

International Notes

Edited by Pat Jackson

Timor Leste: Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Correspondent: Del Cuddihy, Archives Advisor

Following a reply to a posting on the Aus-archivists listserv last year for a volunteer archivist, I took up my position in November 2003 for one year at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CAVR) in Timor Leste. For current activities see their website at easttimor-reconciliation.org and follow the links to the updates section.

The Commission is still in full production, collecting over 9 000 statements from victims of human rights violations in Timor Leste (1974 to 1999) and taking over 1 000 statements and requests for reconciliation from perpetrators. It also holds public hearings and broadcast these hearings by radio and TV across the whole country. However, the Commission will downsize and restructure over the next couple of months in preparation for producing its final report in October this year.

My terms of reference include:

- advising on standard archives procedures and standards,
- assessing organisation-wide current and future information storage requirements for material of all kinds generated or acquired by CAVR,
- assisting in the design and establishment of a secure, climatically appropriate storage facility and work area,
- assisting in the organisation and administration of the collection and making it accessible through the provision of appropriate policies, procedures and facilities,

- assisting in the acquisition and process of additional relevant information, by liaising with relevant archival institutions in East Timor and internationally, and
- providing capacity building for an East Timorese counterpart.

Principal activities have included curating the photographic exhibition *1975* to coincide with the Public Hearing on Internal Political Conflict in December and beginning an inventory of the current records and other documentation created or collected by CAVR in undertaking its functions and activities.

An Archives Working Group was formed recently and we have begun preparations for establishing an archival repository and search area within the space set aside. Incidentally, the Commission is based in a former Portuguese (and later, Indonesian) jail, so 'custody of the record' takes on a whole new meaning! The archives will be placed in the Santa Cruz Room of the jail. The Santa Cruz room is named after the young people who were arrested and placed into this room after the Santa Cruz massacre in the early 1990s and which we, in Australia, saw so vividly on television news footage.

Generally archives in Timor Leste are in a somewhat neglected state and could do with lots of encouragement, support and help – see John Waddingham's post to the Aus-archivists listserv in October last year, available at www.timorarchives.info/docs/may2003.html [Editorial note: John Waddingham's article on East Timor follows].

As the poorest country in Asia, there is still much to be done to recover from the devastation of 1999 such as alleviate poverty, restart education, restart the economy, begin agriculture, establish robust government structures and infrastructures, to name just a few pressing matters here. No wonder that archives must stand towards the end of the line.

Clearing House for Archival Records on East Timor: An Australian Project

Correspondent: John Waddingham, Co-ordinator of the CHART Project

In every city in Australia – in boxes, bookshelves, filing cabinets and back sheds – are fragments of the story of East Timor's traumatic transition from Portuguese colony to independent nation. These

fragments were created, received, collected or garnered by the East Timorese refugee community, by Australian individuals, non-government organisations and political activist groups since Portugal moved in 1974 to divest itself of its long-held colony and Indonesia invaded in 1975.

Most of these collections, by themselves, are not significant. Collectively however, the totality of smuggled letters, documents and recorded interviews constitute a remarkable documentary record of the Indonesian annexation and occupation of East Timor. The correspondence and records of activity of Australian individuals and organisations who argued for or against Australian Government recognition of the annexation are a unique record of Australian non-government responses to the East Timor tragedy.

The documentary record of what happened during the occupation will be of great interest and value to East Timorese as they begin the long road to build their own repositories of memory. The record of Australian non-government actions and reflections on the Timor story must be preserved in Australia to complement the official government record of this part of our history.

The CHART Project, or Clearing House for Archival Records on Timor, was created to identify any holders of such records in Australia and promote the preservation of the materials for the longer term. The Project does not aim to be a collecting body, but rather to serve as a contact point for discussion and advice on how to preserve the record and to provide a central guide to the location and content of these widely dispersed collections.

The project continues to grow at a steady – if unspectacular – pace. It remains an essentially voluntary process. Some significant individuals and organisations have already lodged their collections with Australian repositories, notably the National Library, ScreenSound and Melbourne University Archives. Many other individuals and organisations were contacted, and are being made aware of how to arrange and look after their collections and are encouraged to consider repository options for the long term.

While much assistance and advice was received from a range of people with long-standing Timor connections, the project has remained essentially a one-person show. The establishment of small contact groups

in each Australian city is set for 2004 and is essential to its success. An embryonic website to communicate the archival message and to act as a guide to known Timor collections, private and public, continues to be developed (*www.timorarchives.info*).

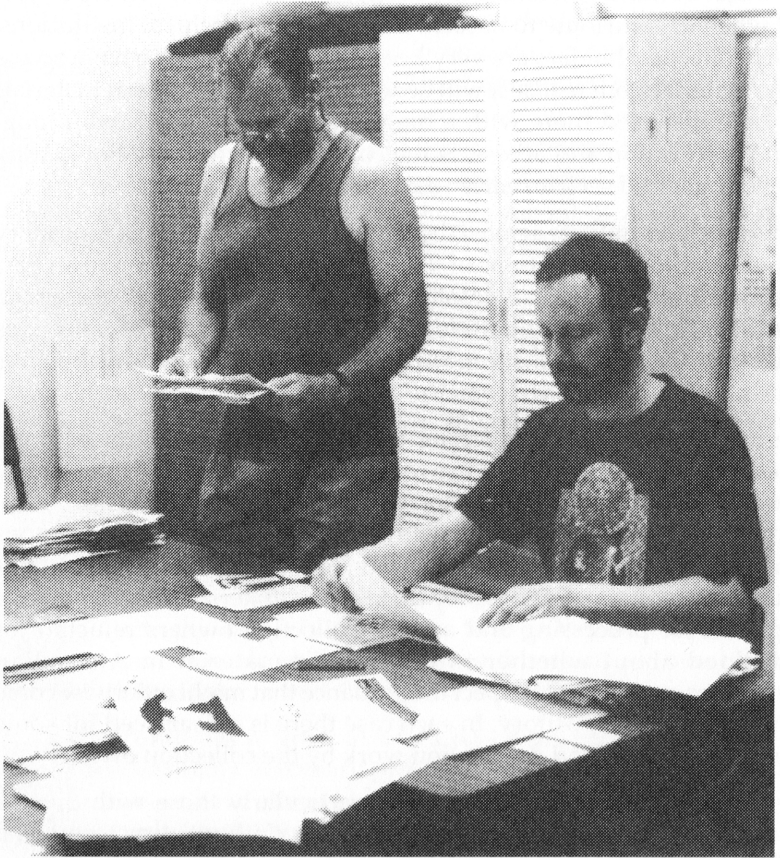
The major conundrum facing the Project and collection holders is how and when to contribute to nascent East Timorese archival institutions. Many collection holders are very keen to ensure Timorese have access to the materials, but realise it will be some time before original materials can be transferred there with a high degree of certainty about long-term preservation and access. Some collection owners are not getting any younger and seek an early resolution of this problem.

Copyright laws militate against the lodgement in an Australia repository of multi-authored collections of documents for later copying to an East Timorese repository. One possible solution is to ask well-resourced Australian archival institutions to act as interim custodians of collections while awaiting archival institutional growth in East Timor. Any thoughts on this would be most welcome!

The other major problem facing the project is that many of these collections were not in active use for some time and are often in a state of high disorganisation. With the exception of high profile collections, many repositories are understandably reluctant to take unsorted cartons of material – at least not without a very good understanding of their volume and content. Even if they do take the material, they advise of a long wait for processing and access. Collection owners reluctant or undecided about whether to lodge their material in Australian repositories cannot easily expect the guidance that might otherwise come from a receiving repository. In each case there is a clear need for some basic arrangement and description work by the collection owner.

The experience so far is that people, particularly those with diverse collections, very quickly get bogged down without direct personal assistance. Phone conversations and emails from remotest Perth are a poor substitute for hands-on processing. Attempts to guide and encourage collection holders to simultaneously preserve what may remain of some 'original order' and, at the same time, arrange and document the content in ways that make it accessible have proved difficult. If there are any archivists in the main cities prepared to offer some occasional onsite advice, and who can lay their hands on a few

second-hand archives boxes, the CHART project would love to hear from you. The CHART project can be contacted at: PO Box 467, Mt Hawthorn WA 6915, email: chart@timorarchives.info



A new image for archivists? John Waddingham and Lyle French attacking one of many cartons of Melbourne's Australia-East Timor Association on a warm summer's day in 2002.

Photographer: Cecily Gilbert

Update on National Archives of Niue: Post Cyclone Heta

Correspondents: Jocelyn Cuming and Tharron Bloomfield

On 6 January 2004 Cyclone Heta damaged and destroyed both public buildings and houses along the western side of Niue that included the main area of Alofi. Even though all the usual cyclone precautions were taken, the unprecedented strength of the cyclone and the particular direction it took meant there was no time for cultural heritage material to be removed to safer ground.

In terms of cultural heritage the most affected building was the Huanaki Museum and Cultural Centre. The building was completely destroyed, along with most of the collection. The Niue National Library and Archives building which was located on the far side of the main road, away from the sea, was badly affected but there was still sufficient structure left to provide some protection for the records during the cyclone. The Justice Department building, which also held very valuable material, was also very badly damaged.

After Cyclone Heta hit Niue there was concern from within Niue and in New Zealand and the international archives community about the state of the archives. Understandably salvage action from New Zealand for the archives was delayed until the immediate emergency was lifted. The Niue Government completed an assessment of the situation and decided that salvaging the archives was among the essential operations required for a fully functioning country. This is a testimony to the importance that Niue places on its cultural and documentary heritage.

The National Preservation Office, Te Tari Tohu Taonga, an initiative of Archives New Zealand and the National Library of New Zealand sent two conservators (Jocelyn Cuming and Tharron Bloomfield) to Niue at the request of NZAID, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The situation was also given impetus by Archives New Zealand and PARBICA's interest. NZAID, Archives New Zealand and the National Library of New Zealand provided funding for the trip.

In addition to physically salvaging the archives the objective of the visit was to leave the collection in a state where it was manageable. To achieve this the archives had to be dried and rehoused, and a suitable temporary storage facility designed.

A storage space was assigned in the Community Affairs building and a number of Community Affairs staff including Joan Talagi (Archivist), Amanda Heka (Librarian) and Norma Palana (Cultural Centre) helped with the operation. A variety of methods were used to dry the wet archives including hanging files on temporary 'clothes' lines, using electric fans and laying files outside in the sun. Once dry, the files were brushed to remove dirt and placed in boxes. New shelving was built and other structures were improvised to make sure the archives were off the ground. The new space is relatively well ventilated – an issue of tremendous importance to the continued well-being of the archives.

It is estimated that approximately 95% of the archives in Niue (including those held by the Justice Department) were saved. One of the most optimistic findings was the comparative lack of mould and insect damage to the collection. This is largely due to good ventilation. The generic government structure of concrete block style buildings with louvred windows at front and back has provided well-ventilated storage areas for Niue's records. Any new building should look at passive environmental control taking into consideration the benefits of low-tech solutions. More supplies of boxes are being sent to Niue and in the future it is recommended that assistance be provided with arranging and describing the archives. Overall it was a very successful trip helped by numerous people on Niue.

National Archives of Fiji, Country Report to PARBICA 10

Correspondent: Setareki Tale, Government Archivist

The National Archives of Fiji's vision is 'our public records – our public memory' and its mission is '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'.

Background

Fiji lies in the heart of the Pacific Ocean midway between the Equator and the South Pole. Local time is 12 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time. The archipelago includes over 322 islands. The total land area of Fiji is 18 333 square kilometres. Fiji has two major islands – Viti Levu and Vanua Levu. The capital, Suva is located in Viti Levu.

The climate of Fiji is governed chiefly by the marginal position that the islands occupy within the tropics and by the vast expanse of sea with which they are surrounded. Temperature averages 22 degrees Celsius (72 degrees Fahrenheit) for the cooler months (May to October) while summer (November to April) temperatures are higher with heavy downpours.

Whilst the multicultural society of Fiji retains their native languages, the official language is English. Based on the 1996 census estimate, the Fiji population was 772 655. This included 394 999 Fijians (51.8%), 336 579 Indians (43.6%) and 41 077 (5.3%) others.

National Archives of Fiji history

After several decades of lobbying from interested individuals, the Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission was established in 1954. This was the predecessor archival institution to the National Archives of Fiji.

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' predecessor was a branch under the Colonial Secretary's Office. As was evident from its name (the Central Archives and the Western Pacific High Commission), it was a joint depository for records of the Government of Fiji and those of the Western Pacific High Commission (WPHC). 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.

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:

1. *Archives Administration and Records Advisory Section*

- Evaluates, selects and takes into custody for proper preservation public records which have permanent values;
- Arranges, describes and publishes records held in the Archives to facilitate easy retrieval, and to promote scholarly research among them;
- Safeguards the integrity of public records by ensuring their proper security and safe custody, and by promoting their better preservation.

2. *Conservation and Restoration Section*

Responsible for the proper conservation and restoration of the permanent records held in the Archives. This includes the control of storage conditions of records in repository areas, control of pests and the repair of damaged and embrittled documents.

3. *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.

4. *Reference Library and Public Search Room*

This section is responsible for the receipt, organisation and preservation of legal deposit library materials that are deposited with the Principal Archivist under the *Libraries (Deposit of Books) Act*, and is also responsible for the supervision of Search Room users.

5. *Administration Section*

Deals with all clerical and accounting duties of the National Archives, including all typing, the messenger service, and cleaning and maintenance of the National Archives buildings and equipment.

National Archives holdings

1. *Archives*

The holdings of the National Archives at present occupy some 10 000 shelf metres of records, which 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 office for the period 1874 to 1970. Other significant series of records held are:

- HBM Consul Fiji and Tonga 1858-75;
- King Cakobau's Government 1871-74;
- Immigration Department records relating to the introduction of Polynesian and Indian Indentured Labourers 1877-1920;
- Records of the Lands Claims Commission 1875-84 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.

2. *Library*

The Sir Alport Barker Memorial Library (National Archives Reference Library) has a collection of over 20 000 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.

3. *Photocopying and Microfilming Section*

The holdings of this Section include 3 500 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.

Series that have so far been filmed include records of the Colonial Secretary's Office, the Registrar General, the Native Lands Commission, the Methodist Mission, the *Fiji Times*, the Land Claims Commission and the Cakobau Government.

Staffing and training

In 1954, two people staffed the predecessor agency to the National Archives, with an archivist as the head of department. In 2003 the staffing numbers increased to 19 including two unestablished staff.

The majority of the staff of the National Archives of Fiji receive some training in the areas of archives administration and records management, bookbinding and conservation, library work and microfilming. Training programs on specific areas are received through scholarships offered by the Australian government and the Malaysian government. The National Archives has for the past two years facilitated four workshops on archives administration and records management which were sponsored by the Fijian government and other non-government organisations.

The National Archives is involved in providing training through work attachments for officers from archival institutions within Fiji. Professional literature from other regional and international archival institutions is available for staff reference in our Reference Library.

Use of archives

The past two years has seen a vast increase of researchers using the archives' facilities for research purposes. The majority of users are students, academic scholars and the general public.

General research topics include issues of land claims from the late 1800s, Colonial government administration, family history, and various articles of interest from the newspaper and historical events.

The National Archives also provides information for its local and overseas researchers who either contact us by letter, email or telephone. Letter or email is the most frequent method of contact with overseas researchers.

Developments in 2000–03

The National Archives has for the past two years extensively developed its own manpower through training attachments in overseas institutions. Two officers attended two-month training courses in records management and conservation and reprography at the National Archives of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur in 2001 and 2002.

Two new staff members were recruited to the Archives Administration and Records Advisory Section and one staff was recruited to the Conservation and Bookbinding section.

In November 2002, the National Archives, through the Japanese International Corporation Agency engaged a Senior Volunteer to design and develop a database for its archival collection. Ms Misako Kojima will be engaged for two years and will also be involved in the data input and the training of staff during her two-year term with the Archives. Two temporary officers are currently been employed on contract basis to help in the data input phase of this project.

The Fiji Government in its 2003–04 budget has allocated F\$200,000 for renovations to the current National Archives building. Renovations will include the painting of the building, minor repairs and an extension to the building that will facilitate a strong room and a records processing room. At the same time, the National Archives is vigorously pressing the Fiji Government for the construction of a purpose-built building to house its current and future holdings and also records of newer format such as audiovisual, electronic and digital recordings.

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.

Palau National Archives, Country Report to PARBICA 10

Correspondent: Ms Naomi Ngirakamerang

Background

The Palau National Archives (former Division of Palau National Archives) is now directly under the Minister's office, Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs. The Palau National Archives in past years came under the Director of Bureau of Community Services. In the year 2000, the Administration of President Remengesau eliminated a lot of Divisions including the Division of Palau National Archives. The Palau National Archives is now directly under the Minister's supervision.

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 *RPPL 3-38 Republic of Palau Public Law*. The Archives was closed down from 1990-92 and in 1994 due to a lack of individuals interested in being employed as Archives personnel. The Archives has been operating since December 1994 up until the present. The Palau Archives is in constant contact with the Belau National Museum Research Library and the Oilbiil era Kelulau (OEK), Palau Legislature National Library.

Accommodation and buildings

The Palau National Archives office building is purpose built. Even though it is a rather small office, it has microfilm cabinet drawers that can hold 4 300 rolls of 12mm and 35mm cartridges of microfilm rolls. We also have a secure room for the microfilming and developing of 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, records and files are now arranged in their alphabetical section on these shelves. We do not have any more records and files maintained in cardboard boxes on the floor.

There is only one microfilm reader and printer located near the front door by the computer. This is where researchers review their desired information and obtain their copies. The Palau National Archives' future plan is to establish a records centre and process a backlog of over 20 years of file records and documents. In January 2001, the President announced on his first radio announcement that a new building will be designed to house the Archives. As soon as the current occupants vacate the proposed site for the Archives records centre, it will be renovated and refurbished to suit the Archives' requirements.

Staffing and training needs

From 1997 up until the present there have been two staff at the Archives office, Daniel Adachi and myself. Daniel was promoted from Archives Clerk to Microfilm Operator.

Current records management

Daniel has been trained by John Wright and myself to microfilm records, and in 1997 we processed and microfilmed five rolls of microfilm for the Palau Public Land Authority. In March 2000 John Wright and I (with

the help of four prisoners) were able to transfer 18 drawers of files and records from the Supply Warehouse to the Archives. These drawers contained the legislative branch of the government records dating back to 1974. We have not yet appraised these records for the microfilm preservation process.

The Bureau of Land and Survey brought their files and documents in cardboard boxes in late 2001 and we have microfilmed their records as they are in their series order contained in folders. At present, we are microfilming the Ministry of Health records along with the Bureau of Land and Survey records.

We started the Ministry of Health records in April 2002 and we now have five complete rolls of microfilm. The Ministry of Health records are dated up to 2000 and we are microfilming them backwards, so the next set we will microfilm will be 1999. These records are of patients with certain medical cases that are proving to be of interest to medical doctors who are researching their conditions. We are also training two staff from the Ministry of Health as they are planning to establish their own microfilm centre. The Ministry of Health records are returned to the medical records office once we complete the microfilm rolls, review them and index their contents.

The Palau National Archives Council members and I are planning to establish a fee for researchers who use the Archives. I have prepared a draft fee schedule for Imelda Nakamura at the Attorney General's office to review. It will be submitted to the Council members for their approval before we post it for public notice.

At present, the Archives does not have retention and disposal scheduling programs.

The Archives' next microfilming project is the Personnel Office records, Bureau of Domestic Affairs, and the Scholarship Board Office.

In March 2003, the Palau National Archives UNESCO proposal was approved for US\$22 000. This funding is for archival supplies and mobile shelving to process the 1 800 cubic feet of twenty year's backlog of records. They will then be stored in a secure area to await their microfilming preservation process.

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. In late 2000, the Archives finally acquired the original copy of the Palaun Declaration of Independence along with three pens that the President of the Republic of Palau, the Senate President, and the Speaker of the House used to sign the Declaration of Independence.

Use of archives

Researchers who frequent the Archives office are mostly lawyers, high school students and other local people. At present, land records are usually what bring researchers to the Archives. Government staff usually donate to the Archives office supplies for the copies obtained for their office programs. Researchers who cannot locate their desired information are usually referred to the OEK Library or the Belau National Museum, the 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 copies of records for a minimum fee.

Conservation requirements

The Palau National Archives has available microfilming equipment that is in perfect working condition. The Archives has a microfilm camera, a developer and a duplicating machine for the microfilming process. We also have a microfilm reader and printer. Another camera head was donated in 1999.

We are now microfilming two projects at the same time, Ministry of Health and the Bureau of Land and Survey. In 2002, the Ministry of Administration, Bureau of National Treasury, Division of Finance microfilm centre closed down and they transferred all their microfilming equipment to the Archives. In April 2002, the Judiciary microfilm camera broke down. The Archives has given the Finance microfilm camera to the Judiciary microfilm centre for a rental fee of US\$50 payable every three months to the Archives.

Promotional activities

The Palau National Archives is required to submit its quarterly reports to the Minister for Community and Cultural Affairs. In March 2003, all Ministries Bureaus, Divisions and agencies are required to submit their program's performance report to the Budget Office, Bureau of National Treasury, and Ministry of Health.

Project proposals

With the UNESCO funding for the 2003 Archives project, I have asked the Minister to locate a secure office space to store these appraised and processed records to await their microfilm preservation process. This will be the first major project for the Archives and due to lack of funding we cannot hire an expert consultant to assist in appraising these records. We will salvage all records, as they are records of limited value mixed with records of permanent value.

The Palau National Archives established its email in 1999. Our email address is archives@palaunet.com. We also have links with the Internet which we use to obtain information, such as the microfilm roll and frame number from the Trust Territory Index.

Samoa National Archives Project, Country Report for PARBICA 10

Correspondent: Mrs Ulrike Hertel, Museums and Archives Officer

Background

In 1990, a survey on all non-current records held by the Samoan government was conducted in cooperation with PARBICA. The survey found over 20 million items of archival value in the custody of Samoan government departments. However, there was no National Archives.

The Ministry of Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs of Samoa (since May 2003 the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture) is responsible for the preservation of cultural heritage; this includes the museum and archives projects.

After several years of very little success, there was a major breakthrough. An action plan to establish the National Archives of Samoa was approved by the Cabinet Development Committee (CDC) on 13 February 2001. This project included:

- seeking professional advice (archives consultant/volunteer);
- establishment of storage room for archives;
- accessioning, registration and creation of finding aids for archival material;
- computer scanning and indexing of other records;
- once rules are set which can establish if a document is confidential or free from access conditions, we can start servicing researchers;
- National Archives building (approved in principle as CDC proposal December 2001);
- archives legislation; and
- establishment of government records retention schedules.

The Ministry was also asked to establish an Archives Task Force.

Expert advice

Due to the absence of an archives specialist in Samoa, the recruitment of an archives consultant was considered crucial to assist staff of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs to achieve the project objectives. While the proposal requested a consultancy period of three to six months, the decision was made to first provide a three-week assignment, to help planning further steps to be taken.

From 27 August to 14 September 2001, the consultant Greg Coleman, Director of the Northern Territory Archives Service, gave advice and assisted with tasks relating to the establishment of the National Archives of Samoa. His visit was sponsored by the Australian government aid agency, AusAid.

A detailed report of his visit was published in the PARBICA *Panorama* newsletter. In summary, Greg's work included:

- specifications for renovation and refurbishing of the storage room at the Nelson Memorial Library;
- design brief for the National Archives building;
- draft of archives and records legislation;

- training in describing and accessing archives, using records rescued from unsuitable storage conditions and German file series at the Nelson Memorial Library; and
- report and recommendations to the management of the Ministry and for AusAid.

After the consultancy visit by the Director of the Northern Territory Archives a second phase volunteer was requested, and the terms of reference handed to Foreign Affairs. So far, there has been no confirmation for this requested consultancy.

The proposed tasks of this consultancy/volunteer assignment are as follows:

- training of archives staff in archival selection, accessioning, finding aids copying and access procedures;
- training of archives staff in records retention and disposal procedures and the application of records policies and procedures for agencies;
- production of archives management policies and procedure manuals;
- drafting of records retention schedules for selected Samoan Government departments and common government functions; and
- implementation of an appropriate computerised archives management system.

Storage and registration

In cooperation with the Nelson Memorial Library in Apia, a storage room was established on their premises. The room was renovated in December 2001, and it now has 24-hour airconditioning, concrete walls and a fire-resistant ceiling. In the Christmas holidays 2002, metal shelving and archival boxes arrived. Once part of the shelving was set up, the sorting of files into archival boxes began. Another storage room, a refurbished classroom, has now been provided at the Ministry's Headquarters.

Documents in the custody of the archives project are the files from the German Administration 1900-14 which were stored in crates at the

library, and government documents. These include police records and Chinese labourer files and financial records from the period between 1914 and the 1970s. These were rescued from a very unsuitable storage place. So far, over one hundred archival boxes have been filled and their contents registered.

Staffing

The total archives staff is made up of the Chief Museum/ Archives Officer and the Museum/ Archives Officer, who are also running the museum (opened 1999). Much archives registration work therefore has to be on overtime on Saturdays.

Registration and creation of backup copies

Until recently, file lists were written by hand in the storage room and then typed into the computer at the museum. It is planned to change this process to enter the documents into a DBText database directly at the storage room. The museum received a new computer from UNESCO and therefore the old museum computer could be shifted to the archives. DBText software has now been ordered. The library already uses DBText, as well as Public Service Commission, Treasury and several other government departments. A tentative DBText archives program, created by library consultant, Maureen Henninger for the archives project, is already stored on the library computer system.

So far, no backup copies are produced from the documents in the custody of the archives project. The exception to this is one project in cooperation with the Pacific Manuscript Bureau (PMB). In December 2002, Ewan Maidment on behalf of the PMB microfilmed four volumes with records of over 9 000 Melanesian labourers (employed by the German company DHPG from 1887 to 1912).

Research

Except for the use of the documents on Melanesian workers, and research on Church history in the German colonial times, which were approved by the Attorney General's Office, no other research work was done. This is also due to the fact that the Archives legislation is not yet established, so that there are no approved access rules for the documents. However we have had requests to use our material and they will need to be dealt with in the near future.

Archives building

The archives consultant, Greg Coleman, proposed a design brief for a building with 500 square metre storage space and 160 square metres for the reading room, processing rooms, offices and other facilities. A cost estimate by the Public Works Department for this building came to US \$500,000. The Samoan Cabinet approved in October the use of a quarter acre of land between the National University of Samoa (NUS) and the Polytechnic for the construction of the archives building, as set out in the design brief by the archives consultant.

A meeting between the Vice-Chancellor of the National University of Samoa and the Secretary of the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Cultural Affairs on 13 February 2003 confirmed that the archives building could be included in the proposal for development work at this site in cooperation with the Japanese government. At the date of writing (April 2004) there has been no definitive answer from the Japanese donors as to their agreement for the inclusion of this part of the project.

Archives legislation and government records retention schedules

Samoa presently does not have any archives legislation, national records retention schedules or freedom of information legislation. However, several departments have participated in institutional strengthening programs, which included the development of records management procedures and computerisation of records; most of these programs were initiated by the Public Service Commission (PSC) and supported by AusAid.

During Greg Coleman's assignment, a draft *Archives and Records Bill* was prepared for consideration. The draft bill was not primarily based on the old draft (1993–1997), which was similar to the now outdated New Zealand archives legislation (presently under revision), but is modelled on the *State Records Act 1998* of the Australian State of New South Wales. This Act was selected as the model because it is one of the most contemporary and comprehensive pieces of legislation on this subject.

Key provisions of the draft bill include:

- the establishment of the Archives and Records Authority of Samoa;

- records management responsibilities of government departments;
- protection of government records and archives;
- standards for records management and archiving; and
- public access to records and archives.

The revised draft from the Attorney General's Office then underwent further revision by the Archives Task Force, with valuable advice from overseas experts Emma Murray, Peter Orlovich, Greg Goulding and Greg Coleman. It is now being prepared for wider stakeholder consultations.

There were also consultations with the Public Service Commission (PSC) records manager and the PSC Institutional Strengthening Project consultant, regarding the development and implementation of archives and records management policies and procedures in consultation with government departments.

A Records Retention Schedule training course was implemented in September 2003 through the PSC AusAid In-Country Training Program. The course trainer was Emma Murray from Melbourne.

Through the initiatives of the International Records Management Trust and the World Bank, the Public Service Commission has become more involved in the international developments in this area. A representative of the Public Service Commission, Ms Amela Silipa, attended the Johannesburg Conference in September 2002 and organised the video and audio conference participation of Samoa in April 2003.

Archives Task Force

The Archives Task Force is made up of representatives from the Ministry of Finance Records and Aid Divisions, Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture, Nelson Memorial Library, National University of Samoa, Public Service Commission, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, and the Attorney General's Office. So far, it has met eight times; the ideas and discussions in this committee were of great positive impact to the project.

Outlook

Besides the construction of the archives building, the most important steps for the future will be the finalisation and passing of the archives legislation, and the development of national records retention recommendations or schedules.

The most needed assistance to the Samoan National Archives development at this stage would be expert advice. The second phase expert was requested from overseas, as there is not enough local expertise available, especially when dealing with the link between archives and records management in the electronic age.