



Australian
Association
for Pacific
Studies



NEWSLETTER **SEPTEMBER 2024**



'Oceanic orator'
'A force of nature'

Vale Sēini Fale'aka Taumoepeau

inside this issue

Editors' Notes	2	Announcements: Call for Publishing Grants	15
President and Vice President's Report	3	A Reflection: FestPAC 2024	16
A Tribute: Vale Seini Fela'aka Taumoepeau	5	A Short Essay: Kanaky Colonialism	17
Announcements: Call for Panel Submissions	8	Creative Texts: Harkin and Ieremia-Allan	19
A Reflection: Epeli Hau'ofa Masterclass 2024	9	Announcements: Project for Gender Inclusivity 20	
Congratulations!: PhD Graduations	10	A Reflection: Two Conferences in Hawai'i	21
Tracey Banivanua Mar Prize Winner 2024	12	Member Publications	23
Creative Texts: Harkin and Apiata	13		
Events: Opening of The Oceania Institute	14		

EDITORS' NOTES

We celebrate and remember Vale Sēini Fale'aka Taumoepeau in this issue: her warmth, and generous yet powerful influence on emerging Pacific artists and scholars in the region. We acknowledge Seini's sister Latai for sharing with us photographs of Seini, one of which we have chosen for this issue's featured Shutter image. Talei Mangioni and friends have written a moving tribute on page 5. She was an 'Oceanic Orator' and 'A Force of Nature' for many. We feature the poetry of Narungga poet Natalie Harkin alongside Ammon Apiata and Litara Ieremia-Allan who was recently crowned Miss Samoa 2024. Litara is an AAPS

member and the daughter of another brilliant scholar and AAPS member Wanda Ieremia-Allan! Congratulations to Litara and the Ieremia-Allan family! There are other reasons to celebrate too: PHD graduations, the successful Epeli Hau'ofa lecture and the opening of the Oceania Institute at the University of Melbourne. We interviewed Marco de Jong on winning the 2024 Tracey Banivanua Prize; spoiler alert, there is a book coming out soon! Thank you to everyone who sent us 'longs'. Vinaka vaka levu for taking the time to write. We appreciate your words!

Editorial team



AAPS exec members and Reverend James Bhagwan in Sydney for the annual AAPS Epeli Hau'ofa Memorial Lecture

PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

2024 has been a year of creativity and connection for AAPS, with more on the horizon. After the fantastic success of last year's *To Hell With Drowning* conference at ANU – organised by AAPS Vice-President Prof Katerina Teaiwa, Prof Rebecca Monson, Lisa Hilli, and AAPS Secretary and all-round wonder woman (and new mum!) Talei Mangioni—we were excited to reconvene in April this year in Sydney for the annual AAPS Epeli Hau'ofa Memorial Lecture, which was delivered by the Rev. James Bhagwan in partnership with the Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education and the Australian Museum. Huge thanks to ERC Director 'Alopi Latukefu, the Australian Museum's Manager of Pasifika Collections and Engagement Melissa Malu, and their hardworking teams, for making this event such a success.

Read more inside about Rev. Bhagwan's powerful reimagining of the Pacific as an Ocean of Peace, in pursuit of ecological, social justice and liberation. You can read more, too, about the terrific HDR and ECR talanoa held by Rev Bhagwan as part of his visit, and organised by AAPS' postgrad reps Sarouche Ravi and Romitesh Kant.

As we move now towards the end of this year, we are excitedly gearing up for the 2025 AAPS Conference, which is being organised at the University of Sydney under the leadership of Prof Jioji Ravulo. The conference will be held from 3-6 June, with the theme '*Pacific Discourses and Destinies*'. AAPS conferences are always deeply enriching, relational spaces for sharing knowledge and community. Get the dates in your diary now, and we will look forward to seeing you there!



Set against this creativity and positivity, of course, is the pressing reality of the ongoing colonial violence in Gaza. The Pacific region knows, too well, the devastation of colonial violence, displacement, ecocide, and militarisation. In May, following discussions at our Annual General Meeting in April, the AAPS Executive issued a statement in solidarity with the Palestinian people, and in condemnation of the violent Israeli occupation. As we stated in that document, "Pacific scholars like Epeli Hau'ofa, Teresia Teaiwa and Haunani-Kay Trask have taught us to recognise the forces of resistance, creativity, and solidarity that can bind people and communities across oceans and continents, and in refusal of forces of fragmentation and isolation."

No-one is free until we are all free.

From the Wansolwara/Moana to the Middle East, from the river to the sea.

Assistant Professor Victoria Stead
President
AAPS

Professor Katerina Teaiwa
Vice President
AAPS



Pacific Studies PhD candidates, and AAPS executive members with Rev James Bhagwan at the AAPS Epeli Hau'ofa Memorial Lecture



VALE SEINI FALE'AKA TAUMOEPEAU **A TRIBUTE**

On 21 May 2024, Sēini Fale'aka Taumoepeau, also known as SistaNative and Napangardi, passed away at 48 years of age. The Oceanic orator and songwoman's death deeply devastated her family, friends and collaborators, who expressed their grief through numerous tributes across social media. Born in Sydney, Sēini lived most of her life on unceded Gadigal and Wangal lands (Marrickville) and also spent time on Bundjalung (Lismore) and Anmatjere (Ti Tree) Country. She was a respected community leader, radio broadcaster and performance artist, widely recognised in the Pacific diaspora and across academic, creative arts, and media communities across the region.

I knew Sēini as a mentor through her *Reading Oceania* group and through Pacific Studies, where she served as Community Connections Officer at the *Australian Association for Pacific Studies* from 2021-2023 and also as a member of the *Oceania Working Party* of the Australian Dictionary of Biography. Since her passing, I've only just been able to grasp how she nurtured an extensive network across the Pacific and touched more lives than I could have ever imagined. As her sister, Latai Taumoepeau, told me: 'She held community in a non-institutional way, which is really hard...her work was invisibilized and it wasn't seen by more than three or four people at a time'. To honour her impact, I spoke with Brian Fuata, Tracy Quan, Kirsten Lyttle, Daniel Browning and Taloi Havini as an attempt to document some of her influence that she had on



many of us in the Pacific community here in Australia. We came together through Sēini's Reading Oceania group, which started in 2017. The group offered a Pacific spin on what was typically viewed as the tired, monotonous and classical academic reading group. Sāmoan artist Brian Fuata recalled that Reading Oceania came about through a shared conversation around how 'contemporary art in a canonical Western sense seemed to be the defining framework in which ethnic artists understood themselves'. Instead, 'we wanted to start new discussions about our Pacific identities, cosmologies and just being ourselves as creative people in this world...and not in a way that was mystic or easily reduced to ooga booga aesthetics'. The group met every month in Sēini's lounge room, on Zoom during COVID-19 and in galleries for public events. Brian observed that Sēini adapted the format over time, introducing roles like the 'text selektah' who chose a text and led discussions. Brian reminisced that this fostered 'a really significant decentralised logic of learning...There

was no pressure to come having read the text' which was deliberately intended to mitigate any 'power plays' or hierarchical sense of 'expertise'. Sēini described this 'come-as-you-are' philosophy as part of her 'One-of-Many Methodology'. Here, the group collectively read, digested and processed the reading in real time together. Brian said the discussions that Sēini facilitated of iconic Pacific Studies texts like Hau'ofa, Wendt, Banivanua-Mar, and many others, 'there was a muscularity to it that wasn't flimsy...Sēini gave a maternal kind of support and nudged people to speak, not from a place of "oh you haven't spoken" but instead to give them a voice'.



“ she held community
in a non-institutional
way ”

Solomon Islander artist and Archives and Records Management student, Tracy Quan, was one of the younger generations who regularly participated in the *Reading Oceania* sessions and was mentored by Sēini along with others like Paris Taia, Georgia Taia, Sereima Adimate, Kilia Tipa, Morgan Hogg and myself. Tracy recalled: 'As a mentor in the Pacific arts, Sēini's approach was transformative. She supported our generation and many others with unparalleled engagement, embodying a mentoring style characterised by deep listening and insightful guidance. All through this, she nurtured an intergenerational space where everyone felt included and comfortable and could actively and informally connect with one another.' Like Tracy, Sēini also took me under her wing through Reading Oceania. After I finished my undergraduate degree and was only able to find hospitality work, she encouraged me to pursue honours in Pacific Studies at the ANU. Canberra was cold and isolating, and I felt lonely compared to the community that we found of our reading group. Sēini frequently checked in on me though and I always made sure to get my Murrays bus back down to Sydney! Kirsten Garner Lyttle, a Māori-Australian artist and academic, spoke highly of the vital role Sēini played throughout her PhD candidacy by offering unwavering peer-support from the margins. She said: 'She was one of the most generous people that I ever met...She was a force of nature..like a

cross between a life coach, a psychologist and a cheer squad all rolled into one...Without her, I may not have finished my PhD'. Sēini invested a lot of care into people across generations who were having to encounter Australian institutions which often marginalised Pacific peoples. Lyttle remarked: 'In terms of encouraging and supporting any person of colour going through and trying to navigate these incredibly white spaces, she gave me the confidence to not only, pull up a seat at the table, but to demand a presence at the table. Her belief that we needed to be there was not just beneficial for us as Māori and Pasifika people but also for the white academics. They need us - they need the ancestral knowledge we bring with us.'

“ a force of nature like
a cross between a life
coach, a psychologist
and cheer squad all
rolled into one ”

Professionally, Sēini was also known for her tireless work in community radio over the years. She also followed in the footsteps of her mother by working at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and became the first-ever host of the Pacific Mornings on Radio Australia

from 2018. Bundjalung and Kullilli journalist and radio broadcaster, Daniel Browning, fondly recalled her time there. He praised her as the voice of the flagship program and as 'a colleague, sista and cultural being' through her genuine solidarity she enacted to First Nations mob as an Indigenous Pacific person whereby 'she stood alongside us, listening quietly without interrupting and embodying true respect'. With a deep commitment to the region, she worked 'the hard slog' with just 'one producer, presenting live three hours a day, five days a week' often managing all the aspects of the show herself including 'finding the stories, identifying the talent, recording, editing and presenting the content for air'. While Sēini's dedication to the role didn't carry on into an ongoing role which she was disappointed by, Daniel remembered she carried an 'absence of self-pity' in her final broadcast where she addressed the audience person-to-person by declaring: 'I hope that ABC Radio Australia will consider replacing me with 2-5-10 people of Pacific heritage', she said, 'and in doing so, evolve the Australian lens of the Pacific with the great and valuable resource that is our region, inclusive of our people'. The ABC has since increased their number of Pacific Islander staff and programming, no doubt this reflects Sēini's impact.

“ her genuine solidarity
she enacted to First
Nations mob ”

Finally, Sēini was also a talented musician, songwriter and orator. In the 1990s, she gained recognition as a rapper in the Australian hip-hop community and later toured with the folk group, the *Stiff Gins*, showcasing singing skills. Bougainville artist, Taloi Havini, first met the Taumoepeau sisters at the iconic Pacific Wave Festival in Sydney in the early 2000s. Taloi recalled: 'They were both wearing Free West Papua t-shirts and I knew that out of anyone in the crowd, I could go to them. We became a chosen family...Sēini was for me of a High Ranking Chieftess and like being in a village she held me accountable...she was able to love and hold everybody, but remind them of the old and nurturing ways'. Sēini's oratory practice and

sense of solidarity with other Indigenous and Pacific peoples is evident across her published writings. For example, in her triptych of chants called 'Hymns of Blood and Land (in three movements)' in *Reclamation* (2022), Sēini undertook a form of sonic life-writing of her 'island sister' Taloi's exile from Bougainville to Australia as a result of the civil war while also recentring their relationality as 'fellow female landholders from cultures and histories which offer an alternative to patriarchy'. Taloi memorably invited Sēini as part of a Pacific delegation to the Venice Biennale 2024 for Latai Taumoepeau and Māori, Sāmoan and Tokelauan designer Elisapeta Hinemoa Heta's collaboration *Re-stor(y)ing Oceania* at Ocean Space hosted by TBA21-Academy. Taloi praised Sēini's 'unwavering support of building up the practices of her fellow kin and artists and Indigenous practitioners...during *NATIVE GAZE: Reading Oceania* [in Elisapeta's installation]...people would come to the space and sit and stay...she held that space as tapu, as sacred...such a wahine energy.. she held that whole space...[it] wasn't fleeting..[it] allowed people to decompress and just be present...it was deeply spiritual and impactful' which was distinct from other biennale performances throughout the opening'.

Sēini's Fale'aka Taumoepeau's remarkable impact across many fields - the creative arts, academia, radio, and cultural advocacy - demonstrates her profound dedication to Pacific communities and her craft. Her legacy is marked by her ability to bring together and support diverse communities, while also maintaining a deep respect for Indigenous practices here in Australia and the Greater Pacific region. Vale Sēini, gone too soon but never forgotten.

“ she held me
accountable...she was
able to love and hold
everybody but remind
them of the old and
nurturing ways ”

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL FOR PANEL SUBMISSIONS



Australian
Association
for Pacific
Studies



Conference 2025!



Tues 3 June - Fri 6 June 2025

It is with great pleasure that we invite you to submit a panel proposal that responds to the conference theme 'Pacific Discourses and Destinies' and sub-themes.

Submission Process



Due date for submissions:
Mon 28 October 2024

Successful submissions will be notified on **Friday 15 November 2024**.

Panel submissions must include the following details:

- **Title of submission** (100 character limit)
- **Panel convener/s**: Name of 1st panel convener, title, position, institution, email, mobile phone) and Name of subsequent panel convenors, title, position, institution, email, mobile phone)
- **Description** (250–300 word limit): Please provide a concise description of your panel. The detail provided here will be used for publication in the program and will appear in the conference resources.
- **Biography/ies** (150–200 word limit): The detail provided here will be used for publication in the program and will appear in the conference resources. Please include subsequent biographies for additional panel convenors.



University of Sydney



Conference sub-themes

- **Presentation requirements:** The conference will be held in person at The University of Sydney Business School, Abercrombie Building, Abercrombie Street, Darlington. All presentations must be delivered in-person at the allocated time.
- **Online submission of panel proposals:** Complete the online submission form here:



Online panel submission form

A call for individual papers will open later this year.

Professor Jioji Ravulo
Academic Convenor

EPELI HAU'OFA MASTERCLASS APRIL 2024

A REFLECTION

The AAPS Masterclass on 5 April 2024 with Rev James Bhagwan (known as 'Padre') brought together an impressive group of Pacific Studies PhD candidates, scholars and aligned academics. The venue, the Edmund Rice Centre for Justice and Community Education, was an appropriate setting for Rev Bhagwan's challenge to be accountable for the stories we tell and the recommendations we make.

Rev Bhagwan framed research as 'accompaniment' to contrast with the historically extractive nature of research in the Pacific. He welcomed the strengthening of ethical practice during the conduct of research collection, interpretation and publication, including the return of research stories back to the Pacific communities. He also challenged those in the room to go further and put justice at the centre of our practice. He asked us to consider our role in 'accompaniment' after the research is published. He encouraged ongoing investment in honouring our relationships and in the pursuit of outcomes centred on Pacific peoples.

Rev Bhagwan's message was one of peace, love and care, particularly as the web of research relationships deepens over time. It was delivered with a lightness and sense of the purpose about the positive contribution researchers can make in genuine partnership with Pacific states and societies. Rev Bhagwan encouraged the participants to create research that would (in the words of one participant) "occupy the minds and hearts of Pacific people".

Jay Caldwell
School of Culture, History and Language
ANU

Masterclass attendees with Rev James Bhagwan (Padre)



PHD GRADUATIONS

DR LAURA SIMPSON REEVES

Thesis Title: Ola Manaia: Exploring how Samoan diaspora in Greater Brisbane, Australia, conceptualise 'the good life'

Institution: Uni of Queensland

Supervisors: Professor Cameron Parsell, Professor Shuang Liu and Dr Ruth Lute Faleolo



Downloadable thesis (open access) link

DR GENEVIVE QUIRK

Thesis Title: The Making of an Ocean Continent: The Evolution of Oceania's Institutional Architecture for Ocean Governance (1947–2022) and the Consequences for Ocean Diplomacy

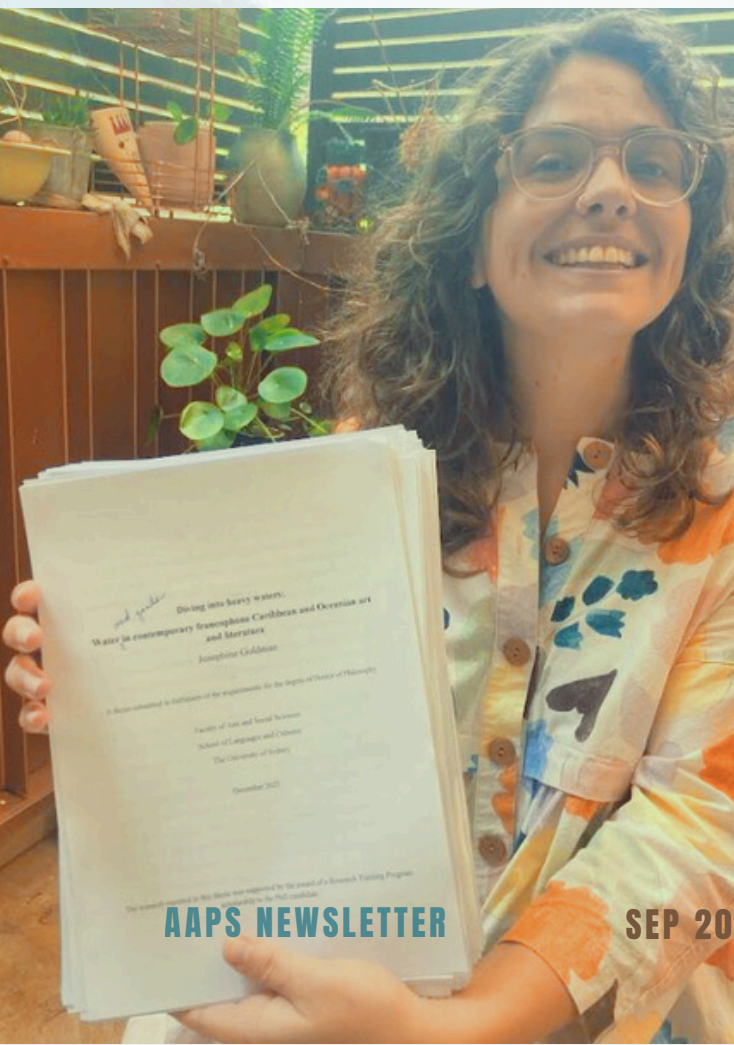
Institution: University of Wollongong

The PhD received one Special Commendation for the top 5% theses examined. She graduated on April 16, 2024 and is currently a scholar at the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security at the University of Wollongong.

DR JOSEPHINE GOLDMAN



Dr Laura Simpson Reeves



Dr Josephine Goldman

Thesis Title: Diving into heavy waters: Water and gender in contemporary francophone Caribbean and Oceanian art and literature

Summary: This project examines contemporary representations of gendered waters in the works of francophone Oceanian and Caribbean women, offering possibilities for re-imagining the space, history and identity of these regions and entangling Black and Indigenous futures. It focuses on six authors and artists: Déwé Gorodé (Kanaky-New Caledonia), Titaua Peu and Marie-Hélène Villierme (Mā'ohi Nui-French Polynesia), Fabienne Kanor (Martinique), Maryse Condé and Guy Gabon (Guadeloupe). What role does water play in the imaginaries of these geographically disparate artists and authors? Can examining their representations of water deepen links between the francophone Caribbean and Oceania beyond French colonialism? This thesis argues that water is an ambiguous substance: while it carries the heavy traces of the past, it is through water that new futures can be imagined.

Institution: Uni of Sydney

Supervisors: Dr Léa Vuong, Dr Nathalie Ségéral, Dr Sonia Wilson

DR SUZANNE O'NEILL

Thesis Title: The Idea of Ownership: The Flaws in the Samaritan's Dilemma

Institution: Australian National University

Summary: Suzanne's thesis examines the influence of the idea of Ownership on development partnerships in Samoa and Kiribati by exploring the model for policy change which underwrote the Paris Declaration and its regional counterpart, the Forum Compact on Strengthening Development Coordination. The research demonstrates that local policy actors attributed a different significance to the idea of Ownership to that agreed in Paris. The exercise of Ownership in Samoa and Kiribati led to outcomes which challenged their largest donor and development partner, Australia, and its expectations of aid relations.

Supervisors: Dr. Stewart Firth, Professor Paul D'Arcy, Professor Sinclair Dinnen and Dr. Sue Ingram.

DR SHAUN GESSLER

Thesis Title: Encountering Sainaman: Friction at a Papua New Guinea Mining Contact Zone

Institution: Australian National University

Summary: This thesis is an ethnographic case study of the Chinese majority-run Ramu Nickel Cobalt Project and its relationship with the Indigenous communities on whose land the mine and refinery are located in Madang Province,

Papua New Guinea. This thesis examines a series of social interactions between disparate groups and actors, taking the approach adopted in Mining Encounters, which explores the frictions between groups with competing agendas and world views in different social contexts. The findings demonstrate how long-standing local expectations of wealth and modernity from the mine are articulated by landowners using the Christian language of the 'prosperity gospel'.

Supervisors: Associate Professor Graeme Smith, Dr. John Cox, Honorary Professor Colin Filer, and Dr. Thiago Oppermann.

DR HENRIETTA MCNEILL

Thesis Title: Offshore currents: Examining securitisation and de-securitisation of criminal deportations to Tonga, Samoa and Cook Islands

Institution: Australian National University

Summary: Interrogating criminal deportations to these three Pacific island countries, Henrietta's thesis tracks securitisation throughout the deportation process, from the departing state and society, across the border to the receiving state and society of citizenship. It shows that the departing and receiving states both have very different ways of undertaking securitisation and de-securitisation, according to their social, cultural, and (post)colonial histories.

Supervisors: Professor Joanne Wallis, Professor Sinclair Dinnen and James Batley

L-R: Dr Suzanne O'Neill, Dr Shaun Gessler, Dr Henrietta McNeill



TRACEY BANIVANUA MAR PRIZE WINNER 2024



An Interview with Marco de Jong

Title of PhD thesis: Kotahi te Moana, Only One Ocean: Pacific Environmentalism, 1970–1995

Can you tell us briefly what your thesis was about? Kotahi te Moana is a history of environmental movements and governance in Oceania. It looks at regional bodies like the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme and asks how Pacific people have engaged issues like nature conservation, nuclear pollution, and climate change from the mid-twentieth century. What it shows is that we have a distinctive environmentalism in the Pacific, it draws on Indigenous knowledge, international science and decolonial politics. By wielding it on the global stage we have made an outsized contribution.

What does winning the Tracey Banivanua Mar prize mean to you? It is humbling not least because of the contribution Dr Banivanua Mar made to Pacific Studies and our histories. She showed so many the strength of our solidarity networks and how to write against empire. As a Pacific historian myself, I have thought a lot about her method and seen its impact. During my time at the University of Auckland the copy of *Decolonisation and the Pacific* was so fiercely fought over my goodness! There is power in our stories, Tracey clearly knew that, and I hope this prize will help in highlighting some more.

What are your plans for your thesis post-PhD?

I am attempting to expand its scope and build out some of its arguments to turn it into a book. Right now I am looking at the history of Pacific ocean governance through the law of the sea and regional fisheries negotiations in the 1970s. I was fortunate enough to win the Judith Binney Fellowship here in New Zealand and having the freedom to commit to it full time this year has been a real privilege. I am sick of sitting on it, please let it be out next year!

Dr Marco de Jong
Tracey Banivanua Mar Prize Winner 2024



MEMORY LESSON 9 BLOOD ON THE RECORD

Read early South Australian government of Aboriginal Affairs records and legislation and a watch a float of official narrative rise and unfold, represented as truth in public discourse to inform and shape public policy and private lives; a grand-narrative inscribed as *The Aboriginal Problem* fiercely defended and understood with compelling old-science rationale, and argued with fervour and conviction in all that is right and virtuous and Godly and proper a Problem, claimed to be the inevitable undoing of Australian social life, of civilisation and natural progression, solved only with urgent-stringent government intervention to preserve what was widely believed the *natural order of things* a Problem deeply engrained, stained and embedded to profoundly shape the foundation of a nation's psyche and underpin every facet of Aboriginal life read closely this *Problem* further unfolds to reveal 'something else' ever-present that is both visceral-reality and created-imagined fantasy a 'something else' to anchor and centre and pulse to and from the heart of it all: BLOOD - flowing stirring spilling dripping mixing blood.

BLOOD: the colonial obsession, revered and repulsed and inscribed on the record - *Aboriginal blood and white blood /full-blood and mixed blood/half-caste and quarter-caste/quadroon and octoroon/sub-human and fully-human/hybrid and mulatto* - bloodied, racialised descriptor-assumptions to underpin an imagined, authentic Aboriginality, absolute on the colonial blood-dilution-scale, not simply as measurement but a way of imagining, perceiving and knowing Aboriginal people; a circular logic reinforcing actions and seeping forward through our family files in archives; a logic reinscribed to justify forced movement and displacement from lands, forced illegal child removal, and an overwhelming surveillance this is what we remember - keep reading ...

Natalie Harkin
Narungga Poet
A/Professor
Flinders Uni



From Natalie's award-winning collection *Archival Poetics* published by Vagabond Press in 2019.

TOTO

After Marama Salsano's
'Bloodwork'.



Every few months I fill an inkwell with my blood and watch other people start writing with it. They dip the pointed heads of their pens into the jar and draw up just enough to write a quarterly entry in their notes about me. I assume they record how my blood works.

One lifts the bottle to inspect the colour then gently taps the liquid surface with an index finger. Pressing finger against thumb then apart—a test of viscosity. Another plunges their pen to the bottom of the glass then quickly brings it to their mouth for a taste. Smacking their lips, they start scribbling.

~~Too acidic?~~

~~Too metallic?~~

~~Too sweet?~~

I wait for them to tell me if my blood is working. But they never can. Their senses too dull to interpret data so rich. And now my blood is at work on them. Tapu, spreading over hands and tongues. Not contaminated. Illuminated. They record what they learn from my blood and I go on my way, knowing I will be back soon enough to give them their next fix.

This is how my blood works.

Ammon Hāwea Apiata
Ngāti Kura, Ngāti Toarangatira, Ngāti Koata
Writer
Poukōkiri Mātauranga Toi
University of Waikato

First published in *takahē* 10 August 2024

EVENTS

THE OCEANIA INSTITUTE, UNI OF MELBOURNE

Institute Launch



4 - 5 March 2024



University of Melbourne



Event link



Oceania Institute

In March 2024, the University of Melbourne launched its newest research platform, the Oceania Institute. The Institute works with partners in the Pacific region to better understand and address key issues affecting the region and its people. Led by co-directors Prof. Jon Barnett, Assoc. Prof. Debra McDougall, a leadership team that includes Te'o Lau Dr. Vili Iese (Senior Research Fellow, Samoa/Tuvalu), Rita Seumanutafa-Palala (Research Fellow, Samoa), Tearanaki Tanielu (PhD Candidate, Kiribati) and Chethna Ben (PhD Candidate, Fiji) the institute will focus on seven key focus areas:

1. Climate change
2. Food, livelihoods and biodiversity
3. Health and wellbeing
4. Infectious diseases
5. Language, culture and history
6. Law, peace and politics
7. Sustainable urban and rural development

The launch event acknowledged the University's Pacific scholars, staff and local communities of Victoria. Guest speakers included guest-of-honour Sir Collin Tukuitonga (Niue/Aotearoa), Professor Duncan Maskell (Vice-Chancellor) and panel discussion members Dr. Fiona Russell (Principal Research Fellow) and Dr. Iese. Hosted by Seumanutafa-Palala, the event concluded with a formal thank you from Niuean community elder Mrs Emma Kamupala accompanied by a traditional lologo tapu (hymn) *'Mitaki e tau mena oti'* led by the Niuean community.

Rita Seumanutafa-Palala
Oceania Institute
University of Melbourne

L-R: Te'o Lau Dr. Viliamu Iese, Professor Fiona Russell, Sir Collin Tukuitonga, Professor Duncan Maskell and Rita Seumanutafa-Palala.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Publication Incentive grants

The Journal of Pacific History Inc. invites qualified persons to apply for a Publication Incentive grant. These competitive **grants are offered to help support early career Pacific historians to prepare articles for submission to the *Journal of Pacific History*.**



See the JPH's website for the journal's Aims and scope, Journal information, and Instructions for authors.



Applicants must follow the Instructions scrupulously in preparing their article. Prospective applicants should note that the journal is primarily 'dedicated to research concerning the Pacific Islands (including the island of New Guinea), their peoples and their pasts'. Where difficult choices have to be made in the selection process, proposals with such a focus are likely to be preferred.

Qualifications

Anyone who has completed a PhD or MA since 2018 in a field relevant to Pacific history, or who is currently enrolled for a doctorate in such a field, can apply for a grant of AU\$3,000 to prepare an article for submission to peer review on a topic of relevance to the *Journal of Pacific History*. In the case of co-authored proposals, all cited authors must meet these guidelines. Successful applicants will receive AU\$500 upfront; AU\$1,000 on submission through the Journal of Pacific History Taylor & Francis web portal, before **30 September 2025**, of a manuscript accepted by the editors to send for peer review; and AU\$1,500 when the accepted final article is sent for production by the *Journal*

of Pacific History. In the case of multiple authors, the total grant will be AU\$4,000, divided equally.

Application Process

Candidates should submit a recent CV, letters of support from two referees, and a proposal of up to 1,000 words by:



30 November 2024

Send your CV and letters of support to the Secretary of JPH Inc. Bronwen Douglas at:



bronwen.douglas@anu.edu.au

Article proposals should include the following:

*Title and 200-word abstract

*Outline:

Rationale of the topic and a brief historiography

*Timeline

Your timeline to submission via the JPH online portal

Applications will be assessed by a sub-committee of the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Pacific History*. A mentor may be appointed to assist successful applicants.

**Dr Helen Gardner
Chair, JPH Inc.**





FESTIVAL OF PACIFIC ARTS AND CULTURE 2024

A REFLECTION

Every four years, since 1972, the Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture (FestPAC, and formerly the Pacific Arts Festival)—the biggest, loudest, most colourful gathering of Indigenous Pacific people—is held somewhere in the Pacific. For the first time, Hawai‘i was the host for ten intense days in early June, dedicated to the theme “Ho‘oulu Lāhui: Regenerating Oceania”.

I went to FestPAC as a non-delegate and earmarked our nine-day stay in Honolulu with my family as relaxed spectators to support our delegates and meet up with friends, colleagues and our different island families. I coordinated myself across the dense tight schedules of the diverse streams of activities, trying to attend a whole range of lectures, readings, demonstrations, workshops, meetings, interviews, and early morning dips in the ocean to remind myself to breathe. Was it relaxing? No! Was it exhilarating, inspiring, exhausting? Absolutely.

As I thought about how to write this reflection, I scrolled through the AAPS Facebook page and was reminded of all the things that were happening in the Pacific world while we were inside the FestPAC bubble, celebrating us, our big chaotic, problematic, artistic, loud and proud Pacific family. From the morning when we dumped our bags at our accommodation to the moment we boarded our plane to return, we were enveloped, and wrapped up in the tide of us, Pacific people.

Events included symposia featuring philosophers, climate leaders, sovereignty activists; visual arts exhibitions; performances around O‘ahu; the quiet of the Ka ‘Ula Wena: Oceanic Red exhibition at the Bishop Museum, and on the grounds outside set up under long wide tents tatau and sculpture demonstrations; choral performances included an Ecumenical Service; and sharing of oratorical wisdom which reached into my heart and made it bleed. Running alongside these diverse events was a film program featuring fifty-three films ranging from documentaries,

queer Pasifika stories, horror, environmental features, and a range of shorts, always followed by Q & A sessions with the filmmakers.

Things I loved the most: a short conversation squashed into a shared Uber ride with a kindly, softly spoken Niuean couple; listening to Nainoa Thompson's transformative speech; a cousin's newfound empowerment thanks to the women's conference; the Literary Arts Program making space for hammers as well young authors; discussions around t/kapu spaces; dinner with t/kapa, siapo, ngatu, and 'ahu makers; witnessing friends and family fill the hale reserved for Kanaky –my island's closest neighbour. We left the day before the closing ceremony, but I watched it online. I was glad to see resistance to the omnipresence of colonial interference: activists organised large unmissable "Free Kanaky", "Free West Papua", and "Stop RIMPAC" banners. We must be allowed a safe space to be vocal about our sea of colonised islands. If this is not the safe space, then where can we be heard?

Since coming home, I've spent a lot of time reflecting on representation, Indigeneity and how we conduct ourselves on this big encompassing Pacific stage—because even as a non-delegate, you're still representing your island/s. When you come from an island such as mine, where the Indigenous population is not in majority, continually justifying your presence, your cultural practices, with many islanders employed within a structure of coloniality, you understand the need for safe regenerative spaces. I am left with a hope for continued unity among Pacific people, unified by our common beginnings, cultures, languages and magic.

Mauruuru roa, saenks fe mi, Hawai'i.

Dr Pauline Reynolds
Norfolk Island

Photo Credit:
13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture 2024
Facebook Page



FACING SETTLER COLONIALISM IN KANAKY, FACING THE PRESENT

A SHORT ESSAY



The current Kanak insurrection and violent colonial repression in Kanaky demand that we pay close attention to the workings of settler colonialism in the Pacific and elsewhere. Dean Itsuji Saranillio (2015: 284) defines settler colonialism as "a historically created system of power that aims to expropriate Indigenous territories and eliminate modes of production in order to replace Indigenous peoples with settlers who are discursively constituted as superior and thus more deserving over these contested lands and resources."

Settler colonialism is the structure that the Kanak people have resisted since 1853. Kanak leader Jean-Marie Tjibaou (1996: 246) highlighted it without any ambiguity in 1988 when he explained that: "The fundamental issue here is that people do realize that we are in Kanaky. We are not in France. And all the foreigners who come, all the immigrants, are well aware that the danger here, in this beautiful country, is the Kanak presence. Therefore danger must be eliminated if it constitutes a political or economic threat. Leaders or committed militants must be physically eliminated in that they make evident the Indigenous fact as the original fact, the specific fact of this country, that implicates that others come from elsewhere. As long as they have not accepted this fact – and that's where we are today."

Tjibaou had a deep understanding of settler colonialism. Eighteen years later, English scholar Patrick Wolfe (2006: 387) in his often cited essay "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native" would demonstrate how "settler colonialism is inherently eliminatory" and explore settler colonization as complex, social formation that is continuous. He pointed out that "invasion is a structure, not an event" (Wolfe 2006: 388), something he already had explored in his essay "Nation and Miscegenation" (1994). This has consequences for the way we think about history. Indeed, as J. Kēhaulani Kauanui (2016) underlines "understanding settler colonialism as a structure exposes the fact that colonialism cannot be relegated to the past." In the context of Kanaky, understanding settler colonialism as a structure implies questioning the description of France's recent policies and practices as "recolonisation" or the focus on "legacies of colonialism" in the country. It also requires challenging the idea that the peace agreements of Matignon-Oudinot (1988) and Nouméa (1998) constitute a break from settler colonialism.

Between the 21st and 22nd of July, media reported that the shrine dedicated to the Great chief Ataï and his Dao (sorcerer), emblematic figures of the 1878 Kanak insurrection, were vandalised in Foha/La Foa. Their skulls, which had only been returned by the French state and the Musée de l'Homme to their clan in the Petit-Couli tribe in 2014, were also stolen. Even in death, the Kanak political threat must be eliminated. While an investigation has now been opened, some commentators including Bastien Vadendyck, lecturer in Pacific geopolitics at the Catholic University of Lille and Sonia Backès' ex-advisor when she was appointed Secretary of State in charge of citizenship in France, have already come forward to blame the vandalism on pro-independence militants. The accusation is nonsensical to any person familiar with the history of Kanaky and out of order since an investigation has only just been open by the La Foa brigade. Nevertheless, the newly re-elected anti-independence member of parliament Nicolas Metzdorf shared Vadendyck's baseless accusation on X/Twitter.

This accusation belongs to a colonial narrative that has been taking shape in anti-independence

circles in the past few weeks with the burning of some churches and buildings from the "colonial period." In this colonial narrative, pro-independence militants (and therefore the Kanak people) are perceived as attempting to erase the history of the country. Of course, this is divorced from any social reality as research shows that it is Kanak history that has been erased by French or anti-independence policies. However, this can be read as a settler narrative of victimization in response to anti-colonial Indigenous resistance: a settler move to innocence (Tuck & Yang 2012) and a strategy for settlers to reverse their role from oppressor to oppressed. History has always been a source of political tension and contestation in Kanaky (Stastny 2022), and they reflect dissensions around sovereignty. Now more than ever, we must contend with the presence of settler colonialism, to resist accordingly and determine paths towards liberation and decolonization.

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MY DAUGHTER



Yes Edward Charles Stirling
the mothers are very fond of their children

we come from a long line of women
Aboriginal domestic workers
still so much work to clean up this mess

I am my Grandmother's granddaughter

her trace is in my blood
my flesh my bones my spirit

her trace is written in
Mission Station dust
she lingers in archives

her trace is my memory

we labour
dig sweat blister imagine
know them more
intimately

Yes Edward Charles Stirling
the mothers
are very fond
of their
children

Natalie Harkin
Narungga Poet
A/Professor
Flinders Uni

From Natalie's award-winning collection *Archival Poetics*
published by Vagabond Press in 2019.

MUM'S MOON SCENT



When I grew taller,
my mother's head rested on my shoulder.

But when I stooped low to cry last night,
my head was able to fit into the crevice
of her shoulder and neck again.
Something I had forgotten.
Skin to skin.

When I stooped low into her neck last night,
Her breath

Guiding me in

Guiding me out

Allowed me to smell the stories in her neck.
I saw again
Or maybe for the first time, that
What a wonderful blur of beauty, strength and
power she was

and is.

More dignified and controlled than I think
I can ever be
If I ever had a daughter.

I'm so glad I stooped low last night.
which made the years flow
which realised the moon's power to connect
which moved space

To spread out

Understanding and contextualising of
Time, reasons, proverbs awaiting

To explain
Life.

To see each other.
Like Sina and her child
Moon as her comfort.
As the superwoman she has always been.

Litara Ieremia-Allan
AAPS Member
Miss Samoa 2024

ANNOUNCEMENTS

A PROJECT FOR GENDER INCLUSIVITY IN CLIMATE ADAPTATION PROJECTS



The Project

Climate change impacts people differently. This can depend on how they sustain their livelihoods, the roles they play in the community and will exacerbate already existing inequalities. The scale and intensity of the current changing climate requires strategies that are inclusive and engage with a diversity of Pacific community members. Resources are becoming fewer, agricultural production will become more difficult, fresh water will be scarcer, and food insecurity will increase. For this reason, the full consideration of inequalities such as gender, disability and is important in research for development.

Knowledge of how well existing climate programs include different groups will lead to better development outcomes, because more effective and efficient aid investments will result if adaptation programs are informed by an understanding of the full range of people affected and designed with their diverse needs in mind. Drawing on Pacific experiences is an important step in recognising the existing lived experience of climate change and adaptation in the Pacific.

We aim to develop Pasifika-led guiding principles for future engagement and insights into development design and programming. We want to hear Pasifika perspectives on how a more inclusive and Pasifika-led approach to gender should shape Australia's efforts in supporting food security, climate change adaptation, and the resilience of Pacific communities. We also want to identify how Australia's investments, specifically targeting food security and climate change in the

Pacific, can more effectively incorporate an inclusive approach to associated gender and other dimensions.

What We Plan To Do

1. Identify grassroots organisations serving diverse and marginalised groups that can be partnered with, and identify key local and national actors, and international donors, working in this space.
2. Discuss and report on inclusive climate programming, including research and practice gaps, agricultural challenges, and best practice initiatives and innovations.
3. Produce posters, factsheets and educational materials in local language(s) on findings and how to communicate diverse needs back to adaptation programs and adaptation grants, checklists, templates, language guides

Dr Jane Alver

Project Leader

University of Canberra

Project Partner:

Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR)

Full name of project:

Intersectionality and gender diverse climate change action in the Pacific: Eliciting a Pasifika-led policy for future engagement



ACIAR website



TWO CONFERENCES IN HAWAII APRIL 2024

A REFLECTION

I had flown in a week early for a Geography conference in Honolulu and was able to attend two more conferences for Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa (UHM) beforehand. The 'Āinamoana Student Conference (April 11-12) was organized by the Native Hawaiian Student Services (NHSS) at the East-West Center, and the subsequent 1898 Project Summit (April 13-14) was further coordinated with various departments and community activists at the Hawaiian Studies' Hālau o Haumea.

The 'Āinamoana Student Conference

The 'Āinamoana conference was two days of keynotes, parallel sessions with postgraduate and undergraduate students, and a final film event and panel with Hōkule'a navigators, especially centering around the women navigators and their experiences. The talks from diverse disciplines were meant to engage an audience that could provide commentary to on-going student projects and thesis work, but they were involved in such advanced Hawaiian knowledge production that the event was a good way for non-academic community members to learn more about the projects and activism these Native Hawaiian youth were invested in.

A children's book project presentation and its story of Hawaiian monarchs' global travels led to author Allyson Franco talking about their own upcoming summer semester travels to Tahiti organized by NHSS, and in Polynesian cultural exchange with students at the university there. The other presenter, Hezekiah Kapua'alawho, referenced his short animation film to supplement and document the book about the voyages of Hawaiian monarchs Lilholiho and Kamāmaluin another multimedia form, which is on the NHSS website.

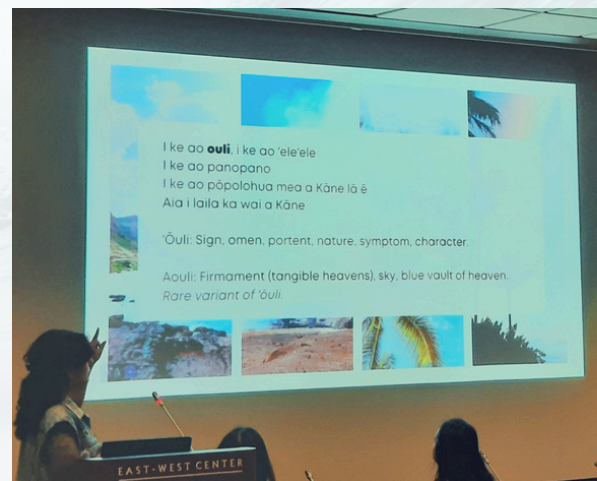


*Allyson Franco and Hezekiah Kapua'alawho's presentation
Photo Credits: Karin Louise Hermes*



The most outstanding presentation I attended was by Kūna'e Kamahale Diehl in the "Reclaiming our Narratives" panel. Her research highlights "the importance of a foundational knowledge of color based in indigenous thought." For her paper she went over examples of how English translations have shown to be lacking in equivalents to the broad spectrum of meanings and nuances for colours and sensory perception, for Hawaiian Language textbooks. In her retelling, the inspiration for the research not only stemmed from being a creative and former hairdresser, but was also to engage with more community building locally, as a diaspora Hawaiian who had recently returned. She provided a handout to summarize her linguistic analysis, and invited others to collaborate in research via a survey and her social media.

*Kūna'e Diehl's presentation
Photo Credits: Karin Louise Hermes*





TWO CONFERENCES IN HAWAII APRIL 2024

A REFLECTION

1898 Project Summit (April 13-14)

The 'Āinamoana conference showcased the role of the Hawaiian archipelago in an Oceanic web of relations, meanwhile the 1898 Summit centered dialogues between the current or former U.S. territories of the Philippines, Guåhan, Puerto Rico, and Hawai'i together. The inclusion of scholars from and/or of Puerto Rico not only brought into focus the role of Puerto Rican diaspora in Hawai'i from the plantation era, but also the on-going legacy of U.S. colonialism and militarization in Puerto Rico, as in Hawai'i and other territories.

As a Filipina with a background in Pacific Studies, who then moved on to a PhD about Hawai'i, I also took the opportunity to go up to the microphone during one roundtable discussion: to mention how excited my Puerto Rican student had been to learn about all these connected histories and about Hawaiian culture, all of which he had never heard of under his U.S. curriculum, until I had taught him in a decolonial philosophy class in a German university the year before.

It was exciting to hear so many young students in their enthusiasm about Hawaiian knowledge production for the sake of developing and sharing the knowledge itself, rather than as a class requirement or similar to present at a conference. Reexamining translation nuances to Hawaiian songs and poetry was a part of my own dissertation, so the colour linguistics pedagogy really stood out for me in "reenvisioning" Oceanic philosophical spectrums. There were many other talks I wasn't able to attend, but I had a handful of conversations with students about their presentations during several conference mealtimes. Since both conferences were open to community members, these provided a good opportunity for me to reconnect with Hawaiian scholars and activists featured in my own dissertation. My highlight of the 1898 Summit was meeting Auntie Loretta and Uncle Walter Ritte for the first time, talking to them personally about their role in cultural revitalization and restoration projects, and Auntie telling me about her Filipino grandkids, when I said I relied on the abundance of Hawaiian scholarship/storytelling to be able to expand on reclaiming decolonial Philippine ones.

Dr Karin Louise Hermes
Researcher/Collectivist, Storyteller

*Activist panels and quilts:
The 1898 Summit had panels which were
decoratively framed by a photography exhibit
arranged by Meleanna Meyer and an activist quilt
(see image below) by Kim Compoc
Photo Credits: Karin Louise Hermes*



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we thank you!

As always, a huge thank you to everyone who sent in photos, reflections, poetry, stories, publications, announcements, and research opportunities! Until the next newsletter.

Editorial Team

EDITORS' NOTES



Australian
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NEWSLETTER **SEPTEMBER 2024**