

# **STRENGTHENING THE RESEARCH AND INFORMATION CAPACITY OF PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES' PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIES**



**MICHAEL ONG**



**Australian Government**  

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**AusAID**

**Strengthening the Research and Information  
Capacity of Pacific Island Countries'  
Parliamentary Libraries**

**A Basic Manual**

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### **Acknowledgments**

The author would like to thank Doreen White for formatting the script, Margaret Cazabon and Ann Rann for the graphics; Richard Ryan (Australian Parliamentary Library), Devika Narayan (UNDP), Rasieli Bau, Fane Buadromo (Fiji Parliamentary Library) and Elesallah Matatier (PNG Parliamentary Library) for the photographs and Katherine Close (New Zealand Parliamentary Library) for her photographs and comments on an early draft. Thanks are also due to UNDP officials Garry Wiseman and Henrik Lindroth for their support. Any errors are my own.

**The UNDP's Strengthening of Pacific Parliaments Project is funded by AusAID. The production of this publication is supported by the Australian Region of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and is presented as a gift to all the Parliamentary Libraries of the Pacific Parliaments.**

**2006**

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Fiji Parliamentary Library

# 1. Introduction

The aim of this very basic ‘manual’ is to provide practical guidelines to strengthen the information and research capacities of Parliamentary Libraries of the Pacific Island Countries (PIC).<sup>1</sup> In order to make the best use of very limited material and human resources, it is not the intention to change the existing systems but, where needed, **with additions of relevant Information and Technology (IT) equipment and training of staff**, to build on them.

It is widely acknowledged that oral traditions still dominate the Pacific region. However, it may be said that a transition has already started. While many still prefer to receive oral advice rather than to read, new, younger and educated traditional leaders and politicians are being elected or nominated. Over time, this trend will increase and more will be expected from their representatives by constituents, supporters and their societies. With constantly changing (and increasingly complex) public issues, they will be expected to know more than past Parliamentarians and other leaders and are likely to demand more specific information and support in the performance of their various duties. **Libraries should therefore be looking to the future and be pro-active in putting in place the services required.**



Fiji Parliament in Session

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1. In this manual, the term ‘Parliament’ will include Congress. Though some of the terms used are that of the Westminster system, which comprises the majority of the PIC Parliaments, explanations are provided for those under the Congress system.

Parliamentary Libraries are ‘specialized’ libraries and should be seen as a storehouse and processing centre of current information. **Their primary aim is to provide accurate, timely, relevant, impartial and confidential information to the ‘Clients’ of the Library.** These include the Head of State (King/President), Speaker of the House, President of the Senate, the Clerk/Secretary-General, Senators, Members and their staff, Parliamentary Standing and *Ad Hoc* (particular purpose) Committees, as well as other Parliamentary staff in the performance of their official duties. Limited access may be given to others, such as academics, journalists, former Prime Ministers and Parliamentarians. In the PIC, clients in cases, also include students, public servants and even constituents.

**By providing effective services, Parliamentary Libraries play a very important role in the law making process and thereby contribute to the future well-being of their countries. Staff should be made aware of this national responsibility.**

## **Current situation**

The existing systems and services provided, as revealed during the July 2005 Regional Workshop on Parliamentary Library Improvement in the Pacific held in Suva, vary very widely. Some (Fiji and Tonga) do provide some research and support services, while others, because of their smaller physical size, space, collection and even more very limited resources, provide only basic services. The Niue Parliament does not even have a library. Usage of Libraries in the region also varies widely with some reporting that they have few visits from Members. It is interesting to note that since 1997, as a result of a UNDP project, the Fiji Parliamentary Library has increased its capacity to provide current information and basic research services. This has resulted in greater awareness of the Library’s role and led to more demands for information and research from government and opposition Parliamentarians.

Currently, most of the PIC Libraries share the common problems of lack of priority, limited funds, resources and space, and have few (as well as trained) staff.<sup>2</sup> The Workshop also revealed that the skills level of staff, with very few exceptions, ranges from none to some with basic Library qualifications.

The limitations of a small Library however should not be an obstacle to providing services. Moreover size is no guarantee of usage. The Federated States of Micronesia's delegate reported to the Workshop that because of the Library's decentralization, much of the work is undertaken by other officials. Thus despite its extensive facilities and resources 'the librarians have not much to do' and have 'practically no visits from the Members'.

Given the above critical shortages, Pacific Parliamentary Libraries should aim to try at all times to maximize their effectiveness with the limited minimal resources available. Wherever possible, they should avoid 'reinventing the wheel'. They need to increasingly make use of existing and new information communication technology to access free information and resources. Much of these are now available from the World Wide Web, the 'WWW', of Internet sites.

## Using the Internet

The Internet may be seen as an electronic 'world-wide information and shopping centre' with millions of 'shops' and all types of public and private organizations seeking to sell goods, provide information or advance their particular

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2. The situation has not changed substantially since the 1980s when the Australian Parliamentary Library conducted a needs survey of regional Parliamentary Libraries. See Carolyn Cohn, Library Services for Parliamentarians in the South-West Pacific, *The Parliamentarian*, Vol. LXVII, No.2, 1986 pp. 69-70. As a result of that survey a very comprehensive procedural manual, *Training Programme in Parliamentary Librarianship*, (February 1985) was prepared and distributed to the regional libraries. Likewise an ALERT and Dateline Newsletter listing new materials on the Pacific were sent to the libraries. These were terminated as a result of among other things, lack of interest, failure of equipment and even the lack of paper for fax machines.



cause. Each of these has a 'Web-site', which is like a 'door' to their 'shop'. Because there are millions of sites very powerful Search Engines have been developed to search, using 'key words' typed in by users.<sup>3</sup> One of these, Google, has 300 million users making two billion requests a month. By typing a key word in any of these engines, they will immediately produce a list of relevant sites. Anyone with a computer, with an Internet connection, is able to read and see what is available in the 'shop' by 'clicking' on each of these sites. Sites contain all sorts of information and may include 'links' i.e. connections to other sites with relevant information. Particular items read and selected can be printed immediately from the site. Information from these sites could also be 'captured' and stored by the Library electronically in its own 'In-House' database. The reason for capturing items is that sometimes information may no longer be available on some sites as they update their information. By capturing and storing the items in data bases, Libraries will be able to make them available for staff and clients to use when needed in the future.<sup>4</sup>

## **Favorites**

Sites which are proven to be useful, accurate and used constantly could also be 'saved' or kept as 'Favorites'. To add a link to a page in your Favorites (Internet Explorer):

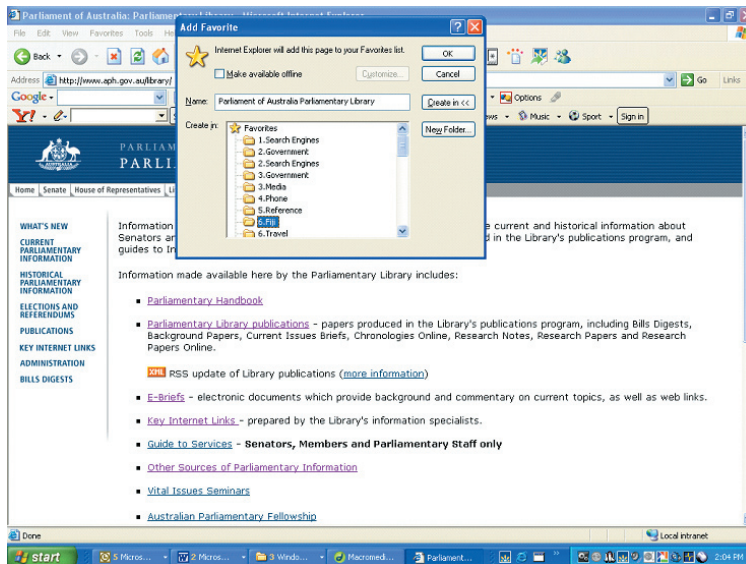
- Go to the page you want to save the link for, eg Australian Parliamentary Library below.
- Click on the 'Favorites' button on the top bar.

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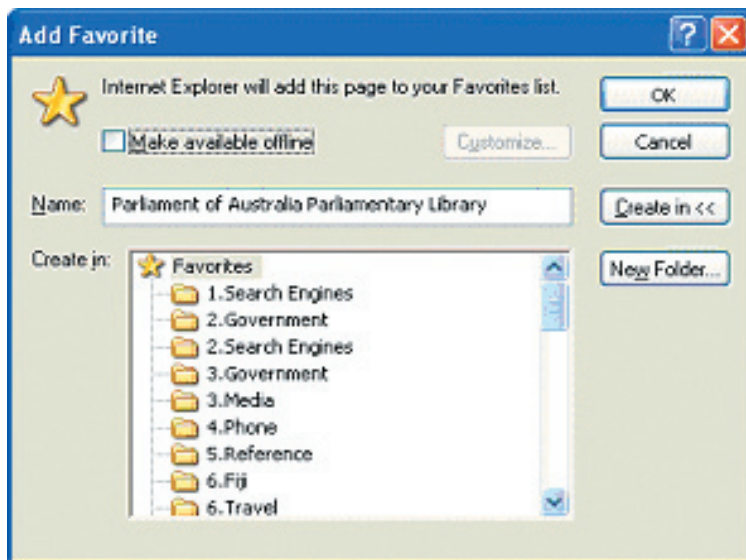
3. A list of Search Engines is available at <http://www.beaucoup.com/>

4. A useful tutorial on how to use the Internet is available from <http://www.sosig.ac.uk/desire/offline.html>

- Choose 'Add to Favorites' from the drop down menu



The following screen will pop up:



From here you can choose a particular one or just add it to the general list below the folders.

- Name the link if you want, then click 'OK' to save.

When you next want to find the link:

- Click on the 'Favorites' button
- Links and folder will be shown
- Scroll to the link and 'click' to bring up the site.

Informed with this knowledge and with staff trained on how and where to locate current information from the Internet, will increase the Library's ability to respond to clients' present and future needs. Despite initial establishment costs, this, in the long term is the most cost-effective and sustainable approach. It would also overcome and minimize the problems of expensive collections, limited space and other material and human resources.

This fast method of sourcing information also dovetails with PIC governments' plans to connect with the world. Co-operating with international organizations, such as United Nations Economic, Social and Cultural Organization and the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Pacific, PIC governments are working to improve their information and communication technologies as well as providing training.<sup>5</sup>



Fiji Assistant Minister for Health, Hon. Tomasi Saugaga using library facilities

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5. The first UN Information Technology Centre to provide training for the region was approved by the UNECAP in June 2005.

## 2. Pre-requisites and competencies required to strengthening and increasing the information and research capacities

To provide the services cited above effectively, all Libraries need to have the following equipment and trained staff.

### Basic information technology equipment

- The necessary information technology equipment, including computers, relevant software, fax, scanner and photocopying machines, with adequate supply of library materials including paper, filing cupboards, files, stamps and record books etc.
- Some computer capacity and software for maintaining an ‘In-House’ electronic data-base.<sup>6</sup>
- A **reliable, sustainable Internet service**, with the necessary security safeguards such as ‘firewalls’, protection against viruses; filters and blocks on ‘re-directs’ to undesirable sites and secure passwords for access by staff only.
- A communication system linking the Library’s computers to other parts of the Parliamentary complex.
- The creation of the Library’s own Web site page, using your government’s domain, which is free, and technical help. Useful information, links to other government agencies and other reliable sites (see pages 27–30 below) may also be added to help clients search for their own information.<sup>7</sup>

### Human resources

This is a critical issue and is a problem faced throughout the PIC. Training and keeping qualified staff, given limited internal prospects within Parliament let alone the Library, is difficult, if

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6. Such as Inmagic software (<http://www.inmagic.com/solutions/libraries.html>)

7. A useful way to do this is by looking at the sites of established parliamentary libraries (see page 28 below).

not impossible. The result is a vicious circle of having to train, only to lose staff, as in the case of Fiji Library, and noted by Fiji Speaker, Hon. Ratu Nailatikau, to other government departments and elsewhere. Nevertheless, for effective service:

- Staff needs to be familiar with the Parliamentary process and its environment to gain an understanding and appreciation of the types of information and research needs of clients. To achieve this, it is strongly recommended that all Library staff, if they have not so already, should observe parliamentary proceedings such as Question Time, Debates and Committee hearings.
- Staff should also undertake to provide services ‘in confidence’ i.e. not to let any other clients, except other relevant library staff, know the nature of requests made by any particular client. **Breaches of this undertaking by any staff member should be made a disciplinary offence.** Without this assurance of confidentiality, clients will be reluctant to seek services. A Code of Ethics is provided in Appendix 2 and a copy of this should be provided to all staff for their agreement and signature.
- Ideally, trained staff should also have computer skills and ability to independently search and locate relevant information from the Internet and add them to the ‘In-House’ electronic data-base.
- Over time, Library and research staff needs to acquire and develop skills in locating, reading and digesting relevant information quickly and with experience, the ability to reproduce them with ‘value added’ i.e. by providing independent analysis and explanations in plain language which clients are able to use effectively. **These skills cannot be acquired overnight and researchers, if possible, may need relevant qualifications in subject areas.**
- A commitment by staff to constantly maintain and add to the Library’s collection of information files and databases with a view to increase the Library’s capacity to provide services as resources and demand for them increases.



Fiji Library staff retrieving items from file

## Staff training

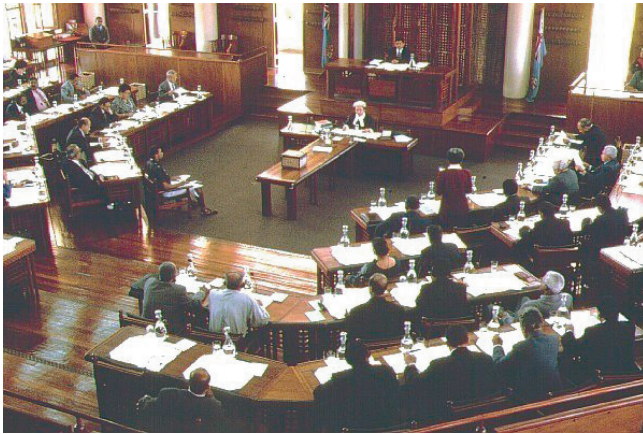
Wherever possible, Libraries should seek to utilize local resources and help from governments and regional organizations. For example, initial computer training could be sourced from your own government Information Technology (IT) training programs. Some Pacific regional and international organisations located in your country, if approached, may be willing to provide some limited training to Library staff.<sup>8</sup> They have sites which they would like everyone to access. The basic skills acquired could then be used to locate information from other sites.

It is understandable that current staff may initially be worried or apprehensive about using new technology. To overcome these initial fears, a short intense period of localised training by experienced information specialists or researchers need to be provided. This will help staff internalize the procedures through practical exercises and give them a level of confidence to operate independently using the above equipment.

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8. For the location of these see the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific site <http://www.spc.int/piocean/CROP/spocc.htm>

Ideally, and to maximize the use of trainers, initial training should be conducted a week before Parliament sits and a week during Parliamentary meetings. Trainers could then also provide initial exposure of the Internet to Parliamentarians, observed by local staff, during the overlapping training and sitting periods. With proficiency, local staff could then provide future training for their own Parliamentarians.



Fiji Parliament in session

## Critical issues

Critical issues in providing the above system are costs, sustainability and availability of human resources. Operational costs involving the Internet could be minimized if Parliament is able to persuade the telephone company, which is often partly owned by the Government, to provide a free Internet connection, on grounds of 'National Interest' to the Library. The company in PIC is often the server of the Internet. Alternately, all the Libraries could make a joint approach to seek financial support for these recurring costs from international and regional governments who are seeking to promote 'good governance' in the region.



Another possibility is that, if it could be arranged, Libraries could all be linked via PEACESAT, the Pan Pacific Educational and Communications Experiment by Satellite which has been working to lessen the information and communication technology gap in PICs. Its mission is to facilitate 'development' and 'public service' communications.

Sustainability is dependent partly on costs as well as commitment by the Library and its staff to maintain and constantly up date information for its clients. This will be easier if clients, satisfied with initial requests, increase their demand for these services to continue.

The issues of trained human resources, cost effectiveness and sustainability will remain as critical and constant problems in the PIC. With the availability of IT and the Internet, serious consideration may need to be made by all PIC for a regional Parliamentary Information and Research Centre to serve all Parliaments, particularly on common, but region-wide issues.



Samoaan Parliamentary Library



### 3. Acquiring and collecting information and research materials

To provide an information and research service, the Library must first have access to, or build up, its resources of both local and other current information. A useful start is to identify the clients' present and future needs by conducting a simple survey asking the priority areas of their interests. The following is an example of a survey form, which may need to be adapted to reflect local needs.

#### Model Survey Form

Parliament of (.....) and Crest of Country	
Survey of Priority Areas for Information and Research for Parliamentarians	
<p>The Parliamentary Library plans to establish a data base of Information Files, with the aim of providing the latest information on all issues of importance to Parliament. Base on this, the Library will seek to provide relevant, timely, accurate and impartial information and, where possible, research support, to all Parliamentarians and Committees. Given that resources are limited, the Library would like to target priority areas of interest to Parliamentarians. We seek your co-operation in order to serve you efficiently and effectively.</p> <p>Please Circle the numbers of ONLY those items that are of interest to you and return the completed form to the Library. Thank you.</p>	
Parliamentary Librarian	
Social Issues	
1. Employment	8. Welfare Services
2. Health	9. Drugs
3. Education	10. Crime/Prisons
4. Housing	11. Police (Law and Order)
5. Environment	12. Judiciary
6. Youth/Children	13. Human Rights
7. Women	14. Others (Please specify).....
Economy	
1. Statistics	7. Infrastructure (Ports/transport/roads)
2. Trade (import/export)	8. Communications (Radio/Telephones)
3. Tourism	9. Science/Technology
4. Agriculture	10. Public Utilities (Water/Electricity)
5. Privatization	11. Others (Please specify).....
6. Industrialization	
Foreign and Regional Affairs	
1. Defence	5. Regional Issues (South Pacific Forum etc)
2. Bilateral relations	6. Parliamentary Organizations (IPU, CPA etc)
3. UN/Peace Keeping	7. Others (Please specify).....
4. Commonwealth	
Name of Member/Senator.....	

## **Local information**

In PIC, much local information is from government publications, local print and electronic media, such as newspapers, magazines, newsletters of non-government organizations, radio and television programs and reports. With few exceptions, most of these would not be generally available on the Internet.

**To collect these materials, Libraries must establish a system of core Information Files on local information as soon as possible and, if possible an ‘In-House’ electronic database of relevant articles related to issues before Parliament, downloaded from the Internet.**

## **Information files**

These are files with the latest information on a wide range of subjects. For the day-to-day work of the Library they will be the most important part of the Collection. Clients need the latest information, including ‘who said what, when and where?’ to perform their legislative duties. Their duties include preparing Questions, take part in general and specific debate, as members of Committees, making Adjournment Speeches, which are speeches made at the end of each sitting, as well as meetings with their constituents and other organizations.

## **Criteria for establishing files**

The criteria for establishing and maintaining any file is the importance of the subject to Parliament and country. Establishing files is also dependent on staff being available to identify items, maintain and add to their contents daily. If resources are limited remember that some relevant topics and areas could be covered by using, web sites with the latest information.

## **A basic set of core files<sup>9</sup>**

There is no fixed number of files to be established. This is dependent on local political, economic, social issues and areas of interests expressed by Parliamentarians as well as the limited human and other resources of a particular library. However, if files are to be established, the following areas need to be included.

Individual files or all Members (and Senators) of Parliament, these should include details of their constituency, personal details such as titles, education, date of birth, age, dated elected, membership of Committees, of delegations to various Conferences such as IPU, CPA and bilateral visits, positions held in their parties as well as other social, cultural organizations. The files should also contain copies of all their Parliamentary speeches, media reports of their activities such as during elections and public meetings. Where possible, their press statements, and other publications, such as articles in magazines, newsletters of non-government organizations should also be included.



Examples of Fiji Library files

**A start could be made with a simple form to each member with a few line of introduction by the Speaker, followed up by personal meetings with individual clients to fill in gaps of information by Library staff.**

9. Appendix 1 provides a modified Master list of Information Files established by the Fiji Parliamentary Library. This needs to be modified by individual libraries.

- Files for every Government Ministry, Departments, agencies and statutory bodies, the Head of State/King/President.
- Key institutions such as Council of Chiefs, Courts, Central/ Reserve Bank and the Auditor-General.
- A range of subject files important to the country i.e. tourism, trade agriculture, health, education, road safety, infectious diseases, drugs, youth, employment, water supply, environment etc.
- Files on every major non-government organizations in the country, such as trade unions, Chamber of Commerce, Bar Council, churches, political parties, sporting, other social, cultural, including women and human rights organizations. The contents of these files, apart from press clippings, would also include newsletters of the relevant organization.
- Wherever relevant and possible, each file, such as those of non-government organizations, should also include the name of a (current) contact person and telephone number of the organization/ministry, in the inside cover. This is to facilitate the acquisition of the latest information, such as government announcements and speeches, when the need arises.

**Initially, the Library should write a formal letter to each organization requesting to be put on their mailing list. Given the turnover of staff in these organizations, the Library should, from time to time, check that these newsletters are received regularly.**

- Files on regional and international organizations as well as individual countries **which are important to the country**. These may include the University of the South Pacific, South Pacific Forum, Council of Regional Organizations in the Pacific, and the United Nations and its agencies.



Files are kept in locked cabinet

In the early stage of building up Information Files, the Library could, if possible, try to make arrangement to have access to the newspaper clippings from the libraries of local newspapers and or tap other local resources for information and expertise.

**The Information Files are very important and should be kept in a secure room and be used only by Library staff to select items for photo-copying and should not under any circumstances, be given to a client. Since the Files involve a considerable investment of time and resources any loss of files or their individual contents will be difficult to replace.**

### **Covers of files**

Each file should have its subject written/printed on its cover and a master list of all files should be kept by the Librarian, staff responsible for selecting items, and those involve in the processing. To help identify files quickly it may be a good idea to have different colours for their covers i.e. red for Members and Senators, green for Government, blue for non-government organizations, and to keep the major sets of files in separate drawers in secure filing cabinets.



Cover of individual file (Fiji)

### Contents of files

The contents of files will be primarily newspaper press clippings from local newspapers. The Library should subscribe to two copies of each local newspaper, one for display in the reading area and the other to provide for the contents of files. Magazines and other publications should also be circulated quickly to identify possible items, which are then photo-copied and marked for filing.

### Maintenance of files

Each working day, Library staff/researcher, given the responsibility, must read and mark identified articles under the file's headings to be processed. For small Libraries, a simple way is to write the subject at the top of the news item e.g. 'Unemployment'; 'USP' etc. These marked items would then be cut and pasted on individual sheets of paper and **filed, preferably as loose sheets, in date order**. This will enable easy photo-copying, should a particular item be needed. If the news item refers to a local report, the Library should also try to get a copy of the original report as soon as possible. To ensure uniformity the Library should acquire rubber stamps with the name of newspapers as well as a date stamp so that the source and date of the item on each sheet

of paper is clearly identified. For examples see the following Figure 1 (pp. 24–25).

In Libraries with few staff, these could be done once every few days, though when Parliament is sitting, it should be done as soon as possible. The reason for this is because clients react to daily news, particularly reports/comments on issues before Parliament.

On important subjects, where there is a lot of information, these files could be divided into several more detailed files. For example the subject of South Pacific regional issues could be divided into South Pacific culture, tourism, health, economy, trade, environment, gender issues and regional co-operation.

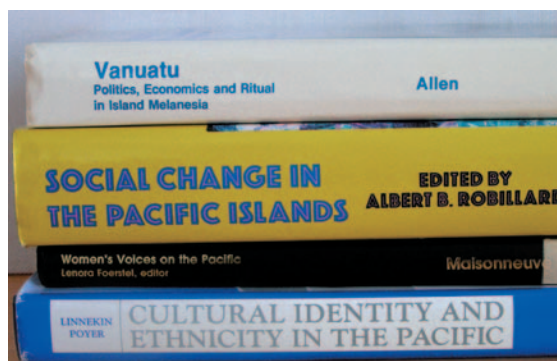
### **Useful guide of new issues: Speech from the Throne/Head of State**

A useful guide of new issues before Parliament is the ‘Speech from the Throne’ (or Head of State) given when Parliament first meets after an election. The Speech will normally include a list of new legislation the Government plans to introduce during the legislative term. Based on this, the Library should start immediately to collect background and current information on the subjects of the proposed new Bills so that when the Bills are introduced, the latest information is available for clients.



Opposition MP Hon. Pratap Chand in the Fiji Parliament Library

As part of the (in cases, future) service, Libraries with researchers should also seek, from time to time, to produce **'Fact Sheets'** on key public issues such as Public Health, Education, Tourism, Drugs use etc before Parliament. These should include basic facts, issues and current figures, culled from government and other authoritative reports. Over time and with acquired experience, research staff could also provide **Background/Legislation Briefs** on public issues before Parliament. These should include some history and background, facts and figures, as well as, where possible, arguments both for, and against, the issue from various sources, such as local and regional reports, academic studies, as well as those from interested parties such as non-government organisations. These, over time will form a stock of papers for quick responses to requests on the relevant subjects.



Books on Pacific

For Library staff and researchers interested in new issues, ideas and important books on a wide range of subject areas (from history, philosophy, religion, culture, science and economics) the following site of Arts and Letters Daily at <http://www.alddaily.com/> should be visited regularly. This site provides, with internet links to its sources, new articles of note, reviews of new books as well as important essays and opinions. These items are culled from a very wide range of newspapers, media sources, magazines, academic journals and well known opinion makers and commentators.



Figure 1. Examples of processed newspaper clipping ready for filing

THE  
**MERCURY**

General News: Page 2

Mon 13 Dec 2004

## Specialist shortage in island nations

# Pacific doctors lured overseas

AUSTRALIAN companies offering better pay are luring medical specialists from Pacific nations, leaving the islands with a serious brain drain.

Australia and New Zealand have about 20 times more doctors per capita than the poorer island nations.

In the *Medical Journal of Australia*, University of Melbourne professor David Watters and David Scott of the Australasian College of Surgeons, said the loss of doctors to the private sector or abroad was a major problem in parts of the Pacific.

Papua New Guinea has lost about 50 per cent of its public-sector surgeons.

"Papua New Guinea has lost about 10 per cent of its surgeons to Australia and the others have been lost to private prac-

tice within the country," Professor Watters said.

"I think the attraction is the better salaries, the better education for their children.

"And some of the people that have been lost from Papua New Guinea are no longer practising the surgery they were trained to do. They're simply working as a remote or rural doctor."

Australia and New Zealand have more than 200 doctors per 100,000 population.

In PNG, the figure is seven and in East Timor four.

"Individual health care organisations in Australia who have shortages themselves don't see the bigger picture and therefore, when a good qualified doctor applies for a position... they grab the person because they satisfy their need," Professor Watters said.

"And it does create a brain

drain from those countries."

Because of the shortage of doctors in rural and remote areas, Australian governments and health departments are happy to recruit overseas-trained doctors to fill the void — despite it being a case of the rich robbing the poor, the report's authors said.

Professor Watters said Pacific nations wanted to increase the number of doctors they trained but were limited by the number of places in medical schools.

"That means that many people just don't get to see a doctor quickly enough to have a potentially curable condition cured," he said.

The authors expect the shortage in the Pacific to last for decades.

AAP

## THE MONITOR

### INFRASTRUCTURE

#### Internet 'a lifeline' for Pacific islands

Internet penetration in Pacific island nations has been relatively slow, according to a new report from Australian telecommunications analyst Paul Budde.

Budde's report, released last month, called telecommunications "a lifeline for the scattered island nations", although they were slow to adopt the internet.

Unreliable power, roads and other infrastructure were hampering telephony in some nations, but mobile telephony was helping remote communities and workers such as fishermen, the report said.

Many islanders used telecentres and cyber-cafe-style access points for email, often to keep in touch with family members.

In April last year, the island nation of Tokelau was the last country in the world to be connected to the World Wide Web.

Jenny Sinclair



#### INTERNET USE IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

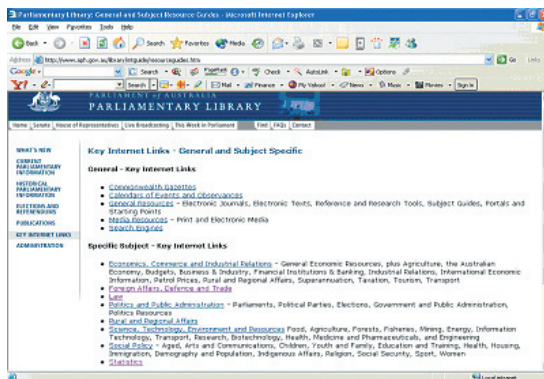
COUNTRY	INTERNET USERS	PENETRATION %	COUNTRY	INTERNET USERS	PENETRATION %
FIJI	15,000	1.82	PALAU	1,200	5.50
FRENCH POLYNESIA	18,000	6.70	SAMOA	3,000	0.28
KIRIBATI	2,000	2.50	SOLOMON ISLANDS	3,000	1.66
MARSHALL ISLANDS	900	1.26	VANUATU	5,500	2.73
NEW CALEDONIA	25,000	8.60			

SOURCE: PAUL BUDDE COMMUNICATION

## Research materials from other Libraries and Internet

Much research and other materials are now freely available on the Internet from the web sites of international and regional organizations, universities, independent ‘think tanks’ and research institutions. They include their latest news, activities, reports as well as research findings. The sites identified below have been selected for particular relevance to the Pacific region and **are only samples of what is available on the Internet.**

Staff should be aware that there are sites which advocate an ideological or partisan viewpoint and information from them may not be entirely accurate and hence should be treated with caution. **Wherever possible reliance for accurate information should be from those sites whose independence are widely acknowledged.** To minimize these problems, the Information Specialists of the Australian Parliamentary Library have identified and checked a wide range of useful sites, covering many subject areas such as health, international relations and organizations, environment, human rights, women, children, employment etc for their independence and reliability (from the Australian point of view). These are at <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/intguide/resourceguides.htm> under ‘specific subject - key internet links’ and is reproduced below. These links, if acceptable, could be added to your own Library web page and use as critical tools by staff and clients for acquiring research materials and information quickly.



## **In-House data base**

An efficient, cost-effective and sustainable way to store relevant information from the Internet is to establish an 'In-House' electronic database where articles, reports etc can be 'captured', stored and retrieved for use by staff and clients at a later date. The reason for this is that some reports in the sites may be available for a fixed period and then removed to make way for new ones.



Researcher at work (Fiji)

## **Regional Libraries**

Materials on the South Pacific region is available at the USP Library's Pacific Collection [http://www.usp.ac.fj/library/collection/pacificcollection/pacific\\_collection.htm](http://www.usp.ac.fj/library/collection/pacificcollection/pacific_collection.htm)

For legal materials the USP's Pacific Islands Legal Information Institute, which seeks to promote access to Pacific Law is at <http://www.pacii.org/> There are others including Monash University Library's Pacific Law Collection, <http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/law/pacificlaw/> The World Legal Information Institute also provides free, independent and non-profit access

to worldwide law at <http://www.worldlii.org/> The Australian National University has a virtual library for Pacific Studies at <http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVL-PacificStudies.html> and reports of the ANU's Melanesia Project is available from <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/melanesia/>

## **Parliamentary Libraries**

Parliamentary Libraries of several countries also provide a wide range of current research and information which, while meant for their clients, are available freely. The Internet addresses of some of these are:

Australia <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/index.htm>

New Zealand <http://www.clerk.parliament.govt.nz/Publications/>

Canada [http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/library\\_prb.asp?Language=E](http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/library_prb.asp?Language=E)

United States Library of Congress <http://www.loc.gov/>

The United Kingdom's House of Commons Research Papers are available at [http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary\\_publications\\_and\\_archives/research\\_papers.cfm](http://www.parliament.uk/parliamentary_publications_and_archives/research_papers.cfm)

Information on the European Union [http://europa.eu.int/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/index_en.htm)

**Note that requests for information and help from other Parliaments are part of the services provided by the Australian Parliamentary and New Zealand Parliamentary Libraries. SO DO NOT HESITATE TO USE THEM AS FREE RESOURCES.**

A new addition is the Pacific Parliamentary Research and Library Network site <http://pparln.cmonline.org.nz/> established by the New Zealand Parliamentary Library. This site offers a *potentially* rich source of both current and comparative information, networking and support to all PIC libraries. Co-operation and sharing of useful information by making them available on the site would also help all regional Librarians and researchers as well as officials and academics interested in the region.

## **International organizations and independent ‘Think Tanks’ on current international issues.**

United Nations <http://www.un.org/> and its agencies such as the Suva based UNDP <http://www.undp.org.fj/>

World Trade Organization <http://www.wto.org/>

World Bank <http://www.worldbank.org/>

Commonwealth [www.thecommonwealth.org/](http://www.thecommonwealth.org/)

US Council on Foreign Relations <http://www.cfr.org/>

Institute of International and Strategic Studies <http://www.iiss.org/>

International Crisis Group (is useful for current and in-depth analysis and reports on global trouble spots). <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?>

Some of the above sites provide regular emails to registered readers alerting them to their latest reports. There is no charge for these.

## **Information on overseas Parliaments**

International Parliamentary Union <http://www.ipu.org/english/home.htm> Commonwealth Parliamentary Associations <http://www.cpahq.org/>

Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum <http://www.appf.org.pe/>

## **Other Internet sources**

Many international and regional, including the Pacific, media, Radio and TV, newspapers and magazines are now available online. In cases, transcripts of their programs, including television shows and reports are also available soon after they are shown. Most sites now include a ‘Search’ facility and may require (free) registration to access their articles. The following are some of them.

The United States funded East-West Centre in Hawaii, provides the Pacific Daily Reports <http://www.eastwestcenter.org/pidp-pi.asp>

Australian Broadcasting Corporation [http://www.abc.net.au/default\\_800.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/default_800.htm)

US (non-commercial) Public Broadcasting Service <http://www.pbs.org/>

The New Zealand Herald <http://www.nzherald.co.nz/>

The PNG Post-Courier <http://www.postcourier.com.pg/>

Fiji Times <http://www.fjitimes.com/>

British Broadcasting Corporation site also has a useful search engine. Its Asia-Pacific site is <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/asia-pacific/default.stm>

<http://english.aljazeera.net/HomePage> provides news from the Arab viewpoint.

All the above links could be included in your Library's Web page as links to other subject areas such as 'Media' 'International Organisations' etc and listed under them. These identified sites will save time for clients and valuable time by Library staff to meet information and research requests. In cases, the Librarian could make initial contact with the institution/organisation through their e-mails addresses, available on their sites, to receive notification of new items. By using these alternatives sources for reference and current information as well as research findings, costs will be minimized.



Researcher at work (Fiji)



## 4. Building a core collection

Ideally, which may not be the case in the PIC, the Library core Collection should include:

- A range of Reference books, including dictionaries, Yearbooks, Atlas (including local maps) and other general books on a range of subjects;
- A range of local, regional and international magazines and respected journals;
- All Parliamentary documents: Hansards, i.e. Reports of Parliamentary proceedings, Order Papers, White Papers (which sets out government policies in a particular area); Committee Reports; Standing Orders, Bills and Acts of Parliament etc;
- All Government publications and press statements including Annual and other Reports by ministries, departments and government agencies;
- Most important is a system of current Information Files.

Most Libraries have some of these already. However, new additions must seek to meet the current and future needs of its users as indicated by the Clients Survey mentioned above.



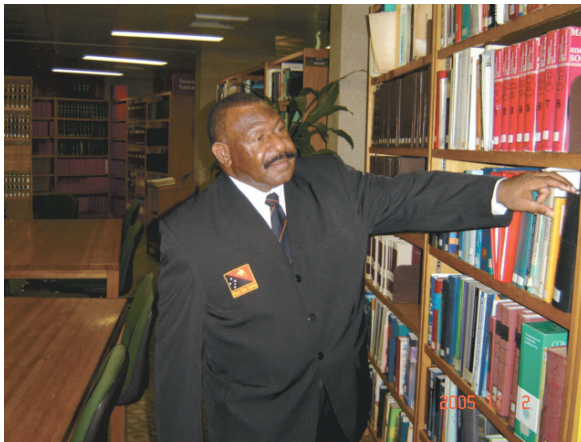
Pan Pacific Organisations: Booklets and Reports



## Reference and other general books

While these are important, they are also very expensive. Some, such as Year Books, which provides information on a particular year, need to be renewed annually. If they are considered to be important, **wherever possible, donations should be sought.**

**Reference and Other General Information:** There are now general and specific ‘Virtual Libraries’ available on the Internet such as <http://vlib.org/> and encyclopaedia such as the multilingual [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page) There is even one specifically for statistics, <http://www.stat.ufl.edu/vlib/statistics.html>. Other information could be located by using search engines: Google <http://www.google.com.au/>, Katoo, <http://www.kartoo.com/> ANZwers <http://au.anzwers.yahoo.com/> and Yahoo <http://www.yahoo.com/>. Search engines are now very sophisticated. Google for example, apart from searching the Web, provides searches for the latest news, and news ‘alerts’ to its users, on any subject; the works of scholars; images (i.e. pictures) on just about anything as well as provides directories and book searches. It is now in the process of seeking to produce full texts of many books.



Hon. Luther Wenge, PNG MP using the reference collection

**Basic Facts on Foreign Countries:** These are available from several sources:

CIA's Country World Fact Book <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>

Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade <http://www.dfat.gov.au/>

New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs <http://www.mfat.govt.nz/for.html>

BBC (by using its search engine) <http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

United States Department of State's <http://www.state.gov/countries/>

**Buying Books on General Subjects:** Before buying, the Library should ask who and how many clients would be likely to read them? Clients, being very busy people, do not often have time to read, and less so in a culturally oral tradition. However, as a priority, and only if funds are available, books selected should be those that are directly relevant to the public issues before Parliament. A useful guide is to consult the new additions to the USP Library's collection at [http://www.usp.ac.fj/library/publications/recent\\_additions/recent\\_additions.htm](http://www.usp.ac.fj/library/publications/recent_additions/recent_additions.htm).

A cost free means to increase the collection of local books is to encourage Parliament to pass an Act similar to the Fiji **1972 Libraries (Deposit of Books) Act**.<sup>10</sup> Under this Act, every printer and publisher in Fiji must deposit a copy of a new book, free of charge, to the USP Library and the National Archives of Fiji. The Fiji Act should also be amended to include the Fiji Parliamentary Library.

## **Inter-library loans**

Before purchasing, consideration should also be given to whether the publications are available in other Library collections in the country. These could include, where appropriate, the National

10. The text of the Act is available at [http://www.usp.ac.fj/library/collection/files/legal\\_deposit.pdf](http://www.usp.ac.fj/library/collection/files/legal_deposit.pdf)

Library; National Archives; Bar Council or Attorney General's Libraries. Some established non-government organizations, such as Trade Unions, may also have libraries with relevant information and reports not generally available to the public.

In the case of local libraries, a system of inter-library loans should be in place. If they are agreeable, there should be established procedures for the loans. For record and security purposes, a form may be needed. The form should include date and time, identity of staff making the request, the method of delivery (by phone, fax or materials to be collected in person) due date of return and acknowledgement of return by the lending library.



Standing Orders of various PIC Parliaments

## Journals and magazines

These have renewal costs and given limited resources should be kept to a minimum. Priorities should be given to local and regional magazines such as *Islands Business*, and *Pacific Islands Report*. For a list of regional publications see <http://www.southpacific.org/news.html>. Regional and international weekly news magazines, if money is available, could include the Australian **Bulletin**, which also incorporates the US **Newsweek** magazine, the London

**Economist** and the **Far Eastern Economic Review**. Articles from academic and professional journals could be sourced, on request, from the Australian and New Zealand Parliamentary Libraries.



Pacific Island Countries Constitutions and Reports

## Parliamentary documents

As noted in the July 2005 Workshop many current requests involve information from parliamentary documents such as Acts and Proceedings and Hansards. Consequently, the collection should include all parliamentary documents and ideally should have completed sets of them. These include Parliamentary proceedings i.e. Hansards, Committee Reports, Order Papers, Standing Orders, Bills and Acts of Parliament. They should also be filed separately by titles alphabetically and in year order with an index for quick access to the particular item required.

Given that copies of such documents are often limited, the Librarian and staff need to ensure that at least two copies are acquired as soon as they are published.

Where there are existing gap and missing individual copies in the Collection, photo-copies of the missing items, from local sources, such as the National Archive, Attorney General's Office or regional libraries should be made.

Arrangements must be made with key officials such as the Clerk or Secretary-General of Parliament, who are responsible for all documents and records, and Committee Secretaries, when papers and/or reports are tabled in Parliament, for copies to be either sent to, or collected by the Library staff.

## Government publications

The Collection should also have all government publications. These include annual reports by departments, agencies and statutory bodies and other occasional and special reports which may not be tabled in Parliament. Of importance is the collection of statistics such as trade, tourist numbers etc from either the Statistics Department, and if that is not possible, from the relevant department.

The **UNDP Human Development Report** for the region provides a wide range of country and regional statistics. Other sources are the South Pacific Forum Library, academic research publications of the USP and the ANU's **Pacific Economic Bulletin** which has articles on individual countries as well as those comparing development in PIC. The reason for having statistics is that clients like to quote the latest figures in their speeches and during debates.

**Information files** See pages 18–22 above.



Former PNG MP Sir Thomas Kavali making enquiries at the circulation desk.  
All former MPs are entitled to some services

## **5. Organizing and cataloguing library materials**

Libraries in the region have, depending on the size of their collections and the availability of qualified staff, used different methods and systems in organizing and cataloguing their books. As a result there is no common system and it should be stressed, given the limitations, there is no need for uniformity, though there should be consistency within each Library.

The key point to note is that the Catalogue provides a list of titles of all items in the Library's collection. The process starts with collecting/buying new items, adding their titles in the Accession book, cataloguing them according to the system adopted, adding to the card catalogue etc before placing them on display or on the shelves. For security reasons, some Libraries 'stamp' a particular page of new items to identify ownership. If possible an acquisition list of new items in the Library could be circulated to clients on a regular (monthly?) basis.

The organization and location of materials in the Library should follow the sections in the Core Collection with their own shelves in the Library. It is important that there are clearly displayed signs for each of these shelves i.e. 'Government Publications'; 'Hansards' etc. To help clients, it will be useful to have a 'Floor Plan' at the entrance of the Library indicating where these items are located. Reference books may, if needed, be kept in restricted or supervised areas.

### **Special displays**

There should be an area, preferably near the entrance of the Library, for new items and for special displays. Displays could commemorate particular significant days such as Independence Day, anniversaries of historical national events and Head of State Birthdays. Special UN International Days, such as International Women's Day, are listed at [http://www.unac.org/en/news\\_events/un\\_days/international\\_days.asp](http://www.unac.org/en/news_events/un_days/international_days.asp). Whenever possible, these displays should include items such as copies of historic photographs,

documents from the National Archives, books, artefacts and special posters. Other material items on loan should be kept in a secure glass display cabinet. Where possible or available, there should be a written brief, handout or pamphlet from the relevant local and or international organization would also help reinforce the subject of the displays.

## 6. Encouraging library use by clients

Clients will not use the services unless they are convinced that their parliamentary performance, public standing and image can and will be enhanced. Clients come from a wide range of backgrounds and education and have different personalities, interests and needs. Some are content to be quiet backbenchers while others are ambitious and active. Seeking any form of help may be difficult for some with sensitive personalities.

**It is important that all clients are treated equally and attended to with respect. There must not be any favouritism towards any particular client.**



Fiji Opposition MP, Hon. Ahmed Gaffar in the library

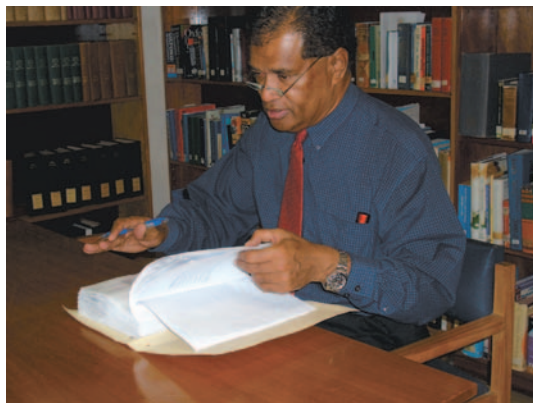
The following are some practical suggestions to encourage Library usage.

During the first meeting of Parliament after an election, the Library should arrange with the Secretary/Clerk for a meeting with the newly elected/appointed Parliamentarians to brief them on what Library services are available, as well as introducing key staff.



The briefing should, where possible, include:

- Handouts of printed materials, with names and phone number of staff to contact, should be given to all clients.
- Emphasized that all requests are treated in confidence: that is, no one, except the relevant library staff, will know what services, information or research are requested by any particular client.
- Stress that the Library aims to provide accurate, timely, relevant and impartial information to help them in their work. Examples of these (based on past requests) should be given.
- Hand out Request Forms (see Figure 2, p. 41).
- Include a tour of the Library.
- If facilities are available, a practical demonstration of how to source information from the Internet could be demonstrated.
- If staff is able to provide some basic internet training to individual or groups of clients, this should be at a time convenient to them.
- Distribute the Survey Form to indicate their interests and urged them to fill them as soon as possible.
- Awareness of the individual client's interests (from the survey) and sending new information, including the new acquisitions list of the Library.



Fiji Deputy Opposition Leader the Hon. Poseci Bune reading a media file

<b>Parliament of XX</b> (Country's Crest)	
Parliament of (Country) Library Phone: xxxxxxxx	Fax xxxxxxxx
<b>Information/Research/Advisory Request Form</b>	
Client's Name: .....Constituency/Party:.....	
Phone/Fax Number:.....	
Request: (Please give as much time and detail as possible). ..... ..... ..... ..... ..... ..... ..... ..... .....	
Delivery Instructions	Parliamentary Office.....Others (Please specify).....
Signed:..... Date.....	

## **A user-friendly image of the library is important**

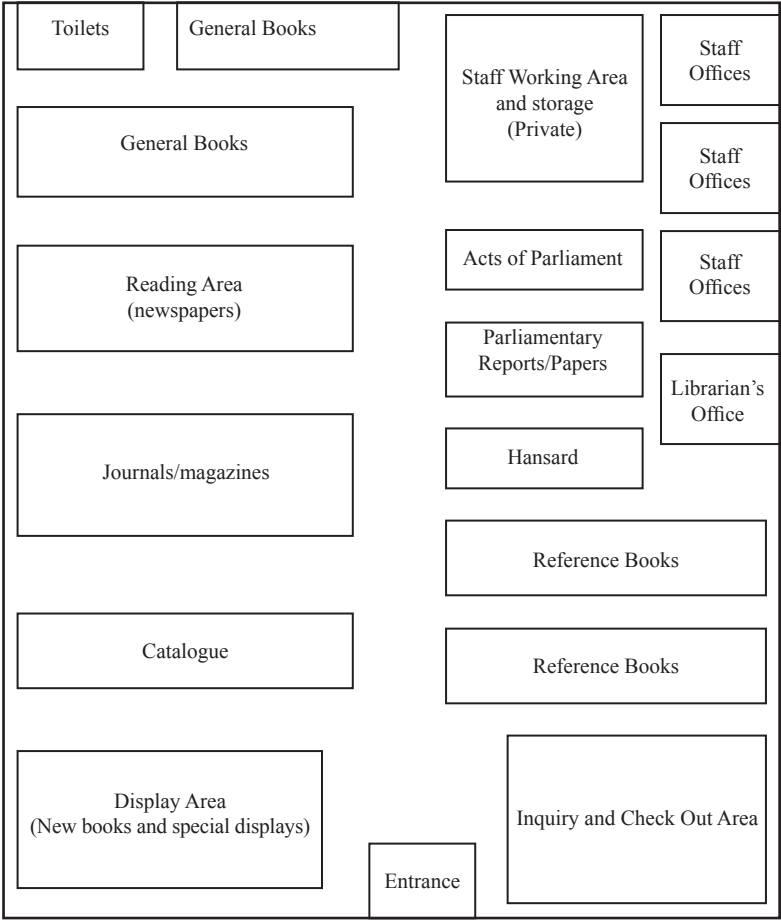
This could be assured by including:

- A 'Floor Plan', see example p. 43, (at the main entrance of the Library) showing where items are kept.
- Having friendly and helpful staff. When Parliamentarians visit, particularly for the first time, staff should take the initiative to introduce themselves to them.
- Responding to requests (unless renegotiated) on time and not promising more than can be delivered. Reasons need to be provided in person when services can not be provided.
- Where space is available, there should be an area set aside for those clients who may want to read or prepare their speeches etc in the Library.
- If possible, have one (or more) computers with an Internet connection for clients to use.
- Organizing regular and displays (see p.37 above).



Tongan Parliamentary Librarian Mrs. Fataimoemanu Leki in the reading area

Figure 3. Model Floor Plan



## Keeping records

The Librarian should also maintain a book to record appreciations and complaints by clients. Staff should be told of them and due credit given. Complaints should also be dealt with as soon as possible and the complainant told personally of actions taken to avoid future problems.

Confidential records for monitoring the usage by clients should be kept by the Librarian. These will be used to review and evaluate the effectiveness of services provided and as a means to identify gaps in resources etc. The following is a model record keeping form.

### Figure 4. Record Keeping Form

<b>Parliament of XXX (Crest of County)</b>	
<b>FOR LIBRARY USE ONLY</b>	
Request No:.....	
Date Requested: .....	Date Due: .....
Time Taken: (<15 minutes)..... (<1 hr.) .....(>1 hour).....	
Response (circle one):    Oral/Phone	Stock/Paper (Fact sheet)
Notes	Written Paper
Information Material	Others
Delivery:    Oral/Phone	Mail
To be collected	Others.
Resources Used:	
Library Files	Local Libraries
Reference	Internet
Periodicals	Overseas Libraries
Books/Monograph	Others (specify)
Officer(s) Responsible (1)..... (2).....	
Comments: .....	
.....	
Librarian: .....	

## 7. Concluding note and a proposal

Given the financial and other limitations of PIC Parliaments, the challenge to Libraries to be more effective, provide the latest information and research services, is enormous. Hopefully by following the above basic guidelines, and with the support of all Clients, national governments and external inputs from donors in terms of IT equipment, connection and training, a start could be made to achieve these objectives. There must also be a commitment by staff, made fully aware of their important contribution to the work of Parliament.

However, because of limited financial and human resources, and given the commonalities of the PIC problems, research and information services could in the longer term be more effectively provided by a regional 'Parliamentary Information and Research Centre' linked to individual parliamentary library via the Internet to serve Parliamentarians in the whole region. This idea was first raised in my 1996 *Report on the Communication and Information Needs of the Fiji Parliament*.

Such a Centre, based not unlike the idea of the University of the South Pacific, will be responsible to the Speakers of all PIC Parliaments to serve primarily their members and staff. Costs could be minimized if it could be co-located to an established Library such as that of the Forum Secretariat with qualified and trained researchers from the region. If realised, it will also reduce the current problem of both lack of staff, duplication and high turn-over of trained staff faced by individual Libraries. It will also allow libraries to concentrate on gathering local information, which could be fed to the (future) Centre. Furthermore, the Centre could also act as the 'one regional storage and conservation facility....to guarantee preservation and back up mechanisms for essential parliamentary information' as recommended by the *Communiqué* of July 2005 Regional Workshop.<sup>11</sup>

But that is in the future.....

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11. For text of the *Communiqué* Appendix 3.

## **Appendix 1. Press Clippings Files—Subject Headings**

The following Master List is a modification of the one use by the Fiji Parliamentary Library and is provided here only as a guide to be further modified, added or deleted according to the interests of each country.

### **CRITERIA FOR ESTABLISHING FILES**

- 1. IMPORTANCE TO PARLIAMENT**
- 2. IMPORTANCE TO FIJI**
- 3. GENERAL**

A review of Files may need to be conducted from time to time with the objective of establishing new and closing old ones.

### **MASTER LIST**

In addition to the following list, individual files are kept for all MPs, Senators, Government Ministries, Statutory Bodies, Commission of Inquiry, Tribunals and Local Government Authorities.

Agriculture General  
Aids  
Alcohol & Alcoholism  
Asia/Pacific  
Asian Development Bank (ADB)  
Australia  
Australia-Fiji  
Ausaid  
Banks  
British Development Assistance  
Canada  
Canadian Development Agency  
Cabinet/Government  
China  
China-Fiji

Coconut  
Commonwealth General  
Commonwealth Parliamentary Association  
Cook Islands/Fiji  
Copyright  
Courts  
Consumer Affairs  
Export Trade  
Fiji-Commonwealth  
Fiji Constitution  
Fiji Crime  
Fiji Land Tenure  
Fiji Parliament  
Foreign Aid  
Defence  
Disasters (Natural)  
Drugs  
Economics  
Education General  
Education-USP  
Electoral System  
Employment/Unemployment Issues  
Energy General  
European Union-Fiji  
Environmental Issues  
Fiji Council of Social Services (FCOSS)  
Fiji Culture/Tradition (Includes Fijian, Indian, Rotuman, Chinese and Others)  
Fiji Sugar General  
Fiji Sugar Industrial Tribunal  
Fiji Sugarcane Growers Council  
Fiji Law Reform Commission  
Fisheries



Forestry  
Forum Fisheries  
Forum Secretariat  
Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)  
France  
France-Fiji  
Great Council of Chiefs (GCC)  
Health Services  
House of Representatives  
Housing  
Human Rights General  
Immigration  
Imports Trade  
Industries General  
Industrial Relations  
Insurance  
International Organizations (See Also United Nations, United Nations-Fiji or Other International Organizations)  
Internet  
Inter-Parliamentary Organizations  
Investment  
International Monetary Fund (IMF)  
Japan  
Japan-Fiji  
JICA (Japan International Cooperation)  
Judiciary  
Malaysia-Fiji  
Marine General  
Media  
Mining  
New Zealand  
New Zealand-Fiji  
National Bank of Fiji

Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)  
Local Governments  
Papua New Guinea  
Papua New Guinea-Fiji  
Parliamentarians  
Plural Society  
Police  
Political Parties (Files for Every Fijian Political Party).  
Politicians  
Population  
Ports Authority of Fiji  
Poverty General  
Poverty in Fiji  
President and Vice President  
Press  
Primary Industries  
Prices and Incomes Board  
Prisons  
Privatisation  
Public Enterprises  
Race Relations  
Religions/Culture  
Religions: Methodist  
Religions: Others  
Republic of China (ROC)  
Road Safety  
Rural Development Issues  
Russia-Fiji  
Senate  
Science  
SOPAC  
Social Issues  
Solomon Islands

South Pacific Region  
South Pacific-Australia  
South Pacific-New Zealand  
South Pacific Forum  
South Pacific Regional Organizations  
Sports  
Superannuation General  
Tariffs  
Taxation  
Technology  
Tourism  
Tourism Council of South Pacific  
Trade  
Trade Agreements (Lome, SPARTECA)  
Trade Unions  
Transportation  
United Kingdom  
UK-Fiji  
United Nations Agencies  
Un-Fiji  
UNDP  
UN Peacekeeping  
United States of America  
USA-Fiji  
USAid  
Western Samoa  
Western Samoa-Fiji  
World Bank  
World Health Organization  
World Trade Organization  
Women  
Youth

## **NON GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS (NGO)**

Fiji Institute of Accountants

YMCA

YWCA

Women in Politics

Women Crisis Centre

Women Rights Group

## **TRADE UNIONS**

Fiji Public Service Association

Fiji Nurses Association

Fijian Teachers Association

Fiji Teachers Union

Fiji Medical Association

National Farmers Union

Fiji Sugar Workers Union

National Bank Employees Union

Public Employees Union

Credit Union

Fiji Dock Workers Union

## **Appendix 2. Code of Ethics and Standard of Conduct for Library and Research Staff**

The Services of the Library need to be underpinned by the following principles and values:

- Quick responsiveness to the Presiding Officers, Senators, Members and eligible staff;
- A close focus on results;
- Merit as the basis for staffing;
- The highest standards of honesty, integrity and conduct;
- A strong commitment to accountability and
- Continuous improvement through team and individual efforts.

### **Official Duties**

Individual members of staff are required to:

1. Perform your official duties with skill, care, diligence and impartiality and to the best of your ability;
2. Comply with any Acts, regulations or instructions that relate to the performance of your duties;
3. Comply with any lawful and reasonable direction given by the Secretary General/Clerk of Parliament and Librarian having the authority to give the direction;
4. Have regard to any official guidelines or recommendations that relate to the performance of your duties;
5. Treat clients, other officials and members of the public with courtesy and sensitivity to their rights, duties and aspirations;
6. Provide reasonable assistance to members of the public in their dealings with the Library and help them understand their entitlements and their obligations;
7. Use Library and other parliamentary resources economically and only for official purposes;

8. Not take, or seek to take improper advantage of any official information which you have access to as a result of your job in order to gain or other benefit for yourself, or any other person or group;
9. Behave at all times in a manner that maintains or enhances the reputation of the Library;
10. Inform the Librarian if you are absent from your office and provide a contact number, should your presence be required;
11. Maintain confidence (that is, not to divulge the nature and the person requesting the service to anyone except those who are directly involved in responding to the requests) for requests undertaken on behalf of individual Parliamentarians, Committees and other clients;
12. Maintain confidence, particularly when seeking information from government and other external sources. The failure to maintain this confidentiality will undermine and discredit the Library as the major source of information and will be seen as a breach of official duty;
13. Maintain records of requests and a copy of all written work in order to monitor the effectiveness and areas of demand for future planning purposes;
14. Adhere strictly to all deadlines for jobs undertaken;
15. Manage your time effectively and efficiently;
16. Responsible for the accuracy of the contents and impartiality of your work;
17. Be constantly aware of, and monitor, the major issues before parliament in terms of impending legislation, public issues highlighted in the media and also important and special occasions which may require action.
18. Maintain a network of relevant contacts to ensure that relevant, accurate and timely information are acquired from

all available sources to meet requests and for the preparation of Fact sheets and Briefs. This process should be regarded as a CONTINUOUS EXERCISE. However, given limited resources, services should initially be concerned with major issues before Parliament rather than the needs of the individual Parliamentarians and other clients and

19. Ensure that new information will be sent to clients who have expressed particular interests.

## Appendix 3. Work Shop Communiqué

### COMMUNIQUE ON IMPROVING AND STRENGTHENING PARLIAMENTARY LIBRARIES IN THE PACIFIC

The *Regional Workshop on Parliamentary Library Improvement in the Pacific*, held 19-22 July 2005 in Suva, Fiji, supports the timely discussion on the challenges facing libraries and research facilities in Pacific Parliaments, including their ability to support the effective operation of those parliaments. In particular, this includes providing services to support the effectiveness of the lawmaking process, and improve parliamentarians' abilities to scrutinize the executive and better represent their constituencies.

Importantly, the workshop recognizes that not all parliaments have operational libraries, and that service requirements and information provision differ widely between parliaments.<sup>12</sup>

To address these challenges, The Workshop makes the following observations and recommendations:

#### Networking

The Workshop recognizes the significant benefits that can be gained from cooperation and effective communication between regional parliamentary libraries in furthering the goals of effective parliamentary democracy, and therefore

*recommends* the strengthening of networking and communication facilities across the Pacific region to better share knowledge, tools and experiences through person-to-person and electronic means. This includes the formation of networks such as the Pacific Parliamentary Research and Library Network (PPARLN), and consideration of the continued support for workshops of this nature.

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12. The term 'library' is used for ease of reference to cover the full range of information services in Pacific Parliaments.



## **Training**

The Workshop expresses support for continued regional exchange programs for parliamentary library staff to improve technical capacity and skills, and therefore

*recommends* the identification of appropriate training support relevant to the requirements of the countries of the region.

The Workshop further identifies the need for parliamentarians to better understand the potential benefits parliamentary library and research services can provide them in the execution of their duties, and consequently

*recommends* the design and launch of parliamentary specific information literacy training programs that will enhance the understanding and usage of library and research services by parliamentarians.

## **Parliamentary Information**

The Workshop recognizes that technologies and methods to support better access to parliamentary information for parliamentarians, parliamentary staff and the public are vital in strengthening parliamentary democracy. Further, that the maintenance, storage and preservation of critical parliamentary information is of concern in the Pacific region. Therefore the Workshop

*recommends* the establishment or improvement of tools and mechanisms to enhance the capacity to record, access and protect parliamentary documents (including debates, resolutions of the parliament, and legislation), and further,

*recommends* that one regional storage and conservation facility be established to guarantee preservation and back up mechanisms for essential parliamentary information, and that the kind of assistance other relevant institutions could provide be explored.

## **Follow-Up**

The Workshop finally recognizes the need to adequately follow up on the recommendations put forward in this communiqué and consequently,

*recommends* targeted follow-up reporting to be conducted by each country delegation at a similar future workshop.