

**Event report for
Book2Buk
11th – 12th August, 2008 UPNG Waigani Campus**

**John Evans, Manager
UPNG Press and Bookshop**

"There is only the unknown and the known – in between there are books"

1. Theme and goal

The theme "Books : Sources of information, inspiration and education" was suggested by Prof. Crocombe. Both this theme and the goal "To celebrate and advance the role of books in preserving the heritage of Papua New Guinea" were extremely suitable for the two days and can continue to be worked on and towards at future events.

The meeting was run in association with the 2008 Waigani Seminar – the first since 1997 - and was organized by UPNG Press and Bookshop. It was an unabashed reflection of the book culture and a chance to meet those who have made significant contributions to PNG and Pacific books.

It was also intended to draw attention to the improved facility at UPNG Bookshop. Certainly the event did build on the slow but steady re-establishment of the bookshop – and there have been increasing numbers of visitors as a result.

What was also welcome was the presence of the UPNG hierarchy through attending and making presentations giving the assurance of higher level support that is needed for progress. MSL take note!

2. Events

The proceedings have been recorded so this provides only the briefest summary of events.

2.1. Inauguration of the “permanent” Papua New Guinea Book Fair at UPNG Bookshop – Monday 11 August 0900-1000 meeting at MLT

The recent visit of MV Doulos had brought about considerable activity in terms of book buying at various ports in the country. The ship had just left leaving us the opportunity to point out the permanent nature of the bookshop as unlike MV Doulos an enhanced local book trade will be a ship that will not sail away.

Camilus Narakobi, Chairman of UniVentures, UPNG Pro-Chancellor was able to provide the latest information on the creation of Univentures and on the prospects for the future. In particular he announced that funds were to be made available for publishing projects to further this aspect of the UPNG Press and Bookshop once more.

After starting at the Main Lecture Theatre the audience moved to the Bookshop led by the pipes for a tour of inspection led by the pipes – a welcome assertion that the Bookshop was indeed a part of university life.

2.2. “Books – the source? – reflections on their role” - MLT – 1000-1200

Welcoming and contextual remarks were provided by the Chair Prof. John Waiko. It is noted that it was indeed pleasant to have the organizers (two Ronnies) of the first and the subsequent Waigani seminars here to speak. In all the morning panel had produced a library full of books on PNG and the Pacific so no more significant a group could address this topic.

Ron Crocombe, Emeritus Prof.,USP -- awaiting his notes

Ron May, ANU - outlined the varied history of ANU Press (closed), ANU school publications, Pandanus Press (closed) and now ANU e-press (success at last!). There was a large amount of valuable material produced which is now very scarce – in addition much that had been produced about PNG is not available here. There need to be ways and means of changing that.

Max Quanchi, QUT – As he was discussing Papua photographs in the main seminar – this presentation concentrated on an account of TTPF The Teaching the Pacific Forum. This was well a funded project on Pacific history which produced many publications – some of which are available in electronic form – as outlined.

A mini version of this extensive project might be useful in PNG. Certainly it is hoped that Dr Quanchi (photography, reference) can assist in developing versions of publications adapted to our needs.

2.3. Books in education –about writing and books from UPNG staff - 1300-1500 MLT

Bernard Minol coordinated a panel of UPNG authors - philosophers, historians and literary figures – who gave an account of their experiences and showcased a wide range of exciting works. The main conclusion is that writing was indeed alive and well at the university and that there was a wonderful set of talents amongst us.

See Annex 1 for details. There will be a booklet of the works presented.

2.4. Access to books “Where there is no library (and that’s not unusual!)”

Chair – John Evans, UPNG Press and Bookshop 1530-1700 MLT

“If he shall not lose his reward who gives a cup of water to his thirsty neighbour, what will not be the reward of those who by putting books into the hands of those neighbours, open to them the fountains of eternal life” Thomas A Kempis

The lack of libraries has received some media coverage over recent months – this panel provided a less bleak scenario and all had been involved in one way with the UPNG Bookshop in developing their plans. The main problem was with the mainstream or traditional libraries and the panel showed there was ample scope for successful new initiatives.

NGO initiatives included

Buk bilong Pikinini, Anne-Sophie Morainis – working with disadvantaged children in hospitals and institutions - 2 successful projects

Leditami Group; Selmah Lawrence – projects to re-establish libraries with a focus on women and self help in Port Moresby – anticipated start in February 2009

Southern Highlands Hope – Joe Pereap – libraries based on large book donations from Hope Worldwide and being set up in the Southern Highlands Province. Local people meeting freight costs from POM.

Networking opportunities included:-

UPNG Open Campus - Prof. A. Mannan, Director, outlined that the university had a ready made network in place which offered considerable potential as a library network and as a network of book sales outlets.

State Library of Queensland initiatives – These had involved Motsy David, UPNG, Tory Jones, SLQ gave a presentation on the Indigenous Knowledge Centers opening in Quuensland that had gained the interest of Carol Kidu and the Department of Community Development. It was hoped to trial this kind of model here. The SLQ – PNG arrangements are developing in various areas (annexed).

Rural High Schools - John Volmer, ICT Division, PNG Dept. of Education outlined what was being done to enhance access to ICT and to information at rural disadvantaged high schools. He provided a demonstration of TALIS – a server based system which uses information material provided by the bookshop. In addition the bookshop is providing textbooks for the schools.

2.5. Role of booksellers, publishers, researchers and the web

Tuesday 12th August MLT 0900 – 1030

Chair: Danny Aloi, School of Business Administration, UPNG

Robert Brown, Pictorial Press and a pioneer bookseller and publisher in Papua New Guinea gave an account of the exciting times in the 1970s when there were numerous book business and many interesting books were successfully put on the market. At present UPNG Press had high hopes of reviving some of the book series – and of reprinting some of the scarcer items.

Prof. Subba Rao, School of Business Administration, UPNG, mentioned the initiative of producing localized co-published versions of his successful textbooks with Himalaya Publishers. This could be extended to other texts and other publishers and offered a way of reducing costs while still providing quality and relevant books. In these cases the initiative became more of a PNG one – a move away and in contrast to other Indian book projects in PNG.

TH Slone, Masalai Press, Oakland, Ca. – Tom Slone outlined experiences – which were varied enough as he has been involved in bookselling to UPNG Bookshop and publishing a major PNG collection of stories the “1001 nights” under his Masalai Press imprint. In addition he has been developing web resources relating to PNG. A book series of 10 volumes had been in planning for several years and would now finally be coming out this year – it was at GPO at press.

Academic journals- Peter Yearwood, SHSS, UPNG, outlined issues involved in maintaining from the successful UPNG journal South Pacific Journal of Philosophy and Culture. There were other UPNG journals that were less noticeable for their success!!

Dictionaries and reference works – Anne Turner outlined her work on the Historical Dictionary of Papua New Guinea and other book projects. It was hoped that she would assist with producing a range of local reference publications at less cost based

The presence of School of Business Administration staff did serve to reinforce the fact that books were very much a business and one that really needed to re-establish itself in the country to assist in development.

2.6. Books for inspiration 1100-1200, MLT

This took the form of a panel of announcements and launches of new publications – Chair, Prof. Isi Kevau, SMHS

Pari - Prof. Ian Maddocks gave the background to his work in the village and proudly launched the first 2 volumes of a 3 volume work “Pari Hanua”. This was to be launched in the village the following Sunday.

A4D – Peter Ella (who designed the covers for Pari Hanua) detailed the posters produced for UPNG Bookshop under support of the Media for Development Initiative (MDI). These were on several themes. Nimo Kama of MDI witnessed the launch and gave a briefing on MDI and their potential role in supporting community communication projects.

Introducing Bob Brown – the cartoonist was selling books and T-shirts at the venue and gave an inspiring account of his career. He was of the opinion that cartoons were of much more interest than posters!!

Tony Power – Had put many of his significant works on a CD to increase ease of access. The compilation was now available from UPNG Press for the first time. In addition another CD “The Magistrates Manual of

Papua New Guinea" was mentioned this arose from permission given by the Commonwealth of Australia to reprint law books. The book reprints will take more time.

Aitape – Prof. Hugh Davies, SNPS and PNG Dept. of Mines was able to launch his report on the Aitape disaster at this venue.

2.7 Don't forget to remember MLT 1315-1430

Books and other devices in support of local history, biography and local knowledge. Chair – August Kituai

"How can we live without our lives? How will we know it's us without our past?" Steinbeck, The grapes of wrath.

This focused on the all important issue of publishing local history – contributions came from:-

Stephen Pokawin, Manus' other Meads (Provincial history of Manus based on radio broadcasts)
Kekalem Nork, Gardens and local history in Buang LLG, Mr Nork is one of early graduates and custodian of the Tarot songs – he promises a compilation of these;
Writing local and family history – Madi Roua – also was selling several volumes of his father's books at the display area
My gun my brother – August Kituai – Oral history of PNG police, published by University of Hawaii – also mentioned in Dr Minol's session
Tukul Kaiku – New Ireland – work in progress – original articles and collecteana from Jim Ridges

In most cases there would be considerable progress by next year.

2.8 Pacific publishing 1500-1630

This consisted of PNG launches of books from the Institute of Pacific Studies by Prof. Crocombe. Unfortunately Prof. Crocombe also had to inform the group of the closure of IPS, USP owing to budgetary problems.

Copies were available of the following

South Pacific – 8th ed. – Ron Crocombe
Asia and the Pacific – Ron Crocombe

Almost all other IPS books were now available at the Bookshop.

Dr Nicholas Garnier, Director, Alliance Francais also introduced the audience to significant books about the region from France and from within the region. He was also compiling a bibliography on the French researches in the Pacific.

This was a valuable session as looking forward the Bookshop should take a greater interest in stocking books about the Pacific and Melanesia.

"For the things that are kept are always 'realities', which transport an individual or group back to another time, which place them once again before their origins, before the origin" Godelier, The enigma of the gift (trans. Scott)

2.9 Concluding remarks (1630)

Our future plans – Prof. Ross Hynes for UniVentures – Notes and comments are appended in order to complete this element of the report.

1. Active use of academic school book purchase allocations for restocking the MS and Taurama Medical Libraries with relevant reference and small sets of course reference texts. Note – Bursar needs to provide indicative figures to the IRC Committee.
2. Student book allowances to move through bookshop. Note – This already happens but allowances are in urgent need of review – action is needed by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors.
3. Book lists nominated by schools on a priority basis. Note – This will be facilitated by selection from what is in a broadening range of stock at bookshop. A new process for library acquisition is also called for – and will be presented to the IRC Committee.
4. Approval for UniPress [the publishing function] to invest K200,000 in producing appropriate reprints. Note – refers to approval of internal loan.
5. Eventually provide a print-on-demand capacity at the UPNG Press and Bookshop. Note – needs to be time specific and build on links to UQ Press where discussions have taken place over the last few years. (annexed)
6. Libraries established in all 22 PNG Regional Open College DL centers.
7. Establish small bookshops in all 22 OCDL centers and then at the Honiara Open Campus. Note – Internal discussions are underway.
8. Continuously upgrade the security systems of the UPNG libraries
9. Advertise and fill all Senior Library positions. Parallel this with the filling of related IT Senior positions.
10. Independently review and recommend and implement crucial actions for the revitalization of the MS library and its modernization, including a/c and floor covering.
11. Work cooperatively with collaborative partners in and out of country to maximize improvements to library management and the provision of access to:-
 - Both hard copy books – through the above actions
 - Digital information through a greatly improved and strengthened Broadband system

3. Practical matters

The event was organized by John Evans with reports and contributions to the main Waigani Seminar organizing committee. In general this worked well in terms of getting things done – though the linkages proved to be rather too loose in terms of promotion and general administrative support for Book2Buk. I did not have time to arrange catering and see to much advertisement.

A shorter Waigani Seminar has a lot to be said for it – and the extra 2 days and usefully be used on this collateral book related event. They need to be more coherently seen as a whole week university activity in terms of administrative support.

This was of necessity mainly focused on UPNG – but will broaden in future as we hope this becomes an annual event. The main intent was to gain some publicity for the bookshop – rather than cater for outside interest. We did gain valuable information on where it would be best to locate displays and could build into next year. There could have been far more participation by UPNG Departments involved in publication – doubtless a publicity thing!

Musical interludes by Bagpiper Ilaita Gigimat and the PNG Pipe Band Association – information on the Association was given by Mr. Gigimat. This proved to be an useful form of entertainment in the circumstances – much easier to arrange than the dancing and other groups.

Collateral events were

- All week 11-15 August Display of books at Michael Somare Library relating to past Wiagnai Seminars
- 11-14 August 630pm – Forum area - evening film shows – arranged by Dr. Garnier – with projectionists fees covered by Bookshop.

These both seem to have been useful and well attended and worth including in future plans.

Edward Wolfers, University of Wollongong – provided a paper on PNG books – that is attached to the report – annex 2.

Tom Slone – His presentation on the folklore compilation moved to main Waigani Seminar. He also gave a training session given on web bookselling to bookshop staff.

4. Problem areas

Attendance by students in particular could have been better - as the overall presentations were of a high standard and offered much of a historical perspective for those about to go forward in these areas.

Communications were problematic all through – and the late release of programmes for the Waigani Seminar did impact. Lack of website and poor web support – was a real hindrance. Flyers did go on www.pngbuai.com

5. Financial

The event cost very little – some logistic costs and small spare part purchases were covered by the bookshop, say K1200 – plus adverts of K1600. Our only paid for visitor was Tom Slone and his costs could be covered by Waigani Seminar as he spoke there – or considered as an advance on royalty payments.

6. Conclusion

I certainly found the whole thing most informative and it formed a link between the vibrant past and what should be a new and vibrant future.

Activities illustrated the theme and moved us towards the goal. The high level support given is a significant step in ensuring the success of these ventures – and many seeds were sown to be harvested next year.

Judging from comments that came back from participants well versed in the ways of seminars – they found it to be a valuable and well organized experience.

It is certainly worth repeating the combo next year – if a date can be released early then more speakers and attendees will be secured (half of ANU?). The focus would be more on Melanesia. It could be worth taking up Ron Crocombe's idea on a change of title for the overall seminar series. There could be a thread on lower cost books – more on this when I complete report on Delhi Book Fair – as our long term contact in India – Mr. SK Ghai is now elected Chair of the Book industry panel of CAPEXIL – a Government of India body.

Mini book sales could be held say one Saturday a month on the campus (not clashing with Ela and other markets – with a similar mix of film shows, entertainment and talks. The only problem would be security. Feedback (Norah Vagi Brash) would indicate that poetry readings, story telling and performance of all kinds should take a prominent part in university life in future (as it was in the past).

7. Future Book2Buk

Next year could be Book2Bukchain – to concentrate on the various elements in the Book chain – including reading development and information literacy.

Annex 1

Campus Authors

Russell Soaba:

- Wanpis
- Maiba
- Kwamra plus
- Short stories, poems and articles published in Journals both in-country and international

Regis Stella

- Moments in Melanesia
- Gutsini Posa
- Imagining the Other (University of Hawai'i Press)
- Poems, stories, articles, papers on literature published both within and International Journals

Steven Winduo

- Lomo'ha I am in Spirit's Voice I Call (1991)
- Hembemba: Rivers of the Forest (2001)
- Editor of Savannah Flames: A PNG Journal of Literature
- Plus many stories, poems, articles published in both in- country and international Journals

Sakarepe Kamene

- Zia writers

August Kituai

- Flight of a Villager
- My Brother, My Gun

Pascal Waisi

- Manuscript in preparation for publication
- Poems published in journals

Melissa Aigilo

- Falling Foliage (2005)
- Poems published Journals both here and overseas

David Kombako

- Collection of poetry in preparation for publishing

Books in Education- University Authors Segment

Program

- Master of Ceremonies: Dr. Bernard Minol
1. Introduction Bernard Minol
2. Poetry Recital in Chant Pascal Waisi
3. Discussions
- Russell Soaba
 - Regis Stella
 - Pascal Waisi
4. Poetry Recital David Kombako
5. Discussions
- August Kituai

Dr. Kituai highlighted some of the issues from his book, My Brother, My Gun. Members of the PNG Constabulary were allowed to do extraordinary things during their day's work in the field. Often the punishment they gave were harsh and cruel and beyond the set colonial rules and code of conduct expected of colonial officials. Much of what described in the book has been corroborated using books, patrol reports, interviews and talking with informants.
 - Sakarepe Kamene

Mr. Sakarape Kamene spoke on the Zia Writers project that he and Dr. Winduo started among the Zia Community in the Morobe Province. The main aim was to get people in the community to write stories about themselves and their village community. Many attended the workshop and started writing their stories which when published created great excitement within the Zia Community and outside.

Mr. Kamene spoke of how he has run a number of courses in several settlements in Port Moresby and in the town of Wewak. In Wewak the demand is big and he has been asked to return and run a few more workshops. According to Mr. Kamene people have many many stories they want to write but they need someone to encourage and help them.
 - Melissa Aigilo

Ms. Melissa Aigilo spoke of her early interest in reading and literature at a very young age. She decided she would be a writer early and when she came to UPNG she majored in Literature and took the creative writing courses offered in the Strand. She published her first Collection of Poetry call, Falling Foliage, while she was still a student.
6. Power Point Presentation Steven Winduo
- Got the audience to participate by reading a poem he wrote when he was in the United States..
7. Question time
- .8. Close

Introduction by Bernard Minol

Papua New Guinea has in excess of 800 cultures and languages. All of them were oral or talking cultures. Our ancestors passed their “remembered” knowledge, wisdom and lore to their children and grand children by way of talking and the same technique is still being used in many communities in PNG today. Papua New Guineans have exceptionally good memories. The books and the tape recorders were not necessary. What the ancestors wanted to preserve was stored in stories like legends, myths, sayings, carvings, songs, rituals and performance.

Even when the missionaries introduced western education and the knowledge of writing and reading the newly converted did not immediately embrace the skill and the facility of the written word. I believe Osea Linge of New Ireland was the first Papua New Guinean to take pen and paper and commit his story of himself in book form. However it was not until the establishment of the UPNG that Papua New Guineans developed confidence and skills to write. The man responsible for creating this nursery at UPNG was Ulli Beier. Ulli Beier and colleague Pritchandra Chakravarti not only started creative writing classes; they also established two journals namely Kovave and the Papua Pocket Poets (PPP) as outlets for student writing. The other outlet that carried writing from students or campus writers in those early days was the Papua New Guinea Writing.

During this initial phase of creativity the books that put PNG writers on the map were Vincent Eri’s novel The Crocodile, Maori Kiki’s autobiography, Ten Thousand Years In a Lifetime and Kumalau Tawali’s first anthology of poetry, Signs in the Sky. In fact The Crocodile was written as part of the creative writing course that Eri enrolled in with Ulli Beier. At this juncture I wish to acknowledge that outside this campus nursery, Paulias Matane had already written his first book after his stint as school inspector in the Highlands Region. The book, Kum Tumun of Minj, was first published in 1965.

Many of these student writers have graduated and have gone on to do greater things like late Vincent Eri, Rabbie Namaliu, John Waiko, Arthur Jawodimbari, the late Kumalau Tawali, Enos Apisai, John Kadiba, Leo Hannef, Kasaipwalova, Russell Soaba, Michael Yaka Mel etc. But successive younger generations on campus read the poems, plays, stories and novels and continued to be inspired by these pioneers. John Kasaipwalova speaks of the “reluctant flame” that refuses to die and Kumalau Tawali’s “Bush Kanaka Speaks” which for the first time rebukes the colonial masta.

The reluctant flame John Kasaipwalova talked about in his famous poem still burns on campus. After Ulli Beier’s departure creative writing courses have continued to be taught at UPNG. In the 1980s as well as Russell Soaba the other important writer writing out of Campus was Nora Vagi Brash. Nora started writing while a student of Literature and then wrote plays when she joined the National Theatre Company. In the 1990s among the campus writers were writers like Regis Stella who edited “Moments in Melanesia”; Sorariba Nash who published one collection of short stories, A Medal Without Honour; Steven Winduo who published his first collection of poetry, “Lomo’ha I am , in Spirit’s Voice I Call (1991)

Annually our students graduate taking with them the skills to write their own stories about the world around them. When Kovave and PPP disappeared they were replaced by Ondobondo, PNG Writers, Bikmaus, and now the Savannah Flames. Waigani Campus continues to inspire, encourage, nurture and promote writers as new waves of students pass through. Poet Melissa Aigilo is the newest Campus Author to publish. Her collection is call Falling Foliage was published the Melanesian and Pacific Studies (MAPS) centre at UPNG.

Waigani Campus was the cradle from which writing in PNG emerged and I am happy to report that it still continues to provide that creative environment. It is still the only campus in PNG that can boast of writers whose works are being studied throughout the Pacific and internationally. Waigani campus is also one of the few campuses in the South Pacific where young writers study under the tutelage of seasoned and professional writers.

This afternoon I am happy to introduce to you some of our writers on Campus. Some of them are new writers, some not so new and others like Russell Soaba and August Kituai were part of the Ulli Beier period in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The writers who will be sharing their experiences with us today are:

Annex 2

PUBLISHING ‘HOMEGROWN’ PAPUA NEW GUINEAN BOOKS

Edward P. Wolfers, CSM CMG
Professor of Politics
University of Wollongong
NSW, Australia

Paper prepared for ‘Book2Buk – Talking about PNG Books’

Waigani Campus
University of Papua New Guinea

11-12 August 2008

Introduction

The University of Papua New Guinea, with the generous support of the PNG Sustainable Program Ltd, will shortly be publishing a series of ‘home-grown’ works by Papua New Guineans. This short paper is intended to outline the context and character of the project.

Context

The existence, spread and development of the Internet, together with improved means of access, mean that humanity may well be at an historical turning-point as significant for the dissemination of information, ideas, and products of creative imagination as the discovery or acquisition of literacy, or the invention of the printing press.

On the one hand, some custom-bound, sceptical readers, writers, and publishers might feel that the Internet will prove to be a passing fad. In this way, they will resemble scribes who had previously written on vellum and were reluctant to change when the first printing presses appeared (much as schoolteachers in Australia, or at least NSW, insisted more recently that students continue to use pens with nibs and inkwells long after ballpoints became readily available).

However, on the other hand, it could be that the book, at least in the form in which it is currently known – as a number of pages bound together – is destined for what has been called that ‘great dust-heap of history’¹. The garbage is, certainly, the place where many librarians consign increasing numbers of books and journals that they believe (not always correctly) are available online. In doing so, they display little regard to possible future changes in technology – which have already meant that materials which were once available in one medium only a few years ago are not always readily accessible when the technology and the medium change. One outcome is that readers and researchers who rely on the Internet tend to be limited to those sources which are available online (which, at least until recently, has often meant classics already out of copyright, and, in the case of many scholarly journals, only comparatively recent issues). Another outcome of relying on the Internet, a product of its relative openness to public participation, is that it is becoming increasingly difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish between self-published and other, professionally edited and / or refereed works.

In Papua New Guinea, as in many other developing countries, access to the Internet is still available to only a very small part of the population. According to figures which are themselves available on the Internet, 170,000 people or 2.8% of people in Papua New Guinea (including both citizens and non-citizens) had

¹ The expression has been attributed variously to Augustine Birrell (1850-1933), a British essayist and politician, and to the Russian revolutionary, Leon Trotsky.

access to the Internet as at the end of 2007; this is the second lowest percentage in the South Pacific (after Solomon Islands), and one of the lowest in the world - though the number of Papua New Guineans with access to the Internet appears to be growing quite fast (by 25.9% between 2000-2007).² In areas of Papua New Guinea where people do not have access to electricity, telephone-lines or affordable computers, which is probably the case in most rural villages, access is probably close to non-existent. However, the invention and manufacture of solar-powered computers costing as little as US\$100 – and their distribution to schools, where children can be taught how to use them – means that current low access to the Internet could be no more than a passing phase³ (similar to the time when access to radio was limited before transistor radios – and now wind-up and solar-powered radios - became readily available at prices which many Papua New Guineans can afford).

We do not yet know the impact that access to texts by portable or hand-held receivers is likely to have on reading. Is the contemporary preference of many adults to print out what they intend to read – thereby increasing demand for paper and ink⁴, and, as a frequent consequence, the costs of reproducing individual texts – an innate human characteristic? Or is it generational? Will children who grow up with devices such as Amazon's Kindle or SONY's PRS-500 feel as comfortable reading on a screen as many older people feel when curled up with a good book? Is the way in which people read texts on the Internet changing the way that we read – and so really ‘making us stupid’, as a recent writer on the subject has suggested?⁵

In any event, the reality is that, even as the volume of literature on the Internet grows, there are still many works not available online. Even when they are, books and other documents which were once – and sometimes still are – readily available in libraries, where they can be read without hindrance or charge, are increasingly limited to people who are privileged to have passwords or the ability to pay for access (in some cases, they are put online, and then, in effect, taken off as far as many prospective readers are concerned). This is true even of documents produced by bodies like the United Nations, which claim to promote transparency and accountability, and are, in practice, actually limiting access – and so the public's right to know. The growing practice of placing such vitally important documents as Papua New Guinea's laws online⁶ – and ceasing to publish or, at least, to distribute the print copies which were once held at government posts around the country – is, in effect, limiting public access, at least until access to the Internet becomes more widespread.⁷

² 2

Internet World Stats, at online <http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats6.htm>; accessed 10/8/2008.

³ 3

See ‘One Laptop per Child, at online <http://laptop.org/>; accessed 10/8/2008.

⁴ Thereby rendering the long-promised ‘paperless office’ an ever-more distant prospect at a time when resource use and environmental sustainability are increasingly critical global issues.

⁵ 5

Nicholas Carr, ‘Is Google Making Us Stupid?’, The Atlantic Online, July-August 2008, online <http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/print/200807/google>; accessed 10/8/2008.

⁶ 6

At online <http://www.paclii.org>

⁷ 7

Edward P. Wolfers, ‘Issues and Challenges in Access to Law via Computers and the Internet in Papua New Guinea – A consumer’s Perspective’, paper presented for the 7th Conference on Computerisation of Law via the Internet, University of the South Pacific – Emalus Campus, Port Vila, Vanuatu, 17-19 November 2005; available online at <http://bar.austlii.edu.au/other/CompLRes/2005/24.html>

Literacy has been a critical factor in many different aspects of development: the imposition of uniform laws throughout Papua New Guinea; dissemination of information about health risks and ways of improving human wellbeing, as well as knowledge and skills which contribute to human mastery over nature through enhanced agricultural practices and technology; the spread of religious doctrines; and the ability of people to acquire and contribute to knowledge, and enjoy texts. Literacy is critical to many forms of education, aspects of government, and, especially, bureaucracy.

Available statistics show that 57.3% of Papua New Guineans aged 15 and over and 66.7% aged between 15 and 24 are literate. Sixty-nine percent of children who enter grade 1 progress through to grade 5 at primary school. When compared with other developing countries, these figures suggest that promoting mass literacy is truly a national challenge in Papua New Guinea.⁸

However, limited though its distribution might be, literacy has had a significant impact on the lives of many Papua New Guineans, both those who are themselves literate and others whose lives are affected by the presence and activities of literate people among them. While other media have been important – especially radio, but recently television, and newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, posters, and other print media for even longer – books have played a significant part in reshaping many Papua New Guineans' lives. Literacy has tended to privilege people who acquire it over those who do not. People with ready access to books often enjoy additional advantages when, for example, certain information is available, at least locally, only in books.

Books by Papua New Guineans

Most – in fact, an altogether overwhelming proportion – of the books available in Papua New Guinea are by foreigners (or are, in some cases, believed to be divinely inspired). But an increasing number of books have Papua New Guinean authors, though none of these authors has written anything approaching the 44 books by the country's most prolific author, the former schoolteacher, diplomat, departmental head and energetic traveller (to all six continents), H. E. Grand Chief Sir Paulias Matane, the present Governor-General.

Moreover, Papua New Guinean writers have been writing and having their words published for very much longer than is widely appreciated. They have been contributing to government and church publications since mission, then government, schools began to teach literacy. Other Papua New Guineans had their words published earlier – when government officers, missionaries, or others recorded what they heard. A number of anthropologists have also recorded and reproduced almost verbatim accounts by informants, some dating back 100 years. However, even close family members do not always know of the existence of their relatives' published words (I have personally had the privilege of informing some of works by parents and other relatives of whose publication they were previously unaware).

The people whose words were reproduced in print were not always literate themselves. This was true, for example, not only of many anthropological informants, but also of Members of the Legislative Council and the House of Assembly whose words were recorded in *Hansard*.

In this regard, I am reminded of a personal experience when a Member of the first House of Assembly, a man with no formal schooling, learnt that I was interested in securing articles by Papua New Guineans for publication in the former *New Guinea Quarterly*. He brought me a clearly much-handled piece of paper with some marks on it which I could not decipher. But, when asked to help me understand what the marks represented, he 'read' out what he had intended to say while I wrote down what he said. The short manuscript which resulted was eventually published. It will be republished in a collection of articles which are being put together for republication in a volume of reprints from the *New Guinea Quarterly*.

⁸ United Nations Development Program, 'Fighting climate change: Human solidarity in a divided world', *Human Development Report 2007/2008*, New York, 2007, page 271.

One of the surprises in this volume will be the identification of some now-prominent Papua New Guineans who wrote under pseudonyms at a time when they were employed as public servants by the Australian Administration, and were not supposed to be making public, political comments – and, certainly, not comments critical of the Administration. A very particular source of surprise will be the revelation how wrong Australian officials could be when it came to identifying who was responsible for writing which article. This is, in certain respects, testimony to the trust that existed among members of what is now sometimes called the ‘independence generation’ (although ‘independence’ was not always clearly on the horizon until the early 1970s), and between them and their editors and publishers. Evidence of the officials’ mistakes has recently become available following publication of a volume of Australian official documents concerning Papua New Guinea in the period 1966-1969.⁹ However, the negative side of such pleasure as there might be in revelations of this kind is to wonder who might have been unjustly disadvantaged by such mistakes (and whether similar mistakes and unfortunate consequences might still be occurring at a time when the Internet makes it possible for others to track both what others may write and what they may read).

The book just mentioned will be a volume in a series of reprints which the University of Papua New Guinea will be reproducing, with the generous financial support of the PNG Sustainable Program Ltd, in order to help to make some early published texts by Papua New Guineans available to a wider audience. Another volume in the series will include the memoirs of a former village constable from Hanuabada, Ahuis Ova, previously taken down and published in a scholarly journal by the pre-war Government Anthropologist for Papua, F. E. Williams. The text will be supplemented by photographs of the original author taken by members of a pre-war American expedition.

A third very important volume will be what is believed to be the first complete book by a Papua New Guinean author. Originally written in Kuanua in the author’s own (very stylish) handwriting, the book was first translated and published in 1932 under the title, *The Erstwhile Savage. An account of the life of Ligeremaluoga (Osea): an autobiography*.¹⁰ It was subsequently re-translated and edited to very different effect by Reverend Neville Threlfall and published as *An Offering Fit for a King*.¹¹

Conclusion

The three volumes just mentioned are intended to pave the way for publication or re-publication, as the case may be, of books of significance in the history of Papua New Guinea. If the written texts I have seen prominent Papua New Guineans make without publication in mind (but so they could refer to what they were told, learnt, or experienced) and others create for diverse creative and other personal purposes (perhaps with eventual publication in mind) are any guide, then there may well be quite a trove of very worthwhile manuscripts out there in the community. The purpose of the series is, authors or their families permitting, to make those manuscripts likely to be of wider interest publicly available in book-form. The series will not only be as ‘home grown’ as the books to be published, it is intended to stimulate and provide an outlet for further growth in the writing, publication, and, above all, the public availability of books by Papua New Guineans.

⁹ Stuart Doran, ed., *Australia and Papua New Guinea 1996-1969. Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, Canberra, 2006.

¹⁰ F. W. Cheshire, Melbourne.

¹¹ 11

United Church New Guinea Islands, Rabaul, 1978.

The two editions are compared in Edward P. Wolfers, ‘Ligeremaluoga – life and story of a pioneering Papua New Guinean writer’ (Review of *Ligeremaluogo of Kono (Hosea Linge)* by Eric Johns), *Savannah Flames* (forthcoming)

Annex 3

The University of Papua New Guinea Reflections on Past, Present and Future Contributions to Nation-Building

Maev O'Collins¹²

The university system is vitally important to develop Papua New Guinea as a nation. Every country today, and particularly one which is changing rapidly, needs institutions where the potential of some of its people for creativity, elucidation and problem solving can be developed to a high order. *Report of the Committee of Enquiry into University Development* (Gris Report) 1974:3.

Introduction:

This paper is a reflection on some of the challenges which have confronted the University of Papua New Guinea since its inception in 1966 and the way in which this institution and its staff and students have met these challenges. In the years before and after Independence, the University has been the subject of government and university reports and academic research. Former staff and students have written about the way in which political, financial and administrative realities influenced what could or could not be achieved at particular periods. As a member of the university community from 1972-1989, and during many visits since that time, I have also been able to observe at first hand the way in which the University has weathered political, financial and administrative storms, and continued with its fundamental task of nation-building.

The contributions of the University to nation-building have been many and varied so any discussion will inevitably be selective. However, over more than forty years staff, students, and graduates have been involved in discussions of, and practical contributions towards, the political, administrative, professional, and economic and community life of the new nation of Papua New Guinea.

A quick survey of the topics considered at Waigani seminars - an annual feature for so many years - illustrates the diversity of these contributions. *New Guinea in Transition: a seminar on indigenous participation in business, industry, politics and society*, was held in May 1967. This was followed by *The Politics of Melanesia*, which provided a forum for a consideration of various paths towards national unity. Five years later, *The Melanesian Environment* considered problems confronting the people of Papua New Guinea in balancing the need to become self-sufficient without destroying their forests, rivers and other natural resources. In 1982, ten years after self-government, *From Rhetoric to Reality* continued the debate as to whether the ideals expressed in Papua New Guinea's Eight Point Plan could be realized in a meaningful way. In 1987, the focus was on *The Ethics of Development* and in 1993, following a series of provincial seminars, *From Rio to Rai: environment and development in Papua New Guinea* was the theme of the twentieth Waigani Seminar. The final Waigani Seminar, on *Information and the Nation*, was held in

¹² Paper originally presented as part of the Vice-Chancellor's seminar series on Wednesday, 30 April 2008, in the University of Papua New Guinea Main Lecture Theatre. Maev O'Collins taught at the University of Papua New Guinea from 1972-1989, was appointed Professor of the Department of Anthropology and Sociology in 1979, received an MBE in the Papua New Guinea Honours List in 1987, and was awarded the title of Professor Emeritus by the University Council in 1989. Now living in Canberra, she is a Visiting Fellow in the Department of Political and Social Change at the Australian National University and an Adjunct Professor at the Canberra Campus of the Australian Catholic University.

August/September 1997 and the digital recording of its proceedings reflected the way in which the University has continued to contribute to capacity-building throughout the country.¹³

Over the years the University has had to confront numerous challenges in order to continue to fulfill the purposes for which it was established. Now, as plans are underway for another Waigani Seminar, it is useful to look back on its past contributions to nation-building and what may be contributed in the future.

The role of a university in nation-building- a multi-faceted concept

The role of a university in nation-building cannot be considered in isolation from political and administrative changes and specific economic, social and community realities confronting an established or emerging nation. The importance of these roles in the development of independent countries was emphasized by President Kwame Nkrumah, in his address as Chancellor on 24 February 1963 at the University of Ghana.¹⁴

The role of a university in a country like ours is to become the academic focus of national life, reflecting the social, economic, cultural and political aspirations of the people. ... A university does not exist in a vacuum or outer space. It exists in the context of a society and it is there that it has its proper place. A university is supported by society, and without the sustenance it receives from society, it will cease to exist.

It is important to note that this role of nation-building is a continuing task for all universities, particularly when faced with political and economic crises at national or regional levels. The level of economic and administrative support for a university either by state or colonial authorities may also reflect external political pressures. While recent studies of newly established universities emphasize the role of the university in newly independent countries, the role of a university in developing or changing concepts of national identity has a long tradition. As one study of two universities established in Strasbourg, Germany in the disputed Alsace-Lorraine border region with France notes:¹⁵

One is the university established in Strasbourg following the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 and the resulting German annexation of Alsace-Lorraine. Its missions were to further the Germanization of the conquered territory and, more generally, to add to the growing renown of German higher education abroad and thereby contribute to the extension of the nation's influence. The other is the university founded in Strasbourg following World War I, when France regained her lost provinces. Its missions were similar, if antithetical, to those of its German predecessor: to hasten France's assimilation of Alsace-Lorraine and to reinforce the country's efforts to regain cultural and scholarly hegemony in Europe.

Just as these two universities were established to promote a sense of national identity, universities in many newly independent countries faced the same questions. There were also particular challenges for academic staff as, particularly in the early years of a university's development, they were mainly recruited by the colonial administration. The challenge was to balance their 'responsibilities as scholars and their responsibilities as servants of the state, between their commitment to scholarship and their commitment to nation-building'¹⁶.

¹³ Papers presented at these seminars included Somare, 1970, Waiko, 1977. Samana 1985, Hinawaelo 1987, Tovue 1996, Hill 1997 and Evans 1998.

¹⁴ 14

Nkrumah, p. 314.

¹⁵ Craig, p.3.

¹⁶ Clark p. 4

In considering the role of the University of Papua New Guinea in nation-building, it is also important to keep in mind the changing political and economic environment confronting the University Council, administrative and academic staff, students and graduates. The preparation of students to take over responsibilities in government administration and private enterprise has taken place during a period when the maintenance of national unity, while respecting national diversity, has remained a major challenge. This, as the 1974 Gris Report emphasized, calls for an emphasis on creativity and problem-solving to meet the new challenges of the 21st Century.

Establishment of the University

During the 1950s the development of universal primary education and the importance of government and church secondary schools became accepted policy. In 1954, the establishment of the Australian Scholarship Scheme also reflected an increasing awareness among some Australian administrators of the need to prepare Papua New Guineans to take over administrative and professional roles on equal terms with their expatriate counterparts. This scheme only provided for a small number of eligible students and the need to establish more government high schools accessible to a wider range of students became a pressing concern.¹⁷

In 1962, the Report of the United Nations Mission noted that the need for skilled personnel at all service levels had not been fully addressed. Otherwise, it would be ‘impossible to develop the standards of professional, administrative and political leadership which are vital to any Territory in preparation for self-government’.¹⁸ It was a matter of increasing concern that the Administration appeared to be prepared to delay the provision of higher education facilities until there was a greater level of universal primary and improved secondary education. There also appeared to be a lack of support for many capable students which would encourage them to continue on to further studies, rather than be quickly absorbed into the work force.

In the Mission’s view the kind of programme for secondary higher education needed in New Guinea must be approached with greater imagination and boldness. The need for qualified personnel in all fields is so great and so urgent that a new approach is essential. ... Inevitably, until a university is functioning within the Territory, the co-operation of Australian and even other overseas universities will have to be sought, but the Mission feels confident that this assistance will be readily granted.¹⁹ Following this report, the Australian Minister for Territories Paul Hasluck appointed a Commission for Higher Education under the chairmanship of Vice-Chancellor Sir George Currie to consider proposals for the establishment of tertiary education institutions. During 1963, a Mission organized by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) also considered higher education needs and presented its draft report in June 1964. At the same time, action was being taken to establish the Administrative College of Papua New Guinea and the first students were enrolled at the beginning of 1964.

The Commission presented its final report in March 1964 and strongly supported the immediate establishment of a university which would provide tertiary education of a high academic standard. The strong and enthusiastic support for a Port Moresby based university reflected the views of all three commission members George Currie, John Gunther and Oscar Spate, and their strong conviction that this would be the best way to prepare graduates to take over administrative and professional and community service roles. In order to achieve this objective, a preliminary year, with admission considered as equivalent to provisional matriculation, would make it possible for a larger number of students to be enrolled. Aware of the potential criticism of this proposal the Report noted that:²⁰

¹⁷ See Smith 1987, Chapter 6 ‘Education for Independence’ and Taylor, 2002.

¹⁸ United Nations Trusteeship Council Report, 1962, p. 64.

¹⁹

Ibid. p. 65.

²⁰ Commission for Higher Education, *Report*. 1964:277 Recommendations 39 and 40.

The preliminary year should not be regarded as an inferior part of the University's work, but that senior staff should take part in both its planning and its execution.

As a once-for-all exception, the preliminary year should be given for the first time in the Administrative College, beginning if possible in 1964, with the assistance of seconded staff.

It is important to note that there were many differing opinions as to the wisdom and timing of the establishment of a Territory university, and its location in Port Moresby. However, external pressures from the United Nations Committee on Decolonization, and international and Australian pressures to hasten self-government and eventual independence, forced the Australian Government to accept that there was an immediate and urgent need to provide qualified local graduates. In a press release dated 19 March 1965, the Minister for Territories stated that:²¹

In particular it had been necessary to consider this important project in the light of the World Bank Missions' Report. The Mission, in proposing its programmes for economic development, had said "there is nothing more central to the progress of the Territory than leadership of a high caliber, some of which the staff and graduates of the University may be expected to provide". ... the Government had concluded that, subject to the support of the Territory House of Assembly, the University and Higher Technical Institute should be proceeded with immediately.

Given the sense of urgency, it was not surprising that the University of Papua New Guinea Ordinance was approved by both Commonwealth and Territory governments on 24 May 1965 with the extraordinarily optimistic goal of enrolling students at the beginning of 1966. Temporary teaching, students and staff accommodation had to be identified and prepared, and academic, administrative and support staff appointed and accommodated. An Interim Council was appointed in September 1965. At the same time, and perhaps most importantly, a Vice-Chancellor with vision, ability and drive, had to be selected, and perhaps even persuaded, to take over a very demanding role.²²

The crucial appointment was that of Vice-Chancellor and the Interim Council made a surprise (*sic*) and imaginative choice in selecting Dr John Gunther. He had 20 years experience in Papua New Guinea, first as Director of Public Health, then as Assistant Administrator, and he had served on the Currie Commission. Gunter admitted that he 'did not know a damned thing' about being a Vice-Chancellor. But he was a tough and forceful leader who knew the workings of the Administration and could use this knowledge to protect the University's autonomy.

Despite all these challenges, the University of Papua and New Guinea commenced its work on 7 February 1966, with an intake of 58 students (52 men and 6 women)

The early years: 1966-1971

It was inevitable that the University would be established under very difficult and chaotic circumstances as hasty preparations had to be made to accommodate the initial group of students and the growing number of academic, administrative and support staff. Teaching took place at the Port Moresby Showgrounds; dormitories were some distance away at the Administrative College; and the main administrative offices were located in Konedobu and Boroko. Library and other study facilities were still being planned so students had to make do with what was available. Hank Nelson, one of the first lecturers, described some of the problems encountered during the first year of the University's existence.²³

²¹ Barnes, p.1.

²² University of Papua New Guinea Library, 1986: 3, also Meek, 1982:74

²³ Nelson , 1967: 19.

If the buildings provided somewhere to teach, they did not always provide somewhere to learn. ...
No desks, reading lights or bookshelves could be fitted in the crowded dormitories. To provide
some study facilities an unoccupied staff-house was converted into a small library and study area.
... The isolation of the dormitories from shops and entertainment centres restricted students' leisure
activities too, particularly during the holidays.

On the other hand, staff were generally well looked after and the benefits of small student numbers often outweighed any lack of support staff or facilities. The small class sizes and the much more informal settings in which teaching took place provided new windows of opportunity for staff/student dialogue. There was a clear feeling that the University was an instrument for change and that it had a special nation-building mission in providing an opportunity for discussion and debate, in marked contrast to the negative colonial attitudes and expectations which existed at the time. Underlying tensions existed between those who had not yet accepted the need to move more rapidly towards self-government and independence and those who considered that Australia was moving far too slowly. However, it is important to note that there was also a great deal of support and encouragement from many expatriates, no doubt influenced by Vice-Chancellor John Gunther's commitment and enthusiasm.

Directly, members of the University criticized colonialism in academic journals, in the classroom, in public lectures, and in the popular press. But the most significant effect of the University on PNG political and social affairs was more indirect. Members of the University community were setting an example to the Papua New Guinea people, especially the young political activists, that the power of the Australian government could be challenged and in some cases, defeated.²⁴.

The first Waigani seminar, jointly sponsored by the University of Papua New Guinea, the Administrative College, the Australian National University, and the Council on New Guinea Affairs was held at the Administrative College in May 1967. The seminar programme warned that: 'Visitors are asked to take special care as there are hazards due to open concrete drains and incomplete buildings at the College.' During the next few years, as University facilities were built and increased numbers of students enrolled, the Waigani campus gradually took shape. Significant events included the initiation of an annual Waigani Seminar series in 1967, the first graduation in 1970, the transformation of the Papuan Medical College to the Medical Faculty, and the admission of direct entry students in 1971. At the same time, debate continued as to how best to counter any tendency for graduates to become a group of distant intellectual and political elite; substituting one form of colonization for another. It was soon evident that the University should play a role, not only in encouraging political debate, but also in providing a variety of opportunities for students to consider how cultural diversity and group identity should be taken into account in the building of the new nation and how best to 'decolonise the mind'.²⁵

1972-1975

In November 1971, I visited the University for the first time to finalise an initial three-year appointment in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology, commencing in March, 1972. Dr John Gunther was about to hand over the position of Vice-Chancellor to Professor Ken Inglis. The University Library, Administration Centre and Main Lecture Theatre were operational and further classroom and office buildings were about to be completed. While I was completing my doctoral studies, a chance encounter with Michael Somare (now Sir Michael) in New York in 1971 had been the impetus for my interest in teaching in Papua New Guinea. He had commented: 'You are so far away here. Why don't you come and teach with us and then if we get tired of you or you get tired of us, it is not so far to go home!' When I met him again in Port Moresby in 1972, self-government was a reality, Independence was on the horizon and Chief Minister Michael Somare greeted me with the words; 'I see you took my advice!'

²⁴ Meek, 1982, p. 84, see also Inglis 1980, Titus 1976 and Griffin, 1976.

²⁵

See Young 1973, Howie-Willis 1980 and Beir 2005 for different viewpoints on the impact of the University during this period.

A sense of expectation and urgency invaded all aspects of university life as the momentum for decolonisation increased, and the University was a major centre for political discussion and debate. At the same time, some tensions existed between the University and the expatriate population and internal and external debates continued as to how far the University curriculum, teaching methods and research should reflect political, cultural and community needs. Community outreach and rural and urban fieldwork involving both academic staff and students became an important element of academic life and the university continued to provide a forum for political debate and discussion. Reflecting on his experience during this period, James Griffin (1976:120) described the role which students played as political educators. He noted that:

The spontaneous reaction of U.P.N.G. students to the inter-territory riots in Port Moresby in July 1973 was the formation of the Melanesian Action Front which conducted a 'peace and unity' march through the streets. This may be an augury of a binding developmental role which U.P.N.G. (and other tertiary institutions) may come to have in Papua New Guinea. This role will be all the more credibly acted out for having purely indigenous origins.

At the same time, there were often mixed reactions from family elders and community leaders, particularly when students returned home and undertook political education activities. On one occasion I was present when students working with youth and women's groups addressed the community. Afterwards several women drew me aside, noting that I had looked less than happy when the students seemed a little too sure of themselves. One commented that I should not be worried as these were their sons and they knew that education in the 'Big School' may have made them over-confident. However, it was also clear that these comments were really made to reassure me that there was no serious rift. In considering the impact of tertiary education on nation-building at the community level, one of the first UPNG graduates concluded (Elijah Titus 1976:127):

Further tension is created when students stay away for long periods from their home area. ... Some parents deliberately conceal their resentment because at the same time they are happy to have their children back with them. They know that their children have changed because of their education. They see their societies are changing and yet at the same time still holding on to traditional patterns. For them it is becoming very difficult to cope; this often puts them in a dilemma and creates confusion.

Community elders also observed the similarities between the old and the new style administration. Although told that this was self-government and that independence was on the horizon it often seemed that nothing had changed. As one New Ireland village leader commented at a meeting (pers.com. in *tok pisin* 1975):

Our grandfathers told us about the way the Germans behaved when they came to tell us what to do and order us about. The Australians took over, the Japanese came and then the Australians came back, but they all acted more or less in the same way, although they also brought better health and other services. (He then paused, looked around and laughed before continuing) Now our own young people are coming and doing exactly the same thing!

Attitudes among school leavers varied. While the value of tertiary education was undeniable, many were concerned that the University was so far from their home areas. The greater freedom students experienced was considered very positively but balanced against reports of student anti-government or anti-university administration protests. The problems of distance also meant that high school graduates, able to obtain public or private sector employment, were sometimes reluctant to undertake university studies.²⁶ This meant that the over the next few years, the development of University Centres and distance education courses would become increasingly important as part of continuing contributions to nation-building. In April 1975, when Dr Gabriel Gris was appointed as the third Vice-Chancellor and the first Papua New Guinean to hold the office, these developments were still in the future. In the

²⁶ See Kemelfield and Keviame, 1976, 'High School Leavers look to their future: A Study in Mendi and Tari'.

immediate future, what mattered most was the need to provide a sufficient number of graduates to take over from Australian and other expatriates about to leave administrative, education and other service positions. One vivid memory is of a visit in mid-1975 to the Asaro/Watabung council area in the Eastern Highlands to discuss the possible placement of students to work with the community development officer. The new Papua New Guinea flag was flying outside the local school and inside the Australian administrative officer was preparing a classroom for a Council meeting. He picked up an old rag lying in the corner to clean the board and suddenly called out to me: 'Sign of the times eh?' as he had suddenly realized it was an old Australian flag which had been overlooked in the changeover.

Part of his responsibility at the meeting was to explain that, as Independence was coming and he would be returning to Australia, a Papua New Guinean, who had just completed training at the Administrative College, would take over from him. It was very evident that he wanted to make the transition as easy as possible but knew that there would still be some misunderstandings. It was also clear that the local councillors were concerned that he was leaving, and not too sure as to how they would relate to his replacement.

Later in the year I visited a New Island village and was asked by the bemused villagers as to why: 'Now that Independence has come, the price of copra has gone down?' I struggled in *tok pisin* to explain international market fluctuations and reassure the listeners that this was not the fault of the newly elected Papua New Guinea Government or the process of localization. They were not really convinced and it was clear that teaching back at UPNG was often a much easier task!

Many of my students had now graduated and taken up government or private enterprise positions throughout the country. Others had moved from being involved in student politics to the national arena and it was becoming increasingly obvious that the University would need to provide additional opportunities for graduates already in employment to increase their knowledge and skills.

University Contributions to National, Provincial and Local Development: 1976-1996

The University of Papua New Guinea was created with a great sense of urgency and began teaching its first students in February 1966 when it had no facilities of its own. The University had the task of educating Papua New Guineans who would help take the country out of colonial dependency and into independent nationhood. Inevitably there have been problems and conflicts. Yet as the University celebrates its twentieth birthday, and the country its eleventh year of independence, U.P.N.G. is a thriving institution which continues to occupy a central role in Papua New Guinea's development.²⁷

In the years after Independence, debate and action on national and international political issues continued to be an important focus for many students. The task of nation building gained momentum as, in addition to those completing courses in arts, education and science, medical and law students were now graduating in larger numbers. Political debates as to the direction which should be taken by Papua New Guinea and more locally based protests against teaching staff and the University administration often reflected a growing sense of national identity.

Throughout this period, the student body was often far from unanimous in its support for vigorous protest as a way of bringing about positive changes. In May 1978, after coming to the assistance of a staff member who was confronted by an angry student, I suddenly found myself very much involved in the debate over appropriate disciplinary action. It was reassuring to receive support from my own students, but clearly some administrative decisions could have been handled better.

²⁷ Sir Buri Kidu, vii, *The University of Papua New Guinea 1966-1986: 20th Anniversary Booklet*

In 1978, following student unrest in April and May, Prime Minister Michael Somare appointed a Commission of Inquiry to investigate ways of improving the University.... In August 1978 the University Council established a Working Party on University Legislation, headed by the then Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Dr Elton Brash.... The outcome was the repeal of the old Ordinance and a new University Act which was passed in August 1983. Among the significant changes brought about by the Act was a wider representation of interests on the University Council and more specific powers to regulate and enforce discipline among students and staff. (University of Papua New Guinea Library, New Guinea Collection, 1986:5)

Student/staff research and fieldwork projects, which involved working with government departments, non-government organizations, and other tertiary institutions served to create opportunities for staff and students to work together in a more positive and cooperative atmosphere. The aim was to assist various development projects to achieve the best possible results and to identify areas of need throughout the country. As papers presented at the Australian National University in 1984 and the 17th Waigani Seminar in September 1986 illustrated, the difficulties which women faced as unequal partners in development remained a major concern.²⁸ At the same time, the lack of education and employment opportunities raised serious questions as to how to enable young people to participate in national, provincial and local development. The National Youth Movement Program was established in January 1981 and began to fund youth projects and programmes throughout the country. During the 1980s, the evaluation of many of these projects became an important element of Social Work student fieldwork and student/staff research.²⁹

Research and fieldwork course components provided valuable opportunities for students to work together and spend time in unfamiliar urban and rural communities. Although not always fully appreciated at the time, many graduates have commented to me on how these experiences were invaluable when they left the University and became more actively involved in the overall process of nation-building. As one graduate, who had been noted for his student activism, pointed out: 'We did so much talking that it was good to get out into the community and see what people were really concerned about.' They also felt more confident to challenge the way development was viewed by outsiders. This was no surprise as I was often reminded of an occasion back in 1974 when a student presenting the findings of a fieldwork placement in the Southern Highlands questioned me as the only expatriate present: 'What if they don't want your kind of development?'³⁰

There remained a clear challenge to provide educational opportunities for those who already employed throughout the country. In response to the call for greater accessibility to university level education, a programme of long vacation courses (Lahara sessions) was initiated to enable teachers, administrators and others in the work force to continue their education. Along with other colleagues, I taught courses in community and rural development in several Lahara sessions. Initially, it was hard to evaluate the benefit of a six-week course with little opportunity to maintain contact with students. However, a number of encounters with former students across Papua New Guinea suggested that the extra teaching involvement had been worthwhile. On one occasion, waiting at the airport outside Madang, a former Lahara student came up and was clearly excited to meet me again. He had taken a course in 'working with communities' and was now headmaster of a rural high school. Much to my delight, he pulled out a battered course notebook and told me that this course, along with the others he had taken, and the opportunity to meet students from different parts of the country, had been a very worthwhile experience.

In addition to these sessions, the Extension Studies Department coordinated a number of distance education courses and plans for the establishment of provincial University Centres gathered momentum. The first University Centre was opened at Arawa, North Solomons Province, in October 1981, followed by East New Britain and Madang in 1983, and East Sepik and New Ireland in 1987.³¹

²⁸ O'Collins et al. 1985 and Stratigos and Hughes (eds) 1987.

²⁹ For evaluations of these projects, see O'Collins 1984:34-46, and papers by Biango Buia, Solomon Yowait and others (O'Collins 1986).

³⁰ O'Collins, 2007:

³¹ The University of Papua New Guinea, *Annual Report of Council* 1987:21-22.

The Department of Extension Studies is committed to making available to the wider community a range of academic courses offered on the Waigani Campus to fulltime students, and to develop continuing education programmes in those provinces where University Centres have been established. In so doing, the Department is assisting the University overall to meet the important national goal of expanding opportunities for Papua New Guineans to acquire tertiary level education and to achieve this by a very cost-effective method distance learning.

Over the next few years, University Centres in Southern Highlands, Manus, Western Highlands, Sandau and Western established. Although political and financial problems and natural disasters had to be overcome, by the end of 1992 the Department reported to the University Council that all eleven centres were in operation and carrying out their teaching outreach objectives.³²

In January 1994, the Department of Extension Studies was expanded and transformed into a more independent Institute of Distance and Continuing Education. In his report, the Director, Professor Harold Markowitz noted that this was a time of great change at the University and this meant that Institute would also need to reassess its role in the light of 'current financial problems'.³³ The overall financial constraints impacting on university planning were also noted by Dr Bruce Yeates, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts.³⁴

The Faculty had difficulty in maintaining its teaching, academic and community service programmes because of the financial crisis and the structural adjustment programmes which the University and nation faced in the second half of 1994.

However, despite these problems he reported that:

Literacy training and awareness courses and workshops continued through the work of academics in the Language and Literature Department. There was also an active Creative Writers Group supported by the Literature section. From the seminars in support of the International year of the Family, staff from Psychology and social Work founded an N.G.O. 'Concern over Child Abuse'. The organisation's president is Sir Paulus Matane. The Faculty also reactivated the University Aids Awareness Committee and presented a draft AIDS policy for consideration of the University authorities.

The focus on providing opportunities for all Papua New Guineans as part of the overall contribution to nation building included an expansion of staff development opportunities. Initially staff development had been seen in terms of academic, administrative and library staff but this expanded to include all staff employed by the University. The Vice-Chancellor Professor John Lynch presided at a graduation ceremony for apprentices and, as the Annual Report (1989:5) noted:

There was an increase in in-house training, primarily in the use of computer applications in the work place. A successful Safety Officers Course was organized during the year with the assistance of the International Development Programme (IDP) of the Australian Universities and Colleges.

During my term as Director of Staff Development (1987-89) initial support and encouragement was given by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Nick Kuman and it was reassuring to find that the importance of providing all university personnel - academic, administrative, technical and support staff - with opportunities for further internal and external education and training was recognized. In 1989, Dr Bernard Minol and Associate Professor Lance Hill were appointed as Pro Vice Chancellors and continued to provide important support and encouragement in this area.

³² The University of Papua New Guinea, *Annual Report of Council* 1992: 37.

³³ *Annual Report of Council*, 1994:29.

³⁴ *Ibid.* pp 2-5.

However, as the University moved towards its 30th Anniversary, it was increasingly clear that the uncertainties of annual budgetary provisions would make imaginative planning in all parts of the University extremely difficult, although not impossible. Given the severe budgetary constraints under which the University was now operating, it was not surprising to observe the lack of adequate maintenance and the deterioration or closure of various facilities and programmes. As John Connell noted, in his 1997 discussion of the continuing struggle for development in Papua New Guinea, similar problems were being experienced throughout the national and international tertiary system.³⁵

Present policies, aimed at rationalization of higher education, through amalgamation of institutions, the reduction of subsidies to students and the relative decline of support for universities rather than other elements of the education system, mirror those in tertiary systems elsewhere.

Yet, in reflecting on the University's continuing role in nation-building, it is also remarkable that staff and students have so often overcome practical, logistic and financial difficulties so that useful programmes and projects can be continued and others identified and initiated. One of my former students, now a Social Work academic, teaching and undertaking research on youth in society, was the conference facilitator for the 1996 Papua New Guinea Mini-Conference on National Youth service – Youth in National Development. This conference considered whether, in the face of persistent youth unemployment, national youth service would provide better ways to assist both urban and rural young people to contribute positively to the life of the nation. Yet, despite all the efforts being made to develop suitable programmes, it seemed that little had changed and that urban youth were still often seen as 'folk devils'.³⁶

The 1997 Waigani Seminar on *Information and the Nation* raised important questions as to how government and non-government organizations could and should make better use of information technology. The Chair of the Organising Committee, Dr John Evans pointed out that, for real progress to occur there was a need, not only for sufficient material and human resources but for 'political will on the part of decision-makers'.³⁷

Although not explicitly states, it was clear that this would only be possible if institutions such as the University of Papua New Guinea continued to provide opportunities for critical discussion and debate.

Final thoughts on the continuing contributions of the University to Nation-Building

A developing nation like Papua New Guinea needs a national, and public, university of quality, even excellence. It also needs a university relevant to Papua New Guinea today and tomorrow, drawing on traditions. (Sir Rabble Namaliu 1998)³⁸

Concern over the apparent inability of the University to maintain its standards of excellence was evident in a series of seminars in 1998 entitled *UPNG em i go we?* (UPNG, where is it heading?). As the then Minister for National Planning concluded:³⁹

I speak not to provide easy prescriptions but to help all of us pose the right questions. The challenge is that someone has to make tough decisions because it is those tough decisions which will put UPNG back on the pedestal, as an oasis, and as a refuge where many other Papua New Guineans

³⁵ Connell, 1997:242.

³⁶ Wrondimi, 1996 and O'Collins 1986

³⁷ Evans, 1998, p.273.

³⁸ Sir Rabbie Namaliu, paper presented for the *UPNG em i go we?* seminar series 1998:21.

³⁹ Sir Moi Avei 1998:34.

can come to be enlightened. And that I believe is the core function of The University of Papua New Guinea.

While it was evident that many serious problems did exist, the very real contributions which various University departments had continued to make was perhaps not fully recognized. For example, the *Southpac News* had reported in June 1987 on the involvement of sixteen students and three lecturers in the first 'Reproductive Health Peer Education' training course and the presentation of certificates by the Vice-Chancellor of UPNG, Dr Rodney Hills. It was noted that:⁴⁰

The training is part of a reproductive health project for youth, funded by UNFPA and implemented through the UPNG, NGOs and Churches. It was developed in recognition of the extent of the problems in the area, including teen pregnancies and rising levels of STDs and HIV infection, as well as difficult male-female relations, including violence and rape.

On more recent occasions, staff, students and graduates have participated with outside government and non-government organizations and national and international tertiary institutions in the design and evaluation of development projects. The reminder by Sir Rabble Namaliu, that, in order to be relevant, the University also had to draw on cultural traditions was reflected in the South-West Pacific Cultural Heritage Training Workshop held in Kavieng and Tatau Village in New Ireland in 2001. This workshop brought together university staff: Dr Bernard Minol, Mr Vincent Kewibu and Mr Paraka Pena (Director of the UPNG Institute of Distance and Continuing Education), University Centre staff from New Ireland, Manus, North Solomons, and East and West New Britain, provincial cultural officers and archaeology staff from the National Museum. Further workshops were held in Manus in 2002 and Buka in 2003 and university staff and students have continued to be involved in exploring and recording the impact of changing cultural beliefs and practices on all development throughout Papua New Guinea.⁴¹

Another striking example of the contribution which graduates, students and academic staff have made, and continue to make, to national and local level development is the work undertaken by the National Agricultural Research Institute (NARI). Established under NARI Act 1996, it initially reported to the Minister for Agriculture and Livestock, but in 2002 was transferred to the Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology. A major aim is to promote 'broad and sustainable rural development, through empowering people' and this involves practical and innovation research and fieldwork. The NARI Governing Council for 2006-2009 include Dr John Kola as Chairman, Professor Lance Hill as Vice-Chairman and a number of other graduates and staff from the University of Papua New Guinea and the University of Technology.⁴²

In Papua New Guinea, as in most other countries throughout the world, although it may look as if much has changed, closer inspection reveals that some things have remained the same. Women still do not have equality of opportunity in many fields – the most striking being that of political representation and young people still struggle to relate to the demands of a developing nation in a changing world. The best ways of achieving sustained economic development and political stability continue to be the subject of national and international debates.

Since its inception in 1966, despite many financial difficulties and internal tensions, the University of Papua New Guinea has provided a much appreciated venue for discussions on these issues of national importance. Perhaps because I have continued to have a *Bias for Hope*,⁴³ when I spoke in the Main Lecture Theatre in April 2008 it was encouraging to see in the audience students, staff and graduates who have been and will continue to be such positive contributors to nation-building.

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⁴¹ For further details see Summerhayes 2001 and South-West Pacific Cultural Heritage Training Workshop Website.

⁴² NARI: About US Website.

⁴³ Hirschman 1971 and O'Collins, 1979

The topic of the August 2008 Waigani Seminar *Living History and Evolving Democracy in Papua New Guinea* is one of great importance for the University and the nation. Congratulations to Vice Chancellor Ross Hynes, Professor John Waiko, Dr John Evans and all those who have worked so hard to re-establish an invigorated Waigani Seminar series. This confirms that the nation-building mission of the University of Papua New Guinea is ongoing and gathering strength. It also clearly answers the question:

2008: UPNG em I go we?

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