

# International Notes

Edited by Ewan Maidment

## Preservation of audiovisual heritage in the Pacific Region

*Correspondent: Matthew Davies, ScreenSound Australia*

Audiovisual records of Pacific region history, culture and heritage date back to at least 1899, when Henry Mobsby took footage of Kanaka labourers cutting cane in Queensland with his Lumiere camera, but it is from the 1920s on that the use of film for recording both ethnographic studies and what we would now call 'home movies' became popular. The early films record a vanishing life and landscape, and document the impact of increasing European influence on indigenous cultures. Islander involvement in the Great War and in World War II is covered in newsreels, and travelogues chronicle the development of tourism.

Since the end of World War II we have seen developments in technology and growing awareness of the importance of recorded images and sound as a heritage resource. As the technology has become more accessible it has become a vital tool for indigenous people to record and maintain their culture. Growing interest in preserving the intangible cultural heritage of song, dance, ceremony and custom in the form of film, audio and video recordings has resulted in quite large collections of material being recorded or acquired by cultural centres, archives, libraries and government agencies around the region. Increasing awareness of the fragile nature of these audiovisual records has put their preservation onto the agenda of relevant national and regional organisations as a high priority.

The strategies for preserving audiovisual records are based around passive preservation in controlled storage conditions to slow deterioration, and active preservation by copying obsolete or deteriorated recordings to new materials or new formats. The provision and maintenance of the necessary infrastructure – conditioned vaults, conservation and copying facilities – and the ongoing development of skilled staff is seen as a challenge in rich, highly developed countries. Climate, resource restrictions, distance, and limited access to communications infrastructure such as the Internet contribute to the very challenging preservation scenario faced by Pacific nations.

Sharing and developing skills for dealing with preservation of audiovisual materials was the theme of a workshop held in December 2001, hosted by the Vanuatu Cultural

Centre in Port Vila. This workshop was the culmination of efforts by a number of individuals and organisations over the last three years. An initial scoping study of Pacific audiovisual archives was undertaken by Mark Nizette in 1998, the results of which were instrumental in obtaining funding for a pilot project at the Vanuatu Cultural Centre to begin copying some of the at-risk collection material, and to hold a workshop for similar organisations from around the Pacific.

Objectives of the workshop were to:

- establish an estimation of the condition of the material the collections of Vanuatu Cultural Centre and Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation that may be representative of others throughout the region;
- determine the range of treatments necessary for the cleaning and conservation of the material prior to copying;
- assess the labour and skills resources necessary for the conservation and copying stages;
- assess the capital resources necessary for the developed processes; and
- recommend standard techniques to the copying of audiovisual material that consider the materials, skills, needs and resources of the institutions within the region and begin the training of the trainers at the Cultural Centre.

ScreenSound provided two trainers for the workshop, Joe Kelly and Matthew Davies. Costs for the trainers were shared between ScreenSound and the Pacific Islands Museums Association (PIMA). Jacob Kapere and Ambong Thompson from the audiovisual unit at the Vanuatu Cultural Centre were the local resource persons.

Total workshop attendance was 17 persons, comprising practitioners from museums and cultural centres in 8 countries (Vanuatu, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, New Caledonia, Palau and Australia) plus representatives of the regional organisations PIMA and the Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association, and one participant from the Vanuatu Television and Broadcasting Company.

Additionally a number of interested observers attended some sessions including visiting researchers using the collections at Vanuatu Cultural Centre and the local engineering support contractor.

The selection of participants for this workshop was coordinated by PIMA and was successful in bringing together the right people to gain maximum benefit from the workshop program. The participants were all directly involved in managing the preservation of collections within their own organisations, and brought a good base of knowledge to the workshop. Many of the participants already had good practical skills in working with the materials.

Overall the workshop was a great success, with feedback from the participants indicating a high level of satisfaction, and all objectives of the workshop met. Key recommendations from the workshop included:

- identified resource requirements for Vanuatu Cultural Centre as a basis for funding proposals to potential donors and sponsors;
- identified opportunities for collaboration between Vanuatu Cultural Centre and other organisations represented at the workshop;
- identified a wide range of possible sources of funding to be approached to support archiving activities;
- recognised need to develop disaster management plans for the institutions represented at the workshop; and
- specific recommendations to improve storage and management of collections at the Vanuatu Cultural Centre and the Vanuatu Television and Broadcasting Company.

Future activities arising from this workshop were suggested and will be implemented if possible. These included:

- support for training broadcasters in archiving through the Pacific Islands Broadcasting Association;
- further workshops to be convened by PIMA, including consideration of issues relating to access to and interpretation of collection materials; and
- a practical workshop at ScreenSound Australia.

The Pacific Nations face difficulties brought about by extreme climate, resource shortages and lack of access to the level of infrastructure we take for granted in Australia, but remain optimistic and dedicated to the task of preserving their cultural heritage on film, audio and video materials. For further information, see the PIMA website at [www.finearts.mcc.edu/pima/opening](http://www.finearts.mcc.edu/pima/opening) and the Vanuatu Cultural Centre website at [arts.anu.edu.au/arcworld/vks/vks](http://arts.anu.edu.au/arcworld/vks/vks).

## **Celebrating the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand's Silver Jubilee**

*Correspondent: Anne Robertson*

The Archives and Records Association of New Zealand (ARANZ) held its annual conference 'Records: The Power, Passion and Politics' on 23–25 August 2001, an event that coincided with the Silver Jubilee of the Association, which was established in 1976. Responsibility for organising the Association's conferences is rotated between

its six regional branches. This year it was the turn of the national capital, Wellington, the home of Archives New Zealand as well as the country's major cultural institutions. The conference was attended by 175 delegates, attracted by the Association's commemorative anniversary and the calibre of the keynote speakers – Verne Harris, Director of the South African History Archive at the University of Witwatersrand and Tom Wilsted, one of the founding fathers of ARANZ now based at the Thomas Dodd Research Centre at the University of Connecticut, USA.

Consistent with the view 'New Zealand solutions for New Zealand problems', local speakers dominated the bulk of the conference program apart from the two keynote speakers and a small trans-Tasman contingent comprising Chris Fripp (President, Records Management Association of Australia), Justine Heazlewood (Public Record Office, Victoria) and Anne Robertson (National Archives of Australia) who presented external perspectives on the management of electronic records. This is not to suggest, however, that the conference had a parochial focus, as many of the topics addressed by the local speakers echoed issues and concerns familiar to the broader archival community: for example, building closer relations between professional associations; using consultative mechanisms to develop access regimes; establishing mature legislative frameworks; defining indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights; and negotiating cross-institutional collection development policies.

The conference was characterised by a well-balanced program that catered for both historical and contemporary interests, well-prepared (and disciplined) speakers and an engaged audience, which took every opportunity to ask questions from the floor. The organising committee effectively used Midnight Oil's eponymous anthem 'Power and the Passion' to reinforce the conference theme and to draw delegates back into the conference venue after each session break.

Personal highlights of the program included Verne Harris' moving keynote address 'Seeing (in) blindness', subsequently adapted and reprised at the ASA/RMAA conference in Hobart; Tom Wilsted's comparative history of the foundations of professional archival associations in New Zealand, Australia and Canada; newly appointed Chief Archivist Dianne Macaskill's initial impressions of Archives New Zealand; Jeremy Cauchi's frank assessment of Archives New Zealand's 1997 electronic records policy; and the closing debate between Verne Harris, Rachel Lilburn (Victoria University of Wellington), Stuart Strachan (University of Otago) and Tom Wilsted on the topic 'Recordkeepers are all passion and no power. Bugger!'. Verne and Rachel spoke on the side of passion 'between the sheaves of archives' where we learnt how the 'fetish for the document' previously associated with secret yearnings for leather bindings is now being replaced by more explicit passions for metadata. A key message arising from the debate was that as individuals and institutions we should be brave and partner promiscuously with those who have power in order to attain power ourselves. In hindsight it is regrettable that the debate was not recorded for posterity,

not only for its humour but also for its underlying commentary on the personal, political and public perceptions of archivists and recordkeepers in society.

Several of the papers presented at the conference, including the keynote addresses, appear in the April and October 2001 issues of *Archifacts*, the journal of the Archives and Records Association of New Zealand and on Mike Steemson's website at [www.caldeson.com/RIMOS/index.html](http://www.caldeson.com/RIMOS/index.html).

## **Archives of the Western Pacific High Commission transfer to the University of Auckland Library**

*Correspondent: Stephen Innes, University of Auckland Library*

The long-standing issue of a permanent home for the archives of the Western Pacific High Commission will finally be solved with their transfer to the University of Auckland Library early in 2002. Currently held by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (F&CO) at Milton Keynes near London, the archives have been a source of frustration for researchers since their removal from Suva, Fiji in 1978, as most interest in them resides in the Pacific area. Access to the archives is also quite difficult. Negotiations with the F&CO began two years ago when Stephen Innes, New Zealand and Pacific Librarian at the University Library, learnt of the British Government's likely interest in moving the archives to Auckland, a relatively central location for both Pacific Island researchers and those in Australia and New Zealand. Since then there have been a variety of discussions, and a visit by Mrs Heather Yasamee and Mr Ken Clare of the F&CO in January 2001 helped to finalise the details.

The Western Pacific High Commission was established in 1877 to extend British authority over British subjects in the islands of the southwest Pacific, then outside any formal colonial control. Its jurisdiction originally included British New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu), Tonga, Samoa, Pitcairn, and the various island groups now comprising Kiribati. British New Guinea was removed from the Commission's authority in 1888, and likewise Samoa by the end of the century. Fiji and Pitcairn were transferred from its jurisdiction in 1952, and the following year Commission headquarters were transferred from Suva, Fiji, to Honiara in the British Solomon Islands protectorate. As the largest island nations gained independence in the 1970s, the Commission became redundant, and was disbanded in 1974, with the High Commissioner becoming the governor of the Solomon Islands.

Intended initially to control the more unruly and illegal activities of European traders and settlers (especially the labour traffic), the Commission over time became a vehicle for British imperial expansion in the region generally, taking on general administrative functions in the New Hebrides, Gilberts and Solomons including health, taxation, communications, land policy, and public works.

The material transferred to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 1978 consists of the records of the Western Pacific High Commission, together with the territorial records of the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu), Tonga and Pitcairn. Legally, the Commission's archives are British public records, whereas the local administrative records belong to the successor governments in the region. This now only applies to Tonga and Vanuatu, as the other territorial records were returned to the relevant governments in 1978, and both these countries have consented to the transfer. Notwithstanding its legal rights, the F&CO has also been careful to include all of the interested governments in its deliberations over the Commission's records proper. To date all but one of the successor island governments have given the transfer their blessing. However, given the lack of any suitable repository in the islands and the advantage of placing the archives in a central Pacific location, the F&CO plans to transfer the material to the University Library in 2002.

The transfer of materials with such importance to the development of British colonial policy in the Pacific, and to the modern development of Pacific peoples, will strengthen the University's research infrastructure for Pacific Island studies. It will also greatly facilitate access to these important materials which has been a bone of contention for many researchers over the years. Access to the archives will be provided in the Special Collections reading room of the General Library which is currently under construction as part of a major library refurbishment.

Reproduced from *Pambu*, Vol. 5, No. 13, November 2001.

## **Pacific Manuscripts Bureau**

*Correspondents: Ewan Maidment and Greg Rawlings*

Based in the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at the Australian National University (ANU), the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau is a joint copying project, making preservation microfilm of archives, manuscripts and rare printed material in or relating to the Pacific islands. It is the longest running international archives preservation microfilming project in the world. Since 1968 it has produced over 3 300 rolls of 35mm microfilm and associated documentation which constitute a major body of Pacific islands research materials.

The Bureau also publishes indexes to Pacific islands documents and issues a newsletter, *Pambu*, which reports on its work and on Pacific archives in general. It employs one full-time Executive Officer, an Assistant working half-time and two casual microfilmmers. It has two rooms in the Coombs Building, a working office and a studio. Its two Hiraikawa 35mm microfilm cameras can be used either in the studio or in the field. The microfilm master negatives are in cold storage in the National Library of Australia. Sets of the microfilms are held by each of the Bureau's eight member

libraries: the Mitchell Library, Sydney; the National Library of Australia, Canberra; the Australian National University Library; the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington; the University of Auckland Library; the Library of the University of Hawaii, Honolulu; the Library of the University of California, San Diego; and Yale University Library, New Haven. Copies of most of the microfilms are available for purchase and specific titles are held by many libraries throughout the world.

The Bureau is funded by the consortium of eight subscribing member libraries. It is directed by a Management Committee consisting of representatives of each of the member libraries, a representative of the Pacific Regional Branch of the International Council on Archives (PARBICA) and three representatives of the ANU's Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies. The Management Committee usually meets twice a year in Canberra but, over the past seven years, it has also been meeting at least once a year in the islands, usually in conjunction with a PARBICA or Pacific History Association Conference. In February this year a *Pambu* Committee meeting was held in conjunction with the Association of Social Anthropologists Oceania (ASAO) meeting in Auckland. These island meetings have enabled all members to be directly involved in the Bureau's decision making and keep the Bureau in touch with users of its materials.

In its early days, when Robert Langdon was Executive Officer, the Bureau located and microfilmed personal papers, such as diaries and correspondence, linguistic materials and the records of non-government organisations, especially missions. The Bureau also administered three special projects funded by separate consortiums. In 1970 and 1976 Dr John Cumpston carried out the New England Microfilming Project, locating and microfilming many hundreds of Yankee-Pacific whaling logs in North American repositories, making 428 reels of microfilm. In the mid-1970s Mr Kevin Green located and microfilmed about 40 rolls of Papua New Guinea patrol reports and diaries, personal papers, government minutes, reports and official publications. In the early 1980s, Fr Theo Koch SM travelled the Western Pacific islands arranging, listing and microfilming the records of the Oceania Marist Province, making 400 reels of microfilm.

Chaired by Professor Brij Lal since 1993, the Management Committee has widened the Bureau's focus to include more contemporary records: the archives of businesses, trade unions, judiciaries, government, semi-government and non-government organisations; records documenting the political and social history of the independent Pacific Islands states. Under Professor Lal's leadership, the Bureau has had a busy schedule of fieldwork in the Pacific Islands. It has ongoing projects in Fiji and Papua New Guinea. Simultaneously the Bureau has run special projects in Tonga and Kiribati, responding to specific demands and opportunities. More programmatically it has developed a long-term strategic plan, focusing consecutively on French Polynesia, the

Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Micronesia. In 2002–03 the Bureau will reorientate its program towards Polynesia. Throughout this period the Bureau has been making microfilms of supporting documents in New Zealand and Australia.

The Bureau's searching and filming activities concentrate on the islands, as the island-based records are seen as most at risk of loss or destruction. Such records are given absolute priority by the Bureau. Nevertheless the Bureau is also able to respond to research demands and undertakes microfilming of records in safe custody where it is felt warranted by international demand for access.

The Bureau continued its vigorous program of fieldwork in 2001. It undertook several new overseas projects: in Honiara on the archives of the Solomon Islands National Union of Workers, in Rarotonga on records of the NZ Resident Agents in the Cook Islands, and in Auckland on archives of Tasman Empire Airways Ltd. The *Yap Legislature Journal* was microfilmed in Colonia, Yap State, FSM. Microfilming of the personal papers of WC Groves and Fr J Tschauer was continued in PNG. Work on the Marshall Islands Resource Materials, collected by Gifford Johnson, was completed in Majuro. Microfilm preservation projects were also carried out onsite in Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne.

During the year the Bureau received 12 transfers of archival record groups for arrangement, description and microfilming. They include: archives of JT Arundel and Co, the Pacific Islands Co Ltd and the Pacific Phosphate Co Ltd, on loan from the National Archives of Australia; personal papers of Ms Dorothy Crozier, Mr Laurie Bragge and Mr Robert Melrose; research papers of Dr Joan Herlihy; and minutes of the Kiribati Overseas Seamen's Union and the South Pacific and Oceanic Council of Trade Unions.

In 2001 the Bureau became involved in archival sound preservation for the first time, making arrangements for the preservation and duplication of 26 oral history interviews made with Europeans and part-Europeans in Fiji by Ms Marsali MacKinnon. In 2002 the Bureau will extend this sound preservation program to include recordings of oral history interviews which Merle Coppel made in Rarotonga in 1993 with three Catholic priests who were stationed in the outer Cook Islands, Fr John Kruitwagen, Fr John Rovers and Fr Damien Marinus, and an interview which Professor Lal recorded last year with Jai Ram Reddy, the Indo-Fijian politician.

Apart from attending the ASAO meeting, the Bureau has made one field trip this year to South Australia. Kenneth Thomas' patrol reports and anthropological studies from the Sepik Region in Papua New Guinea, 1927–34, were microfilmed at his daughter's house in Victor Harbor. Rev. EG Neil's diary, still in family hands, of his first years with the Methodist Mission in Samoa, 1902–03, was microfilmed at the South Australian Museum in Adelaide. Preparations are being made for a follow-up

trip to Rarotonga in April to complete microfilming the Cook Islands Resident Commissioners Office files of correspondence with the Resident Agents in the outer islands, 1905–65. Further fieldwork in Fiji, PNG and Ponape is planned for this year.

In-house microfilming projects so far this year have included a set of reports on the Pacific Islands trade unions, transferred by Alan Mattheson, the Australian Council of Trade Unions International Officer. Dr Niel Gunson arranged the transfer of the unpublished autobiography of Norman Cocks, Australasian Secretary of the London Missionary Society, which has also been microfilmed. The PNG Department of Agriculture gave permission for the Bureau to copy the *PNG Agricultural Journal* which was microfilmed onsite at the CSIRO Black Mountain Library in Canberra.

This is the first stage of a collaborative project with the Pacific Community Secretariat aimed at ensuring preservation of and access to Pacific islands scientific journals. Microfilming of Grant McCall's 10 000 Easter Island press cuttings is proceeding at the Bureau. We have also started filming selected parts of Dorothy Crozier's papers and have commenced work on the arrangement and description of the Beatrice Baker Papers, included in the Crozier transfer.

A second batch of Jo Herlihy's Solomon Islands papers, dealing with local government, were transferred to the Bureau earlier this year. Pat Johnson, a PNG old-hand, has sent the Bureau a set of Graham Hamilton's PNG patrol reports for microfilming. They include a copy of Rev. Norman Crutwell's report on UFOs in Papua which is the basis of Randolph Stow's novel, *Visitants*. Anna Powles has lent the Bureau James Jupp's papers documenting the independence period in Vanuatu for arrangement and microfilming. Sister Margaret Sullivan of Tarawa has been in touch with the Bureau over a large batch of the Catholic Bishop's archives which have recently come to light.

Dr Mike Bourke of RSPAS has suggested that the Bureau survey unpublished reports and rare published material considered to be at-risk in the PNG Department of Agriculture Library at Konedobu, Port Moresby, which has now been closed for 12 months. Christina Tuitubau, of the Pacific Community Secretariat (SPC) Library in Suva, has also indicated that the SPC has concerns about preservation of the holdings of resource materials held in agricultural research stations, especially following the recent destruction of three stations, including the burning of Dodo Creek Research Station in Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands.

A searchable database catalogue of information sheets on each of the PMB's microfilm titles is accessible through the PMB's homepage at [rspas.anu.edu.au/pambu](http://rspas.anu.edu.au/pambu). Please note, however, that descriptive information on some of the most recent titles has not yet been downloaded to the database. The Bureau launched its searchable database or online catalogue in June 2000. The PMB's online catalogue provides references for all of the Bureau's manuscript and printed document series titles in microfilm.

What was previously only available on *Complete annotated catalogue: PMB manuscript series microfilms PMB 1-1030* (1991) and *Complete annotated catalogue: PMB printed document series microfilm Doc. 1-400* and their short title versions (1997) are now online, with new titles added since these hardcopy catalogues were published.

Researchers can search both the manuscript and printed document series, either separately or together. Search fields include author, title, PMB number, notes and an all-records category which allows for comprehensive searching. Additionally all of the Bureau's holdings, currently numbering 1608 titles for both manuscripts and documents, can be browsed all at once. Whether browsing records altogether or under specific fields, the results have been set to display standard bibliographical details including author, title, dates, the location of the original records, access provisions (open or restricted) and information notes. The Quick Search option provides a series of express features that are excellent for researchers already familiar with the PMB's microfilms and just want a summary of the Bureau's titles.

For the last seven years, from PMB manuscript numbers 1080 on, the Bureau has been releasing reel lists to accompany its information sheets. In some cases microfilm contents have been included in information sheets, but for the majority of recent releases it has been necessary to provide more comprehensive calendars, or reel lists. The Bureau has now made virtually all of its reel lists, numbering over some 100 calendars, available on the PMB's online catalogue. These reel lists can be downloaded in .pdf using Adobe Acrobat Reader 5.0 (which can be downloaded free from [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)) or in rich text format, .rtf, which is part of most PC packages.

## **Division of Palau National Archives: Country Report for PARBICA 9 Conference**

*Correspondent: Naomi Ngirakamerang, Chief, Division of Palau National Archives*

### **Background and basis of archival operations**

The Division of Palau National Archives for the last six years was under the Bureau of Community Services within the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs. There has been reorganisation within our Ministry this year, and as soon as the President signed into law the proposed amendment, the Division of Palau National Archives will be under the Bureau of Arts and Culture.

The Palau National Archives was established in 1988 when the Trust Territory administration office in Saipan closed down, along with the Trust Territory Archival Project. Two years later in October 1990, the Palau Archives legislation passed and became Republic of Palau Public Law (RPPL) 3-38. The Archives was closed 1990-92 and in 1994 due to lack of individuals interested in being employed as Archives personnel. The Palau Archives has been operating since December 1994 up until the

present. It is in constant contact with the Belau National Museum Research Library and the Olbiil era Kelulau (OEK), Palau Legislature National Library.

### **Accommodation and buildings**

The Division of Palau National Archives office building was purpose-built. Even though it is a rather small office, it has microfilm cabinet drawers that can hold 4 300 rolls of 16mm and 35mm microfilm. We also have a secure room for processing microfilm and developing films.

The Archives office finally in 1996 acquired two sets of shelving with seven shelves each and also a wall shelf that contains 27 slots of two feet each. All the documents, and files are now arranged in their alphabetical sections on these shelves. We do not have any more files maintained in cardboard boxes on the floor.

There is only one microfilm reader/printer located near the front door by the computer. This is where researchers review their desired information and obtain their copies. The Division of Palau National Archives' future plan is to establish a record centre and process a backlog of over 20 years of records. In January 2001 the President announced on his first radio announcement program that a new building will be designed to house the Archives and the Belau National Museum. At present the Minister, the Museum Curator and I have agreed that an existing building near the Archives office will be renovated and established as the Archives records centre as soon as it is vacated by the current occupants.

### **Staffing and training needs**

For the past four years there have been only two staff at the Archives office: Daniel Adachi, who is the Archives clerk, and myself. I have trained Daniel to microfilm records; in 1997 I processed the Palau Public Land Authority land records and Daniel microfilmed and developed five rolls of 16mm microfilm. In March 2000 John Wright and I, with the help of four prisoners, were able to transfer 18 drawers of records from the Supply Warehouse to the Archives. These drawers contained the legislative branch of the government records dating back to 1974. Due to the limited space in the Archives office we have not been able to process these recently transferred records.

In 2000 I attended the Western Archives Institute 14th annual conference, an intense two-week program which covered all basic archival principles. The program covered understanding archives and manuscripts, records management programs, manuscripts acquisition, appraisal, arrangement and description, automation of archival functions, electronic records, reference and access, ethical and legal issues, preservation and managing archival programs.

The program instructor was Dr Helen Tibbo of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. We also had two staff from the Huntington Library who gave a

presentation on manuscripts acquisition. Walter P Gray III from the California State Archives gave a presentation on managing archives programs and William Landis from University of California at Irvine gave a presentation on automation and electronic records. We had the opportunity to tour the Ontario City Library, the AK Smiley Public Library at Riverside, the University of California at Riverside Library, the Special Collection at the Museum of History and Art at Ontario and the California Museum of Photography at Riverside. I feel that with this training program I am now able to appraise all the records located at the Supply Warehouse and to begin to establish the Archives' records management programs. I was very fortunate to have been selected as one of the participants.

### **Records held in custody**

There are 2 200 16mm and 110 35mm cartridges or rolls of microfilm records at the Archives office. All records maintained at the Archives are government records.

### **Use of archives**

Researchers who currently frequent the Archives office are mostly lawyers, high school students and other local people. At present land records are usually what brings researchers to the Archives. Government staff usually donate office supplies for copies obtained for their office programs. Researchers who cannot locate their desired information records are usually referred to the OEK library, the Belau National Museum Research Library and the Division of Land and Survey office.

All records maintained at the Archives are open to researchers. There are no restrictions on any records and they are considered public information. Public and private researchers have full access to obtain any desired copies of records with a minimum fee.

Both Palau's weekend newsletter *Roureur Belau*, vol. III, no. 22, 31 May – 7 June 2001 and *Pacific Island Association of Libraries and Archives (PLALA) Newsletter*, vol. 10, no. 2, April 2001, ran an article about the Trust Territory photos on Voyager.

It stated that the Trust Territory Archives digitised image database and the index to the documents on microfilm that make up the bulk of the Trust Territory Archives are now located on the web at [libweb.hawaii.edu](http://libweb.hawaii.edu) and [trusterrpacific.lib.hawaii.edu](http://trusterrpacific.lib.hawaii.edu).

### **Conservation requirements**

The Division of Palau National Archives has available microfilming equipment that is in perfect working condition. Due to the Archives limited space, we have not been able to process any records for the last four years. Our future plan is to establish a records centre and start processing this over 20-year backlog of unprocessed records. The Archives has a microfilm camera, a developer and a duplicating machine for the microfilming process. Another set of a camera head was donated in 1999.

### Promotional activities

The Division of Palau National Archives is required to submit its monthly report to the Director of Bureau of Community Services.

### Project proposals

In May 2000 the Division of Palau National Archives submitted a proposal for funding assistance to the Administration for Native Americans, Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC. The Archives' past two funding assistance proposals have been declined and it is now planning to submit its next proposal again for the January 2002 deadline. The project proposal is to process over the 20-year backlog of unprocessed government records located in the Supply Warehouse holding area. The project requires an archival consultant to coordinate and help identify the major steps in accomplishing this archival project and improve the in-house capability of staff for archival work by conducting training in archival procedures. The project also proposes to hire a computer information management specialist to design an appropriate information management database, install and network the computer, and train Archives staff in their use.

### Internet usage

With funding assistance from the Palau/Australia Small Grants Scheme, the Archives was able to obtain its computer and scanner. We now have email and access to the Internet. Our email address is *archives@palaunet.com*.

## Papua New Guinea Provincial Archives

*Correspondent: Jacob Hevelawa, PNG National Archivist*

I recently presented a paper on provincial archives at the Papuan Governors' Conference. The paper was aimed at informing the Honorable Governors of a proposal, endorsed by the National Library and Archives Board, to establish provincial archives to enable the long-term preservation of provincial archives and the archival records of the nation as a whole:

In this decade important changes are taking place in the nation of Papua New Guinea and it seems that a public accountability crisis is besetting our society. It is the wish of the Public Library and Archives Board, through the National Archives, to bring to the attention of provincial authorities the need to ensure that proper recordkeeping is maintained so that the public service and, in particular provincial administrations, are accountable.

It is a long-standing aim of the National Archives, firstly to encourage and promote the adoption of improved measures for ensuring the effective management and

proper disposition of records and, secondly, to make better provision for the accommodation, management and accessibility of provincial government archives. Therefore, the National Archives will aim to provide a service which will:

- preserve records and archives of a province in an accessible, intelligible and useable form for as long as they have continuing utility value; and
- make information from records and archives available to users in the province in the right format, to the right people, at the right time.

The way provinces can ensure continued availability of records and archives of utility or value to government and its citizens is to ensure that the management and development of archives programs are tackled and adopted at all levels of government. As a result archives programs will become a national and provincial objective rather than being adopted piecemeal.

It is encouraging to see the Papuan Governors' Conference support the National Archives by allowing it to announce its provincial archives concept at its very important meeting. The National Archives extends its sincere thanks to the Chairman of the Papuan Governors' Conference, the Honorable Titus Philemon, and Deputy Chairman, the Honorable Opa Taureka, and the Honorable Governors and officials of the Papuan Provinces (Central, Gulf, Oro and Western) for allowing the Archives to participate and present the paper on the provincial archives concept. The National Archives would like to encourage other Provincial Governors to introduce and promote this important concept.

## **Tonga Traditions Committee: Country Report for PARBICA 9 Conference**

*Correspondent: Hon. Albert Tu'ivanuavou Vaea, Tonga Traditions Committee Secretary and Keeper of Palace Records*

### **Introduction**

Geographically the Ancient Kingdom of Tonga is often unrecognised in a general atlas due to the blue expanse of the South Pacific Ocean. Despite that, Tonga is the oldest constitutional government in Polynesia and one of fourteen remaining monarchies in the world. The strength of Tonga's constitutional government is attributed to a written constitution adopted in 1875 and recognised afterwards by the United States of America, France and England, a feat unheard of in the late 1800s. Thus, Tonga entered the complexities of the modern world with its traditional system and culture intact, a strength that Tonga enjoys today and politely informs other, younger island states that forgetting the past is a detriment to the future.

After 1948 at the conclusion of the Second World War the national parliament of Tonga seriously debated the national identity of Tonga and the challenges faced during the war. The US Navy occupied Tonga and during the occupation the Tongans were exposed to the so-called material world, so parliament set about to introduce a law that would ensure that Tongan national identity would be retained and preserved. In 1954 the Tonga Traditions Committee was formed and the preservation of tangible heritage was keenly promoted through various means.

### **Tonga Traditions Committee**

The Tonga Traditions Committee, a committee for tangible and intangible cultural heritage, was chaired by the late Queen Salote Tupou III. The members consisted of Ministers of the Crown, senior elders of acknowledged cultural authority and foreign experts. In Tongan history Queen Salote's reign is referred to as the 'golden era', a description of her governance through traditional values and customs. It was also a period of time often associated with the war, singing, dancing, and of the presence of the American sailors.

In accordance with policies produced and implemented by the Tonga Traditions Committee, the members set about recording oral knowledge, tangible heritage sites and monuments. The results were typed and deposited in the Tonga Traditions Committee archive. The medium used to publicise the work performed by the Tonga Traditions Committee was the national radio ZCO. These broadcasts generated strong public interest, and the documentation was made available for Tongan studies at primary and secondary school level.

The Tonga Traditions Committee works under the auspices of His Majesty the King's Department. The staff consists of three personnel: a secretary, an archivist and a research assistant. The assistance of a departmental casual employee is also available to the Committee. The role of the Committee is very general, including kava ceremonies, traditional presentations, and functions for nobles and royalty. Many of these activities are recorded and the records are deposited in the archive as part of Tonga's ongoing living culture.

As elaborated above, the traditional tangible heritage of Tonga was enshrined in the 1875 written constitution. An important part of this was land. Advice had reached the King of Tonga that indigenous Hawaiians had lost their land because no land laws assisted the indigenous people. Thus, Tonga implemented a land law that states that land will belong to Tongans only and can only be leased to non-Tongans.

The Traditions Committee is by no means the only organisation concerned with the management of cultural heritage in Tonga, for there are other ministries, departments and non-government organisations which have developed specific interests in the maintenance and extension of various aspects of our tangible cultural heritage.

Government ministries have developed national tangible heritage policies and programs aimed at protecting our traditional environment and instilling Tongan heritage in our young people.

### **Ministry of Education**

The Ministry of Education, Sports, Youth and Culture ensures that Tongan tangible cultural heritage is taught in primary and secondary schools and, therefore, that tangible heritage is available to pupils in those schools. Of course, Tongan studies, grammar, written language and history are core subjects for young Tongans of Tongan and non-Tongan parentage to study for it imposes on them their national identity as a Tongan.

### **Ministry of Lands and Environment**

The government of Tonga recently separated the Department of Environment from the Ministry of Lands allowing the Environment Department to focus on certain projects. Prior to the separation, the Ministry looked after lands and the sea as tangible heritage. However, the focus of the Department of Environment has changed and pollution is now its primary focus. One of the difficulties in Tonga in handling and overseeing land and sea heritage is the land system, in which most land belongs to Tongan citizens and inheritance by the eldest male determines ownership. Thus, prized tangible heritage land may be ploughed up for farming by a designated owner and coastal seashore protected for fish spawning may be illegally netted and sold to offset poverty.

### **Department of Births, Deaths and Marriages**

The Department of Births, Deaths and Marriages is the institution that records the population of Tonga. It was one of the first institutions in the government to have promoted written records. The Department falls under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice, the judicial arm of the constitutional government. The importance of records of births, deaths and marriages is that the census report gives a true and accurate record of the population of the Kingdom, thus indicating whether the population is increasing or declining. Fortunately the population is increasing and so does migration to foreign countries, mostly English-speaking countries.

### **Non-government archives**

Non-government archival organisations are deemed custodial owners of our tangible heritage because they retain and hold ownership over religious information. Christianity is very much part of our heritage and many of our archival recording centres keep written records in the form of agendas, conference papers, reports, and documentation on the movements and names of ministers. Prominent religious organisations in Tonga include the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, the Tonga Constitution Church, the Latter Day Saints, the Catholic Church and the Assemblies of God.

In October 2001 the Tonga Traditions Committee held a one-day workshop at the Free Wesleyan Church conference room where documents and photographs from the Church's archive were exhibited for all to view and comment on. The press, the *Chronicle* Department, was invited to the exhibition, and other ministries and non-government organisations took part in the workshop. Participants could network to share information: a great deal of uncatalogued information is available which has not been arranged in an orderly way and made publicly known.

### **Archival building**

Since the construction of the Tonga Traditions Committee archival building in 1998 the number of visitors has increased and various departments and local authorities have shown a great deal of interest and awareness. This is very important to government and non-government organisations for the principle of accountability and transparency begins with good records management.

Peter Orlovich, former lecturer at the University of New South Wales, wrote about the dire need for good archives management in the Pacific. He concluded, after visiting archives throughout the Pacific, that the general lack of awareness and lack of records-management training had contributed to a weakness in accountability and good governance. Responsibility for records retention has not always been properly allocated. All too often it has been the tea ladies' responsibility to look after documents. Unfortunately they have been known to set alight to a rubbish heap not knowing that some documents in the heap are precious and valuable assets.

### **Photographs**

The catalogues and photographs made by Tulua Photo Studio in the 1950s and 1960s have been transferred to the custody of the Tonga Traditions Committee. The importance of the archives was recognised by the owner of the studio who willingly agreed to hand over the photographs to the Committee for safekeeping. The Tulua negatives and photographs are a prized part of Tonga's tangible heritage. Some of the photos depict the late Queen Salote in her active role in the transmission of culture. The so-called 'golden era' is still very prominent in the photographs, and as is written so often, 'a picture is worth a thousand words'.

### **Future development**

The Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga and the Tonga Traditions Committee are making a joint submission to JIGA proposing that an archivist visit and work on our archives. The archivist will work for a year under the supervision of the Tonga Traditions Committee and will also be available to assist other archives by giving expert advice.