

Photo: Del Abcede/PMC



## Ratuva calls for stronger approach to safe, sustainable Pacific environment

A LEADING PACIFIC sociologist has called for a stronger cross-disciplinary approach to advocating the need for a safe and sustainable global environment.

“There is a need for articulating the significance of a safe and sustainable environment in the world, no matter how scientifically, artistically or spiritually you define it,” said Dr Steven Ratuva, senior lecturer in Pacific Studies at the University of Auckland.

Launching a new book, *Dreadlocks—Oceans, Islands and Skies*, at AUT University’s Pacific Media Centre, Dr Ratuva said there was a relationship between the environment and people and an interdisciplinary approach was needed to highlight this.

“Be they the writers, academics, artists, performers, poets – each has a way of feeling and expressing their relationship with their environment,” he said.

“And we must also inculcate these ideas through books and stories as through science and technology.

“Environmental damage is not always due to natural causes, it is also partly the



Dr Steven Ratuva speaking at the *Dreadlocks* climate change and creativity book launching at AUT University. Picture: Del Abcede/PMC

result of human process,” he added.

Human developments, global economic growth and increased tourism had all contributed to the environmental degradation.

This book is a special edition of the literary journal *Dreadlocks*, published by the University of the South Pacific’s Pacific Writing Forum and the PMC in partnership.

The journal is expected to be relaunched as a cross-disciplinary publication.

– Rukhsana Aslam

## Transitions

PACIFIC MEDIA CENTRE Advisory Board member Tui O’Sullivan adjusts pounamu presented to Papua New Guinea postgraduate student Henry Yamo.

He has completed his thesis and has returned to Port Moresby.

Students, staff and wantok supporters of the Pacific Media Centre recently farewelled a Papua New Guinean research journalist and the *Pacific Media Watch* freedom project contributing editor while welcoming his successor.

Henry Yamo of the Southern Highlands, a former PNG Transparency International and *Sunday Chronicle* journalist, handed in his Master of Communication Studies thesis investigating the use of mobile telephones in the health sector in the Western Highlands.

“And now I’m looking for a job, but excited to be going back to PNG,” he said.

He praised AUT University and the PMC and thanked his supervisor, Professor David Robie, for the support, funding and encouragement on completing his research.

He carried out his fieldwork last year during the usually volatile PNG general election.

Former *Pacific Media Watch* freedom project contributing editor Alex Perrottet, now working part-time as a journalist with the Auckland bureau of Radio New Zealand International, also endorsed his AUT experience at the centre.

Perrottet will still be around PMC while completing his MCS degree.

A Norwegian journalist, Daniel Drageset, also an MCS student, is succeeding Perrottet.

Although he started officially this month on the *PMW* posting, he had already filed his first report on the visit of the King of Tonga to AUT in March and he has a strong interest in Pasifika issues.

He followed up with reports on the alleged police torture of prisoners video controversy in Fiji.



# West Papuan leader visits PMC during global journey

WEST PAPUAN independence advocate Benny Wenda was stunned to find New Zealand “ignoring human rights issues on its doorstep” after Speaker David Carter denied him the opportunity to speak about his cause at Parliament.

“The Australian Parliament gave support last November and I was looking forward to the same in New Zealand, but my entry to Parliament has been blocked,” he says.

But he says the plight of his people is far too serious for him to give in.

Wenda has witnessed his people being beaten, tortured, imprisoned and killed and has been motivated to fight in this struggle to free his people.

Benny Wenda, a tribal chief of West Papua and founder of International Parliamentarians for West Papua, visited the Pacific Media Centre as part of his world tour visiting governments and parliamentarians.

The global group of Parliamentarians are committed to raise West Papuan issues in parliaments and to raise the case for self-determination.

Wenda’s visit to governments around the world is to raise the issue of West Papua with various parliamentarians to seek support for the West Papuan call for a free referendum, which has been going on for the last 40 years.

## Overwhelming support

Although he has received overwhelming support and has been welcomed by parliamentarians in countries he has visited, his planned visit to the New Zealand Parliament hit a snag when Speaker Carter rejected a meeting with parliamentarians in the Beehive.

However, Wenda, who campaigns peacefully for self-determination and human rights for the people of West Papua, said this did not dampen his spirits – it encouraged him.

His aim is to represent his people in putting forward their desire for self-determination to the governments around the world because he believes the so-called 1969 “Act of Free Choice” was not carried out according to international standards but done according to Indonesian standards.



West Papuan campaigner Benny Wenda talks to PNG journalist Henry Yamo at the Pacific Media Centre. Image: Del Abcede/PMC

“The Western world calls it an ‘Act of free choice’, but we call it the ‘Act of no choice’ and part of my campaign is to seek support from world governments to recognise that West Papuans’ right to self-determination was betrayed in 1969,” he said.

“The 1969 vote must be reviewed, by the UN Decolonisation Committee as the legitimate body that was involved in accepting the process then which was a mistake,” he said.

“In the 20th century we are still a colony; my message is, “please hear my people cry for freedom,” he said.

Wenda was a political prisoner, accused of inciting an attack on a police station. The fact that he was not in the country at the time and certainly had nothing to do with it, does not matter.

However, it was widely speculated at the time that the charges were brought against Wenda because of his political leadership of the Koteka Tribal Assembly, a political council of tribes which advo-

cates self-determination for West Papua from Indonesia.

Speaking at a public meeting in Auckland in February, human rights lawyer Jennifer Robinson, also co-founder of International Lawyers for West Papua (ILWP), said the road had been a long one for Wenda, but his testament and commitment to his people had gained good momentum.

The ILWP movement is a group of lawyers who want to make the case for West Papuans’ self-determination and to set out to support their international legal case needs.

Robinson said Indonesia had tried to silence Wenda’s international campaign by “abusing” the Interpol system and listing him as a “wanted terrorist”.

## Indigenous persecution

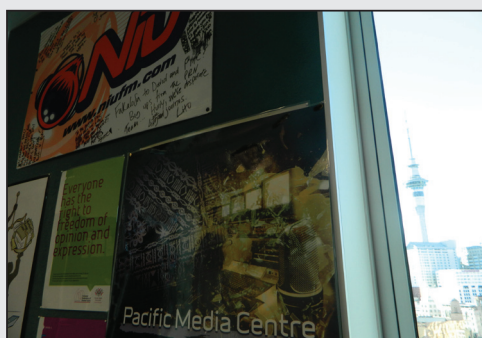
“His case is indicative of what goes on in West Papua and the persecution that any indigenous West Papuan leader suffers when they stand up and speak on behalf of their people,” she said.

But Robinson and her team were able to challenge the warrant posted on the Interpol system and in September 2012 this was removed on the grounds that the arrest was politically motivated.

Since then Wenda, who was granted political asylum in the UK, has been able to travel to many countries raising awareness about the on-going human rights abuse in West Papua.

Wenda returned to Australia and then visited Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. – Henry Yamo

## New PMC office



The view of Sky Tower from the new PMC office in the Sir Paul Reeves Building.



Benny Wenda's interview with Henry Yamo at the PMC.



Dreadlocks - Oceans, Islands and Skies book launch.



Hello and farewell at Pacific Media Watch.





# John Pulu

Director/Reporter, Tagata Pasifika TVNZ  
Bachelor of Communication Studies in Television

While still at high school John Pulu was lucky enough to get work experience through Gateway on TVNZ's *Tagata Pasifika* programme.

## Work experience opens doors

"I then kept in touch with *Tagata Pasifika* during my study – just persisting nicely – and one holiday break they arranged work for me on TV2's *Studio 2*."

John also took up other work experience offers, including freelance reporting for Tongan TV programme, *TNews*, and a bit of radio announcing with *Niu FM*.

His industriousness paid off. After John graduated at the end of 2009 *Tagata Pasifika* employed him on contract and in 2011 he became a permanent staff member.

## Gaining practical skills

"The hands-on experience I gained through the Television major, which included directing, camera operation and presenting, prepared me well for this job. I also really enjoyed creating visual documentaries."

"Another great resource was AUT's Pacific Media Centre," says John.

The Pacific Media Centre offers courses and information for Pasifika students studying towards a career in the media industry.

## Future in Pacific media

John feels strongly about telling Pasifika stories. "In the future I would like to pursue documentary making because there are so many tales from the Pacific yet untold."

"Another great resource was AUT's Pacific Media Centre."



Alison Young Photography