

Rainbow Warrior student assignment climaxes with author's call for justice

A TWO-MONTH *Eyes of Fire* student educational campaign with a microsite on the *Rainbow Warrior* experience climaxed recently with a new edition of the book and the author calling for justice for the Pacific victims of nuclear testing.

The publication of David Robie's *Eyes of Fire* coincided with the 30th anniversary of the *Rainbow Warrior* bombing by French spies on July 10, 1985, at Marsden Wharf in Auckland Harbour.

First published in early 1986, the book tells of Greenpeace's campaign with the *Rainbow Warrior* against nuclear testing in the South Pacific, the penultimate mission to Rongelap, its subsequent bombing and the political fallout that followed.

"This book refocuses the anniversary around the Rongelap mission and action now to confront climate change, which casts an even greater spectre over the planet than the Cold War nuclear threat," said Professor Robie, director of the Pacific Media Centre at AUT University.

"It tells of the activism, and the humanitarian aspects, not just a spy drama being rehased."

Dr Robie said that even though France ended nuclear tests in 1995 and signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), justice was needed for the island victims.

Dr Robie was on board the *Rainbow Warrior* for 10 weeks during its final mission in 1985 through the South Pacific, protesting against nuclear testing and helping evacuate residents of Rongelap affected by nuclear radiation.

Great project

Tony Murrow, publishing director of Little Island Press, which produced the book and created the *Eyes of Fire* microsite, said it



Eyes of Fire author David Robie speaks about nuclear testing and climate change in the Pacific at the book launch. Image: Del Abcede/PMC

was a great project to be involved in.

"Publishing of this calibre is hugely important. David's book speaks not just of a time in the past when activism involved danger, loss of life, and huge humanitarian acts," he said.

"It also speaks about today, because those people who were in that crew are still striving to make the world a better place."



Greenpeace New Zealand's Bunny McDiarmid launching *Eyes of Fire* at The Cloud. Image: Del Abcede/PMC

Greenpeace New Zealand executive director Bunny McDiarmid was a crew member on board the *Rainbow Warrior* during its final mission, and officially launched the book.

"David is one of the few people who were part of the Rongelap story, and us coming down from the Pacific to New Zealand, so he really can write about it from first hand.

"Thank you David for making sure the story of what happened to the Rongelap people and what happened to the *Rainbow Warrior* gets retold."

When Dr Robie approached Little Island Press to discuss publishing a new edition, they decided to do something a little different

Public good

Tony [Murrow] came back and said, 'We want to do the new book, but also we want to produce a public good for the community, something that will inspire people.'

In the weeks leading up to July 10, AUT University television and journalism students, AUT's Pacific Media Centre, Little Island Press and Greenpeace produced a series of interviews and stories about the *Rainbow Warrior*'s final mission on a microsite.

AUT's dean of the Design and Creative Technologies faculty, Professor Desna Jury, joined crew members, environmental activists and social justice campaigners for the launch.

Dr Robie said: "It was an ideal educational opportunity involving 40 of our television and journalism students and Alistar Kata at our Pacific Media Watch project." – Michael Neilson

Microsite: eyes-of-fire.littleisland.co.nz

Eyes of Fire is available at the AUT University book shop.

Tourist mood in Fiji but no holiday in newsrooms

TJ Aumua and Pacific Media Watch editor Alistar Kata travelled to Fiji and Samoa for two weeks last month on a Pacific Cooperation Foundation student media exchange programme. Pauline Mago-King of Papua New Guinea's Divine Word University, Kelly Vacala (Fiji National University), and Bethel Peato (National University of Samoa) were also hosted at AUT University by the Pacific Media Centre on their New Zealand visits. Here TJ and Alistar sum up their experiences:

I FELT the heat of Fiji's tropical climate as soon as I jumped off the plane. The warmth was a pleasant relief from New Zealand's frosty winter and a gratifying reminder of what a holiday feels like.

But I wasn't here for a holiday. So ignoring the billboards touting Fiji as a honeymoon getaway, I was to work in the nation's newsrooms for two weeks to gain a different perspective on our Pacific neighbour.

The exchange was part of Pacific Cooperation Foundation's Media Programme which partnered with Fiji National University and Auckland University of Technology's Pacific Media Centre as host organisations.

On my first day in Suva I met student journalists from Fiji's National University. They told me Fiji should be known for its people; that despite the nation experiencing four coups in the past two decades, the people have persevered and continue to make achievements. For two weeks



TJ Aumua with some of her Fiji journalist colleagues.

it was an inspiration to work alongside some of Fiji's 20-plus-year-old journalists who were informing the nation.

I got to accompany them on their weekly assignments, helping with interviews, writing and voicing news stories, and watching behind the scenes of how a 6pm news bulletin is put together and broadcast live to the nation.

Fiji's media climate often hits inter-

national headlines for being restricted and censored by the Fiji Media Industry Development Decree.

At times, this was frustrating to work under; having to withhold certain questions I wanted answered, as well as locals being extremely

hesitant to speak to the media in fear of repercussions.

But I admired those journalists whom, under challenging circumstances, strived to keep the people of Fiji at the heart of their stories.

Even though my stay in Fiji was brief, I feel honoured to have been able to experience and be a part of the new media generation. – TJ Aumua

Lessons of being a journalist amid the Manu Samoa buzz

IT'S AN indescribable feeling working with local journalists in Samoa, in possibly one of the most exciting times in the country's history. The buzz of the city was beyond definition leading up to the All Blacks versus Manu Samoa test and the day of the match.

Even on the way there all anyone could talk about on the plane was the game and their predictions of the outcome. The locals were literally breathing rugby and it was awesome to see such passionate characters thrilled over something that is so familiar to us back home.

But the whole experience for me was more than just the game. The highlight of the trip was definitely the people I met.

I was the most fortunate person having met and worked alongside the local media. Their perseverance and diligent work ethic would put some of the journalists in New Zealand to shame.

They care about their work and because their community is so localised, everything matters.



Alistar Kata with the New Zealand High Commissioner, Jackie Frizelle.

Each newsroom I went to (*Samoa Observer*, Radio Polynesia, Press Secretariat and TV1) welcomed me with open arms.

The main point that stands out for me about the local media is the sort of family environment they create in their newsrooms. Although there is the odd tussle or war of words, there's no friction.

Everybody is there for the same purpose and they all help each other out, it's a sort of "we are all in this together" feel.

It was an atmosphere that was conducive

to the work we were producing, and at the end of the day when the end product was completed, you knew that it was a real team effort.

The reporters also work under some constraints in terms of the equipment and technology available to them. Although their industry is not as advanced as the systems in some other Pacific countries, they get the job done without complaint or qualm.

It was such an education for me to see and experience with them, working in that way.

While I was at TV1, most of their crew had gone away to Papua New Guinea to report on the 2015 Pacific Games, and because most of their gear was taken, they had to record on tapes.

The Pacific region is an area that is at most times misunderstood, at least in the mainstream media in New Zealand.

This experience has nailed home for me the importance of being a reporter who builds understanding, and gives an accurate expression of who these Pacific people are and what matters to them. – Alistar Kata

Pacific terrorism, humanitarian voyage marked



The launch of the *Eyes of Fire* book and microsite marking the 30th anniversary of the *Rainbow Warrior* bombing.



Communicating in an E-Asia seminar at AUT.



A creative Industries Pacific doctoral graduation cultural presentation.



No More Hiroshimas

Civil Society Unites to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

Come and hear WILPF member Emily Watson speak about the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the humanitarian movement for nuclear disarmament.

Emily attended the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Conference in New York in April, where she worked with WILPF's Reaching Critical Will team

where:

**Sir Paul Reeves Bldg, AUT
Mayoral Drive, Auckland**

when:

Thursday August 13

time

6:30 pm

Sponsored by Pacific Media Centre, AUT and Women's International League for Peace & Freedom, Tamaki Makaurau

