

Vanuatu – Supreme Court Library & Attorney General's Library July 1993

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Just a brief note to bring you up to date on the Federal Court's project of providing library assistance to Vanuatu. I will be writing a longer article for a later edition of the journal.

I have just returned from a short trip to Port Vila, Vanuatu, working on the libraries in the Supreme Court and the Attorney-General's Office. I was ably assisted at the Court by two young men on probation from their twelve month prison sentence, and at the Attorney-General's Office by their library officer, Tountano Bakokoto. At times, any staff member with a few spare moments dropped in and lent a hand which was always welcome in the heat and humidity.



Supreme Court of Vanuatu

At the Court library, we unpacked eighty-one boxes of books, which meant reshelving nearly every book in the library to fit the new material in. We also sorted the texts by subject and the legislation by jurisdiction, classifying as many texts as possible. The main effort at the Attorney-General's library was

to clear out less valuable material to allow sufficient space in which to house the more useful parts of the collection.

At the end of my visit, the Supreme Court library had a reasonably good collection of law reports, including a complete set of the [Authorised] *Law Reports*, and the texts were partly classified and partly arranged in subject order. The Attorney-General's library had the reports in order, reference material collected in one place and the legislation arranged by jurisdiction.

The Supreme Court library has been named the "Heerey-Goldsborough Library" in honour of Justice Heerey and Mr Edwin Goldsborough (formerly of the Supreme Court of Vanuatu) in recognition of their extensive contribution to its development.

The Chief Justice of Vanuatu was very pleased with the results of all the hard work and did not hesitate to suggest that I stay longer or come back soon to work on the legislation, unreported judgments and texts. The Attorney also thought it a good idea for me to spend some weeks working with the library officer in his library. Everyone I came in contact with was very pleased to have our assistance and it was personally very rewarding to have the opportunity to contribute in such practical terms to a developing nation.

Western Samoa - Supreme Court and Attorney-General's Office Libraries

Lorraine Weinman

Lionel Murphy Library
Attorney-General's Department, Canberra

Rebecca Robinson and I have just returned from our second trip to Western Samoa. This is a very brief report of our three week visit. We commenced work after direct discussions with the Chief Justice, the

Secretary for Justice, and the Attorney-General and his staff, who were all delighted with the results evident at the end of our stay.

The Attorney-General's Office Library, which we organised last year, was still in reasonable shape. We had to do a lot of re-shelving, as space is critically short. (It is a room of only 26.5 square metres. They have about the same number of books as the Supreme Court has in double the space). We had to make lots of decisions about what was less used and might be double stacked, or shelved up high. (Shelves three-and-a-half metres high are really inaccessible, even to a giant Samoan).



Lorraine and Rebecca with some members of the Western Samoa Law Society.

The major work we did was with the Supreme Court library. Every item was taken down and either thrown away, or cleaned and re-shelved in a coherent order. The library had previously been organised quite haphazardly - the sequences ran from right to left, and would suddenly skip a shelf, move to the middle of the range and explode outwards in both directions. Finding the next bit of the run of *Queen's Bench* was quite a challenge.

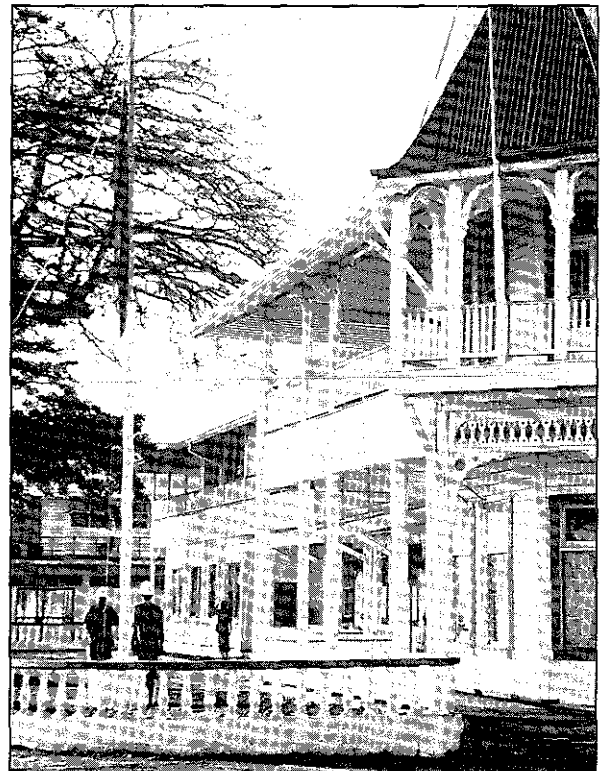
The text books had been shelved by author. Rebecca re-catalogued them all, classified them by Moys, and re-shelved them. I rearranged all the primary material and shelved it by jurisdiction.

All the bays are numbered now, and we will send them a holdings list that includes these numbers, for easy location and retrieval.

I invited the Law Society to come in and meet us as they use the library. We explained the new arrangement, and they were very enthusiastic, and very interested in, and grateful for, the twinning project. They want to become more involved in what they see as a "new" library, have asked for a report to their Council, and are planning to offer to contribute to the upkeep of one of the sets like the NZLR.

To me the major difference this year was that we were greeted as friends. The contact through the year, plus the second visit proved we were not just "flash in the pan" aid, we were genuinely committed to maintaining these libraries.

I would like to write a more detailed account of the work done on this visit for another edition of the *Australian Law Librarian*.



Western Samoa Supreme Court with Attorney-General's Department in the background