

Misa slams 'smug media' Big mouth on campus

by Sebastian van der Zwan

Columnist Tapu Misa has called for a "bigger vision" for Pacific media, saying it is critical that Pacific Islanders develop strong, independent media organisations.

Guest speaker at the Pacific Island Media Association (PIMA) conference, Ms Misa called for a "unity of purpose" between Pacific Islanders in the media.

"What we have now are a lot of fragmented voices," she said. "We are splintering into small groups without the resources and the professionalism to make a real difference. Our already small talent pool is stretched thinly."

The *New Zealand Herald* columnist said that instead of nurturing Pacific Island media, this could end up undermining it.

"There needs to be a bigger vision, an over-arching purpose that transcends petty self-interest and spells out why we're here, why we bother to gather at PIMA. We need to lay our competitive impulses aside and think of the greater good of our communities."

"We, as Pacific media, have a heightened responsibility that goes beyond commercial imperatives. I don't think it's overstating things to say that our success as a community depends on living up to that responsibility."

"A strong independent Pacific media system wouldn't immediately dispel the ignorance and prejudice that's out there. But it would make inroads into it."

"The media has tremendous potential to influence and shape opinions and views, and to contribute to positive social change. When you have a mainstream media with little understanding of Maori or Pacific cultures, inevitably there's little sympathy and support for our causes."

As well as developing an independent voice in the media, Ms Misa said Pacific Islanders needed to have a greater voice in the mainstream media to provide fair, accurate and balanced coverage of Pacific issues.

"The number of brown journalists in the mainstream media nowhere near reflects our numbers in New Zealand society."

She said many Pacific Islanders in the mainstream media got tired of

pushing their cultural views and were worn down by resistance from colleagues and bosses.

"Some of us decided it was easier just to conform and do mainstream stories because we wanted to prove that we could do it."

"And some of us just left the industry."

Ms Misa said she agreed with Mana Maori Media head Gary Wilson when he said that mainstream media were too ignorant and self-satisfied over coverage of Maori and Pacific issues.

"The mainstream media has continued to believe that its piddly efforts — in recruiting Maori and Pacific staff,

and in its inclusion of Maori and Pacific content — has been good enough. As we've often seen, with a few notable exceptions, even when the mainstream media covers our issues,

it has tended to do a poor job."

To solve this problem, Ms Misa said mainstream needed to make more of an effort to recruit and keep Maori and Pacific Islanders in journalism.

"When I look over my shoulder, I don't see many other Pacific journalists clamouring to take my place at the *Herald*."

While stressing that the *Herald* had given her many opportunities, she

said the country's biggest newspaper, like so many organisations, "simply took its mono-culturalism for granted".

She said that when she was asked to write a column in 2002, she was amazed there were no other Maori or Pacific journalists there.

"How could a newspaper in the largest Polynesian city in the world have only one Polynesian journalist?"

Ms Misa also said Pakeha journalists covering Maori and Pacific issues needed to ensure they were familiar with the cultural territory. This was the case with the best Pakeha practitioners, like Carol Archie of *Mana News* and Michael Field of *Agence France-Presse* and David Robie.

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"When I look over my shoulder, I don't see many other Pacific journalists clamouring to take my place at the *Herald*."

Street artists paint the town red, and blue, and yellow



PHOTO: SARAH MAC LELLAN

GRAFFITI: Visiting German artist Atom shows off his skill at the Auckland hip hop summit in Aotea square. See page 17 for full story.

Smokers rewarded with cash and mystery cigarettes

by Cordelia Lockett

An Auckland market research company is giving free cigarettes and cash to people who take part in a smoking survey.

The Grey Lynn-based Sensometrics couriers packets of unbranded cigarettes to participants who complete a questionnaire. At the end of the survey they receive \$30 cash.

Independent market researcher Keith Syron says the practice is legal and blind testing is a routine way for companies to trial a new product or monitor an existing one.

"Sensory testing of consumables is common and, although it's not illegal, there are special regulations under the Commerce Act that apply to the testing of cigarettes."

Mr Syron says ethical issues are involved, such as the age of the participants, how they were recruited and if they were existing smokers.

"It's a very dirty grey area."

Mr Syron said tobacco companies spent a lot of money on market research because they were no longer allowed to advertise.

"A big tobacco company might spend between one and two million dollars on market research. With that budget you could reach about 10,000 people. If you tell people what brand they're smoking, it could be seen as a covert form of advertising."

Association of Market Research Organisations president Philip Mercieca said only two or three companies in New Zealand did cigarette testing, but it was not unethical.

"It's just another product. But there are rules. Cigarettes as giveaways have long been outlawed."

"In this case, the unbranded pack is not a giveaway because you might not like the brand they send you."

But Trish Fraser, director of anti-smoking group ASH, said she doesn't condone giving away free cigarettes.

Ms Fraser said blind testing of tobacco products was problematic because people did not know what they were smoking.

Although the government health warning was prominently displayed on the packet, the legal list of ingredients was blanked out.

Survey participants therefore would not know exactly what substances they were ingesting.

One smoking survey participant, 21-year-old Jodie Marinkovich, said the first two packets of cigarettes she was sent were much milder than her usual brand.

To get the same level of nicotine, she smoked them twice as fast.

Ms Fraser said this was a concern because Miss Marinkovich may have been taking in up to twice her usual levels of arsenic, benzene and formaldehyde, which increased the risk of cancer.

Ms Fraser said the law should be restricted to allow research for health purposes only.

"We wouldn't want to see tobacco research prohibited altogether, because we do smoking surveys too. But we don't give anyone cigarettes."

She said market researchers should co-operate more with health groups, and companies doing market research on cigarettes should share their findings.

Sensometrics director Christine O'Sullivan did not respond to repeated requests for an interview, but an employee said client confidentiality made sharing research findings impossible.

"It's a very dirty grey area."