

Global press freedom summit includes PMC

THE PARIS-BASED global media freedom watchdog Reporters Without Borders recently hosted press freedom defenders from the Asia-Pacific for a summit in the French capital.

Invited participants included Pacific Media Centre director Professor David Robie and delegates from Australia and Papua New Guinea among the 23 correspondents from 17 countries or territories.

The representatives were from Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Hongkong, Maldives, Mongolia, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand and Tibet along with a team of Paris-based RSF advocates.

Asia Pacific head Daniel Bastard said the consultation was part of a new strategy making better use of the correspondents' network to make the impact of advocacy work faster and even more effectively than in the past.

Tui O'Sullivan retires after outstanding career

FOUNDATION Pacific Media Centre Advisory Board Tui O'Sullivan retired recently after more than four decades of outstanding service to Auckland University of Technology.

Tui was the first female Māori academic at AUT and has been a stalwart member of the Tertiary Education Union (TEU) and its predecessor ASTE, as well being a key person in the development of the PMC.

She had a long term involvement in equity and diversity at AUT and her support and influence will be greatly missed.

The PMC will shortly be publishing a profile about her life and times at AUT.

She was farewelled by the PMC at a Four Seasons luncheon and has also been given a send off by the university at the Ngā Wai o Horotiu marae and by the union among other farewells.

PMC director Professor David Robie thanked Tui for her "inspirational" contribution to the centre and the university.

Tui has played a key role in supporting and encouraging the PMC's internships that have included high profile media assignments for our students in China, Cook Islands, Fiji, Indonesia, Philippines, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu.



PMC's director Professor David Robie (centre, below map) with some of the Pacific and Southeast Asian press freedom defenders at the Reporters Without Borders summit in Paris.

Image: RSF

Dr Robie is convenor of the Pacific Media Watch freedom project which has employed post graduate students in part-time reporting/editing/research roles.

New Zealand is eighth on the RSF Press Freedom Index—back in the top 10 media freedom countries after slipping to 13th in 2017.

The other Pacific delegates were Associate Professor Joseph Fernandez, a journalist and media law academic who is head of

journalism at Curtin University of Australia (19th on the RSF Index), and former PNG *Post-Courier* chief executive and media consultant Bob Howarth of Papua New Guinea (53rd).

All made lively interventions even though most media freedom issues in Oceania "pale into insignificance" compared with many countries in the region where journalists are regularly killed or persecuted.

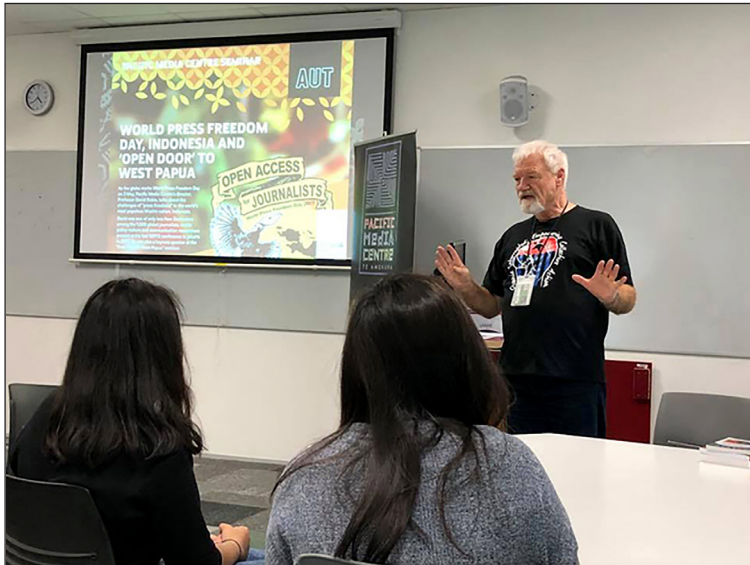
Nauru's controversial ban on the ABC from covering the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) this September was soundly condemned.



DEL ABC/PMC

PMC director condemns 'targeting' of journalists and silence on West Papua human rights violations

KHAIRIAH A. RAHMAN/PMC



Professor David Robie ... critical of lack of New Zealand media coverage of a major regional issue - self-determination for Papuans.

AN ALARMING number of “targeted” journalists being killed and West Papua media for independence were just two of the topics covered in a wide-ranging seminar by the director of the Pacific Media Centre in May.

Professor David Robie called for the media, universities and journalism schools to take their Pacific “backyard” more seriously and not just wait for crises to happen.

The seminar marked May 3—World Press Freedom Day. This year’s conference was in Accra, Ghana.

Dr Robie cited the number of journalists killed while working in 2017 and called journalism an increasingly “dangerous occupation”.

“Reporters Sans Frontières (RSF) [Reporters Without Borders] statistics showed 65 journalists were killed worldwide in 2017,” Dr Robie said. Of the 65 journalists killed, seven of these people were so-called citizen journalists.

This number of casualties varied between media freedom monitoring agencies depending on the definitions of journalists and media workers counted in the statistics, he said.

Although this statistic showed a drop from the previous year, the growth of “hatred” for media and targeting of journalists was a worsening problem.

“This is a dire situation that is getting worse.”

On top of the killings, the Paris-based statistics showed that 326 journalists were detained in prison and a further 54 were being held hostage.

Dr Robie said use of the term “citizen journalist” was problematic, as it gave an impression of untrained journalists working without an ethical basis. In fact, many professional journalists were becoming “citizen” journalists tactically and using social media to defeat mainstream media “gags” such as relating to the Melanesian region and West Papua inside Indonesia. — *Jean Bell*

Elite groups ‘contain’ nuclear food safety debate, says Fukushima disaster researcher

A LOOSE collection of elite groups shape the global language and thinking around food safety in the nuclear era, says a researcher who has been studying the Fukushima disaster in Japan seven years ago.

This cohort, formed in the 1960s and dubbed by the researcher as the “Transnational Nuclear Assemblage”, includes government and business institutions that produce ruling texts on radiation protection that determine safe levels.

A core idea was that of narrative and approach to issues, especially relating to different “realities”, said Karly Burch, a doctoral candidate at the University of Otago who was speaking at a public seminar hosted by AUT’s Pacific Media Centre and organised by postdoctoral researcher Dr Sylvia Frain.

The seminar focused on the governance of “safe food” after the Tokyo Electric Power Company’s (TEPCO) Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant explosions in the wake of the 9.1 magnitude Tōhoku earthquake and tsunami on 11 March 2011.



Documentary film maker and media academic Jim Marbrook, recently in Japan, with researcher Karly Burch at the Fukushima seminar.

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“Multiple realities are possible, but sometimes the ruling elite wants to enact a certain reality and we are convinced there is only one way to do things. In fact there may be many.”

Burch moved to Japan in 2008 and lived in the Kansai region. After two years, she moved to Europe to do her masters degree research in agroecology. At the time of the disaster, she was in Austria and she returned to Japan.

Her research “questions how the Japanese government and agricultural industry

encourage people to eat food that possibly contain TEPCO’s radionuclides, and how this works”.

Radionuclides are unstable isotopes that release particles to reach a more stable state, Burch says.

Ionising radiation is the most concerning radiation as it can damage cells. These radionuclides cannot be sensed by humans and radiation machines are required to identify objects or food with radionuclides.— *Jean Bell*



Safe food governance after 2011 Fukushima power plant disaster seminar - Karly Burch, 13 March 2018.



Free Press in West Papua seminar - David Robie, 3 May 2018.



Pacific Media Centre farewells Advisory Board member Tui O'Sullivan, 26 June 2018.



Pacific journalism students from Fiji and Samoa visit Pacific Media Centre, 29 June 2018.

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