

# International Notes

**Edited by Ewan Maidment**

## **Belau National Archives**

*Correspondent: Naomi Ngirakamerang*

In February 1995, Naomi Ngirakamerang was appointed as Chief, Division of National Archives, Bureau of Community Services, headed by Mitch Solang. The Archives facility is located in a secure section of the building which also houses the Administrative Offices and Research Library of the adjacent Belau National Museum. Initial efforts have concentrated on assembling and checking available equipment, supplies, publications, and making a brief survey of records held in the Archives and in a warehouse holding area. A major handicap is that essentially there is no working budget.

The Archives can film and process 16mm microfilm (using what outdated film and chemicals are on hand), and has a microforms reader-printer (printer not yet operational). From the 1980s Trust Territory Archives project, there are over 2 000 rolls of microfilm, indexed in a massive printout format (for which there are no binders, making it nearly impossible to access the sheets), and in a newer computer index (which is not exactly a copy of the printout; both must be used together). Computer equipment is working.

A quantity of selected original material filmed by the Trust Territory Project and temporarily held by the Museum Library, will be transferred to the Archives (which presently has no shelving of any kind) during the complete renovation and upgrading of the Research Library, work begun in late March. John C. Wright, from Honolulu, who worked with the Museum in 1985, is in Palau for four months to assist with the Library project and with the Archives.

A preliminary survey by Naomi and John of records in the holding area shows that in the 21 cubic metres of material (over 700 cubic feet), dating roughly from 1980, some earlier, much is archival. Sadly, some material is said to have been burned due to infestation and no record seems to have been made of what was destroyed. Happily, it is fortunate that what has been retained appears generally to be in good condition.

Naomi and John, in addition to numerous practical tasks, will be preparing a short-term plan for continuing the work early next year and drafting a five-year plan for a records management and archives program.

## **National Archives and Public Records Services of Papua New Guinea**

*Correspondent: Jacob Hevelawa, Acting National Archivist*

It has been two years since the last report on the National Archives of Papua New Guinea was submitted by the then Chief Archivist, Nancy Lutton, to *Archives and Manuscripts* (vol. 20, no. 2, November 1992). Since then many things have happened at the National Archives and I am glad to report on some activities which we consider were major achievements of the National Archives over the two years since the last report.

Before I do so, on behalf of the staff of National Archives, may I take this opportunity to convey our deepest and heartfelt sympathies and condolences to the family of the late Margaret Jennings on her untimely death. Those of us in Papua New Guinea who have been associated with PARBICA activities owe much to Margaret for her contribution, and for her considerate attitudes and efforts to help develop the archival profession in the Pacific Region. Certainly I for one, personally, will not forget the time and effort she put into training me, as the first Papua New Guinean archivist, when attached to the Melbourne University Archives, after completing the ten months post-graduate archives diploma course at the UNSW, Sydney in 1985. Margaret, on behalf of my family and my staff I once again thank and salute you for a job well done. May you rest in eternal peace.

Certainly, some achievements of the National Archives of Papua New Guinea over the years can be said to be partly a result of Margaret's and the former Chief Archivists, Judith Hornabrook's and Nancy Lutton's direct and indirect involvement.

### **Localisation of the Chief Archivist Position**

The chief archivist position has now been localised with the appointment of Gabriel Gerry who was the Associate to former Chief Archivist, Nancy Lutton. Gabriel holds a BA degree from the University of Papua New Guinea and a postgraduate Diploma in Archives Administration from the UNSW, Sydney.

A word of thanks to the former Chief Archivists, Judith Hornabrook and Nancy Lutton, for their contribution and services to National Archives, as

well for the training of nationals, including Gabriel among others, to become professional archivists. Regrettably, two of the professionally trained archivists, Joseph Molita and Paul Unas have left the National Archives to join other departments. The National Archives is now left with three professionally trained officers and eleven semi-professional support staff to carry out its designated functions and responsibilities.

#### Advisory Services Publication

As reported by Nancy in 1992, the book *Advisory Services to Government Departments and Others* has finally been published and distributed to government departments, statutory bodies, educational institutions and interested members of the public. Encouraging responses to the book have been received from various organisations and many have begun using the instructions documented to create, maintain, use and dispose of records in accordance with accepted records management and archival practice. The publication has also been used as training material when records management workshops are conducted for records officers in the Public Service.

#### Records Management Workshops

Training of records officers particularly in the Public Service is a priority to National Archives. Senior Archivist Jacob Hevelawa has been actively involved in organising these workshops and so far eleven workshops have been conducted in eleven provinces. The aim of the workshops have been to educate records managers on the use of accepted records and archives management methods to create, maintain, use and dispose of records.

Over 200 records officers have attended these workshops and follow-up sessions. Some officers have, with their organisation's backing, furthered their training by undergoing the Certificate in Information Studies (Records Management) course offered by the Department of Library and Information Studies at UPNG.

#### Records Management Situation in the Public Service

In addition to the conduct of workshops, assessments were also made to determine: the nature and range of records held within a department; the location and facilities for storage of active and inactive records; the records control systems, including indexes and registers; and the number of staff responsible for the management and control of records.

These assessments have revealed that:

- (a) There is lack of proper storage facilities or separate records rooms to store semi-current and non-current records. As a result, records are stored in run-down buildings, along corridors and in the ceilings of offices and the conditions they are stored in are pathetic.
- (b) There is also a lack of proper procedural guidelines or registry manuals for records clerks to use as guides to create, maintain, use and dispose of records. The possibility of records being lost or inadvertently destroyed through inefficient filing system and storage practices is imminent in the Public Service.
- (c) Proper coordination and streamlining of registry functions and other records and archives management responsibilities are almost non-existent because those in authority do not regard or recognise the records management function as having enough importance in relation to other program objectives to place such functions on the administrative hierarchy and employ qualified records management personnel to manage that function.
- (d) The inactive and non-current records which are no longer required for current office action are not being retired to secondary storage or disposed of in accordance with accepted records management and archival practice.
- (e) Records clerks throughout the public service are keen to improve their skills and knowledge, however, there is a lack of records management employee training programs or incentives, resulting in very little improvement in the quality of archives and records management services available to the executive management and officers of the organisations they serve.

The above situation in the public service is of major concern to National Archives and with its limited annual budget allocations and with the resignation of two of its professional officers, it is not able to make a dramatic improvement in all the above areas.

On the other hand it would welcome any assistance from outside of Papua New Guinea to help out in areas such as:

- (i) Financial assistance to physically establish a records centre facility in a province that could be a working model for various organisations to follow and make provisions for such facilities when planning new projects in a fiscal year, for their respective organisations.
- (ii) Professional personnel who will assist in conducting workshops, using well documented training aids, to train records managers in specific areas of archives and records management.
- (iii) Financial assistance to organise a general meeting to formally constitute a professional association which will work towards the following: promote closer cooperation amongst persons engaged in work with records and archives and manuscripts; encourage the development of training programs in the management of records and archives; and promote greater recognition of the importance of records and archives in the administrative process in both the public and private sector institutions in Papua New Guinea. More information about the formation of the association is reported below.

#### Archives and Records Managers Association of Papua New Guinea

The Association was formed on 17 December 1992, with the advice and assistance of Dr Peter Orlovich, and the support of professional and semi-professional archivists and records managers within Papua New Guinea. The Association, with an aim as briefly explained under point 4 (iii), was formed during the second stage of the Lahara program leading to the award of the Certificate in Information Studies (Records Management) offered by the Department of Library and Information Studies at UPNG.

An interim executive was appointed comprising a President and a Secretary. Jacob Hevelawa, Senior Archivist at the National Archives was appointed interim President; and Jimmy Lingau, a Records Centre Manager with the Papua New Guinea Electricity Commission, was appointed the interim Secretary. The Association is to be formally constituted at a general meeting.

Since the formation of the Association, the interim executive has requested assistance, both within and outside of PNG, to help fund the general meeting. The Australian Society of Archivists responded positively with a donation of \$500. The money was to have been put into an account under the name of the Association, but there were problems identifying the interim executive with bank tellers before an account was opened, and delays resulted. The cheque, which had become stale, had to be returned to the ASA. An application to

AIDAB through the ASA under the PAIDS scheme to help fund the general meeting has not received a reply.

### The National Library and Archives Act

An NEC decision, 118/90, of the Government of PNG approved the establishment of an Office of Libraries and Archives. Subsequently in the June 1993 session of Parliament, the *Library and Archives Act* was passed and gazetted to be put into effect as from 27th May 1994.

The passing of the Act has now paved the way for the formal establishment of an Office of Libraries and Archives which will be a statutory body reporting directly to a designated Minister. In addition it will confer powers to National Archives and Public Records Services to ensure that government instrumentalities follow recommended procedures to create, maintain, use and dispose of records. One other change, as a result of the Act, will be that the title Chief Archivist is to become National Archivist. The formal establishment of the Office of Libraries and Archives will hopefully take effect in 1995.

The drafting and passing of the Act would not have been possible without the services of former Chief Archivists, Judith Hornabrook and Nancy Lutton. A special word of thanks to them and also to Dr Peter Orlovich for his professional comments before the final submission was made.

Public relations programs aimed at increasing awareness of the implications of the Act have commenced. They are in the form of workshops and visits to the government instrumentalities concerned.

### Microfilm Project

The filming of patrol reports, under the sponsorship of University of San Diego, California, is now nearing completion with only one province (Western) remaining to be filmed.

In her last report, Nancy Lutton indicated a delay in duplicating fiche to meet a backlog of orders. This problem has now been rectified and all orders have been completed. Full sets of all the reports are available. Enquiries are welcome from institutions wishing to obtain information about what reports are available and the costs involved.

## Automation of Records

File lists of the records that are used frequently have been automated using the UNESCO software package, CDS/ISIS. Automated lists also include guides to groups of records which have been arranged and described, such as the Department of Government Secretary, the Department of Administrator and the Department of Health.

It is anticipated that another two guides will be ready for publication before the end of 1994. The guides will be to the records of the Departments of Justice and Lands and, following on from there, their file lists will also be automated.

## PARBICA Activities

Two of the National Archives staff were Executive Members of PARBICA from 1991 to 1994. They are Gabriel Gerry (Deputy Secretary General) and Tukul Kaiku (Editor, for PARBICA publications).

Gabriel Gerry was elected President of PARBICA at the recent PARBICA 6 conference held in Guam. We congratulate Gabriel on his appointment.

## Lahara Course Program at UPNG

Professional archivists at the National Archives have been actively involved in the training of records managers undertaking the Certificate course at UPNG since it started in 1991. Several of the National Archives staff members have also undertaken the course and two have obtained their certificates. Another staff member, who passed the first stage in 1993, completed the second stage in 1994.

The coordinator of the course Sam Kaima is undertaking a Masters program at the Monash University in Melbourne, therefore, it is highly unlikely there will be new intakes from 1994 and onwards.

## Pacific Manuscripts Bureau

*Correspondent: Adrian Cunningham*

1994 was a period of transition for the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau. Following the resignation of the previous Executive Officer, Gillian Scott, in 1993, the PMB Management Committee decided that the Bureau's precarious financial situation needed to be addressed before a permanent replacement could be appointed. As an interim measure the National Library of Australia offered the services of Adrian Cunningham to the Bureau on a part-time basis for

twelve months. Adrian's instructions were to investigate and pursue possible sources of additional funding and to see through to completion existing filming commitments.

Throughout the year an extensive recruitment drive was mounted in an effort to increase the size of the Bureau's funding consortium. By the end of 1994 no new members has been recruited. There was, however, some optimism that certain libraries which had expressed interest in the proposal may formally agree to become PMB members in the early months of 1995. On this basis the existing member libraries committed themselves to continue funding the Bureau for a further twelve months while these and other funding avenues were pursued. In January Adrian Cunningham returned to work in the Manuscript Section of the National Library. Kris Rodgers maintained the PMB's operations while the position of PMB Executive Officer was advertised in the press. In February Ewan Maidment was appointed Executive Officer for a twelve month period on secondment from the Noel Butlin Archives Centre at the Australian National University where he was Senior Archivist. It is anticipated that if the funding issue is resolved favourably that this appointment will be extended.

During 1994 some ninety reels of microfilm were released by the PMB. These include: fifty-three reels of film of the Archives of the Catholic Church Diocese of Rarotonga and Nuie, 1894–1992; six reels of manuscripts from the Cook Islands Library and Museum Society; eleven reels of the papers and Gilbertese publications of London Missionary Society missionary, George Herbert Eastman, of the Cook Islands and the Gilbert Islands, 1913–1969; three reels of the papers of Fijian Methodist leader Setareki Tuilovoni, 1946–1987; three reels of the papers of German/Pacific linguist Otto Dempwolff, 1897–1938; two reels of the papers of Tongan writer and traditions expert Tupou Posesi Fanua, 1959–1992; the diaries and other papers of the Witts Family, planters of the New Hebrides, 1899–1917; and a variety of single reels relating to wartime and postwar Papua New Guinea.

It is anticipated that in early 1995 some fifty-eight reels of film of the Methodist Church Overseas Mission records, the originals of which are held by the Mitchell library, will be released. These records will be chiefly minutes and associated correspondence, 1855–1939. At the same time some twenty reels of film of Bachelor of Divinity and masters of Theology theses, 1968–1993, held in the Pacific Theological college, Suva, should be released. Two filming and surveying field trips are planned for 1995. The major field trip will be to French Polynesia where work will be done at the Catholic Church Archives in Papeete and at other repositories. Another field trip will be made

to Fiji where the records of the Fiji Trades Union Congress will be filmed. Finally, it is hoped that during 1995 a variety of collections in private hands relating to the 1987 Fiji coups and to the Bougainville crisis will be filmed and released.

If the PMB continues beyond 1995, future filming projects should include field trips to Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands; filming of the archives of the Western Pacific High Commission and the New Hebrides British Service which are currently located in England; filming of the records of the various Pacific trade unions; filming of the records of the Methodist Church of Fiji; the filming of further papers of Otto Dempwolff which are located in Germany; filming of the papers of Rev. John Noble Mackenzie, missionary of the New Hebrides, 1895–1909; and the possibility of further filming at the Marist Archives in Rome.

### **Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (PARBICA)**

*Correspondent: Karin Brennan*

#### **PARBICA Bureau Meeting**

Preceding the Electronic Records Conference 'Playing for Keeps' held in Canberra, members of the PARBICA Bureau were able to meet at the NSW State Office of the Australian Archives in Sydney on 6 November 1994. The Bureau met for the first time since its election at the PARBICA 6 Conference held in Guam in July 1994.

Prior to the Bureau meeting members had appointed John C. Wright, Honorary Member of PARBICA and former Territorial Archivist of American Samoa, as the new PARBICA Editor.

At the Bureau meeting, the President, Gabriel Gerry, reported on his attendance at the ICA meetings held in Thessaloniki, Greece, in October 1994, where he represented PARBICA. Other matters under consideration by the Bureau were that according to the wishes of PARBICA members expressed at the General Conference in Guam, the President shall write to the National Archives of Fiji to ascertain whether the National Archives is in the position to accommodate PARBICA's archives.

Further the Bureau decided not to publish a journal for the duration of its term, but to publish a more substantial quarterly newsletter instead. It was

also decided to update the PARBICA Membership Directory and to design and publish an information brochure on PARBICA, its goals and objectives.

The updated Membership Directory is now available for A\$5.00, which includes postage and handling, and subscriptions to PARBICA's quarterly newsletter, panorama, are available for US\$6.00 for one year or US\$10.00 for two years. The first issue of the newsletter was mailed in March 1995. Any requests for back issues of the PARBICA journal, *Pacific Archives Journal*, the Membership Directory or subscriptions to the newsletter should be sent to Michael Piggott, Treasurer - PARBICA, c/o Australian Archives, PO Box 34, Dickson, ACT 2602, Australia.

PARBICA's subcommittees have been non-operational for a number of years. The Bureau therefore decided to formally disband all committees and to establish new committees as required. In view of the fact that lack of formal archival education in the Pacific region is a major issue for PARBICA members, the Bureau decided to establish a committee of Education and Training with Michael Piggott in the Chair. One of the Committees tasks will be to follow-up the implementation and use of the Records Management Package presented at the PARBICA 6 conference workshop in Guam.

Members of the Bureau are currently working on a project plan for PARBICA. Issues looked at are how to participate in the Memory of the World program, a records survey for the National Archives of Niue Island and the resurrection of the Directory of Pacific Archives project.

Changes to the ICA constitution require some minor amendments to PARBICA's constitution. A working party chaired by Karin Brennan was established to look at any constitutional changes required. The working party shall also consider PARBICA membership and Bureau size.

## PARBICA 7

At the conference in Guam PARBICA delegates expressed their desire to hold the next general conference in Noumea, New Caledonia. If Noumea is approved as conference venue, the conference will be held in 1997. The Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre is expected to be opened early in 1997 and would provide an excellent venue with all modern conference facilities.

Conference themes currently under consideration are 'Land and Archives in the Pacific' and a survey on statistical data on Pacific archives. The latter will involve all archival institutions collecting data for the two to three year period prior to the conference. It is intended to hold a pre-conference

workshop on comparative surveys, showing how statistical data can be used to promote the archives, assist with internal procedures, planning and reporting on progress. The theme of 'Land and Archives' should be of wider interest to the Pacific Community and it is planned to open that part of the conference to historians and others with an interest in the history of the Pacific Islands and its peoples.

### Membership News

A hearty welcome is extended to the Archives of the University of Technology, Sydney, which joined PARBICA towards the end of 1994.

The PARBICA President, Gabriel Gerry, Chief Archivist-PNG, has been admitted to Monash University in Melbourne, Australia, for a Masters in Archives Administration.

Cecilia Salvatore, former Territorial Librarian of Guam, has entered the doctoral program in archives at the University of Texas, Austin. It is believed that she will be the first Pacific Islander to earn a doctorate in archives.

Setareki Tale from the National Archives of Fiji has been accepted for the Graduate Diploma in Information Management , Archives Administration, at the University of New South Wales in Sydney.

Any inquiries about PARBICA membership should be directed to the Secretary General, PARBICA, University Archives, UNSW, 2052, Australia.