

PACIFIC NEWS

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INAUGURAL ALLG PACIFIC LIBRARIES SCHOLARSHIP

As mentioned in the National Convenor's column, the winner of the Inaugural ALLG Pacific Libraries Scholarship was **Jenny Binihi**, Assistant Librarian at the University of South Pacific in Vanuatu. Jenny, currently President of the Vanuatu Library Association, is a qualified librarian who is now studying for a law degree. The scholarship enabled the winner to attend the 9th Special, Health and Law Libraries Conference in Melbourne in August and to participate in a work placement programme for a week. Congratulations to Jenny on her success!

There were three other applicants for the scholarship from Papua New Guinea and Fiji. The Selection Panel was impressed with these applications and consequently decided to seek sponsorship so that all three could attend the Conference in Melbourne and have the opportunity to work in another library for a week. The Panel sincerely thanks the

following sponsors who were so ready to assist:

Commonwealth DPP

Sponsor for Mr **Shalen Kumar**,
Fiji DPP Library.

Thomson Legal & Regulatory

Sponsor for Mrs **Miriam Walo**,
UPNG Law Library.

ALLG (Tasmania) and ALLG (ACT)

Joint sponsors for Ms **Mina Shandil**,
Fiji Attorney-General's Library.

The ALLG (Tasmania and ACT) also provided accommodation for all three librarians.

ALLG (Victorian Division)

Assistance with work placement, billets and daily expenses.

Mr Shalen Kumar was kindly offered a shared placement in the Commonwealth DPP Library and the Victorian OPP Library, which will provide him with excellent experience.

ALTA CONFERENCE 2001

Parliamentary Library, Vanuatu

A morning was set aside for law librarians to meet during the Australasian Law Teachers Association (ALTA) Conference held in Vanuatu in July. Although only four law

librarians attended the conference, **Peter Murgatroyd**, Librarian at the University of the South Pacific (USP) in Vila, arranged two interesting library tours. First we visited the new Parliament building where the Librarian Mrs **Leiwia Moli** showed us the new library with beautiful wooden stacks down one side and study tables down the other. In her office Mrs Moli has an Internet connection through which she can connect to the Commonwealth Parliament and other useful sites. The Parliament only sits twice a year but Members of the Committees are often there during the non-sitting periods. If anyone needs legislation from Vanuatu I am sure Mrs Moli would be a willing contact. The email address is Biblparle@vanuatu.com.au.

Supreme Court Library, Vanuatu

From the Parliament we went on to the Supreme Court Library. This is located downstairs in the old (1912) wooden Court-House. It is a small collection with compactus shelving containing serials and about ten bays of wooden shelves with texts. There is no librarian at the Supreme Court but the Chief Justice's clerk has a desk at the entrance to the library. He is responsible for maintaining the collection. The Federal Court of Australia is twinned with the Supreme Court Library and regularly sends generous donations of material. This assistance is greatly appreciated. The judges and clerk in the Supreme Court unfortunately do not yet have access to the

Internet which, given the small collection, would be an asset.

University of the South Pacific Library

Peter Murgatroyd kindly spent some time showing me the USP Library. The focus of the collection is naturally on Pacific material and there is a good collection of legislation and reports from the different jurisdictions. Peter has recently installed a new library system, Athena. He has two assistants working with him one of whom, Jenny Binihi, was the successful applicant for the inaugural ALLG Pacific Libraries Scholarship to attend the 9th Special, Health and Law Libraries Conference in Melbourne (see above).

LAUNCH OF PacLII

Andrew Mowbray and **Philip Chung** from AustLII were at ALTA to launch the new Pacific law database, PacLII, which will operate under a similar agreement with AustLII as that held with BAILII. This will make Pacific materials more easily accessible. PacLII is a joint venture between the University of the South Pacific School of Law and AustLII.

KIRIBATI

Lorraine Weinman recently spent six weeks as an AESOP volunteer assisting in the Parliamentary Library, Kiribati. Following is her interesting account of the visit:

The Library at the Edge of the World

Donne wrote of 'the round earths imagin'd corners'. When I watched the Pacific Ocean rolling in over the reef around South Tarawa, I too felt that I was on the very edge of our round world. A tiny speck of sand in a huge, wide waterworld. A step in any direction and I would fall over the edge, out of the twenty-first century into a world of deep oceans, sailing canoes, seabirds and incredibly bright starry skies.

It is an extraordinarily beautiful country, inhabited by wonderful, happy people. Rising sea levels threaten their tiny, low-lying atolls, but they are optimistic that their land will survive.

*I went to Kiribati on an AESOP project to sort out their Parliamentary Library. A move from their old thatch-roofed Maneaba (House of Assembly) to a new complex had seen the library collection badly mixed up and left in piles on the floor. Mine was the third AESOP library project in Kiribati – **Nick Pengelly** did the Attorney General's library in 1996 and **Jacqueline Elliott** went out to the High Court library in 1999.*

I took four large boxes of library stationery. In addition to the usual pens and pencils, glue and sticky tape, I took sixty pamphlet boxes, a two-drawer catalogue cabinet and many

packets of catalogue cards. I could not have worked without all this.

*When I got there most of the material had been picked up from the floor and - still totally jumbled - now filled 135 shelves. I spent two weeks just sorting it into rational groupings. A great deal of it was in Kiribati, - Laws, Parliamentary Debates, Committee Reports – perhaps 2000 of the 9000 items. My two helpers, **Milliema** and **Matere**, worked hard at sorting, translating as they went.*

There was a great deal of material from Australia (particularly from the Federal and NSW Parliamentary Libraries) and New Zealand. The APLS current awareness publications are invaluable to this information-poor country.

The mid-year session of Parliament commenced while I was there. MPs came in from their far-flung outer islands, where they have no staff, no electricity, no 'normal' communication systems. They travelled circuitous routes by boat and chartered aircraft to get to Tarawa, the main island. (Kiribati consists of 33 little islands and atolls spread across 3500 kilometres of ocean.)

They were delighted to find their library was being organised and I was delighted to be able to help them to find things.

At the end of six weeks I had shelved everything in a logical order, catalogued and classified all the textbooks, written and filed over a thousand catalogue cards, listed all the groups of material in the library, including all the Parliamentary reports, and trained Milliema in basic library tasks. Everything was organised to be as simple and self-sufficient as possible.

This library has no press-clipping service because it buys no newspapers, no connection to the Internet, and no automated catalogue. But staff and Members can now find the basic things they need and they have pride in a new facility that they know they can look after. And I have a wonderful sense of satisfaction in having been able to give it to them.



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