

Activist pleads for sharing not racism

By Jonathan Dow and Dean Campbell

Maori are racist against Pacific Islanders and need to do more to develop relationships, says Ngati Pikiao activist and lawyer Annette Sykes.

"We Maori have to confront our racism," Sykes says. "If we don't look after each other the way we should, it puts our whole world at risk."

Sykes spoke at last weekend's PIMA conference in the run up to October's foreshore and seabed hikoi in Auckland.

An audience of mainly Pacific Island media people listened as Sykes outlined ways in which the relationship between Maori and Pacific Islanders could be strengthened.

"We need to be actively promoting strategies that bring us together to look for more things we can look after together — rather than these racist ideologies," she says.

Shane Ta'ala, a senior Pasifika adviser with the Tertiary Education Commission, says there is untapped potential if Maori and Pasifika collaborate.

"Pasifika don't need to have a treaty with tangata whenua to engage, and to collaborate, with Maori," he says.

Sykes says the foreshore and seabed legislation framework being developed in New Zealand had possible implications for Pacific Islanders.

She urged islanders to join



Shane Ta'ala

the hikoi.

Sykes says she is worried that if the foreshore and seabed legislation is passed it would provide a "dangerous model" for the rest of the Pacific.

"What is happening to Maori is part of an international trend, as large nations need to exploit the resources of the sea," she says.

Sykes says oil is the most precious resource in the whole of the Pacific and Australia is a country most likely to "make a bid for our Pacific".

"I'm worried if they just do that to Maori, what is Australia going to do to all of us?"

"Together, we need to protect this special area of the world."

TVNZ's team boosts Pacific coverage but more community reports needed

by Nic Daley

A new Pacific reporting unit at Television New Zealand has boosted coverage of Pacific Island events, but after one year of operation there is still a long way to go.

This is how news people viewed the unit in a lively workshop at the annual PIMA conference in Auckland last weekend.

Barbara Dreaver, one of two reporters in the Pacific unit, told PIMA participants it was a good start but Pacific coverage needed to increase and become more issues based.

"We've got a responsibility as journalists and people to cover Pacific issues," she says.

"We need to have more domestic Pacific Island stories about knowing your community."

The Pacific unit was established by TVNZ's head of news and current affairs Bill Ralston last October. It has two full time reporters working on Pacific events and issues for TV1 News.

Teamed with Dreaver is Ewart Barnsley, who is presently covering a Pitcairn trial involving allegations of sexual abuse against a number of island men.

Dreaver, a Kiribati-born journalist, spent eight years working in the Cook Islands before moving to New Zealand.

She says that being involved in the Pacific unit allows her more time to work on an issue, instead of "chasing ambulances".

Stella Tanoi-Tagi, communi-

cations adviser for the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, says the increased coverage of Pacific issues brought about by the unit is good, but it needs to be more positive.

"Whether we have 'poor Pacific' stories or celebration news stories, Pacific people are still going to feature, and that's good. But we don't always want to have 'poor Pacific people always getting ripped off'."

She says disasters and conflict could be reported but this should be balanced with positive events.

"We need to highlight successes and things that are special about our culture."

"My concern is that there needs to be balanced reporting of Pacific stories."

Dreaver says there needs to be more Pacific Island journalists to pave the way for greater coverage.

"If there are more people doing it, then it starts to become more normal."

Technical obstacles often prevented pictures from being retrieved from some Pacific Island nations such as Kiribati, but future technology should help increase coverage from some smaller Pacific nations, she says.

Labour MP Mark Gosche accused mainstream media of being shallow and failing to seriously cover Pacific affairs.

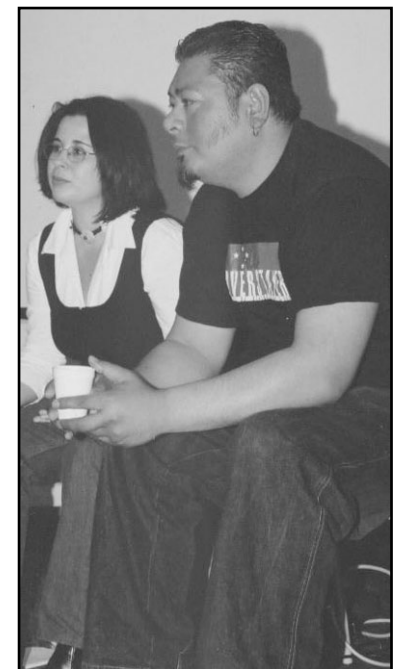
The former Minister of Pacific Island affairs criticised coverage of Pacific events and issues, saying the media is only interested

if something had gone wrong.

"I am concerned with the shallow nature of reporting in this country. Unless a crisis such as a cyclone, coup or major accident happens, it's not covered," he says.

Gosche says many Pacific Islands events were not reported at all, or were only reported in a negative way.

But speakers at the PIMA conference praised the work of TVNZ's *Tagata Pasifika*, as well as new initiatives such as *SPASIFIK* magazine and their coverage of Pacific news.



TVNZ TEAM: Pacific reporter Barbara Dreaver and news producer Tuti Urale.

News chiefs increase training plans for young journalists

by Anna Barge

A proposed new "incubator" programme to help young journalists may boost Pacific Islands media training.

Representatives from mainstream New Zealand-based media met at last weekend's PIMA conference and agreed to consider a programme to foster new talent and channel it through broadcasting schools and production houses.

Mark Jennings, TV3's head of news and current affairs, says he supports such a programme and is prepared to discuss the idea with network owners CanWest.

"The lack of Pacific Island journalists is a common problem," Jennings says.

He thought CanWest directors would be receptive to the idea of increasing the number of skilled Pacific Island journalists.

At present, his company "creams off the top people" from radio stations like Niu FM and programmes like *Tagata Pasifika*.

The shortage of Pacific Islands reporters is endemic but having a Pacific Islands round covered by either Pasifika or Palangi journalists is not something Jennings will implement.

"If you asked some Palangi journalists to do a story about Pacific Islanders they would be reluctant. It's not their natural inclination," Jennings says.

TVNZ chief executive Ian Fraser says the growth of the Pasifika population means funding programmes targeted at Pacific audiences are commercially sensible.

He says TVNZ has invested resources into Pacific coverage and training is important.

Lito Vilisoni, of Niu FM, says that when trained people choose to leave the station, it "robs us a little bit".



Mark Jennings

But the idea of headhunting talent is widespread in the industry.

Vilisoni thinks Pacific Islanders are only just now being recognised as a growth market with considerable consumer power and therefore are a good place to aim content at.

Vilisoni says PIMA could identify up-and-coming talent and refer them to television or radio for internships.

"If the media really want to get Pacific Island people, they would cast the net wider," she says.

However, she says young Pasifika people often do not see journalism as a priority profession and tend to focus on creative arts, graphic design and music.

Niu FM is working closely with the "gateway" programme, which gives high school students the chance to do internships with radio stations and to encourage them to join the media industry.



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Kitekei'aho Tu'akalau, postgraduate journalism

"I have been able to broaden my knowledge of journalism issues. Being a Pacific Islands student has also enabled me to share my culture with those who don't know about what it means to be a Pacific Islander."

Christine Gounder, postgraduate journalism

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Auckland University of Technology (AUT) and Pacific Islands Media Association Aotearoa (PIMA)

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