

New PMW student editor seeks 'voice for Pacific communities'

POSTGRADUATE student journalist Alistar Kata is in the hot seat as Pacific Media Watch contributing editor this year.

She follows in the footsteps of Taberannang Korauaba (Kiribati), Josie Latu (Tonga), Alex Perrottet (Australia), Daniel Drageset (Norway) and Anna Majavu (South Africa) and faces a challenge keeping up with the region's news on the media freedom project.

However, Kata is taking her appointment in her stride – it's a "natural progression", she says.

"I've worked closely with the Pacific Media Centre when covering the elections in Fiji last year and I feel like this is where I belong."

The Cook Islands Māori student journalist wants to engage New Zealand audiences more with Pacific news and current affairs.

"I don't see the Pacific region covered enough in our mainstream media and there's a huge gap and a need for people to know what's going on with their neighbours," she says.

"This is an area where I know PMC really flourishes."

Kata intends to use her experience with multimedia journalism to give people "all forms of content".

Creating packages

"News media is heading towards creating multimedia packages and as a journalist this is exciting for me," she says.

"I know this type of reporting is something I can bring to the team and I know it will make people notice what is going on in the Pacific."

Kata's job as PMW's contributing editor in AUT University's School of Communication Studies started in March and she is looking forward to the multi-dimensional aspect of the role.

She hopes to soon resume the Pacific



Pacific Media Watch contributing editor Alistar Kata interviews Kiribati Independent editor Taberannang Korauaba at a recent climate change seminar.

weekly broadcasts for *The Wire* on Radio 96bFM that the Pacific Media Watch project has offered in the past.

"Not only do I get the opportunity to produce and publish content, but I get to research media freedom, censorship in the Pacific and that is something I see as extremely important for a journalist to be informed about," she says.

Kata, who reported in Fiji on the general election for Pacific Scoop last September, is finishing her Bachelor of Communication Studies (Honors) degree and wants to give "a voice to Pacific communities".

"It's such a privilege to be part of an organisation that puts the Pacific region in the spotlight." PMC director Professor David Robie says he was delighted to have Kata "on board". — *Pacific Media Centre*

PMC students win Ossie Award for Fiji coverage

PACIFIC SCOOP—PMC'S online news website—has won a major student journalism award for its coverage of the Fiji post-coup general election last September with its team covering a "tumultuous political situation".

The crew of three students—Mads Anneberg and Alistar Kata in Fiji, and anchor editor and reporter Tom Carnegie in Auckland—provided comprehensive multimedia coverage of the election campaign for two weeks, including the three-day "blackout".

Judge Tania Bawden said the students' multimedia experience and background research provided "wide-ranging insights" in their coverage to win the Best Use of Multimedia in the annual Ossie Awards for best student journalism in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific".

Climate change seminar tackles ethics



Pacific culture, spirituality limit environmental news

PACIFIC people are linked to their land in a cultural and spiritual way, which makes messages about their changing environment hard to receive, says *Kiribati Independent* editor Taberannang Korauaba.

“First, they belong to the land, their land is theirs, they really have a strong connection there,” he told a public seminar on climate change and the media at AUT University last month.

“So when the media is trying to work to cover the story, people don’t want to hear that because they don’t want to hear stories about ‘they’re sinking, they’re going to die.’”

Korauaba has encouraged journalists to approach their climate change stories in a different way with his newspaper.

“They are putting people as victims, of course they are the victims,” he said.

“But they need to come up with a different approach, a different style to tell the people that their country is in danger.”

Science communication specialist Dr Jan Sinclair of Massey University, who also spoke at the seminar, gave detailed information

showing that the media favour the political factors of the issue, rather than “telling the public what they need to know”.

Media responsibility

“It seems to me that journalists have a responsibility to tell people, number one, you actually are in danger, and number two, ‘Oh look there are things you can do so start thinking about them.’”

As a former science journalist, Dr Sinclair also addressed the breakdown in communication from the experts to the public.

“I say, look you know all these things

about climate change, people need to know about them, why are you not talking to the news media?”

“And they say, ‘No, our role is simply to advise policy makers’.”

Both Korauaba and Dr Sinclair suggested a collaborative approach to informing the public in the ‘correct way’.

Korauaba believes pushing the message through respected community leaders to communities in the Pacific is a way for people to realise “something’s going on”.

“It’s people’s own identity, their land, their culture, it’s very hard to remove people from their roots”.

Students, teaching staff, members of the public and climate change advocates attended the seminar.

A live stream of the event was viewed by more than 300 people from 24 countries, including 142 from New Zealand.

Other viewers tuned in from Australia, Fiji, Mexico, United Kingdom, United States and Vanuatu.

— Alistar Kata



Photos by Del Abcede

Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP) Day



Mads Anneberg and Alister Kata in Fiji



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