

INTERNATIONAL NOTES

Edited by Ewan Maidment

News and Notes from New Zealand

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A new deal for Kiwi archives? The passion for restructuring by central government in New Zealand continues unabated with the latest plan for a “super ministry” for the cultural sector. Affected are the country’s premier specialist research library, the Alexander Turnbull, and the National Archives. On September 1 it was announced that these institutions are to form part of a new Ministry for Culture and Heritage, reporting to a Minister for Culture and Heritage, Hon. Marie Hasler, instead of the Minister for Internal Affairs and the Minister for the National Library respectively. Both are to be part of a new Vote Culture and Heritage and the new ministry is to exercise policy and legislative responsibilities on their behalf. The justification given for their inclusion was that it is in this new portfolio that the government wishes to locate its support for collections of national importance. But will either institution be better off?

National Archives has been in a state of administrative limbo since its review in 1994 by Treasury. Thwarted in attempts to impose a policy/provider split on the institution, the Secretary for the Department of Internal Affairs then created a Heritage Group to absorb National Archives, making the Chief Archivist report to the Secretary through a General Manager Heritage Group. Due to a challenge in the courts by the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand that this restructuring was illegal under s. 6 of the Archives Act 1957 because of the downgrading of the Chief Archivist’s position (an appeal to the initial High Court judgement has been lodged by ARANZ), the position of Group General Manager has been filled on an acting basis. However, the unsatisfactory nature of such a situation is unresolved by this latest restructuring. The Heritage Group remains organisationally within Internal Affairs and the Chief Archivist’s lines of accountability are essentially the same. The new Minister, as with the previous Minister, is also outside of Cabinet.

The Turnbull Library has been fighting independence battles for some 35 years, in particular, for the right to coexist within the National Library, its parent body, with a separate identity and to provide specialist services. Concurrent with the new ministry’s announcement has been publication of

plans for a massive restructuring of the Library. In mid-August it was announced that 12.5% of the Library's staff are to be made redundant, thereby saving \$2 million a year. In the new structure the role of the Turnbull has expanded to become the Client Services Division for the whole of the Library, with a "mish-mash" of public access functions. Critics of the reform, such as Jim Traue (ex Turnbull Chief Librarian), contend that this obscures the Turnbull's primary functions, weakens its image and may be illegal under the National Library Act 1965. While there will continue to be a Chief Librarian, Alexander Turnbull Library, this position subsumes the role of Manager Client Services. Traue asserts that this is contrary to the spirit of the legislation which has provisions to safeguard Turnbull from "cannibalisation" by the National Library. A legal challenge by the Friends of the Turnbull Library may be mounted. Thus, improvements, if any, resulting from the National Library's placement under the new Ministry for Culture and Heritage must be seen against the backdrop of financial impoverishment that has led to this other restructuring initiative.

Hasler believes that she can upgrade the priority of culture and heritage from outside the Cabinet "saying the personal ranking of a minister did not reflect the priority of a portfolio." (*Dominion*, July 29, 1999 p. 10) There is little time for her to do so on the eve of a general election in November, although there is speculation that her successor, should a Labour government win, could be the Hon. Helen Clark, Leader of the Party. (Clark has publicly expressed an interest in the portfolio.) The benefits of unification of a fragmented range of agencies with cultural interests under a single portfolio and vote have been pointed out. But many archivists are sceptical about the possibility of increased financial support for either institution. Ian Wards, who chairs the ARANZ legal action committee, believes the new ministry is a case of "out of the frying pan and into the fire" for National Archives (*City Voice*, 29 July 1999). The lack of independent status of the National Archives and Chief Archivist, and the Turnbull Library and the Chief Librarian, remains problematic.

Hopes for resolution of the independence issue are pinned on the second stage of the Culture and Heritage Review which will involve reviews of the National Archives and the National Library to determine their future governance. One option being touted for both institutions is crown entity status which would give them more freedom and may clarify the position of the Turnbull Library. ARANZ has maintained for some time that the primary purpose of the National Archives is not heritage but constitutional and, therefore, there is some reassurance in Hasler's statement that she is mindful that National Archives has a very important constitutional, as well as cultural, obligation. The reviews are scheduled to be completed by 31

March 2000. A team has been established to progress the terms of reference for this review and public consultation is supposed to begin after the election. Watch this space!

Archives and Records Management Workshops: PNG and the Solomon Islands

Correspondents: Sam Kaima, South Pacific Centre for Communication in Development, University of Papua New Guinea, and Esther Karibongi, National Archives of the Solomon Islands.

Sam Kaima was at Monash for further studies between 1994 and 1997. Since his return to Port Moresby archives and records management courses have been continued at the University of PNG. Aside from teaching two courses during the regular semesters, workshops were conducted in PNG and the Solomon Islands in 1998 and this year (1999). In total eleven workshops have been conducted in PNG and one in Solomon Islands.

The first was conducted in November 1998 attended by 26 participants; mostly registry clerks and record keepers of various government departments and private companies, including Chevron and Ok Tedi Mine. The other six workshops were conducted in Port Moresby in January, March, April, May and July 1999. There is a lot of demand for these workshops and already Sam Kaima is planning one in PNG in October of this year. The follow-up Solomon Islands workshops may eventuate later this year or early next year.

The workshop in Solomon Islands was assisted by the Solomon Islands National Archives, in particular by the National Archivist, Esther Karibongi, and funded by UNESCO. The Solomon Islands project took a period of three weeks, between 6-27 June 1998. The three-week trip was needed to allow for visits to government department registries to collect first hand information on the operations of registries in the country. The workshop itself was conducted from June 11-18. It was officially opened by the Secretary of Human Resources Development and closed by the Minister for Education on Friday June 18. The final week was left for report writing and a seminar presentation. The draft final report was completed and sent off to UNESCO before returning to PNG. The final report will be sent off to all the participants and UNESCO soon.

There are plans for the future based on recommendations that were made as a result of the Solomon Islands workshop. It is anticipated that a follow-up workshop will be held this year. Plans are now also under way to trial offering a regular archives and records management course through the Institute of Public Administration and Management (IPAM) and/or the

USP Centre in Honiara in future. As a result of this workshop the National Archives of the Solomon Islands, with Sam Kaima's help, is also compiling a *Registry Handbook* for all government departments which we hope to print and distribute to all government departments in future.

Report on the 8th PARBICA Conference, Suva, Fiji Islands, 9-13 August 1999

Correspondent: Ewan Maidment, ASA representative at the Conference

This conference, entitled, "Archival Development for the New Millenium: planning for the future", was attended by 58 participants, including representatives of institutional members from 17 of the 22 countries in the PARBICA region:

American Samoa; Australia; Cook Islands; Fiji Islands; Kiribati; Marshall Islands; Nauru; New Zealand; Niue; Palau; Papua New Guinea; Samoa; Solomon Islands; Tonga; Tuvalu; Vanuatu; Yap State, FSM.

There were also participants from Rotuma, the Rabi Island Council, Sweden and the USA. Representatives from the French Pacific were absent, however, as Bruno Corre had resigned his position as Director of the Territorial Archives in New Caledonia to return to France and M. Alexis Rickenbach, of the Territorial Archives of French Polynesia, was unable to obtain funding at the last moment. The good attendance was complemented by the publication of a comprehensive set of updated country reports and the results of PARBICA's biennial statistical survey of national archival institutions in the region.

The conference was opened by the Assistant Minister for Information, Hon Mr Lekh Ram Vayeshnoi, who stated that effective administration of archives minimises the dangers of abuse and corruption whereas mismanagement of archives can lead not only to operational difficulties for governments but also to violation of human rights. Mr Vayeshnoi referred to the importance of archives for authenticating history, protecting land rights and culture, providing evidence and ensuring good governance. He announced that his government was committed to improving the position of archives in Fiji.

In response, Mr George Nichols, Director General of the National Archives of Australia and ICA Executive Member, stated that he too recognised the archival role in maintaining accountability and democracy, as well as the "rule of law". Mr Nichols also conveyed a message from Mr Wang Gang, President of the ICA, to the PARBICA meeting to the effect that restructuring of the ICA would ensure greater opportunities for regional branches in ICA activities: "the Presidents of the regional branches will be drawn into the highest levels of the ICA".

The conference programme was made up of a series of papers, panels and working sessions on the following topics:

- archival development in the member countries;
- archival training in the Pacific Region;
- access regimes, including land records;
- computer technology in archives;
- control and management of land records;
- displays, exhibitions and researchers' needs.

Two major issues were tackled in the conference: access to education and training in the fields of archives administration and records management; and the administration of vital records of Pacific states, in particular lands records.

Speakers reported problems with archives administration and records management courses at the University of NSW, the University of PNG and the Victoria University in Wellington. Peter Orlovich stated that he could no longer recommend the UNSW course for training archivists in Australia and the Pacific. SARBICA proposals for professional courses in Malaysia and Manila have not been successful. Indonesia will continue to train archivists in the Netherlands. It was suggested that it is now time for PARBICA to think about how professional and technical training is to proceed.

One way of proceeding with technical training was indicated by Sam Kaima's paper, reporting on successful short training courses currently being run in PNG and the Solomons, aimed mainly at public service registry officers. Another training path was indicated by the launch at the conference of the International Records Management Trust's, *Management of Public Sector Records Study Programme*, a multi volume hand-book on many aspects of archives administration which includes training exercises. Björn Lindh, representing the ICA, stated that the ICA would support training programs in the PARBICA region. He suggested that PARBICA put a concrete proposal to the ICA's Program Support Commission which would find funding. As an example, he referred to an ICA training program, using the IRMT package, which is being run in Southern and Eastern Africa with Swedish funding.

In discussing the issue it was emphasized that access to professional education and qualifications continues to be important for archivists' confidence and recognition, but noted that long stays away from home are not possible for everyone and, in some cases, have caused personal problems. Extension courses were considered to be a useful option. Sam Kaima indicated that the UPNG's South Pacific Centre for Communication in Development may

offer extension courses in records management if it survives the current restructure. Delegates also called on PARBICA to encourage the University of the South Pacific, which runs many successful extension programs, to establish archives and records management courses. In response it was announced during the proceedings of the conference that the USP Librarian, Dr Esther Williams, had recently developed a proposal to establish such a course in association with the USP's Library/Information Management programs in the School of Humanities. UNESCO funding is being sought for the course. An informal meeting of USP Library staff and PARBICA delegates, held after the completion of the conference, considered the proposal in detail.

The papers on control and management of land records highlighted their importance as vital records not only for the operation of the state but also for an understanding of the cultural, social and political frameworks of Pacific Island nations. Peter Orlovich recommended that archivists make an extra effort to locate and identify land related records wherever they may be. He noted three types of records relating to the alienation of land in the Pacific Islands: records documenting early transactions, not recorded by governments, such as, deeds, certificates and receipts; official registers of documents recording evidence of land transactions giving security of title; and records of land commissions. Further records relating to land are produced by government departments responsible for land survey and management and for the exploitation of mineral and other resources, and also by church missions and businesses. Oral traditions, genealogies and customary practices, such as burying afterbirth in the ground in Tonga, also establish land rights.

Lands related records are therefore not only held in government archives, but also in the courts, in government departments and instrumentalities, as well as in private hands. Setareki Tale gave a detailed account of the Fiji National Archives' strenuous efforts to maintain control over such a dispersed set of records which was reinforced by an inspection of the Fiji Lands Department records section. Consistently heavy demand for lands records to enable transfers and as evidence in land disputes puts great pressure on the record systems. However there are programs underway in a number of Pacific Islands lands offices aimed at maintaining and improving lands records management, such as the Kiribati Lands Information System, on which Pat Jackson reported.

Some archivists referred to the difficulties of establishing and maintaining working relations with land records keeping agencies, particularly where lands related records are secret. Access arrangements for land records vary markedly. For example, the records, including oral traditions, held by the

Samoan Land and Titles Court are strictly confidential, as are Lands Office records in Nauru, whereas in Fiji, PNG, Kiribati, Yap and Palau lands records are open to the public. Bruce Burne made the important point that, not only lands related records, but all vital records of the Pacific nations need to be identified and preserved, including births, deaths and marriage registers, judicial documents, and health and communications records.

The PARBICA Biennial General Meeting was held on the last day of the conference. The ICA membership rule was strictly enforced so those PARBICA members who had not paid their ICA subscriptions were gagged and not given the right to vote. It was proposed that in future invoicing of both PARBICA and ICA subscriptions would be done through the PARBICA Treasurer in order to avoid confusion.

Addressing the general meeting, Mr Björn Lindh reported that the new General Secretary of the ICA, M. Joan Van Albada, wishes to introduce changes to the ICA giving more say to the developing world. He hopes to create two new regional branches, in North America and Europe, and then re-organise the ICA Executive Committee to consist of the President, the General Secretary and the 12 Presidents of the regional branches. The Executive committee would meet once a year at a round table or congress; and a Board would be set up to meet between the Executive Committee meetings, possibly four times a year. The revamped Executive Committee would take over the functions of the ICA's existing Commission on Archival Development; and the Board would take over the functions of the Program Management Commission. The ICA's Program Support Commission would continue to deal with funding.

Reports were given to the meeting noting: the resignation of the PARBICA President, Bruno Corre, and co-option of his replacement Setareki Tale; the replacement of Helen Nosworthy by Kathryn Dan as PARBICA Treasurer; the retirement of Karin Brennan as PARBICA General Secretary having completed two terms; the finalisation of a strategic plan, 1999-2000; and the launch of the PARBICA website (http://www.archivenet.gov.au/archives/parbica/parbica_main.htm).

Resolutions were passed: encouraging members to send contributions to *Panorama*, the PARBICA newsletter; recommending the formation of groups or workshops to keep PARBICA alive between conferences; proposing a project to link all Pacific archives by email; establishing a working party on lands records; encouraging the establishment of an archives and records management course at the USP and recommending that PARBICA representatives discuss course content with USP authorities; and suggesting that the PARBICA

executive write to the University of Papua New Guinea expressing concern at the closure of its archives and records management course.

Setareki Tale, National Archives of Fiji, was re-elected President of PARBICA; Tom Sakias, of the National Archives of Vanuatu, was elected Vice President; Evelyn Wareham, National Archives of NZ, was elected General Secretary; and Kathryn Dan, National Archives of Australia, was elected Treasurer. There were several offers for the site for the next PARBICA conference, but the final decision was left in the hands of the executive.

The PARBICA 8 conference and general meeting dealt constructively with some serious and pressing archival issues in a buoyant and friendly atmosphere, characteristic of the Pacific Islands. The organisers are to be congratulated on a great achievement which reflects the dedication and growing strength of archivists in the Pacific region.



Delegates at the PARBICA 8 Conference, Suva, Fiji Islands, 9-13 August 1999.

National Archives of the Solomon Islands: PARBICA 8 Country Report

Correspondent: Esther Karibongi, National Archives of the Solomon Islands

1. Historical Background and Existing Administrative and Legal Basis of Archival Operations.

The National Archives of Solomon Islands, when first established, was known as the Solomon Islands National Archives (SINA). This was changed to the National Archives of Solomon Islands (NASI) in 1986.

The National Archives was constructed under a British aid project approved in 1977 and completed in mid-1979. The Archives building was originally intended as a replacement for the Western Pacific Archives, which during those days, although located in Fiji, was a department of the Solomon Islands Government, being under the Ministry of Education. The Western Pacific Archives housed both the records of regional administration, the Western Pacific High Commission, and of local territorial administration, the Resident Commissioner and District Commissioners Offices in British Solomon Islands Protectorate, Gilbert and Ellice Islands Crown Colony and the New Hebrides. With the granting of independence to the various territories and the dissolution of the Western Pacific High Commission in the mid-1970s a redistribution of the archives in the Western Pacific Archives along national lines became necessary. Following the redistribution national archives buildings were designed and constructed in Kiribati, Tuvalu, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

From 1978, the year when Solomon Islands gained its independence, to date the ministerial responsibility for the Archives has been tossed from one ministry to another to a total of 7 and are as follows:

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|----|---------------------|--|
| 1. | Prior to 1978 | Education & Cultural Affairs |
| 2. | 1978-1981 | Youth & Cultural Affairs |
| 3. | 1981-1983 | Education, Training and Cultural Affairs |
| 4. | 1983-1989 | Education & Training |
| 5. | 1989-1994 | Home Affairs |
| 6. | 1994-1997 | Culture, Tourism & Aviation |
| 7. | 1997-to date (1999) | Education, Human Resources & Development |

(a) Legislation

The National Archives has an Act called the Archives Act 1994 (No.5 of 1994). This was passed by the Solomon Islands National Parliament on the 26th January 1994. Prior to the enactment of the Archives Act, the functions of the National Archives had been regulated according to the provisions of the U.K. Public Records Acts, 1958 and 1967. As such access to court records is subject to conditions laid down by the Chief Justice of the Solomon Islands. For the purpose of the Archives Act, the National Archives is yet to have its advisory committee established. Submissions on this matter have been forwarded to the (S.I.) Attorney General Chambers through our mother ministry (Department of Education Human Resources & Development) but there has not been any response as yet.

(b) Association with other institutions

The National Archives is associated with the Solomon Islands Traditional Cultures Documentation Project, established in 1993, which includes four different institutions being - Solomon Islands National Museum (SINM), National Archives of Solomon Islands (NASI), Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC) and Osaka University Musicology Division (OUMD). In the Solomon Islands the nickname of the project is MABO project. Its main objective is to document the traditional cultures in the Solomon Islands, such as performing arts, (songs, dances, music and games), custom skills, and oral traditions (custom stories, myths, legends, history), which have not been fully documented.

2. Accommodation and Buildings

The National Archives is housed in a modern purpose-built building which was designed by the former Director of the Western Pacific Archives and honorary member of PARBICA, Mr Bruce Burne. It is a two-storey block, comprised of a large archives repository, records management unit, conservation unit, public search room, reception and enquiries area, a strong room, microfilm unit, lecture/conference room and staff offices. The repository, records management unit, strong room and microfilm unit are fully air-conditioned.

The archives repository has an estimated capacity of 3,400ft run of compactus mobile shelving. About 1,700 feet run of compactus mobile shelving has been installed within the repository. Along with that approximately 4,500ft run of static library shelving have been utilized to hold much of the holdings within the repository and the acquisition room.

Currently, all the NASI units still lack a lot of necessary equipment and accessories required to become fully operational to a proper archival standard. The units most affected are the highly technical units, the conservation and microfilm areas. This is due to insufficient funds/resources to furnish and equip these units to further operational level. In 1978, the National Archives inherited some microfilming equipment formerly used at the Western Pacific Archives in Suva, Fiji, but unfortunately now most of this equipment has become unserviceable. However, the National Archives hope to obtain replacements in the future as soon as funds are available. At present the National Archives has only some basic conservation equipment, which includes two lamination machines (hand press and automatic model), a workbench and three trimmers.

With regards to the reading room facilities, at present, the public search room has four large study tables and can take in a maximum of eight

persons at a time (two persons per table). The search room has two trolleys which are used to and from the repository. It has a microfilm reader-printer which is no longer serviceable and therefore also needs a replacement. The search room is spacious and has three ceiling fans to keep the room cool and has louvres around the windows which can be opened when required.

With regards to future plans/strategies the National Archives will continue to approach responsible authorities to ensure equipment and existing units are improved.

3. Staffing and Training Needs

The National Archives has a staff establishment of seven staff. Currently only six are at post, as follows: a cleaner/messenger, typist/secretary, records management officer, research officer, conservationist and the government archivist. The post of microfilm camera operator is left vacant.

Three of the staff have undergone archival training abroad. Most staff are sent overseas for such training because archival training is not available locally. This year, the Government Archivist has been able to attend a six weeks train-the-trainers program (study) on preservation principles for paper-based collections organised by ICCROM (International Centre for the Study of the Preservation of Cultural Property) held in Washington D.C. in the United States of America, 28 June-6 August 1999. It is also hoped that the Research Officer will attend a two months course on records management at the National Archives of Malaysia in September this year (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia). The National Archives also from time to time conducts in-house training (on the job) for its own staff within the National Archives. This is an on-going program.

The NASI has an in-service training programme which has been slow to eventuate, due to administrative delays and plus no funds to enable staff to undertake such training/courses. However, the various training already undertaken by staff were more or less familiarization exercise. It is planned that the officers would go for further specialist training in their respective fields in the future. Also it is to the Archives advantage depending on interest and availability of funds to send staff to do more formal studies to take up Certificate Diploma and to degree level.

The National Archives has tried to maintain its institutional membership of the important professional archival organisations. Throughout the past years, the Archives has continued to benefit greatly from its association with the various organisations especially through the exchange of professional and technical information in text books, journals, manuals and pamphlets. Currently, there is approximately 4.5 metres of various archival professional/technical literature.

4. Position and Involvement with Current Records Management

NASI has yet to draw up records retention and disposal schedules for use by the record agencies and departments to schedule their records either for disposal or transfer to the Archives. In the absence of those schedules, the National Archives has continued to rely mostly on the Normal Administrative Practice (NAP) which includes guidelines being laid down in our General Orders, Chapter V, Section 1, Clause 105, which caters for the preservation and destruction of documents. Apart from that, there also are the general principles, in a manual on financial instructions, which gives advice on the disposal and destruction of financial records.

The National Archives has not been able to carry out any systematic records surveys over the period due to the shortage of staff. However it has continued to advise the various departments on the proper maintenance and keeping of records, accessioning and arranging, describing records in the best possible manner and also making them available for research to the various government departments and the public.

Over past years and up to the present NASI continues to engage students on work experience attachments from 6-8 weeks. In June 1998 three secondary students and, in April 1999, one USP extension student (SI Centre, Honiara) were attached to the National Archives. In view of the staff shortage, the work experience programme has been particularly helpful to the Archives, because the students were able to carry out and complete some records management tasks such as arranging and listing the backlog of records deposited in previous years.

Also the National Archives has continued to conduct regular stock checks at least once a year. This seems to be a reliable way of keeping track of missing and displaced items, and a way to inspect the conditions of the materials for purposes of repair and maintenance. To safeguard against theft or loss of archival materials security measures are maintained which include:

- I. Use of only one entrance to the Archives building.
- II. All visitors leave their bags at the reception area and must be accompanied at all times.
- III. All visitors are to sign in the visitors book giving details of their name, address and reason for visit.
- IV. All important visitors must be referred to the Government Archivist.
- V. Search room rules and requirements must be observed at all times and include:
 - (a) for note-taking, use pencil only

- (b) food, drinks and smoking are not allowed within the archives building
- (c) handle archival materials with care, not to lean or fold/bend documents

Access to archival materials is governed by public access regulation; where a 30 year rule applies.

5. Nature and Extent of Records held in Custody

The materials in the Archives' custody comprise archival paper records, audio-visual, photograph albums, films and cassette tapes, government publications and newspapers, rare books (SI) and microfilms (both official and non-official sources). The archival holding to-date amounts to approximately 6,700 linear feet run of shelving, which is in fact over double the estimated capacity the repository can accommodate. Records held include the following:

- I. The BSIP Resident Commissioner and District Commissioners Offices. c.1910-1953; D.O.'s records 1954-1977.
- II. Archives and records of the Church of Melanesia (Anglican Church), c.1850-1970, which include photograph albums, diaries, news cuttings etc.
- III. Records of private individuals, eg. World War II veterans, missionaries, overseas researchers, anthropologists, etc.
- IV. Microfilm copies of Solomon Islands records held in overseas libraries and archival institutions.
- V. Solomon Islands records c.1978-1989.

The archival holdings continue to expand every year, each time records are deposited or rescued, therefore NASI has had to refuse further transfers to the Archives because of the growing shortage of adequate storage space in the repository. The latest addition of 500 linear feet run of records is the result of the records rescue operation carried out in 1998 and 1999.

6. Use of Archives

In the NASI, this is one service, for which the demand continues to rise every year, as more people come to know the institution's usefulness as an information resource centre and the archival heritage of the Solomon Islands. Enquiries on customary land rights, interest in customary land court proceedings, traditional wills, customary land ownership registers, deeds of sales, birth registers, World War II veterans, academic transcripts, etc. which are kept in the National Archives continue to be very popular.

The method of dealing with inquiries goes beyond the normal practice of researchers doing their own searches. Assistance has to be given to the extent where staff are sometimes required to search through files themselves and be able to read and translate the findings in simple terms, or in pidgin to searchers. This is especially true of villagers coming to use the search room.

User demand by both, official and public searchers, is continuously growing and has an average of 10-18 visitors weekly, making use of the Archives. Since 1998, due to the reduced number of staff, the National Archives has taken an interim measure to reduce opening times for public/research and to restrict to appointments only. For the period October 1997-May 1999, the number of users was approximately 1,902 researchers. It is estimated that about 9,511 items were consulted.

7. Conservation Requirements

Development of this area in respect to archival repair, fumigation, deacidification, lamination, document binding and microfilming has been constrained by the lack of adequate equipment for the conservation and microfilm units of the National Archives. Although, there are some basic equipment and materials to enable basic conservation activities, the difficulty is that staff are not trained enough in the methods of conservation and microfilming for them to have confidence to work independently. They require constant guidance and supervision.

It is hoped that this area will improve with the recruitment of two technical advisers from Japan, who will commence work at the National Archives later this year. They will be attached to the Archives for a period of 2 years and are to train and assist the technical staff in the conservation and microfilming techniques, a supplement to overseas training.

8. Promotional Activities

The National Archives does not have any information leaflets or brochures as yet to promote its activities, but the NASI staff often make use of any available opportunity to personally talk about archives to visitors and researchers as they come into the Archives. In the Solomon Islands passing the message by word of mouth seems very effective. This can be seen in the increased number of people visiting the Archives. Quite a good number of locals can not read English, so transmitting information verbally is a very useful way of communication and so far efforts done by the National Archives are also through:

- Solomon Island Broadcasting Corporation (Radio) under Public Service programme.

- *Solomon Star* - local newspaper - under Current Affairs programme/special features.
- Work experience attachments. This is undertaken by school students for up to 6-8 weeks. This programme has indirectly educated the students involved of the kinds of work and service which the National Archives do provide for them and the public.
- Workshop: one week (14-18 June 1999). The NASI was able to organise the first National Workshop on Archives and Records Management for government/public officers all around the Solomon Islands. It was funded by UNESCO and the course facilitator was from the University of Papua New Guinea, Mr Sam Kaima. This workshop was attended by 17 participants.

9. Project Proposal

In compliance to the SIG programme of action, the National Archives has submitted a major project proposal in January 1998 for the up-grading of the National Archives, but since then has had no response. The project involves the establishment of a proper conservation laboratory, audio-visual unit, reprography and construction of the repository extension. These are interrelated areas for the overall operation of the National Archives. This project proposal, if taken up, would have positive results on the overall development of the National Archives of Solomon Islands.

Fiji National Archives: PARBICA 8 Country Report

Correspondent: Setareki Tale, Fiji Government Archivist

VISION: Integrity to National Development through the effective Protection and Application of Historical Public Records.

MISSION: To Ensure the Preservation of the Archival Heritage of Fiji and to Promote its Availability to Government Agencies and the Public and as a National Archives to Provide Support to the Custodians of both Public and Private Archives in Fiji.

1. National Archives of Fiji - History

The National Archives of Fiji was established in 1954 as the Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission after several decades of intermittent proposals from interested individuals. The Archives became the office of deposit for local newspapers under the Newspapers Registration Ordinance of 1959. Ten years later, the Fiji legislation defined the responsibilities of the Archives through an ordinance to provide for the better preservation of the Public Records of Fiji. Less than

a year after Fiji attained independence the National Archives of Fiji formally came into being with an amendment to the Public Records Ordinance in July, 1971. The Ordinance was further amended in 1978 to be the Public Records Act.

From its inception the National Archives was a branch under the Colonial Secretary's Office. As was evident from its name [The Central Archives and the WPHC], it was a joint depository for records of the Government of Fiji and those of the Western Pacific High Commission. The Central Archives gained departmental status in 1966. It was not until 1970 before the WPHC was separated from Central Archives. When Fiji gained its independence in 1970 all the records of the WPHC and those of its territorial governments were transferred to a new Archives [the Western Pacific Archives] and the Central Archives of Fiji was renamed the National Archives of Fiji.

2. National Archives Structure

The National Archives of Fiji is a department of the Fiji Government and it comes under the portfolio of the Ministry of Information. It has five well defined, and closely related sections each of which has a role to play in the efficient performance of its statutory functions. These sections and their respective roles are as follows:

(a) Archives Administration and Records Advisory Section

Deals with consignment transfers, accession, preservation and maintenance of public records, file lending service to ministries and departments. Production of original document to research students, general reference inquiries, advise ministries and departments on Records Management programmes and with the drawing up and implementation of the same.

(b) Conservation and Restoration Section

Responsible for the repair of damaged public documents, minor binding jobs, and implementation of records conservation programmes.

(c) Photocopying and Microfilm Section

Responsible for the production of microfilm copies and photocopies of public records and library materials, either for preservation or, for research and reference purposes.

(d) Reference Library and Public Search Room

This section is responsible for the receipt, organisation and preservation of legal deposit library materials which are deposited with the Principal Archivist under the Libraries [Deposit of Books] Act, Cap 109 and is also responsible for the supervision of Search Room users.

(e) Administration Section

Deals with all Clerical and Accounting duties of the National Archives with all typing, with messenger service, and with the cleaning and maintenance of the National Archives buildings and equipment.

3. National Archives Holdings

(a) Archives

The holdings of the National Archives at present occupy some 7,299 shelf metres of records and includes records transferred by Government departments. Of these the most complete and probably the most important series are those of the former Colonial Secretary's offices for the period 1874 to 1970. Other significant series of records held are those of HBM Consul Fiji and Tonga, 1858-1875, King Cakobau's Government 1871-1874, Immigration Department records relating to the Introduction of Polynesian and Indian Indentured Labourers 1879-1916, records of the Lands Claims Commission 1875-1884 and those of the Supreme Court of Fiji 1875-1970s. Of the non-Government records held the two major collections are those of the Methodist Church of Fiji 1835-1988 and the Diocese of Polynesia 1879-1957.

(b) Library

The Sir Alport Barker Memorial Library (National Archives Reference Library) has a collection of 18,475 monographs, dealing mainly with Fiji and the South Pacific, and a near complete set of Fiji Government publications and local newspapers dating back to the 1870s. The library also houses 'Legal Deposit' copies of all books, newspapers and other materials printed and published in Fiji.

(c) Photocopying and Microfilming Section

The holdings of this Section include 3,102 reels of microfilm, held at the National Archives, and a further 1,346 master negatives are held by Bell and Howell Ltd., London, for preservation and reproduction purposes. Records Series that have so far been filmed include the Colonial Secretary's Office records, Registrar General, Native Lands Commission, Methodist Mission, *Fiji Times* collection and Cakobau Government papers.

4. Staffing

The National Archives Staff composition has been raised from 2, with an archivist as head of department, in 1954 to 19 including 2 unestablished staff, in 1999.

5. Training

The majority of the staff of the National Archives of Fiji have received some training in the areas of Archives Administration and Records Management, Bookbinding and Conservation, Library and Microfilm. Training programmes on specific areas are received through scholarships offered by Australian Government, New Zealand Government and Malaysian Government. The National Archives of Fiji has conducted 3 inservice training workshops, under AusAID sponsorship, in Archives Administration and Records Management since 1995 and this is intended to be an ongoing project. The training workshops were directed at institutional archivists and Government records officers.

6. Developments at the National Archives in the Years 1997-1999

The National Archives has for the past two years extensively developed its own manpower through training attachments in overseas institutions. Setareki Tale graduated with a Masters in Information Management - Archives Records from the University of New South Wales in 1997. Feroz Hussein graduated with a Postgraduate Diploma in Information Management - Archives Records in 1998 also from the University of New South Wales. Two officers attended a 3 months and 1 month training attachment, respectively, in Librarianship and Microfilming at the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington in 1998.

In June 1998 Margaret Patel retired as the Principal Archivist and Setareki Tale, who has been acting in Margaret's place since her retirement, was promoted in April 1999 to be the new head of the National Archives of Fiji. Two new staff members were recruited to the Archives Administration and Records Advisory Section of the department.

Other recent developments included a grant of F\$45,784 from UNESCO for the purchase of Preservation Equipment for the department. Equipment that has been purchased out of this grant included a Microfilm Camera, Hygrothermographs and a Distillation Unit. Further developments included purchasing and installation of a computer networking system and the installation of additional 38 mobile compactus shelving.

Conclusion

The National Archives of Fiji will continue to strive to provide the best archival and records services to the Government of Fiji, and the public at large, within the resources available to it.

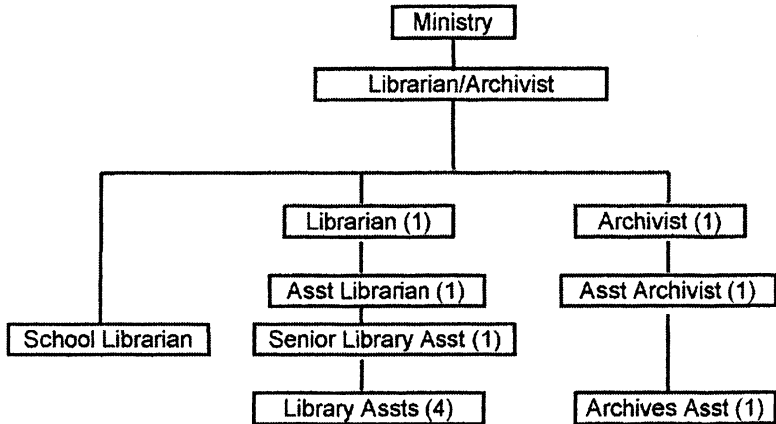
National Archives of Kiribati: Country Report to PARBICA 8

Correspondent: Kunei Etekiera, Kiribati National Librarian and Archivist

The National Archives was set up in late 1978/early 1979 but it was not until 1981 that the National Archives of Kiribati was legally established under the Public Records Act 1981. The Archives is part of the Library and Archives Division under the Ministry of Education, Training and Technology. The officer responsible for our Division is the Senior Assistant Secretary who also has numerous other responsibilities.

The building was purpose built as an independence gift from Britain. The accommodation was thought to be adequate at first but we quickly found out that we need more space as time goes by. Some renovations were carried out with positive results; others, a smelly disaster. There are plans to enlarge the public inquiries area and to build a separate repository. These will depend on the availability of development funds.

The staff establishment remains at the same level, but we are working towards getting two more in the near future. This will depend largely on the justifications for the positions. The following staff structure will illustrate the obvious need for more staff if we are to provide proper archival services.



In addition to the positions described above, the Division employs three support staff: a typist/clerk, an accounts clerk, and a cleaner/messenger. The proposed additional staff will assist with conservation and routine work. More staff will be considered after the three posts are established. Formal appropriate training and upgrading of posts remains one of the major obstacles to development.

We do not have a current records management program as such, and perhaps PARBICA can assist us in setting up such a program. The National Archives has various collections in custody. These include: official records (the largest collection), lands records, pamphlets, historical manuscripts, philatelic materials, audio visual materials, special published materials, and government publications, etc. The most frequently used collection is the lands records. The demand for the records is so high that we have to duplicate the finding lists in order to be able to cater to the personal inquiries. We also have to make indexes to the contents of all the land registers and really old land lists to minimise handling. Some of these records will fall apart if pages are turned roughly.

Apart from microfilming and photocopying there is not much else we can do with regard to the preservation and conservation of records held in the Archives. No microfilming has been carried out since 1993 and some of the required equipment is not working due to the lack of spare parts. New and more sophisticated models are replacing older ones. This makes it hard for us developing countries, not only to get spare parts but also to find brands to replace outdated models. Also the prohibitive price of film and chemicals is a problem to some extent.

To overcome constraints in this area, we are seriously considering using a suitable scanner or digital camera to store the images on computer disk. We are not very sure how suitable this method is with regard to archival records and practices, and would welcome suggestions and comments.

We do need expert consultancies and recommendations to our government in order to back up proposals and submissions made for the development of our archival services and facilities. These needs can be itemised as follows:

- I. In-country current records management in-service courses or workshops;
- II. Consultancy to determine: suitable staff structure; current and future accommodation needs; conservation and preservation requirements.

In concluding this brief report, I would like to mention something that is beginning to worry us - electronic records. How do we manage them? Any suggestions and/or guidelines?

**Papua New Guinea National Archives and Public Records Service:
Extract from Country Report to PARBICA 8 re the records management situation in the national and provincial public service**

Correspondent: Jacob Hevalawa, PNG National Archives and Public Records Service

Current record keeping practises in many government departments, including provincial governments, are based on the Australian colonial

public service system used in the former territory before independence. Today records registry operations still resemble the practices of the past and a lot of records created in these registries have been destroyed without any proper appraisal. The National Archives is now faced with two tasks, firstly to extend archival services to the provinces under the provisions of the new *Organic Law on Provincial and Local Governments* and, secondly, to ensure that the national policy on archives embraces the provincial government archives through implementation of the *National Library and Archives Act 1993*.

Despite the existence of the National Archives before political independence, the work and expansion of it has been hampered by high staff turnover and, in particular, by a lack of sufficient funds. The functions and activities of National Archives are still not understood and included in the management policies of government departments, so files are not closed in a systematic order, nor are they transferred to the Archives for permanent preservation when necessary.

The provisions of the *National Library and Archives Act* have not been adopted by government instrumentalities, including provincial governments, because many of them have not been made aware of the legislation. The National Archives has and will continue to play a role in trying to keep public records of value. Attempts to preserve records of the past, present and future will depend very much on the ability of the National Archives, through the *National Library and Archives Act*, to ensure the relevant policies and legislation are in place in provincial governments so that records are managed in accordance with the relevant provisions of the above legislation. The challenge for the National Archives of Papua New Guinea is now to ensure a national policy on archives is adopted by the provincial governments for the management and preservation of their records. This can only be achieved through the implementation of the *National Library and Archives Act* as there are provisions in the Act which allow for National Archives to regulate on the adoption of records management policies by government instrumentalities.

After independence, the country inherited a very large bureaucracy from the Australian colonial administration. However specific policies and procedures in relation to records and archives management had not been introduced by the colonial bureaucracy and, therefore, were not in place to ensure consistency, uniformity and impartiality in the procedures and conditions for the management of common types and other functional records and archives in all government instrumentalities throughout the Papua New Guinea Public Service.

The National Archives of Papua New Guinea has been involved in raising awareness and participating in training workshops and conducting records management and advisory visits with a view to improving the records management and storage practices in the Papua New Guinea Public Service. Some general observations on the records management situation identified by Mr Hevelawa in his research thesis and relevant to the country report are as follows.

a. Records Management Workshops

Training of records officers particularly in the Public Service has been a priority for the National Archives. Senior Archives Officers have been involved in these exercises and so far over 15 workshops have been conducted. The aim of the workshops has 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 participated in these workshops. As a result of the workshops some officers have arranged with their respective organizations to undertake the certificate course offered by the Department of Library and Information Studies at UPNG.

b. Decentralised Archival Repository System

In Papua New Guinea "National Archives" is a very little known concept to the public, including administrators of government instrumentalities. A records management practice which seems to be a problem for many organizations and government departments in Papua New Guinea is that individual divisions within government departments have their own records registries and a lot of them have different ways and methods of storing their files. Thus there are no common standards even if the registries operate within the same department. The lack of space amongst many records registries have resulted in records and archives stored in run-down buildings, along corridors and in the ceilings of offices. The environmental conditions of these storage areas are pathetic.

There is no infrastructure development or a network of records storage facilities built to archival standards, apart from a basic archival repository service provided in only one province, Morobe. The Lae Archives Office was established in 1973 hoping to serve the frequently disaster stricken areas of East New Britain and other parts of the country in close proximity, including Madang and the Eastern Highlands. Records repositories are new concepts and are yet to be established in all provinces and the facility standards in Lae is not a preferred model for other provinces to adopt. The National Archives has made submissions to Department of Works, Architect

Section, for a Records Centre repository building plan to be designed, which will be used as a standardised building design for all provinces to adopt. Such a facility will have to be built on an approved site, subject to the availability of vacant state land and this will be another issue to confront the provincial governments. Land compensation claims have had detrimental effects on some provincial governments' economic and other development program objectives.

c. Filing Systems

The general administrative practices of government instrumentalities must be documented using appropriate filing methods in order that there is accountability of actions taken in the past. This has been lacking in many government instrumentalities. An organisational records management system, which includes filing methods, is usually co-ordinated through a central records registry. The management of current records in records registries remains a major problem area that has not been looked at as part of general management in many provincial governments. 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 absence of records management related policies have been the main factor in not enforcing the required rules to ensure that appropriate filing systems are used to serve the various administrative functions of a government instrumentality. Some government instrumentalities are confronted with an accountability crisis and the absence of a records management policy has had deterrent effect on good administrative practice and conduct of business. Others tend to perform reasonably well, however, in all, the issue relating to appropriate filing methods determined by a records management policy is not recognised by those in authority as having enough importance, in relation to other program objectives, to consider it as an administrative priority.

National Archives provides advice and assistance to government instrumentalities on proper records management. In so doing it produced a publication in 1992 to be used by Records Officers in the Public Service as a guide to records management in accordance with accepted practice.

d. Mini Records Registries

The absence of records management related policy has resulted in various sections or divisions of a government instrumentality creating mini records registries, thus duplicating the role of a central records registry as well increasing the amount of storage and equipment required for accommodation of records.

Consequently, while it was left up to either a central or divisional records registry of a government instrumentality to keep files and records of their respective departments, no serious attempts were made to recognise the value of these registries. Proper co-ordination and streamlining of registry functions and other records and archives management responsibilities is almost non-existent in many government instrumentalities because those in authority do not regard 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.

e. Records Retention and Disposal Schedules

The issue of organisational standards refers to the scheduling of records. It goes together with the adoption of a records management policy in which proper filing practices are used to create and arrange files and also ensure that there is a regular survey and appraisal of records to enable smooth transition of records from current to non-current storage. Traditional methods of appraising records after the use, are now no longer possible, decisions need to be made at the time of creation to enable smooth transition of records from current to non-current storage. All government instrumentalities have organisational standards in the conduct of other administrative business, but they have not adopted any in relation to decision making on the fate of current records when they cease to have further administrative use.

The possibility of records being lost or inadvertently destroyed through inefficient filing system and storage practices is imminent in the Papua New Guinea Public Service. The absence of separate and proper records storage facilities for semi-current and non-current records has often lead to both active and inactive files stored together. Consequently a lot of the files, including valuable records, are sometimes destroyed without any appraisal. Thus, government instrumentalities will be required to establish set procedures, when they create records, to be followed to ensure that records of value are kept for future use. Establishment of set procedures and standards will also enable records managers to become familiar with past and current practices and allow for future records to be stored in a similar order.

The main problem with this approach is the lack of management support and the fact that policy decisions are continuing to be made on an *ad hoc* basis without any consultation with the staff of the National Archives and Public Records Service of Papua New Guinea.

f. Records Management Training

The most important issue is the ability and quality of human resources to manage any records management system. Many provincial governments

and their departments do not have trained records management personnel to assist in drawing up policies on records management. Records Clerks in general throughout the public service are keen to improve their skills and knowledge. However, there are few 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.

It has been observed during the workshops mentioned under point (a) that a lot of registry clerks in these government departments have not been trained in archives and records management. Most of them had one or two-day induction courses conducted by their training officers and have been in the registries for most of their working life, without any further training. It therefore gives them a very low morale and thus a lot of them do not challenge authority in making records management decisions. To make matters worse for these people, they are often the lowest paid and are at the very low end of the public service structure. Records management personnel are the least recognised officers in the administrative hierarchy of any organisation. They operate from ground floors of multi-storey buildings or even in warehouses.

Whereas organisations which employ trained records management personnel are able to institute or adopt changes to the records management system to ensure inactive and non-current records, which are no longer required for current office action, are being retired to secondary storage or disposed of in accordance with accepted records management and archival practice.

g. Information Technology (Storage and Retrieval)

As is already happening in many organisations, computers and other technology associated with information storage and retrieval have taken control of daily work activities of many workers in institutions and offices. Traditional work habits and environments have changed to cater for the new changes in the work environment. The means and methods of creating, storing and retrieving information will and have changed to suit the new technology. Present manual record keeping systems will need to be upgraded before introducing procedures for electronic management of records. Some departments are already attempting this. Therefore, in some of the records registries at present both the manual and electronically generated records have to be brought in line so that records of the past and present will be preserved.

The manual record keeping systems have to be linked up with electronic systems in order that there is a continuum in the records generated separately and also to allow records managers to appraise records and make disposal decisions at the time of the creation of records and not only after its usage.

The second and third level of governments at present are not being faced with this issue, but may do so in the near future.

h. Geographical Remoteness and Natural Disasters

The mountainous terrain and in some cases fast flowing rivers have made it difficult to maintain frequent communication and physical contacts with district administrations in remote areas of many provinces. Added to that is often a difficulty to reach remote areas in times of natural disasters. Frequent changes in the weather pattern resulting in the occurrence of natural disasters have put records and archives of a province and the nation as a whole at risk and in many cases they are completely destroyed without any trace. The concern to the National Archives of Papua New Guinea has been to establish a central records storage facility in each province, away from disaster zones, for safekeeping of the semi-active and inactive records and archives of the provinces and the nation as a whole.

i. Information Resource and Historical Cultural Heritage

It has been one of the aims of the research study to trace the history of the evolution of archives of Provincial Government in order to provide information about these sources for future generations to research and appreciate the history of how the machinery of government, such as the provincial governments and other government instrumentalities, developed and survived to serve people. National and Provincial administrators are themselves not aware of the fact that a province's and the nation's archives are its identity and a source of information itself. To make this a possibility with free access to archival documents, in accordance with the provisions of the *National Library and Archives Act*, the potential user has to be aware of the existence of the documents. This is where finding aids or guides come into the picture. Since many provincial governments and National departments at present do not provide archival storage and research facilities, it will be a challenge to them in the near future.

Records Management in the Public Service Project Proposal

In addition to the conducting workshops as mentioned above, assessments were also made to determine the nature and range of records held within departments; the location of 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 revealed that: there is lack of proper storage facilities; a lack of proper procedural guidelines or registry manuals for records clerks; proper coordination and streamlining of registry functions and other records and archives management responsibilities are almost non-existent;

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. The records clerks throughout the Public Service are keen to improve their skills and knowledge, however there is lack of records management employee training programs. This situation is of major concern to National Archives and, with its limited resources, it is not able to make any significant improvement in all the above areas.

Two of the very important projects initiated for 1999 are to establish the provincial records centres and to conduct records management workshops throughout the nation. However, due to budget cuts, these programs could not be followed up.

The major constraints faced by Office of Library and Archives in the first half of 1999 were inadequate funding and staffing shortages. This year has been especially bad. We were told to reduce staff when the whole of the National Public Service came under restructure. The cost of goods and services have gone up, and the National Archives budget allocation is almost 40% less than the 1998 allocation. Although we are continuously exhorted to do more with less, there comes a time when that becomes an impossibility. The Office of Library and Archives have reached that stage.

Cook Islands National Archives: PARBICA 8 Country Report

Correspondent: Justina Nicholas

Historical Background

The Cook Islands National Archives was first established in 1974 as a division of the Premier's Department and was initially charged, by executive decision, with the responsibilities of collecting and ensuring the safe storage of government and oral tradition records of the nation.

In 1976, the Archives was placed under the Cook Islands Library and Museum Society with continuing government support for personnel and operational costs. This enabled the Archives to extend its services to include public records.

The Public Records Act of 1984 conferred statutory responsibilities on the National Archives for the better preservation of public records of the Cook Islands. That Act also empowered the Archivist to store by contract, bequest and the like, other materials that might be so placed in the safe keeping of the Archives by private individuals or groups.

Since 1991, the National Archives has been a division of the newly established Ministry of Cultural Development.

Accommodation and Buildings

In the 1999/2000 Budget, the Ministry of Cultural Development is requesting for funding through the Capital Expenditure to improve the housing of archival holdings presently housed in the two dilapidated storage buildings. The building that is earmarked for the Archive holdings is currently used to store two unused canoes from the Festival of Arts held in 1992. This building is quite new but needs walls and proper floor for the storage of archival holdings.

Last October 1998, the archivists managed to transfer all the archive holdings from the Society's premises to the Ministry both as a cost-saving measure in terms of storage fees as well as a means of doing their best to clean up the materials readily at hand. Prior to the transfer, wooden shelves were constructed to house the archive holdings.

With the major restructuring of Government since 1996 and the continuing right-sizing of government operations at the national level, it is unlikely that any significant input of funds or other resources from government sources will be forthcoming in the foreseeable future. This is accentuated by the reduction by 20 per cent of the Ministry's budget allocation for the current financial year (July 1997-June 1998). However, through our Secretary's persistent strive in searching for funds we were able to obtain assistance through the AESOP Volunteer Scheme.

The AESOP Scheme is a two phase project which began last year in June-August 1998 focusing on the photographic collection. For the phase 2 of this year - July-August 1999, the consultants will focus on the cleaning, handling and preservation of documents in the archive collection which should complete this project.

During phase 1 of the AESOP archive project in June-August 1998, Duncan and Christine Rolley together with the staff were able to set up a conservation and preservation work area, and also a research area where members of the public can consult with the archivists and view materials.

Staffing and Training Needs

Since August 1996, when the only professionally trained archivist, Chief Archivist George Paniani, was transferred out of the Ministry, two personnel without any professional training, have been left with the responsibility of the National Archives, a daunting responsibility that they cannot hope to undertake satisfactorily without more resources and professional assistance. While the former Chief Archivist does give professional assistance from time to time, this is naturally limited given his normal duties at the executive level in government.

Current personnel in the Archives are: Mrs Kanny Vaile, Officer-in-Charge; and Ms Ake Willie, Clerical Assistant. On-the-job and overseas short-term training in all facets of archival work are required for both staff. Given the current status of the holdings and the urgent need for a detailed listing of the existing records, apart from trying to minimize the dust and insect infestation, it is vital that on-the-job training and assistance, preferably at the basic level in conservation and preservation techniques, is sought for the archivists.

In light of the above, it has been a blessing for the staff of the National Archives to receive hands-on training from the AESOP volunteers. Due to time constraints (8 weeks) and the size of the collection in the Archives the volunteers were only able to focus on one aspect of the collection that being photographs, negatives and film stock and how to properly house them *i.e.* in quality plastic sleeves.

Through this project the staff were able to learn how to handle, clean and repair photographs, negatives and the film stock. They were also instructed on air drying, fumigation and dry cleaning techniques. Not only were they trained in the care of photographs, they also undertook a workshop together with staff from the Museum and the National Library which focused on the care and preservation of books as well as the general handling of archival material.

In addition, the Clerical Assistant, Ake Willie has been able to attend a Computer Training Session in Microsoft Word for beginners and intermediate level. Although they don't have their own computer now, this is a positive step forward for the Archives staff especially if they are planning to computerise the archive collection when they get their own computer through the UNESCO project which they are awaiting.

Records Management

Both staff are currently involved primarily in the listing, cleaning, shelving and relocation of documents as well as servicing researchers and handling enquiries from overseas and the outer islands. Meeting the needs of researchers takes up about 40 percent of their time with a further 20 percent on responding to enquiries.

In 1998, the National Archives was very fortunate through the AESOP Scheme to have the professional assistance of Christine and Duncan Rolley particularly with their photographic collection. A catalogued sheet was developed for each photograph which is then housed in polypropylene sleeves and folders.

It was also through the AESOP project that a cataloguing system was developed for the Archives. A register of catalogued items was also established which

is locked and filed away in the Archives Office. Access to this information will be at the discretion of the archivists, Ministry of Cultural Development Heads of Division and appointed key personnel in museum/archive employment. It is envisaged that the information from the register will later on be transferred onto a museum cataloguing computer program. Currently there is no formal schedule or policy for records disposal at the Archives.

Nature and Extent of Records

The archival collection is comprised of public and private documents, audio recordings, films and photographic negatives with 80 per cent being government files and documents, and oral tradition recordings and films. The balance is materials from private individuals being held for safe-keeping.

The archivists have estimated, subject to verification as they continue cleaning and listing, that there are over 30,000 files/folders and 300 audio recordings.

Last year during the AESOP Archive project, they found over 5000 prints of photographs of various processes and types. These include silver gelatine types, collodions and albumen prints. The collection includes both coloured and black and white prints. Most of these are in various stages of deterioration and of being subjected to insect infestation. Negatives number over 15,000 shots with an additional 100 plus films. The collection has great historic significance since it depicts Cook Island life and culture from the early 1870s to the present. Of most interest is the photographic record of families during the 1940s onwards, with many individual portraits. Many photographs represent changes in architecture, natural disasters and sailing vessels which visited the island group.

All the photographs and negatives without exception showed signs of deterioration. In many cases this was advanced and in a few cases the images had been so affected that it was close to 60% lost. The main deterioration can be categorised in three ways:

Physical: insect attack, tears, abrasion of the emulsion surface and mould contamination

Environmental: High temperature, humidity and dust

Chemical deterioration.

Last year, during one of their Valley Archive visits, 7 books were retrieved dating from the 1890s. These were fumigated and dried before bringing them into the archive to prevent the introduction of insects and mould spores. Instruction was given to the staff on the handling of mould affected items and how to dry out such books or documents.

To date the staff at the Archives has managed to catalogue 1,788 photographs. By this I mean that they have cleaned, catalogued and recorded these in the Register. The staff has also recently catalogued 220 files from the Prime Minister's Department.

Use of Archives

The most utilised portion of the archival records by the local populace are the Justice Department records and a set of genealogical documents, primarily related to land claims, privately compiled by a former Land Court Judge. Since the last report of August 1997, the archivists have recorded over 25 researchers mainly on genealogy, land issues and history.

Retrieval of relevant materials for researchers has been by trial and error in locating holdings by various government entities and physically searching through files and documents for the relevant information. This task is extremely difficult when researchers have no idea of the specific information they need and the likely dates. As the staff are now familiar with the holdings, this has become easier in relation to regularly consulted information.

Access to records lodged is specified at the time the records are deposited and are strictly adhered to by the Archives staff.

Conservation Requirements

As previously reported there has not been any expertise in this area nor the available basic materials for conservation purposes. No funds were then available for this purpose. However, through the Australian High Commission in Wellington, the sum of \$4080 was granted for a preservation program for the National Archives photographic collection. This money has been used for the purchase of archival materials to clean and store the collection appropriately.

Moreso, through the AESOP Volunteer Scheme, the National Archives was very fortunate to gain the knowledge and expertise in preservation and conservation of materials while on-the-job. Having the available archival materials together with the appropriate expertise has been a step forward in the preservation and development of the Archive Collection.

A second-hand microfilming unit was purchased over five years ago but broke down a few months later and is now irreparable. The Archives do not have their own photocopier but have access to the Ministry's machine for their purposes. They do also have access to a computer but none of their own yet. However they will soon get their own computer through the UNESCO project.

Promotional Activities

With the current status of the Archives, specific promotion of its usage has not been considered advisable. Its status has been reported in each of the Ministry's Annual Reports since 1990. Last year, though, there have been photographs and writeups from the Archives included in the local newspaper thus stirring up some publicity especially with preservation and conservation. Directly after this publicity some members of the public were bringing in their old collections of photographs to be properly preserved and very old sentimental books to be repaired and prolonged.

Project Proposals

A funding application was submitted for UNESCO funding for a national program for the preservation of archival, library and museum materials - a joint project with the Ministry of Cultural Development and the Cook Islands Library and Museum Society for 1998-1999 period. This proposal has been approved by UNESCO for the sum of US\$20,000 from which two computers will be purchased - one for the Archives and the other for the Library & Museum Society. However due to complications with previous assistance by UNESCO to the Cook Islands this funding has not been made available as yet. It is hoped that this matter will be resolved in the near future. Secondly the sum of NZ\$4,080 was granted by the Australian High Commission for a preservation program for the National Archives photographic collection. This money has been used for the purchase of archival materials to clean and store the collection appropriately.

Having the above funds available for the purchases of archival materials provided an opportune time for the consultants from the AESOP scheme to assist with the preservation and conservation needs of the Archives. In addition, for the 1999/2000 Budget, the Ministry is requesting funding to improve the housing of archival holdings which are presently stored in two dilapidated buildings.

Overall it is envisaged that further assistance either in staff training and records management and preservation will be pursued for the nation's heritage collection held in the National Archives. Any assistance that PARBICA or other organisations can offer in this respect will be greatly appreciated.