

## Sabbatical chalks up global mileage, human rights and diverse outcomes



PMC director Dr David Robie with members of the La'o Hamutuk development research NGO in Timor-Leste. Image: La'o Hamutuk. Below: David in batik at Borobudur.

WHAT do Pacific human rights in Yogyakarta, climate change media strategies in Fiji, media freedom in Stockholm, digital free speech in Paris, development communication in Timor-Leste, volcanoes in Indonesia and a new journalism book for the Asia-Pacific region have in common?

They're all different sides of the multiple coin for Pacific Media Centre director David Robie for his just-completed global sabbatical.

Professor Robie began the semester-long sabbatical in July when he presented a paper on Pacific media freedom and human rights at the Asian Media Information and Communication (AMIC) conference in Yogyakarta in central Indonesia.

Barely had that ended – and he managed to squeeze in a visit to the Mahayana Buddhist temple of Borobudur near Mount Merapi volcano—and he was winging his way across the Pacific to an international conference on “failed states” in the region at the University of the South Pacific.

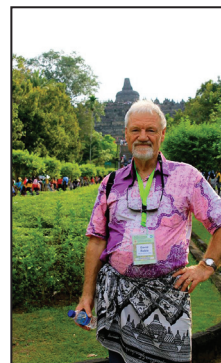
He presented a highly visual paper on climate change reporting and media strategies at the Suva conference.

Then back to New Zealand, where he completed his forthcoming 10th book, *Don't Spoil My Beautiful Face: Coups, Media and Human Rights in the Pacific*, in September ready for the publishers. He met the deadline on this in spite of the shock of losing his father at the age of 92.

### 'Roller-coaster' ride

“I feel like I have been on an astonishing roller-coaster and I have just had to keep up with the flow,” says David.

October involved a month of visiting media groups and guest lecturing related to his postgraduate Asia-Pacific Journalism course



at AUT, including a week at the Danish School of Journalism in Aarhus, Denmark, and a day of back-to-back lectures at Stockholm University in Sweden

This was followed by a visit to Paris, where he had a planning meeting with the Asia-Pacific desk director, Benjamin Ismail, and other colleagues at the Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) media freedom organisation's office.

Back to New Zealand again, and then off to Timor-Leste for three weeks to work with La'o Hamutuk (Timor-Leste Institute for Development and Analysis) as a volunteer.

As his funds were very low by then, he managed to find—thanks to La'o Hamutuk's Charles Scheiner—a comfortable whare next to a goat-grazing paddock close to the beach in the capital of Dili. What a view of Atauro Island!

A very peaceful time—with a lot of vil-lage travel on the back of a motorbike—except for when a murder happened in his neighbourhood early one Sunday morning. A squad of about 30 armed police set up camp for the next few days.

David ran several training workshops and a public lecture on media freedom, and filed some journalism pieces interviewing local editors as well as his research outputs.

“The daily threats and challenges faced by journalists in this resource-rich—oil and gas reserves due to run out within six years—and impoverished little country would shock the average New Zealand journalist,” David says.

Finally, the sabbatical ended with a meeting with the Centre for Peace and Democracy team in Bali. The Bali visit also included going to Mount Batur volcano, an active peak that erupted in 1917 and killed more than 1000 people.

Watch for David's articles on *PMC Online*. [www.pmc.aut.ac.nz](http://www.pmc.aut.ac.nz)

# Fiji torture series wins Pacific Media Centre editor trauma journalism prize

A MULTIMEDIA news report series about the torture of a fugitive prisoner and his suspected accomplice by Fiji prison officers has won *Pacific Media Watch* contributing editor Daniel Drageset a coveted international prize in trauma journalism.

Drageset, a Norwegian journalist interned at the AUT University's Pacific Media Centre and a postgraduate student in the School of Communication Studies, won the Dart Asia-Pacific Centre for Journalism and Trauma Prize for reporting on violence, disaster or trauma in society at the 2013 Ossie Awards for student journalism in Mooloolaba, Queensland.

He has been contributing editor of the PMC's *Pacific Media Watch* freedom project for the past year, and has also been a student intern editor on the associated independent *Pacific Scoop* news website.

"I am really happy to have won this prize. It was incredibly interesting working on this story, and I think it highlights what an important job *PMW* is doing," Drageset said.

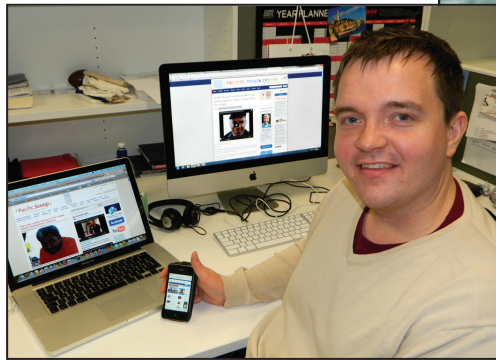
## 'Impressive investigation'

Judge Cait McMahon, director of Melbourne's Dart Asia-Pacific Centre, said Drageset's winning Fiji entry had showed an "impressive investigation into alleged police torture".

"Daniel had to straddle important ethical issues and clarify potential bias of sources to produce an impressive piece of reporting," she said.

"This work carefully investigated YouTube clips, blogs and other sources to construct a series of balanced, online news stories that were eventually picked up by mainstream, international media.

Daniel Drageset and a clip from the prize-winning series.  
Image: Del Abcede/PMC



"While the videos were disturbing to watch, Daniel produced a strong series of news stories that align with the principles of giving voice to victims and survivors of violence and injustice."

The three-part series was reported by Drageset in March as *PMW* became the first international media outlet to break the story, which was soon also reported by news agencies and other media.

The story was developed from graphic YouTube footage captured on mobile phones of the torture of 27-year-old escaped prisoner Iowane Benedito by apparent prison and other security officers.

Another man suspected of helping the fugitive was also tortured with a dog.

The Fiji regime later admitted to "corrections officers" being implicated in the torture, but rejected calls for an independent inquiry. However, a Fiji Prisons and Corrections Service spokeswoman confirmed that three officers had been sacked over the video.

Drageset worked closely with Professor David Robie, director of the PMC and managing editor of the *PMW* project, on

the stories.

The prize for Drageset was A\$200. Highly commended for the Dart award was Eliza Rugg of RMIT University in Melbourne with her article "One metre miracle".

This is the third year running that the PMC-affiliated students have won all prizes and citations going to the NZ-based nominations.

Last year, Karen Abplanalp and former *PMW* contributing editor Alex Perrottet won awards, and Perrottet also gained a highly commended award in 2011 for a series of reports on Samoan post-tsunami reconstruction.

On November 28, Drageset made a presentation about the *PMW* project and the *Pacific Scoop* internship at the Journalism Education Association of New Zealand (JEANZ) conference hosted this year by AUT.

As well as the Fiji torture issue, Drageset spoke about case studies such as the West Papua Freedom Flotilla, the *Samoa Observer* editor being verbally attacked by the Prime Minister of Samoa, Papuans Behind Bars about political prisoners in West Papua, and an expose about Danish MP Marie Krarup's racist comments about Māori.

## PJR focuses on global and local celebrity

*Pacific Journalism Review* was published in October with the special theme of Celebrity and Scandal.

Edited by Professor Barry King, Dr Rosser Johnson and Dr Allison Oosterman, who has been acting managing editor this semester while David was on sabbatical,

the edition focused on the dynamics of fame in a small country and the interface between the global and the local.

In his introduction to the theme, Dr King examined some of the fundamental concepts for the study of celebrity culture and scandal and related these to the New Zealand context.

Del Abcede did the journal layout and production. Next year *PJR* will celebrate 20 years.

[www.pjreview.info](http://www.pjreview.info)





FLAVORZ

Another successful Flavorz 2013 student film festival was hosted by PMC chair Isabella Rasch and her team.



Institute for Media, Journalism and Communication, Stockholm University, 18 October 2013



Danish School of Media and Journalism, Aarhus, Denmark - 22-25 October 2013



Reporters Sans Frontières media freedom advocacy, Paris, France - 28 October 2013



La'o Hamutuk development research, and with NZ Ambassador Tony Fautua and Mereoni Chung of the Fiji Citizen's Constitutional Forum (CCF) in Dili, East Timor - 11 November to 5 December 2013

# 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."



Alyson Young Photography