



**Australian
Association
for Pacific
Studies**



Newsletter August 2016



Dancers from Tokelau perform at Agat, Guam, for the 2016 Festival of Pacific Arts. Photo credit: Bianca Hennessy

AAPS Presidents' Report

2015-2016 began with our inaugural Epeli Hau'ofa Annual Public Lecture, delivered on 29 May 2015 at the Cairns Institute, James Cook University, by Associate Professor Tracey Banivanua Mar from La Trobe University. We thank Barbara Hau'ofa and Epeli Hau'ofa Junior in Fiji for generously giving AAPS permission to pay tribute to the late Professor Hau'ofa whose work has had a profound effect on how we imagine Oceania, in and beyond the academy. Associate Professor Banivanua Mar delivered an inspiring talk entitled *Black Australia: entangled histories on Queensland's cane fields* in honour of Hau'ofa and in memory of South Sea Islander activist and national icon Faith Bandler. This was followed by a moving presentation on the film project *Blackbird* by Melbourne-based filmmaker Amie Batalibasi.

The 2015 AAPS Annual General Meeting was held earlier that day and we said farewell to long-standing members Frances Steele and Nicole George among others, and welcomed a number of new committee members including Tracey Banivanua Mar and Iva Ponton (co-Publications Officers), and Andrew Faleatua (Postgraduate Representative). Rachel Morgain our Digital Media Officer launched the much anticipated AAPS website: <http://pacificstudies.org.au>. It is a comprehensive and impressive looking site and we appreciate all the voluntary time Rachel devoted to designing and building it. The site will allow our members to better share their great work, and with links to our popular Facebook page (followed by over 2000 people), it provides regular updates and information on Pacific Studies and Pacific related events and activities nationally and internationally. The website has also allowed us to post information on the newly established membership fees; we currently have 194 registered members. This is a first for AAPS and something we have tried to keep modest while generating some regular revenue for the Association so we can continue to support the annual lecture and biennial conference. At the 2016 AAPS Annual General Meeting, held in Cairns during our conference, we



also welcomed new Executive members including Camilla Web-Gannon (co-Secretary), Siobhan McDonnell (Public Officer), Victoria Stead and Michelle Dyer (co-Publications Officers), Tom Dick (Media and Arts Officer), and Renee Currenti and Bianca Hennessy (Postgraduate Student Representatives). John Taylor, Jennifer Corrin and Imelda Ambelye joined as general Executive members. Mandy Treagus is the 2018 Conference Organiser, and we look forward to holding our next conference at the University of Adelaide! A special mention was also made at the 2016 AGM of two our members. Bale Sigabalavu experienced major health issues last year and Tracey Banivanua Mar faces ongoing health challenges, please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

Over the last year many things have changed in what has historically been seen as a hub for Pacific Studies: the Australian National University. The School of Culture, History and Language, created in 2008 out of the old Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies and the Faculty of Asian Studies, has experienced restructure and downsizing resulting in the loss of staff. The recent retirements of Professors Mark Mosko and Brij Lal, and other Pacific experts in the near future, as well as cuts to the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia program, have seen the reduction of Pacific research expertise and teaching capacity. The AAPS responded to these cuts with an open letter to the Vice-Chancellor of the ANU, Prof. Brian Schmidt. You can read our letter on our website.

At the same time, the ANU signed a long overdue Memorandum of Understanding with the University of the South Pacific and engagement with the Pacific is growing in universities and within community and arts programs in Victoria, New South Wales, South Australia, Western Australia, and Queensland. AAPS members have been actively teaching, publishing, conducting fieldwork, organizing conferences, seminars and community events and are staying in touch via their own networks, the AAPS website and Facebook page. It is a good time to imagine a truly national and renewed Pacific Studies community across Australia and Oceania.

We would like to thank our AAPS executive team for all the technical work behind the scenes these last twelve months. Thanks go to Bale Sigabalavu who generously handles the AAPS account in Melbourne, Chris Ballard who ensures we're legally incorporated in the ACT, Anna-Karina Hermkens for her work on the AGMs and more, Lanieta Tukana in Sydney for maintaining the AAPS membership database, Rachel Morgain for the excellent website, Iva Ponton for the 2016 newsletter, and our conference conveners Rosita Henry and Doug Hunt and all the session conveners for the 6th biennial AAPS conference: *Tides of Transformation*. We also sincerely thank the Cairns Institute for hosting this conference and acknowledge the hard work of Jenny McHugh. A very special, and heartfelt mention goes to Guy Powles, our indispensable advisor and auditor, who sadly passed away in July 2016. News of Guy's loss came as this newsletter was going to print, and we know that many of you will be deeply saddened by the news.

Katerina, who recently welcomed her long awaited second child, baby Kiera Teaiwa Mortimer, would like to thank Kalissa for brilliantly taking the helm during her maternity leave. She apologizes for the diminished communication with the broader membership in recent months.

Vinaka vaka levu & kam bati n rabwa,

Dr. Katerina Teaiwa & Dr. Kalissa Alexeyeff

President and Vice President, AAPS



Left: Members of AAPS with Associate Professor Tracey Banivanua Mar and Amie Batalibasi following the inaugural Epeli Hau'ofa Annual Lecture, Cairns, 29 May 2015. Photo credit: Doug Hunt.



Left, members of the AAPS Executive at the AGM, Cairns, May 2015. Photo credit: Doug Hunt. Right, members of the AAPS Executive at the 2016 AGM, April 2016. Photo credit: unknown.

2016 Biennial Conference in Cairns: *Tides of Transformation*

The 2016 interdisciplinary AAPS conference was held this year at James Cook University's Cairns Institute, on the 1-3 April. With the theme of *Tides of Transformation*, the conference drew together a vibrant and diverse group of scholars from across Australia and the Pacific. An opening keynote address from Associate Professor Grey Fry mapped the emergence of a 'new Pacific diplomacy', charting key forces of political change acting upon the region but also, critically, highlighting some of the creative and purposeful ways in which Pacific Island states are responding to these. In a midst of a normative conflict over regional political agency, the new Pacific diplomacy includes forms of collective organisation that draw influence from Epeli Hau'ofa's vision of an autonomous region of 'large ocean states', not 'small dots in the ocean'. The themes of Pacific agency and creativity raised by Fry were recurring ones throughout the conference, with attention paid to the diverse ways in which Pacific peoples have responded, and continue to respond, to processes of transformation, as well as to practices that endure in the face of change.

While the recent cuts to Pacific Studies at the Australian National University—and the impacts of these on many of our colleagues—were a point of concern for many in attendance, the conference also highlighted the breadth and richness of contemporary Pacific Studies. Seventeen panels examined processes of social, cultural, and environmental change across a diverse range of subject areas. Contributors to the panel 'Possessing Paradise' offered critical reflections on the trope of

'Paradise' and its deployment within colonial imaginaries as well as by Pacific diasporas. 'Transforming Gender Relations in the Pacific' explored the complexities of gender, past and present, in Fiji, Timor-Leste, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, and Tonga. 'Mobile Labour, Mobile Lives' examined diverse experiences of labour mobility, including contemporary seasonal labour migrations, and the legacies of 19th century 'blackbirding'. Tourism, climate change, urbanisation, ageing, and livelihood systems were among the many other topics also considered by participants.

Pacific arts and music featured strongly throughout the gathering, reflecting the centrality of these within Pacific lives as well as their importance to Pacific Studies scholarship. A pre-conference program of events on the evening of the 31st March included the opening of an exhibition of Pacific objects held in the James Cook University Material Culture Collection, as well as a display of photographs from the *Yumi Kirapim Senis* project in PNG, sharing the stories of people working to address gender based violence within their communities. A highlight of the conference was the powerful and moving exchange between West Papuan and Indigenous Australian dancers in the *West Papua Project*, with the sharing of dance and music by those on the stage also complimented by the offerings of song and solidarity from the audience. Various panels extended the exploration of Pacific music, art and language, as well as the role of film, ethnography, media and imagination in



Tides of Transformation, continued...

research and practice. The conference closed with the Sea Stars Screen Festival presented by artist and curator Jenny Fraser.

The next AAPS conference will take place in 2018, and will be hosted by the University of Adelaide. The working theme for the conference, as proposed by Dr Mandy Treagus, is *Ravages, Resistance,*

Renaissance. The conference program will incorporate engagement with the Maude Collection, which is a significant archive housed at the University of books, journals, personal documents, literature and other source material collected through the mid twentieth century by former British colonial administrator Henry Evans Maude and researcher and string figure expert Honor Maude.

Recent Conferences, Workshops, Events

Europe and the Pacific. The 10th conference for the European Society for Oceanists (ESfO), 24-27 June 2015, Brussels, Belgium.

A number of AAPS members participated in the 2015 ESfO conference, including AAPS President Associate Professor Katerina Teaiwa, who presented a keynote address. The conference was opened with a keynote from the Head of State of Samoa Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi, entitled "*Le fuia, le fuia, e tagisia lou vaelau: Starling, starling, we pine for your nimbleness*": Towards a Samoan Indigenous Framing of Responsibility for 'Climate Change'. Taken from a Samoan song recorded, about a century ago, by Augustin Kramer, the phrase in the keynote's title references the *fuia*, or native Samoan starling bird. His Highness used this reference as a starting point to consider the possibilities of indigenous contributions to climate change debates. The phrase, he argued, "reminds us that with skill and dexterity one can find in nature balance, hope and support despite the potentially harmful effects of gravity." His Highness urged the island Pacific to engage in open dialogue about climate change and its effects "in the manner and style of the *fuia*".

Katerina Teaiwa's keynote speech, "Our Rising Sea of Islands: Hau'ofa's Hope and Mara'a Way in the Age of Climate Change" also responded to the spectre of climate change, drawing particular attention to the critical, engaged, and creative movements emerging throughout the Oceanic region. These movements include Oceania Rising in Honolulu, Oceania Interrupted in New Zealand, Oceania Now in Australia, the Rethinking and Renewing Oceania discussion forum, the 350 Pacific and Pacific Climate Warriors actions against climate change and fossil fuel

consumption, and the multi-sited Wansolwara movement from which the We Bleed Black & Red campaign emerged. Placing these in a historical trajectory of Oceanic protest movements, Teaiwa argued that "today, climate change, much like the earlier Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific movement, has begun to achieve multi-generational, multi-scalar resonance." Teaiwa also launched her new book, *Consuming Ocean Island: Stories of People and Phosphate from Banaba* (Indiana University Press, 2014) at the conference.



Above: His Highness Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Ta'isi Efi (centre) with delegates from the 10th ESfO conference. Photo credit: Allan Alo

Other AAPS members participating in Brussels included Professor Margaret Jolly, with a presentation entitled "Moving Towers: Worlding the Spectacle of Masculinities between South Pentecost and Munich". Dr Kalissa Alexeyeff gave a paper entitled "Regional Labour Circuits: Affective and Other Pacific Economies", and Vaoiva Ponton spoke on "The Spirit



of Polynesia: A Collective Approach in Maintaining Cultural Performances in Australia”

Melbourne and the Pacific in November 2015

By Dr Nadia Rhook Lecturer, Department of Archaeology and History, La Trobe University

Last November saw Sussex University Professor Alan Lester arrive in Melbourne as a Latrobe University visiting scholar, part of Tracey Banivanua Mar’s project, ‘Rehearsals in Colonialism’. This set up two major events.



Above, L-R: Patrick Wolfe, Keith Camacho, Tracey Banivanua-Mar, Catherine Gomes, Nadia Rhook, Tony Ballantyne, Alan Lester, Joshua Wong. Photo credit: Kalissa Alexeyeff

The first was a one-day symposium, Counter Networks of Empire. In the last decade, scholars have illuminated the ways Empires, particularly of the nineteenth century were founded on and maintained by networks of people, goods, and ideas. This symposium stretched, perhaps challenged, the ‘imperial networks’ framework. Australian and international participants – including Alan Lester, Damon Salesa, Penny Edmonds, Sophie Loy-Wilson, Liz Conor, myself, Keith Camacho, Tracey Banivanua Mar and Tony Birch - shone a spotlight on networks that ran counter to the well-documented imperial ones established by settlers, planters, missionaries and government officials that spread across, within and around the Pacific world. Speakers focused on networks formed by racialized and Indigenous people. The day began with a fascinating paper by Alan Lester on the mobile career and ideas of an imperial ethnographer-cum governor. In a fitting arc, it moved

through a seat-gripping paper by Banivanua Mar on the rise of transnational Black consciousness, and ended with Birch’s reflections on the question of how Indigenous knowledge will inform climate change debates, and the risk of white appropriation of this knowledge.

The second main event was the RMIT-Latrobe conference, Race, Mobility and Imperial Networks, co-convened by Tracey Banivanua Mar and Catherine Gomes, and myself. This three-day event had a geographic focus on the Pacific; an Ocean that elicited papers ranging from New Zealand to New Caledonia, to, from China to Dutch Batavia. Speakers continued to lay bare the hidden and surprising historical connections of the Australia-Pacific region; connections that Otago-based Tony Ballantyne showed in a keynote to effectively extend beyond the Pacific, across the Indian Ocean.

The conference concluded with a panel with Alan Lester and the dear and recently departed historian and critical theorist Patrick Wolfe. Wolfe turned our attention to the structural workings of settler colonialism, and gently questioned the importance of a transnational framework, which, indeed, many of the conference papers had assumed important. All agreed that these days were a shot of inspiration. Not only were the symposium and conference intellectually alive, but also an opportunity for scholars working in sites across the Pacific, and beyond, to make and re-make connections. Perhaps, this was a new Pacific moment.

Mafa-Kuchuwa Community Project

By Nicholas Halter, Australian National University

The ANU student society, Micronesian and Australian Friends Association (MAFA), has recently completed a successful research project into indigenous responses to climate change in Chuuk in the Federated States of Micronesia last month. The collaboration between staff and students of the ANU and Heidelberg University culminated in a youth workshop held in Kuchuwa village on Tonoas Island from the 22-24 January. Funded by a European PACE-Net Plus grant for water and waste management, MAFA’s goal was to assess the community’s water and waste needs, and empower the youth to develop community strategies for climate change adaptation.



MAFA's president, Zag Puas, who was born in Lekiniokh and has lived in Australia for many years, was pleased to be able to work at a grassroots level with the Kuchuwa community, many of whom are still struggling to repair their homes in the wake of typhoon Maysak. One of the strengths of the project, he said, was identifying new young leaders in the community. He was aided by Nicholas Halter and Myjolyne Kim, also from the ANU, as well as a European partner from Heidelberg University. Kim, who is undertaking her PhD research in Chuuk, explained that the aim of the project was to facilitate youth participation and innovation, rather than instruct them what to do.

On the final day of the workshop, the youth of Kuchuwa gave presentations to the wider community and made commitments to ongoing local projects, which MAFA plans to follow up on in the next few months. MAFA would like to thank the Kuchuwa community for their support, including Tonoas' political and traditional leaders, the Mayor of Kuchuwa Douglas Reselap, and the FSM Ambassador for Japan John Fritz. A final report will be delivered at



Above: Myjolyne Kim with members of the Kuchuwa community. Photo credit: Nicholas Halter

the PACE-Net Plus conference in Fiji at the end of June 2016.

For more information about the project and MAFA, please email microaustfriends@gmail.com or visit facebook.com/ANU.MAFA or pasifika.anu.edu.au/micronesian-and-australian-friends-association-mafa.

Upcoming Events and Calls for Papers

2016 Epele Hau'ofa Annual Lecture to be delivered by Dr Peter Brunt

The Epele Hau'ofa lecture was created to feature work by key senior scholars working in the field of Pacific Studies, whose work extends the expansive, connective, collaborative Oceanic vision of Fiji-based Tongan scholar and writer Epele Hau'ofa.

In 2016, the lecture will be delivered at Macquarie University, Sydney, by the esteemed New Zealand-Samoan scholar and curator Dr Peter Brunt. Dr Brunt's teaching, research and curatorial interests focus broadly on art and cross-cultural exchange in the Pacific from the late eighteenth century to the present, with a special interest in the development of Indigenous modernisms and Contemporary Pacific art in the 'post-colonial' era. He received an MPhil from Auckland and PhD from Cornell before taking up his permanent position



New Zealand-Samoan scholar and curator, Dr Peter Brunt

where he is Senior Lecturer in Art History at Victoria University of Wellington. Dr Brunt recently coedited the major volume *Art in Oceania: A New History* (Thames & Hudson 2012, Yale UP 2013), the result of a five year international collaboration supported by the prestigious Marsden Fund and winner of the 2013 Author's Club prize for art book of the year. He is also co-curator of the forthcoming exhibition *Oceania* at the Royal Academy of Arts in London in 2018, based on collections in British and European museums.

Dr Brunt's public lecture will draw on his work in an international collaborative project entitled *Multiple Modernisms: Twentieth Century Modernisms in Global Perspective* for which he has been tracing the artistic partnership between Wallis Islander Alois Pilioko and French-Russian émigré Nicolai



Michoutouchkine which was based in Vanuatu but moved across the Pacific region and beyond.

The 2016 Epli Hau'ofa Annual Lecture will take place on 17 November, Macquarie University, Sydney, beginning at 2pm. A masterclass for postgraduate students will take place earlier in the day at 10am.

For more information, contact Dr Alice Te Punga Somerville on alice.tepungasomerville@mq.edu.au

European Society for Oceanists 11th Conference, call for panels open

A call for panels is now open for the 2017 conference of the European Society for Oceanists (ESf), to be held at the Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität Munich, Germany, 29 June – 2 July. The theme of the conference is *Experiencing Pacific Environments*:

People in Oceania experience diverse life-worlds undergoing profound transformations. Migration, urbanisation, religious movements, resource extraction, and climate change, as well as new technologies like the internet and mobile phones, are just some of the recent changes that are reconfiguring Pacific environments. Pacific lives have always featured mobilities, networks and relatedness, but the contemporary era lends these experiences new qualities and meanings. Experiencing Pacific environments presents new research challenges: How are Pacific life-worlds created and experienced through interactions between human and other-than-human entities? How are experiences and environments

reconstituted in times of spatial and temporal reconfigurations?

The deadline for panel proposals is 30 September 2016, and a call for papers will open in November.

For more information see: <http://esfo-org.eu/>

Australian Anthropological Society 2016 conference, *Anthropocene Transitions*, call for papers closing soon

The 2016 conference of the Australian Anthropological Society will be hosted by The Department of Anthropology, School of Social and Political Sciences at The University of Sydney, from 12-15 December 2016. The theme for the 2016 conference is *Anthropocene Transitions*:

The idea of Anthropocene goes to the heart of anthropological enquiry. It pushes practitioners to rethink fundamental boundaries, values and suppositions, including expectations of the perpetuity of homo sapiens and the prospect of extinction. It lends urgency to the task of widely communicating our knowledge about the limits and potentials of human adaptive capacities.

This conference calls on anthropologists to bring our skills, knowledge and wisdom to bear on a fleeting and fragile moment in the human career, when the species condition of Anthropos intersects with the transitional epoch of the Anthropocene.

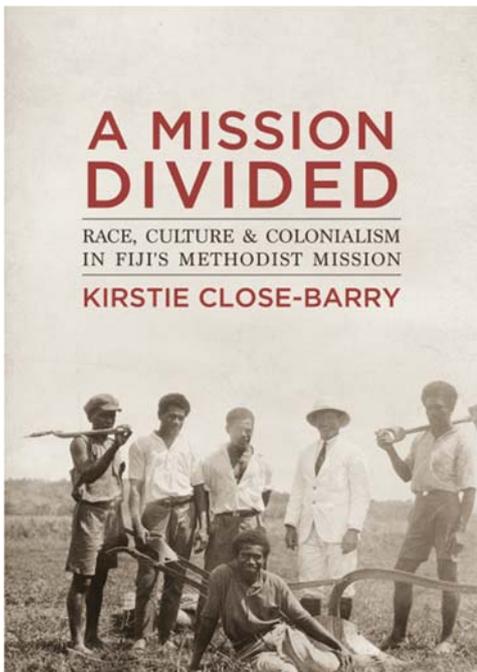
The call for papers closes on 15 August 2016. Go to: <http://sydney.edu.au/arts/conference/aas2016/>



Bardi Jawi dancers from the Bardi Nation, Ardiyooloon, Western Australia, perform at the 2016 Festival of Pacific Arts in Agat, Guam

Publications from AAPS Members

Kirstie Close-Barry, 2015, *A Mission Divided: Race, Culture and Colonialism in Fiji's Methodist Mission*, ANU Press.



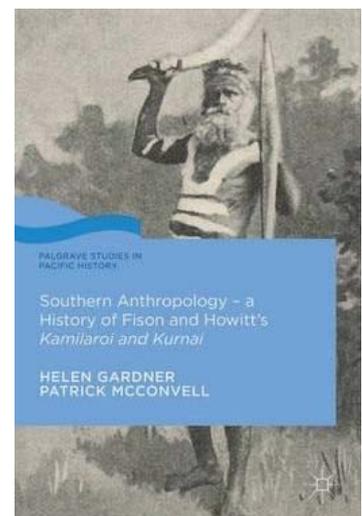
Text Credit: <http://press.anu.edu.au/titles/state-society-and-governance-in-melanesia/a-mission-divided/>

A Mission Divided provides insight into the long process of decolonisation within the Methodist Overseas Missions of Australasia, a colonial institution that operated in the British colony of Fiji. The mission was a site of work for Europeans, Fijians and Indo-Fijians, but each community operated separately, as the mission was divided along ethnic lines in 1901. This book outlines the colonial concepts of race and culture, as well as antagonism over land and labour that were used to justify this separation. Recounting the stories told by the mission's leadership, including missionaries and ministers, to its grassroots membership, this book draws on archival and ethnographic research to reveal the emergence of ethno-nationalisms in Fiji, the legacies of which are still being managed in the post-colonial state today.

'Analysing in part the story of her own ancestors, Kirstie Barry develops a fascinating account of the relationship between Christian proselytization and Pacific nationalism, showing how missionaries reinforced racial divisions between Fijian and Indo-Fijian even as they deplored them. Negotiating the intersections between evangelisation, anthropology and colonial governance, this is a book with resonance well beyond its Fijian setting.' – Professor Alan Lester, University of Sussex

Helen Gardner and Patrick McConvell, 2015, *Southern Anthropology: A History of Fison and Howitt's Kamilaroi and Kurnai*. Palgrave Macmillan.

This book explores the local, regional and global networks of late nineteenth century anthropology from the contested sites of colonial ethnology across Oceania. Along the mail routes of Australasia, Fison and Howitt gathered kinship data and material on social organisation from Melanesian and Aboriginal people, developing and refining field techniques as they went. Based on extensive archival sources that are now the subject of a large multi-institutional ARC Linkage grant, *Southern Anthropology* recreates the intellectual world of colonial ethnography and the trans-local links between Australian and Pacific nodes of scientific endeavour. The primary argument in this book is on the shrouded but indispensable Indigenous input into *Kamilaroi and Kurnai* that challenged metropolitan theses on 'primitive' people and demanded new analyses of colonised peoples at the height of late nineteenth century Eurocentrism.



Share your news with the AAPS community!

We welcome reports on research projects, past and upcoming events, photos from fieldwork or community events, details of recent publications and calls for papers, and other items that would be of interest to the Pacific Studies community. Send your submissions to victoria.stead@deakin.edu.au or michelle.dyer1@my.jcu.edu.au, for inclusion in the next AAPS Newsletter.



Publications from AAPS Members, cntd...

Journal articles and book chapters

Banivanua Mar, Tracey. 2015. 'Shadowing Imperial Networks: Indigenous Mobility and Australia's Pacific Past', *Australian Historical Studies*, 46(3): 340–355.

Cox, John, and Georgina Phillips. 2015. 'Sorcery, Christianity and the Decline of Medical Services', in Miranda Forsyth and Richard Eves, eds., *Talking it Through. Responses to Sorcery and Witchcraft Beliefs and Practices in Melanesia*. Canberra: ANU Press, pp.37-54.

Lee, Helen. 2016. 'I was forced here': perceptions of agency in second generation 'return' migration to Tonga. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. Online, April 2016.

Stead, Victoria. 2016. 'Mobility and Emplacement in North Coast Papua New Guinea: Worlding the Pacific Marine Industrial Zone'. *The Australian Journal of Anthropology* 27(1): 30-48.

Taylor, John. 2015. 'Drinking Money and Pulling Women: Mobile Phone Talk, Gender and Agency in Vanuatu', *Anthropological Forum*: 25: 1-16.

Teaiwa, Katerina Teaiwa. 2015. 'Ruining Pacific Islands: Australia's Phosphate Imperialism', *Australian Historical Studies*, 46(3): 374-391.



Other Publications

Oxford History of the Novel

AAPS members have contributed to Volume 12 of the *Oxford History of the Novel* which covers the Pacific as well as Australia, NZ and Canada. There are essays on Pacific writing from Dr Paul Sharrad, Linda Cowl, Michelle Keown, Steven Windouo and Mohit Prasad. The volume should be appearing late this year.

Gender and Person in Oceania

AAPS members Rachel Morgain, Anna-Karina Hermkens and John Taylor were co-editors of this special edition of the journal *Oceania*, vol. 85(1). Each also contributed an article, and there were also contributions from Benedicta Rousseau, Katherine Lepani, Margaret Jolly, Matt Tomlinson, Katu Latai, and Nicole George

2015 PhD Theses

Dr Elizabeth Betz, La Trobe University

*Tongan Hip Hop Culture:
Negotiating Identity through
Performance*



Many Tongan youth experience multiple marginalisation due to social environments in which they tend to be questioned for individual performances of difference. Despite clear self-identification, many Tongan youth tend to be existentially questioned by others. Some Tongans criticise them as being 'plastic' 'fake' or 'wannabe white', while people in New Zealand and Australia classify young Tongans as 'FOB's' or 'Brownies' – Polynesian migrants who do not belong to mainstream society. My dissertation "Tongan Hip Hop Culture: Negotiating Identity through Performance" explores how Tongan youth experiencing social exclusion participate in hip hop to engage in existential dialogues with their self and their surroundings. Using Martin Heidegger's existential phenomenology of *Dasein*, it is argued that hip hop encourages performers to express their uniqueness to be autonomous while being with others. Hip hop's principle of 'keeping it real' enables young Tongans to 'self-sample' aspects of their identities to be in 'flow' with their self and their surroundings. Consequently, my dissertation argues that hip hop facilitates the Tongan ideal of *fekau'aki* (connecting) between different fragments of the self and with others.

Dr Vaoiva Ponton, University of Melbourne

*An Investigation of Samoan
Student Experiences in Two
Homework Study Groups in
Melbourne*



This research examined Samoan student experiences in two Homework Study Groups in Melbourne using a researcher-practitioner approach. The study highlights the need for teachers to acknowledge students' preferred learning methods, especially those of minority backgrounds like the Samoan participants in



this study. Samoan symbolic meanings from traditional tattoos and decorative ornaments are used as metaphors to describe the positive responses provided by participants in this study. Similar to the way in which the tatau (tattoo) symbols used in ritual tattooing for Samoan men and women represented readiness to serve one's family and extended community, educational aspirations and employment pathways are explored from a participant perspective as a way of serving and supporting their migrant families in Melbourne. Through a detailed investigation of the experiences of students in two homework study groups in Melbourne, this study finds that while students and their families place a high priority on learning, their cultural practices are not compatible with standard Western learning approaches. The homework study group provided a social space in which students could ask the teacher questions without fear of appearing foolish, and in which they could apply themselves to study. It provided a physical study space away from the

demands that Samoan families place on their young people, and it provided a cultural space in which the students could learn according to fa'a Samoa (traditional values and beliefs).

This study makes a contribution to an understanding of the motivations of Melbourne-based Samoan students to learn, of what concerns them, and of impediments to their educational success. It also offers insight into the benefits of setting up a specific space for students, when its specific intent is influencing the merging of traditional Samoan and Western ideas to further learning and understanding. Participants in this study indicated that Homework Study Groups provided structure and learning strategies that improved academic outcomes. It was not only a space in which participants felt they could seek assistance and support from a teacher/researcher who understood the importance of their cultural values and beliefs, it was also a space where participants felt safe to share the highs and lows of their educational experiences.

Meet an AAPS Postgrad: Andrew Faleatua

Profile by Vaoiva Ponton



Andrew Faleatua may not be a name people are familiar with as yet, but his musical work with Pacific communities both in Australia and overseas, will ensure his name is not one to be forgotten anytime soon. Andrew was also the AAPS Postgraduate Representative for 2015-2016 and our digital officer for 2016-2017.

Currently studying a PhD in Composition and Cultural Studies at The Sydney Conservatorium of Music, Andrew credits his success to being supported by a close knit and loving family. Invaluable advice from his father to achieve his goals by 'hanging around the Davids rather than the giants like Goliath' (from the biblical story of

David and Goliath) is what motivated Andrew to stay humble and work hard in achieving success. His father told him, 'hang around the David's because they know how to slay a giant and can help you slay your giant.' When asked about his main musical influence, Andrew said it was watching the talented Toma Amosa play without music sheets that inspired him to be more creative in his compositions, and to develop a varied repertoire of artistic skills.

With the success of the recently released film *Three Wise Cousins* written, directed and produced by Stallone Vaiaoga-Ioasa, Andrew has made his mark as a composer of rhythmic beats and harmonious melodies which can be heard throughout the film. Andrew works on creating compositions that infuse a "range of musical mediums from traditional classical and jazz music through to mainstream pop infused with elements of RnB, funk, hip-hop, country and gospel." Last year, Andrew also collaborated with Sydney based Matavai Pacific Cultural Arts School, to compose their theme song 'Come Together Pasifika' as well as providing more aspects of the fusion of traditional drum beats and soothing sounds in the mesmerising song 'Tidal Wave.' He has made it a priority to ensure he is



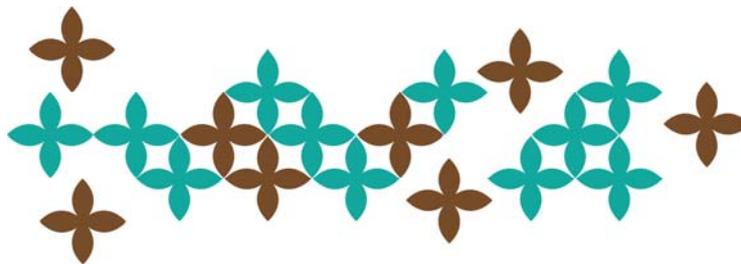
giving back to the community by collaborating with various artists to compose music, as well as share his expertise with those who are willing to learn.

Andrew's current PhD research topic is an investigation of music by Pacific diaspora in Sydney. What has been interesting so far throughout the process of collecting data from interviews, collaborations and reading a multitude of research papers, has been exploring artists' compositional processes. These included 'incorporating traditional Pacific influences into their music and the role cultural identity plays in this.'

Whatever connections and findings Andrew writes in his final thesis, it will most definitely be an interesting read. His enthusiasm and love of sharing his musical talents with everyone, is evidence that Andrew is able to work on a variety of projects showcasing his skills. I believe, the best is yet to come.



Andrew Faleatua created the soundtrack for this 2016 film



Stay in touch with the AAPS!

Keep up to date with the AAPS through our website, at <http://pacificstudies.org.au/>, through our Facebook page, AAPS: The Australian Association for Pacific Studies, and on Twitter with @AAPSPacific The AAPS also has a new email discussion group. To be added to the listserv contact c.webb-gannon@westernsydney.edu.au, indicating your institutional affiliation and whether or not you are a current member.

This issue of the AAPS Newsletter was compiled by 2015-2016 Publications Officer Vaoiva Ponton, with contributions from Victoria Stead. For enquiries about future issues of the newsletter, and to submit items for inclusion, contact the 2016-2017 Publications Officers Victoria Stead at victoria.stead@deakin.edu.au, or Michelle Dyer at michelle.dyer1@my.jcu.edu.au