on the bill would be. He said New Zealand arranged for Father Michael Lapsley, who heads South Africa's Institute of Healing of Memories, to visit Fiji for four days of talks in late June. Mr Goff said Fiji had to find a solution for itself, and New Zealand's measures were aimed at trying to facilitate that process.

The head of the World Health Organisation (WHO) in the South Pacific, Dr Ken Chen, has warned against **betel nut chewing**. "There is evidence that it leads to oral cancer. It is a cause for concern," he said.

The **New Zealand Law Commission** is working on a project to explore the interface between custom and human rights in the Pacific, including New Zealand. In particular the Commission will consider the existing human rights landscape in the Pacific, arguments for and against universal human rights versus a cultural relativist approach in the Pacific, and potential future developments in terms of human rights in the Pacific. The Terms of Reference are available at [www.lawcom.govt.nz](http://www.lawcom.govt.nz), and comments on the issues can be sent to the Law Commission, PO Box 2590, The Terrace, Wellington, New Zealand, or email [NBaird@lawcom.govt.nz](mailto:NBaird@lawcom.govt.nz).

## Business award winners

The top award in this year's New Zealand Pacific Business Awards has gone to Paul and Sarah Nelson of The Cleaning Professionals, Christchurch.

The Pacific Business Person of the Year is Sulia Va'enuku of Morning Star Freight Limited in Auckland, which specialises in freight forwarding of cargoes to Tonga.

The Community Enterprise Award has been won by Wellington's Taeaomanino Trust, which provides a wide range of services using Pacific models of care directed at Pacific peoples and their families.

The Business Enterprise Award goes to Joe and Amanda Lam of Scalini's Restaurant in St Heliers, Auckland.

Isabel Evans of the Ministry of Social Development in Auckland has won the Pacific Business Leader of the Year Award. She is the Regional Commissioner for Social Development in Auckland.

## Coming events

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| 5 September  | Labor Day, Palau   |
| 16 September | Independence Day, Papua New Guinea   |
| 1 October    | Independence Day, Palau  |
| 3 October    | Labor Day, Australia (ACT, NSW & SA)<br>Tuvalu Day, Tuvalu   |
| 5 October    | Constitution Day, Vanuatu  |
| 10 October   | Fiji Day, Fiji<br>White Sunday Holiday, Samoa  |
| 24 October   | United Nations Day, Federated States of Micronesia & Palau<br>Labour Day, New Zealand<br>Peniamina's Day, Niue |

### Exhibitions in New Zealand

- |                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| Until 4 September  | <i>Pacific Rhythm</i> , Letham Gallery, Ponsonby, Auckland<br><i>Fresh Eke</i> by Ani O'Neill, Waikato Museum, Hamilton<br><i>Te Hei Tiki</i> , Auckland City Art Gallery, Auckland |
| Until 27 November  | <i>Jewelled – Adornments from Across the Pacific</i> , Te Papa Museum, Wellington   |
| Until January 2006 | <i>Te Moananui a Kiwa</i> , Te Papa Museum, Wellington  |



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