

## West Papua supporters gather at PMC for Morning Star flag event



Supporters of a “Free West Papua” at the flag-raising ceremony. Image: Venus Abcede/AUT

ABOUT 20 academics, librarians, journalists, students and Pacific issues activists gathered at the Pacific Media Centre for a Morning Star flag-raising ceremony as part of global actions for West Papuan freedom.

Kevin McBride of Pax Christi Aotearoa and the Asia-Pacific Human Rights Coalition (APHRC) spoke of the important human rights concerns for West Papua and how “we’re all part of the oppression” with New Zealand’s “complicity” with Indonesian policies.

PMC’s Dr David Robie talked of the “vision of hope” with mounting solidarity and support in Pacific Island nations, especially the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

But he criticised the “collaboration” of Fiji and Papua New Guinean governments with Jakarta and highlighted the emerging stand in support of self-determination being taken by an Indonesian human rights group, Front Rakyat Indonesia untuk West Papua.

Del Abcede praised the turnout and spoke of another “creative” flag-raising ceremony being planned by Māori and Pacific women from the Oceania Interrupted collective at Mangere Bridge.

Oceania Interrupted was formed on 1 December 2013 in response to the need to raise awareness about Indonesian colonisation and human rights abuses

being committed against the indigenous people of West Papua.

Earlier, this year PMC postgraduate researcher Karen Abplanalp gained first class honours for her Master of Communication Studies thesis and microsite on media access to West Papua, “*Media Restrictions on Papua: Understanding the Impacts*”. – *Asia Pacific Report*



AUT librarians out in force for the West Papua solidarity flag-raising event at the Pacific Media Centre. Image: Del Abcede/PMC



# Pacific Media Watch has talks in Paris

PACIFIC Media Centre director Professor David Robie had consultations with Reporters Without Borders' Asia-Pacific director Benjamin Ismail in Paris during November to strategise around the centre's long-running Pacific Media Watch freedom project.

The PMW project, founded in 1996 in Fiji and adopted by the PMC in 2007, monitors and maps media freedom issues in the Asia-Pacific region and publishes a website and media reports. [www.pacmediawatch.aut.ac.nz](http://www.pacmediawatch.aut.ac.nz)

Each year in recent times, a postgraduate student or graduate in the School of Communication Studies has been recruited by the Pacific Media Centre as researcher/editor for the monitoring service.

Research on media freedom issues has also been provided to RSF, Freedom House, International Federation of Journalists and other global media monitoring groups.

Dr Robie said he was very pleased with the updates shared with RSF's Benjamin Ismail in Paris.

"It would be great if we could get somebody like Benjamin out here to New Zealand at some stage—we need more media scrutiny in this part of the world," he said.

Dr Robie has been on sabbatical in semester 2 and has travelled widely in Europe, meeting with media collaborators and giving guest lectures at universities.

The PMW's most recent researcher/contributing editor, TJ Aumua, has just finished her contract and she is soon heading off with another former PMW editor, Alistar Kata (a popular reporter at *Tagata Pasifika*), on her OE to Europe.

Thank you TJ and Star!



Former Pacific Media Watch contributing editors Alistar Kata (left), who has been a journalist with *Tagata Pasifika* for the past year, and TJ Aumua. They are soon heading for Europe on their OE stint.



PMC director Professor David Robie and Reporters Without Borders Asia Pacific director Benjamin Ismail consulting in Paris in November.

# 'Atenisi's dean Dr Michael Horowitz at PMC as visiting Pacific research fellow

'ATENISI INSTITUTE'S academic dean Dr Michael Horowitz has joined the Pacific Media Centre this month as visiting research fellow and the Tongan university plans to establish a media school on its second campus during 2016.

Dr Horowitz holds US postgraduate degrees in social science from the New School in New York and the College of Public Affairs at Oregon's Portland State University.

His analyses of US politics and culture have appeared in the *Village Voice*, *Playboy*, and the *Psychiatric Times*, among other periodicals, while academic articles and reviews have been regionally published in *Sites*, *Journal of Pacific History* and *Journal of Pacific Affairs*.

The week after he arrived in Auckland, he delivered a seminar with AUT's Institute of Public Policy on the impact of businessman and reality television magnate Donald Trump being elected as US President-elect in November on democracy in his home country.

Under the pen name V.O. Blum, he authored the speculative novella *DownMind* (2013), which was favourably reviewed by the *Listener* soon after publication by Steam Press in Wellington.

Since 2015, Dr Horowitz has directed the university at 'Atenisi Institute in Tonga, which is planning to establish a media academy on its second campus in the 'Isileli district of Nuku'alofa.

The academy would train journalists, cinematographers, and thespians, among other talent, for media careers in Western Polynesia.



Photos: DEL ABC/PMC

Part of Dr Horowitz's agenda at PMC is to recruit specialists here in New Zealand to serve on the academy's board prior to its launch.

PMC director Professor David Robie, who is currently on sabbatical, welcomed Dr Horowitz, saying: "We are fortunate to have a Pacific academic of the calibre of Dr Horowitz with us and we look forward to working with 'Atenisi in the future."

Dr Horowitz will be at AUT's PMC from the November until early February 2017. – *Pacific Media Watch*



## SABBATICAL 2016



**NORWAY:** Dr Robie's West Papua seminar at the University of Oslo, 5 October 2016.



**AUSTRIA:** A consultation meeting with media freedom director Scott Griffen (left) of the International Press Institute, Vienna, 15 October 2016.



**FRANCE:** Meeting with Benjamin Ismail, Asia Pacific director of Reporters Without Borders, Paris, 14 November 2016.



**BELGIUM:** Role of the Media in Violent Conflict conference in Brussels, 16 November 2016.



The logo for AUT (Auckland University of Technology) is displayed in a white, bold, sans-serif font within a white rectangular box. The background of the entire page features a pattern of overlapping orange circles and leaves, with a dark blue and purple nebula-like image in the lower half.

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A photograph of a young woman with long brown hair, smiling and wearing a black leather jacket over a striped shirt. She is positioned on the right side of the page, with a starry space background behind her.

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**Elizabeth Blackwell**

Master of Communication Studies student