



Laban calls for more investment in Pacific media research



PACIFIC MEDIA CENTRE UPDATES 2

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Pacific Island Affairs Minister Luamanuvao Winnie Laban has challenged New Zealand media and educational institutions to boost investment in research and coverage.

Speaking at the launch of the Pacific Media Centre, she said the occasion was “tangible proof” that AUT University had stepped up to the plate and was demonstrating sector leadership.

“This centre demonstrates that commitment to our cultural diversity, but also to critical thinking and the pursuit of excellence,” she said.

Laban said Maori and Pacific issues needed to have a far greater representation in academic research, mirroring the growing participation of Pacific and Maori peoples in broader society.

She said AUT more than held its own in terms of providing “meaningful access” to Pacific students. Last year, 11 percent of the university’s student body was made up of Pacific students – “well up on the national average of around 6 percent”.

“In providing this centre as part of your strategic planning, AUT is making a significant contribution to New Zealand’s academic growth,” she said.

The minister said the 2006 performance-based research fund (PBRF) audit showed a relatively low quality score for communications, journalism and media studies research across New Zealand universities.

The assessment clearly identified this as an area where improvements could be made, with institutions needing to promote and stimulate such research.

“This centre, and dedicated resources like it, can only lift and enhance the quality of research being undertaken, and I have no doubt that this will be the case.”

Laban also made a personal tribute to the centre director, associate professor David Robie.

“Thank you for your work in the Asia-Pacific region and thank you for being a strong advocate for high-quality journalism, accountability and a free press in the Pacific,” she said.

In recent weeks, the centre has funded a variety of media research projects including:

- “Journalist-in-residence” initiatives;
- A pilot documentary on nickel mining, industrial relations and the media in New Caledonia;
- The Ngatihine forestry land controversy and the media in Northland in the 1970s;



Minister Luamanuvao Winnie Laban and PMC director David Robie — unveiling the new PMC logo plaque. Photo: Alan Koon

- The *Pacific Media Watch* digital repository archive; and
- The Fiji coups and democracy.

The centre publishes *Pacific Journalism Review* and the PMC website. It has also organised a series of seminars on the state of the media.

Minister’s full speech:

www.beehive.govt.nz/ViewDocument.aspx?DocumentID=30989

Visiting guest seminar speakers

Oct 18: **Trish Carter**, former head of Al Jazeera’s Asia-Pacific bureau in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Sept 27: Maori Television’s *Native Affairs* presenter **Julian Wilcox**.

Aug 10: *Scoop* co-editor and Pacific correspondent **Selwyn Manning**.

Launching of *Pou Kōrero*

Aug 27: AUT Chancellor **Sir Paul Reeves** launched **Carol Archie’s** new book on reporting Maori and current affairs (published by the NZ Journalists Training Organisation) on the Nga Wai O Horotiu Marae.

Publication of *Pacific Journalism Review*

A joint edition of *PJR* with a “digital democracy” theme was published by the University of the South Pacific’s School of Literature, Arts and Media and AUT University’s Pacific Media Centre in October. www.pjreview.info