

Gosche calls on media to keep up with reality

By Laura Bond

A major shake-up of New Zealand media content is needed if it is to remain relevant to the changing population make-up, according to Labour MP Mark Gosche.

He says changing demographics are not being reflected by the media.

"Those doing programming at TVNZ need to get out of the Ponsonby cafes and head south or west to see that the world has changed," says the former Pacific Affairs Minister.

He spoke at the Pacific Islands Media Association (PIMA) conference held at AUT University last weekend.

Gosche believes television is "driving change more noticeably than print" but the industry as a whole is still not changing nearly as much as it needs to.

By 2021, it is estimated that the Asian population in New Zealand will increase 145 per cent, the Pacific population will increase 59 per cent and the Maori population 29 per cent, according to Statistics New Zealand.

The change brings unique challenges for the media hoping to attract new audiences.

"New Zealand media needs to deliver to more than just its white middle class," says Gosche.

"New Zealand is not comprised of a small radius between Parnell and Ponsonby."

A PIMA conference report will address the role of the media in reflecting the views and concerns of Pacific Islanders.

The New Zealand Journalism Training Organisation recently released a national survey of 1216 New Zealand journalists, which showed few Pacific Islanders had taken up journalism as a career.

While Pakeha/European make up the majority, Maori make up

just over 8 per cent of journalists and the only other groups that represented more than 1 per cent were Chinese and Australian.

No Pacific groupings registered more than 1 per cent of total respondents despite making up almost 7 per cent of the population in the 2001 census.

Radio 531pi managing director Sefita Hao'uli believes his generation is partly to blame.

"We have failed to deliver leadership to the younger generation," he says.

"It is a challenge for us. We have never really accepted our shortcomings."

He believes many young people have unrealistic expectations about the media. He says many don't realise that you have to work hard.

"They think they will become stars overnight."

Luamanuvao Winnie Laban, Associate Minister of Pacific Island Affairs, opened the conference, saying the mainstream needs more Pacific media input when covering Pacific issues.

"The Pacific media have an important role in New Zealand society to inform, question, enlighten and provide a voice for those with no voice," she says.

"It's important that what we see and what we hear reflects our diverse nation."

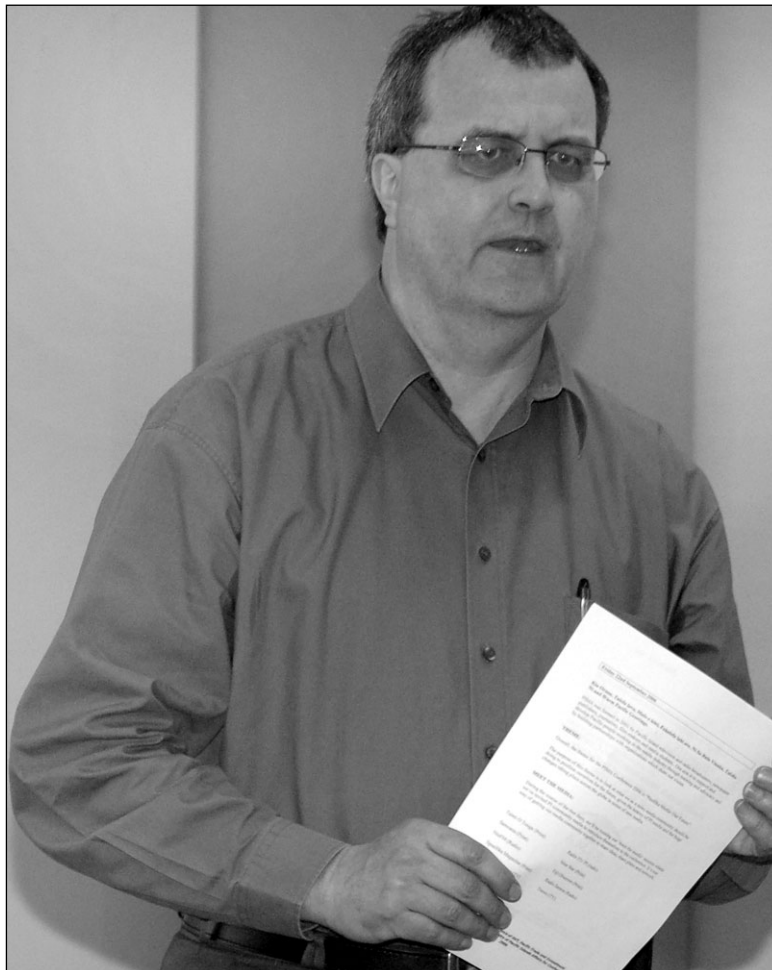
Niu FM chief executive Sina Moore agrees, saying it is not easy to find Pacific journalists to express a Pacific perspective.

She says the Pacific view on issues is very different from that of the mainstream media.

"We take a very different perspective to it," she says.

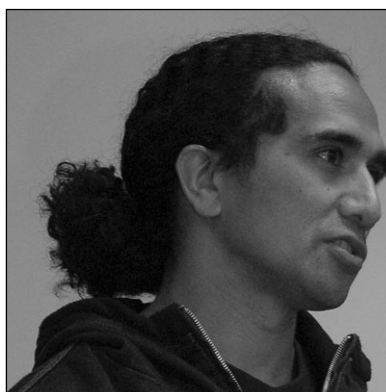
"We need to be thinking about longevity so Pacific people can control their own representation in the media."

The producer of popular Pacific youth TV show *Pacific Beat St*, Stan Wolfgramm, says it is not good enough for Pacific people in the media to become con-



PHOTOS: ALAN KOON

WORK: Mark Gosche tells media to look outside Ponsonby for stories.



STAN WOLFGRAMM



SINA MOORE

tent with their position in the market.

"We need to get out of this complacency. We need to expect

more than to just participate."

A report with findings from the conference will be given to the Minister of Pacific Island Affairs.

PNG media group seeks ties with PIMA

By Helen Twose

A visiting senior journalist from Papua New Guinea has called for training links between the Pacific Islands Media Association (PIMA) and the Papua New Guinea Media Council.

Papua New Guinea National Broadcasting Corporation's chief-of-staff Mulai Robby says "what we are looking at establishing is a partnership between the Media Council and PIMA."

Robby says that working together would produce better coordination of training and have mutual benefits for both organisations.

The PNG Media Council wants PIMA facilitators to run training workshops aimed at industry professionals, ranging in length from two days to one week, says Robby.

Funding for the programme is expected to come from non-government organisations such as UNICEF and environmental groups who want to train journalists reporting complex issues in Papua New Guinea, he says.

Robby is hoping to get the scheme running within the next six months.

"The sooner, the better."



PHOTOS: ALAN KOON

MULAI ROBBY

Robby's state-run NBC runs a regional network of 19 provincial radio stations as well as the national news bulletins.

PIMA chairman John Utanga says although this was the first he had heard of the proposal he was "not surprised".

"There's always been a desire for some sort of relationship with an organisation such as ours," says Utanga.

Utanga says using contacts and connections is how PIMA can hold a successful conference and "in a sense that's what Robby is doing".

Utanga did point out that PIMA was "run on the smell of an oily rag" and any training opportunities would need to be funded.

"It's like most things - get the money and there'll be people queuing up," says Utanga.

Give islanders a fair go, says minister

By Merle Foster

An associate minister has issued a challenge to New Zealand media to present a balanced mix of headlines and news content in Pacific stories.

Associate Minister of Pacific Island Affairs Luamanuvao Winnie Laban said some media did not present a balanced mix of headlines, news and in-depth coverage of events.

Opening the PIMA conference, Laban said she would like to see the media as the "guilty conscience" of society by telling stories that need to be told - digging out the good, the bad and the ugly.

"Unfortunately some media concentrate on the 'bad' and the 'ugly' and forget that they have a role to tell the 'good' stories too," she said.

She said Pacific media had a responsibility to go beyond telling the "easy" stories to report "uncomfortable" stories with integrity, professionalism and honesty.

"I would like to see our Pacific media taking up more of the challenge of the 'tough' and 'uncomfortable' issues of the day."

Former Minister of Pacific Island Affairs and Labour MP Mark Gosche agreed with Laban, saying his electorate continues to get "bad" and "ugly" reports.



PHOTOS: ALAN KOON

BAD NEWS: Luamanuvao Winnie Laban calls for more "good" stories.

"When they report on a murder, they call the victims "these brown gang members," he said. "They report once and then forget about it."

Gosche said mainstream journalists need to know more about Pacific cultures when reporting on Pacific stories.

"In 2050, New Zealand will be a lot browner, which is driving decision making - but there

needs to be understanding of generation gaps and demographics in the Pacific population," he said.

"We need a Pacific media that realises generational differences and that different ethnicities want different media outlets, which is a challenge."

"It will be a vastly broken up Pacific Island audience."