

Courageous women featured in *PJR's* Melanesian media freedom edition

ALICE MOLDOVAN



Human rights lawyer Veronica Koman believes that Indonesians witnessing accounts of Papuans expressing their grievances leads some to better understand and acknowledge Papuan perspectives.

AN EVOCATIVE “Frontline” article about courageous women activists at the heart of a communication and media struggle for justice for West Papua features among the lead articles of the latest *Pacific Journalism Review* – the largest edition ever produced in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

The article, by journalist and advocate Belinda Lopez, about the #Illridewithyou campaign in West Papua, features crusading lawyer Veronica Koman, activist Zely Ariane and others.

In an editorial, *PJR* says hostile media environments in Fiji, Papua New Guinea and West Papua pose growing challenges to the Melanesian region’s democracies.



The New Zealand-based research journal published by the Pacific Media Centre warns that laws and cultural restrictions are providing barriers to open information and are silencing journalists.

Partnering with the Melanesia Media Freedom Forum (MMFF) and Griffith University, the journal published 32 articles in the July edition, mostly devoted to threats to the region’s media but also addressing other critical issues such as the covid-19 pandemic, climate change and tropical cyclones.

“The legacy of the former Fijian military dictatorship continues to maintain a stranglehold on the local press under Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama, fostering a culture of self-censorship,” the journal says.

The publication, founded in Papua New Guinea and now in its 26th year, refers to Fiji’s “repressive” Media Industry Development Decree that became a parliamentary Act in 2015, paving the way for “even more insidious control” through a state-controlled Media Industry Development Authority (MIDA).

Vanuatu’s arbitrary government attempt to deny former *Vanuatu Daily Post* media director Dan McGarry permission to re-enter the country in November 2019 after he participated in the inaugural MMFF conference in Brisbane “heralds a troubling time for press freedom”.

The election of Prime Minister James Marape in Papua New Guinea in mid-2019 removed “the dictatorial grip” of former Prime Minister Peter O’Neill that led to “countless violations of press freedom—but media freedom ... remains endangered”.

This edition was edited by Kasun Ubayasiri, Faith Valencia-Forrester, David Robie, Philip Cass, and Nicole Gooch.

The Pacific Media Centre has been very active over the past six months in spite of COVID, publishing research articles, participating in international webinars and operating special news coverage of the global pandemic from a Pacific perspective on *Asia Pacific Report*.

Pacific Journalism Review open access: <https://bit.ly/2GWaqA3>

Coronavirus in Aotearoa/New New Zealand ...



Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern ... "flattening the curve".



Dr Ashley Bloomfield and Health Minister Chris Hipkins.



Barbara Dreaver, Pacific correspondent of TVNZ.



Khairiah Rahman of the PMC.



COVID and Zoom.



Professor David Robie and UGM colleagues.



Sri Krishnamurthy on covid broadcasts at Southern Cross.



Jim Marbrook and the launch of the documentary *Loimata*.

... and in Asia-Pacific



Ena Manuireva with stranded Wallis and Futuna dancers.



Stephanie Sageo-Tapungu of PNG.



Solomon Islands PM Manasseh Sogavare.



PNG school children in Port Moresby.



Screening at Amata Kabua International Airport, Marshall Islands.



East Timor's *Jornal Independente* distributes a free newspaper.



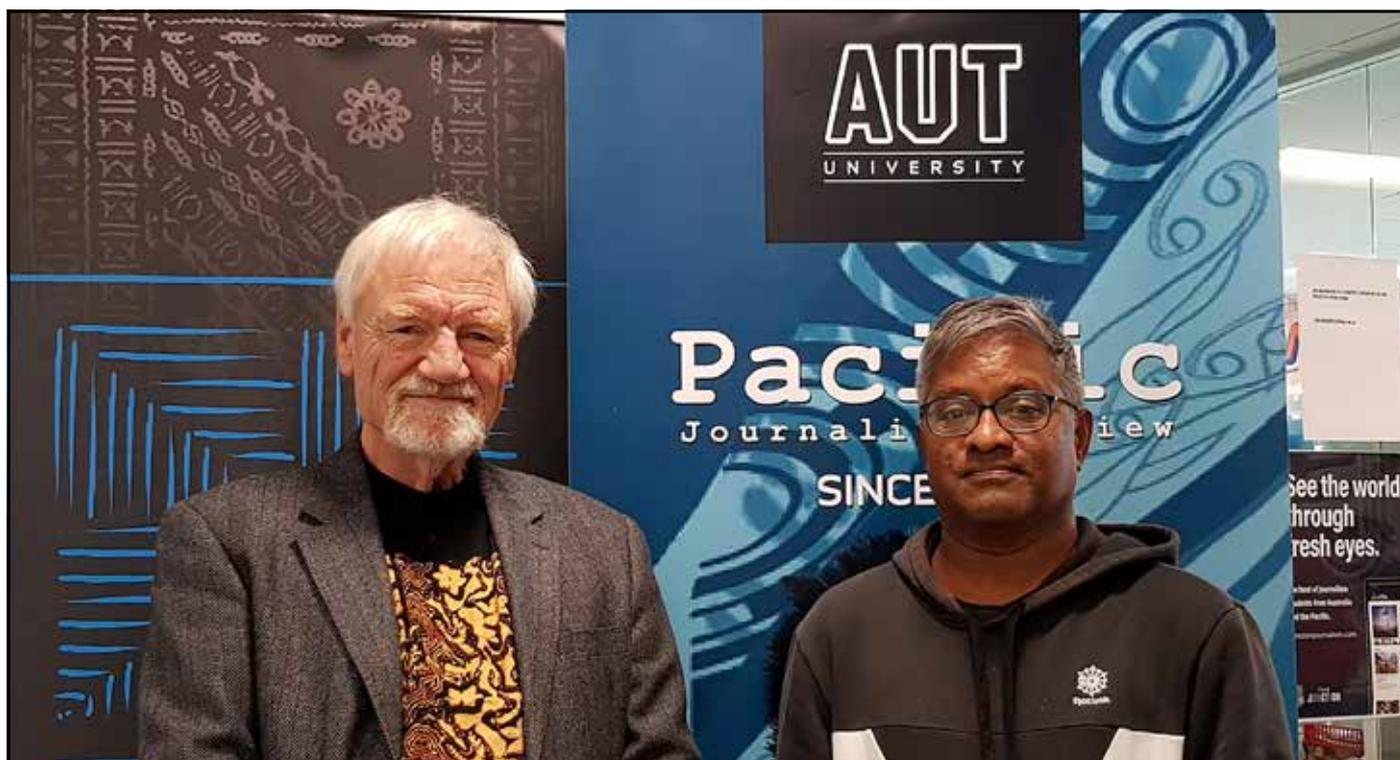
Student Laurens Ikinia of West Papua.



Stranded Filipinos in Manila waiting to go back to their hometown.

PMC's Pacific Media Watch in new climate crisis project with Internews

PACIFIC MEDIA CENTRE



The team working on the Pacific Media Centre-Earth Journalism Network project on “climate and covid-19”, Professor David Robie and Sri Krishnamurthi.

IN AN innovative new development, Internews’ Earth Journalism Network (EJN) has partnered with the Pacific Media Centre on a “climate and covid” project to help improve and enhance the quality of environmental and reporting in the Pacific region.

In a move that could signal future partnerships with New Zealand Pasifika groups, the 12,000-member organisation working in 180 countries is fast growing in response to the need for more in-depth sustainable development and environmental reporting.

“Building on EJN’s work in the Asia and the Pacific Region, the EJN Asia-Pacific project aims to improve the quantity and quality of environmental coverage in the region, thereby contributing to the capacity among local and regional actors to promote greater accountability and sustainable development in relation to the environment and climate in Asia and the Pacific,” says Imelda Abaño, who is content coordinator Philippines and Pacific facilitator for EJN’s Asia-Pacific project.

“We wanted to build and achieve this with the Pacific Media Centre and its Pacific Media Watch freedom project.

“Under the remit of our EJN Asia-Pacific project, we’re open to partnership with New Zealand-Pacific groups and any media and journalists network groups that provide environmental news and information to communities in the Pacific Island and Asian countries,” she says.

Professor David Robie, director of Auckland University of Technology’s PMC, welcomed the partnership grant, saying: “This joint ‘Climate and Covid-19’ project is a significant step forward in the centre’s Asia-Pacific collaboration projects.

Read the reports at: <https://bit.ly/3dstyld>



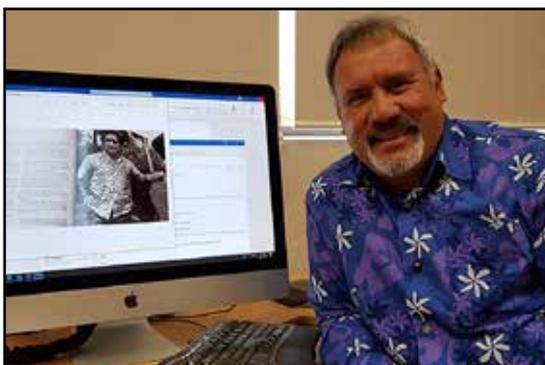
Rainbow Warrior bombing relived during lockdown

THE DAY began with a video, showing a disparate collection of arresting images—the drowned Greenpeace photographer Fernando Pereira, camera in hand and a huge smile on his face.

Mugshots of two captured French DGSE secret agents—a fake honeymooning pair jailed for manslaughter, but later spirited off to Hao atoll and freedom.

Sun-drenched tropical beaches and a ship with a gaping hull, sinking into the frigid Auckland Harbour on a winter’s night.

Newspaper headlines expressing disbelief that something like this could happen in peaceful New Zealand.



It is fitting that the discussion began with such an array of images. The bombing of the *Rainbow Warrior* on 10 July 1985 is one episode in a large and complex geopolitical story—a story that isn’t over yet.

A panel of academics, journalists and activists—including AUT’s professor David Robie and Tahitian doctoral candidate Ena Manuireva (pictured)—each with a connection to the bombing, met via webinar to

reflect on the 35th anniversary. – *Matthew Scott*

Read the full article: <https://bit.ly/37couAb>