

definingnz

Pasifika@Massey

APRIL 2011

Scents of time and place

Talei Smith's 'hybrid' views

A Southsider speaks

Design inspiration and dance dreams

Reducing poverty in paradise



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA



Defining Pasifika

Professor Sitaleki Finau, Director Pasifika

Warm greetings from the Pacific languages spoken in New Zealand

Dada namona, Talofa lava, Halo mafren, Kia orana, Halo olketa, Noa'ia 'e mauri, Feele bahic, Bula vi naka, Namaste, Tena koutou, Kwariginé, Yokwe yuk, Malo e lelei, Ia ora na 'outou, Kam na mauri, Taloha ni, Koe kia, Fakaalofa atu ki a mutolu oti, Mu zheri dâng, Malo le kataki, Niganisa, Talofa, Aloha mai, Kulo malulo, Kaoha nui, Ali'i, Kauangerang, Nesor állim, 'lorana, Alofa atu, Mogethin, Kaselhia Maign, bonjour and hello!

We literally have come a long way by any measure of the *va* and *ta*; the time space continuum that is Pasifika and Moana Nui. We have travelled the depth and breadth of Moana to make Aotearoa/New Zealand our home. We have much further to go to embrace all the rights and privileges destined for Pacificans as citizens of Aotearoa. That journey is treacherous, long and full of diversions and red-herrings, but it is a journey we must make to take our rightful place in our new home.

Education, social development and economic transformation have been identified as essential pathways to becoming Pacificans and New Zealand citizens simultaneously. The dualism of Pacificans' lives is confusing to mainstream New Zealand and the onus is on Pacificans to bridge this gap. Policy leaders struggle with the reality of multiculturalism, the politics of biculturalism, and the liberation from the yokes of colonialism. Into this milieu, the Pacificans have arrived with their heterogeneity; small pockets of populations at the margins of mainstream society; and 'unity in diversity' based on an intense sense of reciprocal obligation to homelands.

For more than a century New Zealand and the Pacificans have 'talked past each other'. The time has come to accept we are all here to stay and that we will rub shoulders in the street, churches, workplaces, businesses, and in politics. Therefore, we must intensify the efforts to attain shared equitable citizenry to control the heat and static from the rubbing of so many muscular shoulders! This must be channelled to create an equitable, culturally democratic New Zealand.

The first step is to shift Pacificans from the migratory mindset of 'sons and daughters for the return home'. A simple, formal Tangata Whenua welcome of Pacificans to Aotearoa will suffice. The Crown should formally declare that New Zealand and the Pacific nations have a seamless relationship. Added to this, Pacificans must prioritise New Zealand and contribute more fully to the national identity and economy. Then they may embrace their position as 'sons and daughters for the stay home'.

Massey University has contributed to the above through the introduction of its Pasifika@Massey Strategy in 2007, with resources to a directorate

to lead the implementation. The directorate started as a support service for the pastoral care of staff and students to improve and increase Pasifika participation in the university and the community. This strategy is the first explicit document of its kind of any tertiary institution in New Zealand.

Six years on, the Pasifika@Massey Strategy has led to better student achievement, increased recruitment, better staff performance, and publications and distribution of Pasifika knowledge. The latter has contributed to the much-needed stimulus for Pasifika viewpoints, epistemology and pedagogy to be incorporated into teaching and learning not only at Massey, but globally. Success has become the norm for Pasifika@Massey and we celebrate the achievements, Pasifika style!

The Pasifika@Massey Strategy is being reviewed to dovetail with the Massey University Strategic plan "Road to 2020". In that reiteration, the Pasifika Directorate aim for Pacific studies to be an academic discipline in an institute of Pacific community development and economic transformation – focused on Pacific multicultural literacy, leadership and policy styles – will be central. Most importantly, it will be based on Pacifically-appropriate approaches of emotional and cultural intelligence.

This *Defining* issue is exemplary of the wairua at Massey University that allows, supports and highlights the '*va* (space) and *ta* (time)' for cultural democracy and Pacific development. For these, we at the directorate are truly humbled and gracious, especially to Professor Sir Mason Durie, the Vice-Chancellor Steve Maharey, and all the Massey staff and students.

My best wishes to Pasifika@Massey staff and Massey University - 'Malo Aupito! May our union continue to be mutually defining and globally pertinent.

Yours faithfully and 'ofa atu! Tofa soifua!

Sitaleki

Pasifika@Massey Strategy

The primary aim of the strategy is to increase gains for Pacific peoples through teaching, research and consultancy services at Massey University. Its five strategic goals are:

- Academic advancement
- Professional development
- Research capability
- Cultural diversity
- Collaborative partnerships

Contents



8 Scents of time and place

Talei Smith writes on life and learning through a 'polycultural' prism



19 Poverty in Fiji

Tourists enjoy idyllic beaches while locals get poorer



23 Mathematics mates

Dr Roberta Hunter discovers a way to get Pasifika pupils hooked on maths

5 Dancer with grand designs

Award-winning design graduate Phoebe Smith on Pasifika inspirations and LA dance dreams

7 Southside voices

Wisdom from his great-grandfather has given Melvin Apulu the drive and strength to help South Auckland youth

10 Boat to bowl

Ernest Kolly examines how to ensure seafood is safe food for the Solomon Islands' fish exporting industry

12 Freud in the fale

Psychologist Siautu Alefaio is bridging the gaps between Western psychology and traditional Pasifika beliefs

14 Motherly input a boon to Tongan children's learning

Cross-cultural education specialist Dr Lesieli MacIntyre on the role of Tongan mums as teachers

15 Story of loss inspires Pacific scholarships

Samoa Ben Taufua hopes Massey's new scholarships will help island nations be better prepared when disaster strikes

17 Cultivating and spreading Pasifika knowledge

Professor Sitaleki Finau leads a publishing project to get more Pasifika research in print

18 What's God got to do with sex?

Master's graduate Analosa Ulugia-Veukiso explores the links between Samoan teenagers' spiritual awareness and sexual behaviour

Pasifika@Massey 2011

Published by Massey University www.massey.ac.nz

Editor: Jennifer Little, External Relations **Email:** j.little@massey.ac.nz

Writers: Kathryn Farrow, Jennifer Little, Paul Mulrooney

Photography: Mark Coote, Geoff Dale, David Wiltshire

Cover: Talei Smith **Photograph:** Mark Coote



From the Vice-Chancellor

Steve Maharey

The fact that Pasifika ceremonies are now held across Massey's three campuses means Massey is serious about its One University concept, and about defining the University as the preferred home for Pasifika peoples in Moana Nui.

Massey University has been contributing to the socio-economic development of Pasifika peoples and nations for many decades now. Our ceremonies to honour Pasifika graduands and graduates are special because they are the culmination of years of hard work not only for the graduands/graduates but their families, extended families, friends and communities too.

These celebrations also cement Massey's continued commitment to Pasifika peoples' advancement in Aotearoa, New Zealand. Scores of Pasifika students who have graduated from Massey over the years are now serving their communities and greater society in New Zealand and in the Pacific countries and territories.

The systematic, strategic focus and university-wide response by Massey in 1998 to meet the needs and aspirations of Pasifika peoples paved the way for the Pasifika@Massey Strategy in 2007 – a first for any New Zealand university.

Much has been achieved for Pasifika peoples at Massey over the past 11 years, especially after the establishment of the university-wide strategy. Our growing number of students is well-supported by dedicated Pasifika services.

There is a steady increase of staff and other resources, Pasifika-centred research is taking shape and Pasifika knowledge is being published and validated into qualifications. Collaborative partnerships with Pasifika leaders, organisations, communities, and nations are also being enhanced for mutual benefits.

There is room for improvement but this positive Pasifika@Massey transformation is a sound springboard for the next decade.

As Massey University navigates towards 2020, with its aim of on-going contribution to the development of New Zealand and the Pacific region, its commitment to Pasifika peoples and cultural democracy is further embedded into its strategic planning, organisational structure, services and activities.

Central to all these activities are our Pasifika students who will make up a substantial part of our workforce in the next few decades. Equally talented and gifted as other ethnic groups, Pasifika students can make defining contributions to society. Massey is proud and privileged to be part of this significant development in the Pacific spirit of 'unity in diversity'.

Hon Steve Maharey
Vice-Chancellor

From the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Māori & Pasifika)

Tēnā koutou katoa

We live in times challenged by environmental hazards, economic constraints, and global uncertainty. But these are also times where higher education, research, and advanced scholarship have the potential to change our world so that all peoples can enjoy full and rewarding lives. For that reason alone academic study brings with it the hope of better things to come for students, families, communities, Aotearoa and nations across the Pacific.

This inaugural issue of Pasifika@Massey provides a vehicle for us at Massey University to share our hopes and our plans for the year ahead and to affirm our commitment to furthering tertiary education of Pasifika peoples, both here, and in the wider Pacific.

Since the appointment of Massey's first Director Pasifika in 2006 to lead and implement the Pasifika@Massey Strategy, academic achievement of Pacific students and researchers has grown from strength to strength.

A decade ago fewer than 20 students of Pacific Island origin had graduated from Massey. But in this year alone, that total will quadruple when 80 new Pasifika graduates cross the stage to receive their degrees and diplomas. They are part of an unstoppable wave that will see the numbers of Pasifika graduates magnified several times more in the next decade. We have excellent role models, strong academic leadership, exciting research by Pasifika researchers, and resilient Pasifika communities and families who are supporting and encouraging students.

Unlike the majority of our students who are New Zealand born, many Pasifika students travel away from their home islands to study at Massey

and then return to make significant contributions to their communities applying the knowledge learnt here in a range of areas as diverse as artists, business people, disaster management specialists, nurses, psychologists, teachers, and scientists.

As a university, it is our responsibility to have graduates who can hold their own with the best in the country and internationally and who will make a difference to their communities here, in the island nations and across the globe.

Massey is committed to contributing to the ongoing development of Pacific nations by consolidating links with Pacific peoples, communities, and states, and participating in teaching and research activities that will lead to social, cultural and environmental gains. We already have a partnership with the Department of Hawaiian Health at the University of Hawaii and are developing strong links with other universities in the Pacific. But of greater significance over the past year has been the links that have been established with Pacific communities throughout Aotearoa. As this year goes on, we want to strengthen those links and ensure even greater success of our Pasifika students.



Professor Sir Mason Durie

Kia māia, kia ora.
Mason Durie



Dancer with grand designs

By Paul Mulrooney

In many ways Phoebe Smith epitomises her Samoan heritage. Vibrant and friendly, the 23-year-old also has another quality befitting people who have had to leave their homeland to better themselves – she is adventurous.

Last month the Massey University Bachelor of Design graduate left Wellington, and the security of a full-time position as a junior art director, to pursue her true passion of dance in Los Angeles.

She takes with her a growing appreciation of her Pasifika culture, something that has gradually grown upon her and has been encouraged by the European family she was adopted into as a baby.

One of her brothers is also a Samoan-born New Zealander, and a sister is part Fijian. Having attended a multi-cultural high school like Wellington East Girls', Ms Smith has always felt welcome to explore her birth culture more, through mentoring breakfast club sessions and a Samoan group.

"My parents have always encouraged me to get into the Samoan culture and learn all about it," she says.

Just over two years ago she made her first visit to Samoa, quickly becoming enchanted by the place and its landscape, identifying Lalomanu Beach on the south coast of Upolu as a favourite destination there.

"It's a very hospitable and lively culture. You always feel so welcome and the music and dance is so vibrant and exciting."

It is something Ms Smith knows full well as she embarks upon a 12-month sabbatical in California training in her favourite dance discipline of hip-hop.

The staccato dance style, driven by a funky backbeat, took her and the all girls hip-hop crew *Infinite* she coaches, to the FISAF World Fitness and Hip-Hop Championships in Eindhoven, the Netherlands last October. The team was placed ninth out of 26 crews.

"We were definitely different to all of the European teams, so I'm really proud of the New Zealand flavour we took to the competition and the result we achieved."

The trip also fuelled a travel bug and her ambition to make dance, for the time being, her number one pursuit.

"It was so good to experience other cultures and immerse myself in dance and that has partly influenced what I now plan to do."

We are in a Wellington café, where the lithe dancer, with what appears to be a trademark headband atop her head, has squirmed herself away in a corner. Contacts have already helped her secure an internship with a choreographer management company in Los Angeles, and any spare time she has will be spent honing her hip-hop skills, she says.

"I love new adventures and experiences and want to do as much as I can as life is short and I want to fit in as much as possible."

Even in her short design career to date, Ms Smith has been a quick mover. In 2008 she won a New Zealand Post Student Marketer of the Year award when she and fellow visual communication design student Nicole Yeoman were given a brief from the Vodafone Warriors rugby league club to develop a marketing programme aimed at improving primary school literacy. To show reading was fun they devised a folder containing collectible cards featuring short stories about different Warriors players.

That same year she also received a Pacific Islands Scholarship from Massey to help with her studies. In 2009 she won a Zonta Visual Communications Design award and, in November, gave the opening address followed by a hip-hop performance she both choreographed and performed in, to launch the University's annual *BLOW* creative arts festival.

As part of her degree major project Ms Smith was able to combine her dance and design talents again, exploring the concept of exercise advertising with a 'flash mob' performance she choreographed, for her chosen client Air New Zealand. The flash mob, which is when a group of people appear to spontaneously perform before quickly dispersing, was performed in the arrival gangway at Wellington airport.

"It was quite a lot of fun; if the opportunity comes up I would use a flash mob again, if it was right for the intended audience."

Through the Zonta award, which was sponsored by Saatchi and Saatchi, Ms Smith found her own ideal audience, with part of her prize being an internship with the global advertising agency, which led to her being taken on full-time to devise ideas with copywriters for advertisements and some graphic design work too.



Multi-talented, award-winning graduate Phoebe Smith is successful in design and dance. Photo: Mark Coote

"I've always loved design and when I got a Massey bursary it nudged me to pursue a design career over dancing."

For now the priorities between her twin passions have been reversed. She says the advertising agency has been "really supportive" of her decision to trip the light fantastic. "They respect my passion for dance and are really excited for me."



Phoebe leaps in glee with her Wellington-based dance group Infinite. She is heading to Los Angeles on sabbatical from design work to chase her hip-hop dance dreams.

Photo: Andrew Gorrie, Dominion Post.



Melvin Apulu Jnr believes young Pacific Islanders need to learn more deeply about their heritage.

Photo: Geoff Dale

Great expectations for the South Side

By Jennifer Little

Parts of South Auckland might suffer from an image problem in many people's eyes. Alcohol and drug-fuelled crime and violence, poverty, unemployment and social malaise are statistical realities - headline grabbers that instantly define it.

Meeting Melvin Apulu Jnr, a New Zealand-born Samoan who grew up in Manurewa, makes any knee-jerk hopelessness at those grim associations melt away.

The 22-year-old, who graduates this year with a Master's degree from the School of Health and Social Services, brims with energy and enthusiasm about his work at the Beacon Fellowship National Trust youth centre helping South Auckland Samoan youth steer clear of those negative statistics - the focus of his thesis.

Its title *Tautua Faa'tama'alii* - Servant-hood with Absolute Integrity - has a faintly archaic ring, imbued with honourable notions of loyalty, sacrifice and discipline. The phrase epitomises the teachings of his great-grandfather, Apulu Faamaile Taupulega Apulu, who passed away in 2010 aged 103.

Mr Apulu Jnr, the eldest of four and only boy in the family, shared a bedroom with his great-grandfather until he reached his late teens. It was a formative experience. He would wake in the morning to the sound of the elderly chief singing or praying, and fall asleep at night listening to his colourful stories about family life in the village of Faleasiu, in Upolu. The stories were laced with instructions about the moral, spiritual principles he wanted his great-grandson to abide by in his daily life.

'Servant-hood with absolute integrity' is what Mr Apulu Jnr practised on a daily basis caring for his elderly relative, helping him shower, get dressed and making his breakfast at 5 or 6am, even after he had been studying or working on assignments until 3am.

"He taught me patience, respect, the importance of respectful relationships, and the principle of service," he says. "It means having absolute integrity, goodwill, even when it's difficult and you're really tired. It's shaped me as a person, given me a framework."

A precise lack of cultural, moral framework is what he saw as the missing ingredient in the lives of many young Pacific Island men he comes across. Working at the frontline as a youth worker gave him the inspiration and material for his academic research - a vehicle for articulating a philosophy he hopes could bring about positive changes in the lives of other young men.

For his thesis - completed while he continued his youth work at the local youth centre and campaigned for a seat on the Manurewa local board in the new Auckland Council elections last November, winning 3988 votes - he interviewed 15 South Auckland Samoan males aged under 25, on film, about their lives and beliefs.

The resulting documentary features some of the young men he met at the youth centre. They have all struggled in some way to make sense

of their lives, and talk candidly about their journeys. Estrangement from their Pacific Island heritage was a big part of the problem, Mr Apulu Jnr says, and taking part in the film and research helped them to connect with cultural identity, family, land and language.

He firmly believes Pacific Island youth need to reconnect with their cultures in a meaningful way to "give them an identity and framework, not in a shallow, superficial sense but adapted to this day and age. I thought if what I learned has been helpful for me, maybe it can be a model for others too."

He has great expectations and hopes for his peers, grounded in his own experience of hard work and serving family. His mature, cheerful disposition makes him an ideal role model, although his industriousness could put most of us to shame.

It all stems from his different upbringing, he says. He and his sisters were home-schooled throughout secondary school years by their mother, Hinemoa Flora Apulu. She felt the mainstream system would not teach her children important lessons in holistic life learning, so she endeavoured to bring together spiritual, physical, mental, emotional, intellectual components as well as financial literacy, budgeting and paying bills.

At age 18 he gained a bachelor degree in social sciences at Te Wananga in Manukau, simultaneously completing a one-year Diploma in Graphic Design at Natcoll Design Technology at night class. He then worked full-time as a social worker alongside doing a Postgraduate Diploma in Youth Development at Auckland University of Technology. Encouraged by his family, he decided to come to Massey to do master's degree majoring in social policy.

Combining his youth work with the teachings of his great-grandfather in an ethnographic thesis was an obvious move, he says. He now plans to do a PhD to expand on the themes and material he has gathered so far.

Fulfilling his great-grandfather's teachings is hard going and tiring at times. "You learn coping mechanisms. What it teaches you to do is to take the self out of everything. It becomes ingrained - family first, yourself second."

'Servant-hood with absolute integrity' is a life philosophy that may sound alien to most his age. So it is a relief to hear that amidst his hectic schedule of academic and social work, and family commitments, he finds some time for his passion, surfing. His eyes light up as he describes heading out to the east or west coast on a fine weekend in his 1999 forest green Holden Commodore.

After all, he says, as a Pacific Islander a strong love of the sea is in his blood. And there are beautiful waves not so far from the suburbs of South Auckland.



Photo: Mark Coote

Scents of time and place

A LIFE AMONG ISLANDS

A great-grandfather killed by a swordfish and grandparents who met and married on a leper colony in the middle of the Pacific Ocean are among the dramatic, poignant details of one woman's family history. They form the background of a scintillating thesis with challenging views on culture and learning. She talks to Jennifer Little...

New Zealand-born Talei Alani Smith, of Fijian, Chinese, Kiribati and Australian/Scottish descent, had been teaching secondary school English, dance and drama for six years in New Zealand and the UK when she began her masters' degree through the School of Educational Studies at the Manawatu campus.

On a break during a planning day in her new job with the Education Review Office based in Wellington, the 30-year-old speaks entrancingly of her unconventional family history and "hybrid" ethnicity, and how these have helped to shape her outlook on culture, learning and life, inspiring her auto-ethnographic thesis; *Doorways to Other Worlds: Towards Successful Pacific S[p]aces in Education*.

Her research goal at the start was to find better ways to bolster success for Pacific learners in New Zealand – a quest spurred on by how little she found in academic literature about the clash between Pacific peoples' cultural identities and Western education processes. The gap, she says, led her to ask; "What is a Pacific person?"

Her starting point was admitting she does not fit the popular New Zealand stereotype of the Pacific persona herself; that is, she doesn't speak any one Pacific Island language, doesn't like corned beef, large amounts of root vegetables or coconut, is not keen on hip-hop or break-dancing choosing ballet instead, and contrary to a recent advertising campaign,

does not need “the solidarity of group visits as a pre-requisite for undergoing intimate medical examinations”.

Revealing the eclectic influences behind her own “polycultural”, or “hybrid”, identity, she traces the travels and trials of her forebears, starting with her half-Chinese, half-Kiribati grandfather and his “well-travelled childhood that scattered him between the fishing villages of Southern China to Kiribati and the British, French and Irish missions in Fiji.”

It was his Chinese father – Ms Smith’s great-grandfather – who had been killed by a swordfish while fishing.

Excluded from traditional Kiribati society for his mixed ethnicity, her grandfather met and married his Fijian wife on Makogai, a leper colony in the mid-Pacific Ocean where they had both ended up – he after being taken into the care of a French Marist priest who looked after people from all over the Pacific diagnosed with leprosy, and she after being mistakenly diagnosed with leprosy (she in fact had eczema). They eventually settled in Levuka, the old capital of Fiji and one its most ethnically diverse towns.

Theirs is a remarkable story. The impact of being ostracised by their respective cultures and how it forced them to adapt to new environments has filtered down to her own generation, Ms Smith says.

When her Fijian mother and Australian father moved to New Zealand, they wanted Talei and her brother Jason to stay on the margins of their cultures so they could draw on positive aspects but remain free of the constraints to their aspirations these cultural traditions might impose. This they did in Palmerston North, her hometown. The result is remarkable – an astute, worldly, highly perceptive young woman with multiple talents, alive to her cultural heritage without being confined by it.

Evocative and alive with the scent of coconut oil, burnt chicory, the sounds and motion of the sea, Ms Smith’s writings are a portal to understanding how culture shapes a person in many ways, including how they interpret the world, how they learn. Thus, her 12 years’ practising ballet with its focus on perfection and discipline is juxtaposed by an appreciation of contrastingly earthy Fijian dance. She also sings in Western and Fijian Catholic mass, and compares the uses and meanings of voice and lyric in these contexts.

Questions about identity and culture, and what these bring to learning in a broader sense, are at the heart of her research, which evolved from an academic examination of tertiary teacher-student feedback dynamics to a far more intimate exploration of those themes in her final work.

Marrying the sensual with the scholarly, and a razor-sharp intellect with pure poetry, she describes and demonstrates the ways sensory experience informs cultural awareness.

“Scent has been a measure of time, place and occasion and a mapper of what I have termed a ‘geo-sensual’ landscape. My mother and my grandparents have used scent, and in particular - the scent of sea and of flowers, to tell where they are, and who they are. They have also used scent to understand time, both in terms of the time and time as it is related to social behaviour; smell is an “emotional, arousing sense” and so it has been particularly powerful in the fine tuning of expectations and assumptions within different social occasions.”

Moving from conventional discourse to personal reflection via auto-ethnography – a creative, experimental method of qualitative research based on the writer’s experiences – her thesis deploys Jack Kerouac’s American Haiku verse form as well as written and photographic mind maps, vignettes, journal entries and poetry to convey “embodied” sensuous experiences.

Vibrant memories, musings and “dream flashes” about places, people, flowers, dance, music and even hair-grooming rituals resonate beyond the purely personal to encompass universal ideas about cultural otherness, and ultimately how this affects classroom experiences.

The result is a compelling platform for her main contention: that there is a chasm between the presumptions, priorities and processes implicit in New Zealand’s education system and the experiences of many Pacific Island children and teenagers within it.

Failure to acknowledge the “cultural capital” of Pacific Island nations; a lack of care and empathy from teachers towards Pasifika pupils, and rigid timetabling that does not accommodate different “rhythms

of learning” all contribute to poor achievement, says Ms Smith, who graduated with a BA (Hons) in English Literature and taught in a range of schools, from Paraparaumu College in Wellington and Tu Toa School in Palmerston North to an all-girls’ school in North London.

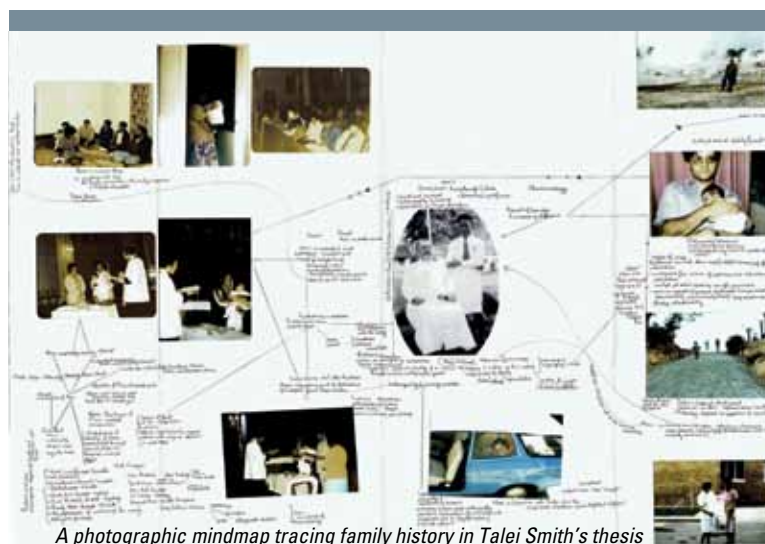
Misunderstandings that lead to under-achievement abound in undetected ways, she notes. “Silence, reluctance, reticence and sitting at the back of the class is not blind obedience or a sense of shame felt about being in the class as a student of Pacific Island identity, but it is deference to the positions and experiences of others. The respect for authority is a respect for the traditions and the systems that have positioned the teacher where they are.”

The decision to write her thesis as auto-ethnography was a response to the death in 2006 firstly of her father, the late Dr Robin Smith who lectured at the Manawatu campus’ College of Business, followed by the death of her partner the following year while she and he were living in London. Working on it “became a lifeline”.

Research and writing, she stresses, were not a means of escaping emotional pain, rather a sanctuary for reflection and forging new perspectives that ultimately helped her endure grief by “forcing me to be disciplined in my daily life and to explore higher avenues of thought”.

Now working as a review officer, she is passionate about the joys of learning and the challenges ahead for Pasifika youth. She foresees a necessary evolution in their relationships with elders, and with authority, in relation to the time-honoured view that age is synonymous with wisdom.

“Education,” she says, “is about not accepting an idea as a given. It’s about questioning and thinking. Education is life, and vice versa.”



A photographic mindmap tracing family history in Talei Smith's thesis

“The tang of fresh-cut pineapples cutting through the diesel fumes at the central bus station in Suva reignited for me the time spent with my godmother on the island of Gau, and culinary reconstructions of home in her kitchen. The blaring racket of the pumping stereos that repelled one from Indian electronic and clothing stores long before they came into sight hit me with images of Indo-Fijian blends of curry powder in brown paper packets, opened in our kitchen in Palmerston North, over a hot goat curry. These physical realities are experienced as sensations which are not just experiential and without critical thought, but sensations which imagination makes meaning out of.

FROM TALEI SMITH'S THESIS



Ernest Kolly Photo: Mark Coote

From boat TO BOWL

By Paul Mulrooney

Ernest Kolly knows his fish. He also knows that how they are being prepared for export could be the difference to his native Solomon Islands becoming a leading regional player in international trade.

It was this awareness of the differences in food preparation standards that led to his masters' thesis examining how those standards must be raised if the Solomons is to retain a lucrative exporting contract with the European Union.

Since 2004 the Solomon Islands has exported tuna loin to Europe with shipments rising in the following five years to (SBD) \$147 million or NZ\$28 million.

But Mr Kolly, who is studying at the Institute of Food, Nutrition and Human Health at the Wellington campus, realises for the exporting drive to continue, his homeland needs to ensure its food quality and safety is consistent with an internationally recognised food safety system known as the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP).

At present, health and educational concerns could jeopardise the economy, he says – just as the Solomon Islands government proposes to



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

Pasifika@Massey

THE NEWEST AND FINEST FOR PACIFICANS



Left to Right: Aipopo Faaluaaso (Bachelor of Aviation),
Lisa Laulala (Bachelor of Aviation),
Surava Elaisa (Bachelor of Aviation Management)

Fly places, win graces. I Come fly with Massey.



Come to Fale Pasifika Bilong Oloketa

www.massey.ac.nz | 0800 MASSEY

build three more tuna loin-processing factories. The country also exports canned and frozen fish and fishmeal.

"To come and work in a factory where there are HACCP standards requires a big adjustment from the workers," he says.

Their lack of hygiene knowledge was hampered by low education standards, poor literacy and cultural differences too. People employed as fish cleaners, mostly women aged 18-40, returned to their village after a day's work and reverted to "old ways."

"For example, not washing their hands properly before handling tuna products, and not wearing proper uniforms, including hairnets and gumboots in the factory. These are not practised at home in the villages," he says.

"If they are not properly trained to wash and rinse hands then there is a big risk there."

Other workers, who lived in a hostel near the factory, were likely to be more mindful of their work environment. Mr Kolly acknowledges that the tuna processing company, Soltai Ltd, has lifted standards, but warned against complacency and urged them to further strengthen their training programme.

For his research, Mr Kolly was able, aside from the fish cleaners, to speak to factory line managers and supervisors. A descriptive study involving a systematic review of the Government's audit reports into the industry was also undertaken. This also involved a review of maritime food safety and quality practices. These were based on records supplied to the fish factory by fishing boat captains and engineers, who were not granted permission by the company to speak to him.

"Though I am a Solomon Islander we have these cultural barriers. We know what the problem is, but the need to continue to strengthen the food safety standards is there as a majority of the workers don't understand what the food safety systems are all about."

Most of the tuna loin, or white meat of the fish, is exported to international food distribution company Bolton Alimentari in Italy.

"It's to the advantage of the company and the Government authority [to promote food safety] because this is a lucrative market which in the international context is very important to the country and the company."

Mr Kolly, who hails from the Bugotu District of Isabel Province in the Solomon Islands, has had first hand experience at the fishing company based at the Soltai Ltd processing plant, where for four years he worked as a quality control officer.

"No two days are the same in the tuna industry," he says.

"It is a multi-trade industry where one day you are a boss and the other day you will be in the factory cleaning fish. It is all done in the name of food safety."

Since embarking on his academic career, which has seen him win numerous scholarships for his studies in environmental health at the Fiji School of Medicine, the University of Western Sydney and Massey, he fears employees are reverting to old ways. His thesis *'From boat to bowl: An Exploratory Study of the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) System in the Solomon Islands'* clearly states what is required of the country.

"In countries like the Solomon Islands, where resources (technical expertise, monetary and monitoring facilities) are lacking, strengthening networking nationally, regionally and internationally and integrating the HACCP food safety system into the food safety legislation and policies would be a means of enhancing food safety and quality assurance."

It is something he is personally looking to provide guidance on following his graduation, when he plans to return to the Solomon Islands and the seafood industry by starting an environmental health consultancy specialising in food safety.

"Studying at Massey has further enlightened my knowledge and understanding of the challenges of the real world," he says, acknowledging that this includes his environmental health research work and problem solving – essential skills for the Solomon Islands to secure its fish processing future.



Above: Fifth Pasifika Staff and Student Network conference.

Pasifika researchers out in force

Poverty reduction in Fiji, Samoan leadership style, and Pacific Island perspectives on Western psychology were among the diverse research topics presented at a two-day conference at Albany last November.

About 50 staff and postgraduate students from all three campuses gathered for the fifth Pasifika Staff and Student Network conference, with the theme of *Pasifika Community Development: managing change for growth*. Participants from many Pacific backgrounds presented their latest research from a wide range of academic disciplines, covering economic, education, health and social issues.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Māori and Pasifika) Professor Sir Mason Durie, launched several new publications

from the Pasifika@Massey Directorate. Professor Sitaleki Finau, Director Pasifika says the conference was a resounding success, showcasing the broad scope and richness of scholarship by Pasifika academics across the University's colleges and campuses.

"It's clear each and every one of the conference participants has done a great deal to progress the University's [Pasifika] strategy to advance teaching, research and consultancy. Individually and collectively, their work promises to make big differences to our Pasifika communities and nations. The publications represent Pacific knowledge being packaged for academic and community use."



Freud in the fale

PIONEERING A NEW PSYCHOLOGY FOR THE PACIFIC

By Jennifer Little

Registered psychologist Siautu Alefaio has worked with some of the country's most violent offenders, with victims of the Samoan tsunami and a good many misunderstood people who have come through mainstream psychological services.

Photos: Geoff Dale

In all her work, she wants to address what she sees as a disconnect between Western psychology and Pacific Island cultural beliefs, values and behaviours...

Meeting Siautu Alefaio was the last straw for one particular client of hers. The woman had already confounded a bevy of health professionals who in total had written up to 10 reports about her in follow-up to treatment for a head injury from a car crash.

The encounter was a turning point for the women, both Samoan. Ms Alefaio had been asked to do yet another assessment because the client had allegedly failed to respond to various therapies and was deemed "cognitively delayed or deficient".

"The first thing I did was to take some *ti o le taeao* (breakfast food) and we got talking in Samoan. Within our first meeting I found out that she was tired and confused. She didn't understand why she had to keep seeing all these people. As far as she was concerned her accident was over."

Ms Alefaio came to understand that the woman felt overwhelmed by the barrage of questions she encountered at each assessment by health professionals. She felt she did not need any more help and simply stopped responding. This was misinterpreted as evidence of injury symptoms and on-going need for even more treatment.

"In the end I worked out what help she needed, the case-worker found out what she needed to know and it was a win-win situation," says Ms Alefaio, who is based at Massey's School of Psychology in Albany.

But the experience, similar to previous dealings with Pasifika people in her work with Child Youth and Family, Accident Compensation Corporation and the Ministry of Education, led her to question the knowledge foundations of her profession and its relevance to Pasifika people.

"From what I've studied and practised, psychology has nothing in its knowledge base that speaks to me as a Samoan. What I've often had to do is clean up other people's mess, in a professional sense," she says.

The 'mess' is in reference to the results of what she sees as the confusing clash between Western notions and understandings of psychology – or the 'science of psychology' – and Pasifika cultural concepts of the heart and spirit.

Western psychology [think Sigmund Freud, cognitive behavioural therapy, self-actualisation] is-relatively speaking-a young science still evolving and largely framed around the individual, the self, she says. For Pacific cultures, the 'self' is synonymous with the collective – family, village, community – and configured by one's relationships within the wider family.

"Cultures within the nations of the Pacific have ancient histories and ways of knowing, being and doing that outdate the evolution of this young science – psychology. Attitudes and beliefs, modes of communicating – not just language itself but body language too – differ among Pacific peoples and are open to misinterpretation," she says.

"Psychology is very much informed by a European-American perspective. There's very little knowledge representation from a Pacific context. It's the self versus the collective paradigm. If we don't explore these differences we end up talking past each other because therapists and psychologists invariably focus on unpacking the individual before them, often with little or no understanding of the cultural-historical context."

“From what I’ve studied and practised, psychology has nothing in its knowledge base that speaks to me as a Samoan. What I’ve often had to do is clean up other people’s mess, in a professional sense.”

At Massey, where she was appointed in 2009 as Senior Professional Clinician to supervise a new qualification – the Postgraduate Diploma in Psychological Practice – Ms Alefaio has embarked on nothing less than pioneering research through Monash University, Melbourne, to chart a new path of understanding about how Pasifika cultural knowledge can inform psychology.

Along her intellectual, theoretical journey towards new understandings, her travels to Samoa have also informed her scholarly direction. She was one of two Samoan-speaking psychologists recruited by the Ministry of Health to counsel traumatised survivors of the September 29, 2009 Samoan tsunami, which killed 192 people in Samoa and Tonga and flattened coastal homes and crops.

There, she worked within Samoa’s psycho-social response team in hospital wards, schools and directly affected areas. She says she found that Western terms such as ‘grief counselling’ were unhelpful.

“It misguided well-intentioned local support services from doing what would have come naturally. It was hugely beneficial to understand the language and cultural context of Samoa because we were able to quickly identify groups to work with and provide good information to guide the support required in order to restore calm and stability.”

Ms Alefaio has also been working to heal psychological wounds resulting from devastation caused by societal forces, as well as natural ones.

Back in Auckland, where she has spent most of her 35 years, she has seen violent male Pacific Island offenders transformed by a rehabilitation programme she helped re-develop for the Department of Corrections at the Spring Hill Correctional Facility’s Pacific Focus Unit Vaka Fa’a’ola. Called *Saili Matagi*, the violence prevention programme is run by Pasifika facilitators and based on Pasifika cultural concepts such as *aiga/fanau* (traditional family) incorporating key values and beliefs such as identity and belonging, respect and maintaining relationships. “‘Saili Matagi’ means ‘in search for good winds’. It’s a healing metaphor,” she says.

She realised during the programme delivery that “one of the dynamics for these men is that they are not afraid to die, but afraid to live. It is too hard to show face and overcome shame, guilt and humiliation. To live means to make all these sacrifices of pride and embrace the gentleness of humility – these are huge *mauli* (heart/soul) challenges.”

The offenders go through a 24-week programme based on core cultural principles, which form the context for cultural awakening. Participants confront their offending by telling their story, and realising the impact on their victims. The most powerful aspect of the programme is when they do so in the presence of family, she says.

“I’ve witnessed huge guys weeping and sobbing when they hear metaphorical stories from their families – like the father who told of how

he planted a tree for each of his kids in his back garden. Even when the tree for the imprisoned son failed to thrive and grow properly, he kept on watering it in the hope it would regain normal growth.”

Since its launch a year ago, 20 men have been through the programme. The response has been very positive and hopes are high that it will curb re-offending for many more, she says. She is currently connected to the programme through training, and discussions are under way for the development of a research framework to monitor the programme’s effectiveness and capture the innovation in the hope this may contribute to therapies appropriate for Pasifika peoples.

Spring Hill is 20 minutes south of Manukau, not far from where she grew up in Otara and Papakura, and where helping others in the community was part of everyday life. Her father, a retired Presbyterian parish minister, and her mother, a former early childhood educator, moved to New Zealand to fulfil the ubiquitous migrant dream of a good education and better life for their three children, of whom Ms Alefaio is the second.



Siautu Alefaio has developed a Pasifika approach to rehabilitating Pacific Island offenders.

Perhaps it is not surprising that the warm-hearted, curious girl from a close-knit family who tended distraught teenagers, homeless alcoholics and marginalised people, and helped run communal gardens and youth clubs in her spare time would become a psychologist.

Although family she visits in Samoa don’t really understand what a psychologist does when they ask her about work, she is part of a peer group that hopes to reduce such baffled responses among others.

Together with a small group of Pacific peers, she spearheaded *Pasifikology* – a network of Pasifika psychologists, students and friends of psychology who began meeting in 2005. They give each other professional support and mentoring, and discuss the challenges and ethical dilemmas they face by “sharing stories about how we often have to work outside the box to meet the needs of our clients”.

Ms Alefaio says her ultimate drive is to achieve social justice. “Pasifika people are still at the tail end of achievement and mental illness is on the increase, so for me it’s about repositioning the mission. We need to stop importing programmes and experts from overseas to provide answers we in the Pacific region have the knowledge and expertise for.”

“We are all different island nation states with unique identities and if we can embrace and understand the deep cultural concepts, I think we can then help the next generation to navigate their way in the world.”



Motherly input a boon for Tongan children's education

Pacific Island parents can be so reverential in the face of the education system that they often overlook how much they could contribute to their own children's learning, says veteran Pasifika education specialist Dr Lesieli MacIntyre.

The Tongan-born teacher and senior lecturer at the College of Education did her PhD on the subject of how Tongan mothers in New Zealand contribute to their children's education.

As a result, her radar is alert to instances of mixed and missed messages in the cross-cultural sphere.

"One of the mismatches is that Pacific Island parents often think they don't know very much, and they perceive the teachers as knowing everything. The teachers don't think like that, but they are perceived by parents in this way."

Her study investigates the complex nature of how Tongan mothers in New Zealand contribute to their young children's 'ako' – or learning, and general education – in their homes, in early childhood centres and primary school settings, as well as in church and the community.

She found that the mothers' use of Tongan language, cultural values, beliefs and practices, along with their Christian faith, was effective in teaching the children social and moral education, and their academic learning.

But they need recognition and encouragement from teachers who understand the value of cultural knowledge to the child, she says. Many mothers – particularly those born in Tonga whose children were born in New Zealand – struggled to feel comfortable and confident in the school setting. But they responded well and were eager to participate in school activities when teachers reach out to them.

"Teachers are idealised by Pacific people. And more teachers are exposed to Pasifika ways so there is more understanding. Teachers perhaps don't realise the good things they are doing for Pasifika families. I've witnessed parents who are moved to tears when they talk about how well the teacher treats their kid."

"When mothers became involved they also help to preserve their Tongan culture, language, and identity," says Dr MacIntyre, who teaches a post-graduate paper *Educational Issues for Pasifika Peoples* at the School of Educational Studies in the College of Education, Manawatu.

Her interest in this topic was sparked after anecdotal observations during years as a translator, teaching lecturer at the then - College of Education in Palmerston North and earlier as a trainer in cross-cultural communication. She met Tongan parents doing two or three jobs to support their children's education, yet they refrained from helping them because they put so much trust in teachers. "These parents wouldn't dare to teach their kids anything for fear they might teach them wrongly."



Dr Lesieli MacIntyre with children's books she has written in English and Tongan

Dr MacIntyre, who is fluent in Tongan and Māori, has written and translated many educational books in English and Tongan for young learners and their families to support bi-lingual learning in the home and school.

An understanding of cross-cultural communication, a subject she has taught to peace corps volunteers and overseas volunteer workers as well as education professionals, is something policy makers and teachers increasingly need in order to cope with culturally diverse class populations, she says.

"Teachers have not only Pacific Island, Māori and palangi students, but Chinese, Korean, Somali, Ethiopian, east European to name a few. Then there other combinations of ethnic with gifted, or special needs. A teacher's time is scheduled. Who do you cater for with so little time?"



Story of loss inspires Pacific scholarships

Ben Taufua next to the Honours Board of Massey's Pasifika graduates
Photo: Geoff Dale

Ben Taufua remembers arriving in Samoa on day of the devastating 2009 tsunami that smashed his family's beach fale resort, killing more than 100 people including 14 of his own.

"We arrived there the first day and watched people responding and reacting to the enormity of the challenge. At the same time there was really no clear coordination of how to approach this catastrophe," says Mr Taufua, an academic and national project manager for Massey's Pasifika@Massey strategy. "This is not the sort of thing you plan for. In Samoa this is the first tsunami in recent memory with such a devastating impact."

The losses so close to home prompted the University to establish special scholarships for Pasifika people to train in disaster management, available this year.

"Against the backdrop of my experiences, this scholarship is so personal to me and my family, and to everyone who lost a loved one in the tsunamis in Samoa and Tonga."

The Pacific Disaster Management Research Programme is being coordinated by the Wellington-based Joint Centre for Disaster Research, which is run by the University and the crown research institute GNS Science. The programme offers an annual scholarship worth \$5000 to a Pasifika student undertaking graduate or postgraduate study in disaster management, and four reserved places at the centre's Emergency Management Summer Institute held annually in March. Two of the places are reserved for Pasifika students living in a Pacific nation, and the other two for Pasifika people living in New Zealand.

Mr Taufua recalls first hearing on the 7am news on September 29 that a massive tsunami had struck the coastal village of Lalomanu where his family operates tourist beach fale on the east coast of Samoa's Upolu

Island. He arrived there later that evening to help search for missing relatives in the aftermath of the tsunami, which killed 192 in Samoa and Tonga following an 8.1 magnitude quake.

While emergency and disaster relief operations were present, his family was left to cope alone, Mr Taufua says. He wants to see Pacific communities better informed and equipped to manage disaster planning and relief, rather than relying on outside agencies for aid and believes the scholarships will be pivotal in preventing future loss of life and property.

"The initial response from our experience was that we took upon ourselves the task of looking after our family because there seemed to be no managed support. It would be great if there was better, more comprehensive emergency planning. We are prepared for cyclones and small quakes but tsunamis happen so rarely. When the wave subsided we were left with total, total devastation and we didn't know how to deal with it. With cyclones, there is a season and it's predictable.

Mr Taufua hopes the scholarships will enable Pasifika peoples to identify gaps and develop knowledge and expertise so they can prepare for and manage disasters in a way that reflects their societies' communal social structure, values and lifestyles.

"Against the backdrop of my experiences, this scholarship is so personal to me and my family, and to everyone who lost a loved one in the tsunamis in Samoa and Tonga," says Mr Taufua, who has lived through four major cyclones in Samoa.

With recent natural disasters in Christchurch and Japan highlighting the vital importance of emergency disaster planning and training in coping with the rescue and recovery, he hopes Pasifika students will step up to the opportunities offered through the scholarships.

"It's heartening that Massey is showing its commitment to Pasifika peoples with a scholarship that will enable and empower us to make huge advances in this critical area of disaster preparedness," he says.

For further information:
http://disasters.massey.ac.nz/teaching.htm#pacific_award



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
TE KUNENGA KI PŪREHUROA

Pasifika@Massey

THE NEWEST AND FINEST FOR PACIFICANS



Grace Naparau, Current Student
BAvMan (Bachelor Aviation Management),
Massey University

Fly places, win graces. I Come fly with Massey.



Come to Fale Pasifika Bilong Oloketa

www.massey.ac.nz | 0800 MASSEY



cultivating & spreading

PASIFIKA KNOWLEDGE

Tongan-born Professor Sitaleki Finau once dreamed of being an engineer and building bridges, until a scholarship took him to Queensland to study medicine.

Now, with a prolific collection of books, journals and monographs by Pasifika academics and writers he has published that fill his office shelves, are scattered throughout libraries and cultural institutes here and abroad, and sometimes used as teaching texts at other universities, he is “building bridges between knowledge, cultures and people”.

Since being appointed inaugural director of the University’s Pasifika@Massey strategy in 2006, Professor Finau has been responsible for bringing to light a formidable collection of ideas and perspectives, reflecting a new wave of Pacific-themed research represented across six publication series he has developed. These scholarly writings from across Oceania and mostly by Massey academics are evidence of ‘cultural democracy’ – his mantra, a cornerstone of his personal philosophy and the reason he gets out of bed each day.

He elaborates on the notion in book form in feisty, impassioned prose, defining Massey’s strategy itself as “cultural democracy in action”, aimed at “taking Pacificans from the margins towards equitable participation in the socio-economic transformation of New Zealand” and alleviating the “shame statistics” of poverty, unemployment, poor education and crime. His manifesto is one of 10 books to date in the Pasifika Occasional Paper (POP) series of research-based, peer-reviewed writings by Massey staff, students as well as some by non-Massey Pacific writers. Among them are writings by Massey’s first Pasifika social work graduate Luamanuvae Kuresa Tiumalu-Faaleseuga on community economic development.

A second and third series are for master’s and doctoral theses, and a fourth for arts and literature, such as Juliet Enid Westerlund’s poetry collection *Raw Edges*.

As well as a series of books on general topics, Professor Finau is enthusiastic about the Pacific Forum Leaders’ Series, with two publications so far, including one by former Deputy Prime Minister of Tonga (1991-2001) Dr Senipisi Langi Kavaliku. He set out to capture the wisdom and personal perspectives of Pacific leaders because there is little record elsewhere of what they say and think. He hopes publications such as Dr Kavaliku’s *Pasifika Leadership: An issue of Quality and Relevance* will be of historic value, and a reference for future generations.

“It’s about disseminating their [Pacific leaders’] wisdom. That’s the purpose of this series. A lot of people think Pacific Island leaders pop out of the bush before they start to govern. In fact what you find are highly educated, highly qualified leaders, many with university doctorates.”

Although publishing is now a joint venture with Auckland-based Masilamea Press, putting out half a dozen books a year is no mean feat.

And there is more. He also edits the *Pacific Health Dialog* journal, a biannual journal of community health and clinical medicine, which he launched and which is now in its 17th year. *Pacific Health Dialog* is printed by the University with individual issues funded by various Pacific government ministries or international health agencies, depending on the theme of the issue. Unlike other Pacific health journals, this one is unique in its broad, holistic agenda, Professor Finau says.

“Under the health umbrella are studies and articles on psychology, history, social work and even language, and some issues focused on one Pacific nation’s health profile, such as last year’s on the Federated States of Micronesia.”

It included papers on an email networking project to promote local island foods for health and biodiversity, cultural issues associated with gynaecological screening for women, preventing rheumatic fever, substance abuse awareness among high school leavers, to name a few.

In publishing terms, the journal most closely relates to the professor’s medical background. He has a medical degree from the University of Queensland as well as fellowships from the Australasian College of Tropical Medicine and the Australasian Faculty of Public Health Medicine. Before coming to Massey, he was Professor of Public Health at the Fiji School of Medicine in Suva, and has previously held academic appointments at the universities of Otago and Auckland. It was a three-year fellowship for epidemiology training at Wellington Hospital in the early 1980s that took him down a “different track” in his career.

The frustrations of “repetitive and relentless” work treating basic health problems in Tonga and other Pacific nations prompted him to look further into causes and contributing factors needing research and solutions. Although isolated case studies and research appeared in general medical journals, there was no pan-Pacific forum for health issues. His role as editor has followed him across the Pacific in his various appointments.

At the Albany campus the Pasifika collection – another of his initiatives and housed on level three of the campus’ new library – contains many more book and journal titles on Pacific themes than those he has published himself, although he has donated many.

“We can’t have academic development for Pacific students at Massey without a Pacific collection,” he says.



What's God got to do with sex?

By Kathryn Farrow

Eyes open a little wider when Analosa Ulugia-Veukiso talks about the title of her master's research *"What's God got to do with Sex?"*

And that is exactly the reaction the 32-year-old Samoan researcher hopes for. She set out to explore the link between spirituality and sexual health of Samoan teenagers and ultimately hopes that her findings will spark debate that will help improve health and wellbeing of Pacific youth.

"All too often, people might be talking about an issue in the communities, but we also need written information," she says. "That is the beauty of academia. I wanted to answer a question to generate information so it can be out there and ideally create opportunities for conversation and ultimately help the decision-making."

Pacific young people have higher rates of teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections and abortion as well as a low uptake of contraception. But there is still a lack of information, particularly about the young generation growing up in New Zealand. It is something the Ministry of Health is keen to address as it seeks to improve the sexual health status of its citizens. Ms Ulugia-Veukiso first got interested in the connection between spiritual engagement and the sexual health status of young people through her Catholic upbringing and experiences when she was working as a social worker at the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services and Counties Manukau District Health Board.

"I wanted to answer a question to generate information so it can be out there and ideally create opportunities for conversation."

"You go through high school within a Christian environment which has strong messages about health and wellbeing. Later, I trained as a social worker and came across some Pacific young people who would go to church on a Sunday and then later request an STI test," she says. "I thought 'hang on a minute, that doesn't sound right'. It was a question I wanted to ask."

Funded with a career development award from the Health Research Council of New Zealand, she returned to Massey University, where she had completed a Bachelor of Social Work, and started to try to find out if spirituality was a "protective" factor. Her research focused on sexual behaviours of 13 to 19 year olds, using quantitative data from the Youth 2000 survey. She found that the rates of church attendance and importance of spiritual beliefs were high for Samoan students. However, 32 percent of Samoan respondents had engaged in sexual intercourse. Furthermore, while Samoan students who rated spiritual beliefs as "important" waited longer to have sex than those who said it was not important, regular church-goers were actually having sex at a younger age than non-churchgoers. Ms Ulugia-Veukiso says the findings were not a surprise.

"For many Pacific families the church plays a central role; high numbers are attending church," she says. "But if you are part of a social group that goes out and drinks at the weekends you are more exposed to risk." She says there are many influencing factors in the choices young people do-or don't-make.

"There are situations where you have young people who are adamant that no, they are not going to have sexual intercourse and yet find themselves in an environment where it has happened. Young people will be influenced by their own perceptions and thoughts about sexual activity, their family, the environment they are in and what it teaches or says to them about responsible sexual behaviour-does the family actually talk about it?"

Ms Ulugia-Veukiso is now adding to the literature by expanding on the topic through her PhD studies at Massey. She is looking at the wider potential risk and factors that impact on sexual health such as the home and school environments, substance and alcohol use, paid employment and violence. She has received HRC funding to continue the work.

"That is the thing with research. You have a question, you get answers and it actually leads to asking more questions. I set out on this journey to find these answers with the hope that it adds to the information out there, and ultimately assists others in the work they undertake with our Pacific young people".

REDUCING POVERTY IN PARADISE

By Jennifer Little

Stacks of academic papers, journals and books are strewn across Associate Professor Rukmani Gounder's Manawatu campus desk, as if a strong gust of wind has just swept through. But the Fijian-born economist is a long way from the tropical islands she hails from, where such mayhem could be blamed on natural forces. The state of her office is evidence of how deeply immersed she is in researching and writing about the impact of other forces – political, economic and social – on Fiji's once envied standard of living.

It may be an idyllic paradise with beautiful unspoilt, white sandy beaches if you are a tourist. But a recent survey by Fiji's social service council suggests nearly half its population are below the poverty line, with about 60 per cent of them in rural areas. A government survey on employment and unemployment 2004-2005 recorded 40 per cent live below the poverty line. Either way, that is a lot of poor people for a country once upheld as the most prosperous among island nations in the South Pacific.

"In the 1970s about 10 per cent of the population was living in poverty, increasing to 25 per cent in 1990-1991, rising to 34 per cent in 2002-2003. A recent survey estimates that to be 31 per cent in 2008-2009. However, households spend relatively little on food, medicine and education," says Dr Gounder, who is based at the School of Economics and Finance.

Political instability following a series of military coups since 1987, and subsequent economic volatility, has underpinned the rise in poverty, says Dr Gounder, who has written and published prolifically on Fiji's economic and social issues for two decades. The military regime headed by Commodore Vorege Bainimarama since 2006 has promised elections in 2014.

Another critical factor in Fiji's declining economy is the expiry of thousands of land leases since 1997. Most of the leases to Indo-Fijian sugar cane and vegetable farmers were not renewed due to the decisions of the *Mataqalis* (chiefs, who are the land owners), the Native Land Trust Board (Fiji's land management body) and the Agriculture Landlord and Tenant Act," she says.

Racial tensions between indigenous Fijians, who own land, and Indo-Fijians, who lease it, also add to the precarious conditions. Land once cultivated for lucrative plantations has remained idle, resulting in a major loss of export revenue for the country, she says.

The fallout of a downward spiralling economy from natural disasters, oil crises and the global economic recession means continuing hardship for Fiji's most vulnerable citizens, Dr Gounder says. Urban settlements she has visited for her research now harbour squatter settlements full of people who have left impoverished rural areas to face unemployment, lack of proper food and sanitation, and low wages. Domestic violence has risen, and more and more children are dropping out of school because of associated costs of books, transport and building fees.



Associate Professor Rukmani Gounder
Photo: David Wiltshire

"What's critical for Fiji in its effort to achieve poverty reduction as well as other Millennium Development Goals is to have a high sustainable, real economic growth and opportunities for the poor to participate in economic activities. This will require both competitive manufacturing and vibrant agricultural sectors to allow the export of value-added manufactured products and create employment for poor people in the rural areas."

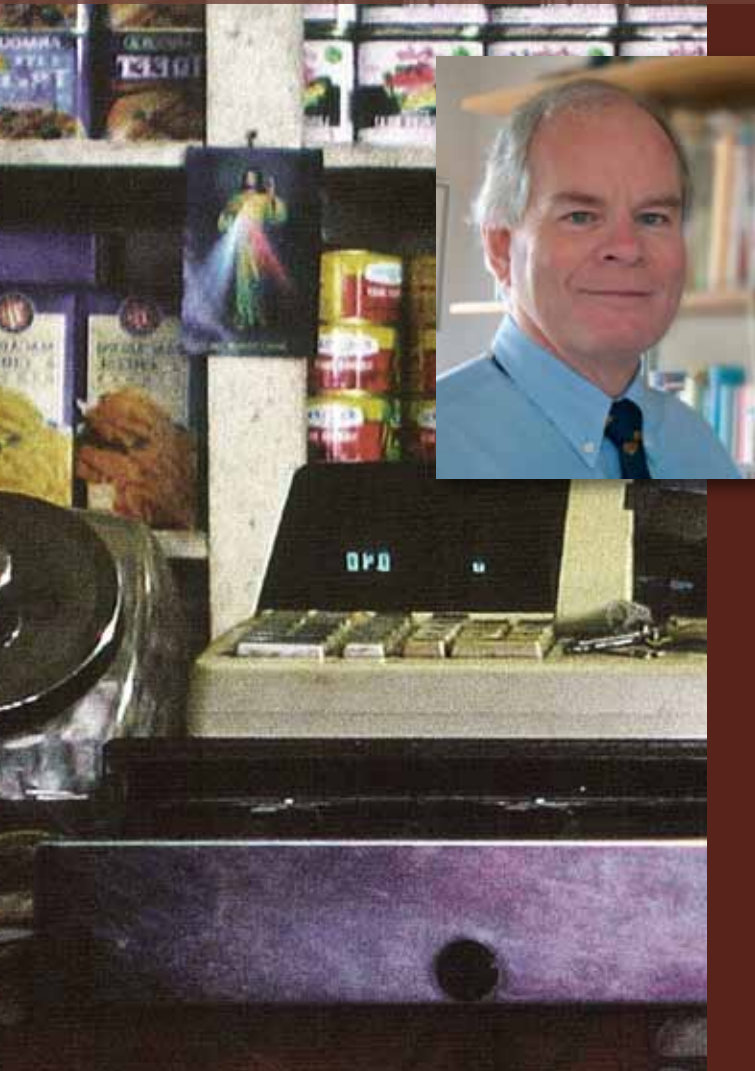
Dr Gounder, who chairs the University's Pasifika@Massey Research Network, joined the University in 1995, after completing her PhD in development economics at the University of Queensland. She is a Smuts Fellow of Cambridge University (named after Jan Christiaan Smuts, former Prime Minister of South Africa and Chancellor of the University of Cambridge), and has presented Commonwealth seminars on Fiji's economy and the impact of political instability there.



She won a Commonwealth Scholarship in 1987 to do a master's in economics at the University of Poona, India and also the Jawaharlal Nehru's (the late Prime Minister of India) prize in Economics in 1988. Her Bachelor of Arts in Economics degree is from the University of the South Pacific in Suva.

As there were still difficulties in getting jobs at the University of the South Pacific in the mid-1990s due to Fiji's political problems, coming to New Zealand meant she has been able to maintain a close connection with her home country, which she observes with interest and concern.

"It saddens me to see Fiji – a paradise of the Pacific – in economic decline and not reaching its full potential," she says. "At the moment the interim government – though not accountable to the people – has established some social programmes to address poverty. It is important they stand by their promise to hold elections in 2014, and that both domestic and international communities play a role in the socio-economic growth process."



Mangoes and mobile phones, fishes and fridges

Sociology professor Cluny Macpherson has spent the past 40 years of his life coming and going between New Zealand and Samoa. In this period he has observed, as both resident and researcher, fundamental changes to village life.

These rich observations have come together in *The Warm Winds of Change – Globalisation in Contemporary Samoa* (Auckland University Press, 2009), co-written with his Samoan-born wife La'avasa Macpherson. In it, they explore how increased exposure to the global culture and economy is transforming traditional Samoan village life.

They provide tangible evidence of the ways in which access to new ideas, technologies and capital is transforming the economies and lifestyles of villages.

Widespread access to reliable power brings with it access to the Internet, Internet cafes, fridges and television, and has the potential to change the village lifestyle in fundamental ways, Professor Macpherson says. Access to running water, new sprays, chainsaws and brushcutters transform the economics and organisation of village agriculture.

Feasting and festivity for Albany staff at Samoan umu

Vibrant tropical colours and succulent aromas brought a touch of the exotic to the Albany campus with staff donning leis and lava-lavas for a traditional Pacific Island meal.

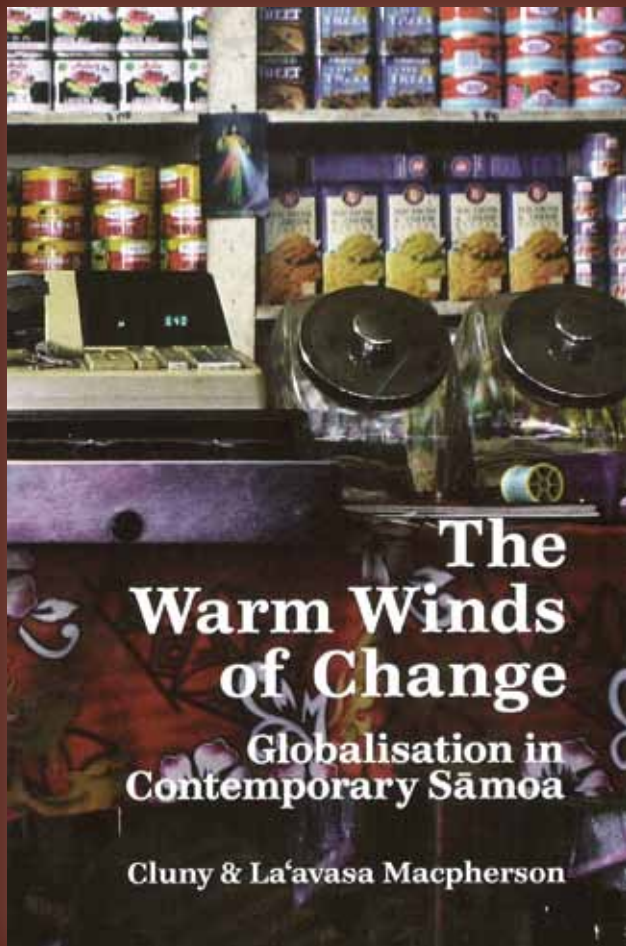
About 100 people turned out for a special feast of meat and vegetables cooked in a traditional Polynesian earth oven, or *umu*. The event was organised by the Pasifika directorate as a welcome back gesture to staff to mark the start of 2011.

Ben Taufua, national project manager for the Pasifika@Massey directorate, and his team of Samoan supporters prepared the *umu* on a grassed area behind the main campus where they cooked dozens of whole chickens, pork sides, as well as taro and kumara to feed the crowds.

They served the hot food with fresh coleslaw and *oka* (raw fish marinated in coconut cream). Feasters were entertained by a rousing Samoan drum and dance performance group.



Albany staff enjoy a traditional umu lunch.



Documenting this shift from baskets to buckets, pandanus to polypropylene mats, the Macphersons reveal how change has been driven by migration, and nurtured through networks of affluent, loyal Samoans based in Sydney, San Francisco, Auckland and beyond who provide support in the form of finance, new technology and ideas to their families in the islands.

"Samoa is arguably the most exposed to global forces of the Pacific states," says Professor Macpherson, who teaches social and cultural studies at the Albany campus, and has published widely in the area of economic and social development in the Pacific region.

The Macphersons, who live part of the year in a village 10km from Apia, say economic change has altered social traditions and structures too. "What happens when people get a fridge? In the old days, people gave away fish, and in doing so they acknowledged important relationships. With a fridge a person can keep the fish, which raises the question of what happens to the relationships?" he says.

Modern technology has meant better opportunities for many, he adds. A fisherman who can afford to buy a gas-powered spear gun, GPS and a boat with outboard motor with help from expat relatives can increase his catch and shift to export from subsistence local trade only.

The increasing prevalence of mobile phones and the Internet has meant people are exposed to many more ideas from outside Samoa, which has led to a challenging of traditional chiefly authority in some situations, such as the amount spent on lavish ceremonial gatherings.

"Samoa is a useful case study as a forerunner of what will ultimately happen in all Pacific states," Professor Macpherson says.

- by Jennifer Little

Serving community while studying society

Dr Maria Kerslake spends her weekends at the local rugby field organising fundraising barbecues to pay preschool teachers in her village, but her mind has been also on the bigger picture of Samoan society and the forces shaping it.

Her study of the fall-out from the restructuring of her country's Public Works Department (PWD) for her sociology doctoral thesis made her the first Samoan to gain a PhD from Massey's Albany campus in Auckland.

The mother of six and grandmother lectures in sociology at the National University of Samoa where she is Dean of the Arts Faculty.

For her case study, Dr Kerslake interviewed a cross-section of Samoans, from prime minister to government road workers, to gauge the effectiveness of free market reforms in combating corrupt practices, nepotism and inefficiency.

She set out to establish whether the changes, which aimed to improve economic growth, productivity and efficiency, benefited Samoans as promised by the politicians and international financial institutions that promoted them.

She says many felt the restructuring was successful, "partly because Samoa is a small country, and also because the changes were introduced after those affected [by redundancy] were thoroughly



Dr Maria Kerslake at the Albany graduation ceremony in 2009 with family

briefed and it was done with a Samoan flavour and in tune with Samoan culture".

But she also found some Samoan employees felt they had been victimised by the privatisation programme. "The promises of flourishing businesses and becoming a member of the business elite are an elusive dream as the employees of the former PWD experience financial hardship and sacrifice."

‘Dream big’ – Pasifika students urged

When Pasifika student liaison adviser Terri Leo-Mauu urges prospective students to “dream big, but put the hard yards in” she is drawing from personal experience.

Her role is a national one in representing Massey among communities and schools. She also chairs the Pacific Island Leaders of Tomorrow initiative, which targets Auckland Pasifika secondary school students in years 10 to 13, and is backed by several tertiary institutions.

“We are always dealing with families when it comes to breaking down the barriers to university study,” Ms Leo-Mauu says. Including them in the decision-making for their child’s future is vital.

Common issues include encouraging families to create a study space for their children at home, informing them about the benefits of study and demystifying funding and access procedures.

When speaking with school groups, Ms Leo-Mauu reflects on the hard work she did to complete her Master of Arts in Pacific Studies examining Samoan tatau (tattoo) and the fact that it stemmed from her best friend “dreaming big” on her behalf by urging her to enrol at university that set her on an academic path.

“My friend was doing law – she’d always known she wanted to study law. To this day I’m grateful to have a friend who believed in me more than I believed in myself.”

She says she was in her element at university where she majored in anthropology, studying education and history as well as Samoan, Spanish and Ancient Greek to develop her love of languages. In recognition for completing her master’s thesis in 2007, her uncle, tattooist Su’a Suluape Petelo, gave her a traditional tatau. The design, which

covers her lower right leg, is a replica of part of her father’s pe’a, the male tattoo covering the area from the waist to the knee. She also earned the high chief title ‘Seiuli’, bestowed by her mother’s family, to acknowledge her work in advancing her culture.

To reinforce the message to her audiences of dreaming big and working hard, she touches on her own story and that of her parents, who migrated to New Zealand from Samoa. “I’m a proud product of a father who was forced into retirement after a serious accident when I was five and a mother who worked several jobs as a cleaner to support the family but only stopped when she was forced to by law at the age of 65. They dreamed big, started their own travel agency later in life and worked hard to get me where I am today. It’s that passion that I use to encourage Pasifika people, young and old, to make their dreams a reality.”

And just to prove her point, she is dreaming even bigger in academic terms with plans to do a PhD in education on Pacific cultures of learning, alongside her work of nurturing the dreams of others.



Terri Leo-Mauu with traditional paddles used in presentations to Pasifika students.

New certificate a must for people working with Pacific communities

A new Certificate in Pacific Development that aims to help students and workers from a range of professions to better understand Pacific cultures has seen enrolments soar from 12 last year when it was launched to more than 40 this year.

“This certificate is useful for a whole range of community workers and students,” says Manawatu-based coordinator and assistant lecturer from the School of Health and Social Services Litea Meo-Sewabu says.

“Not only those who are working in the helping professions, like social work, community work, health, rehabilitation, psychology, and development studies, but also for students across the University. This will help them understand Pasifika world views, protocols and practices and how they might be able to work more effectively alongside these communities.”

She says it is often assumed that Pacific peoples are all the same when, in fact, they are not. “While Tongans, Samoans, Cook Islanders, Tokelauans and Niueans share some underlying values – such as humility, respect and love – they each have unique histories and social and cultural practices.”

The certificate brings together existing papers on culture, development and language from the School of Health and Social Services, the School of People, Planning and Environment and other topics from within the College of

Humanities and Social Sciences. A core requirement is a new paper titled Pacific Peoples in New Zealand. It offers a foundation to understanding world views across the range of Pacific cultures in a New Zealand context. Another Pacific-themed paper is The Wellbeing of Pacific Peoples in New Zealand, which focuses on pathways to health for Pacific communities in New Zealand.

“We look at situations that community and health workers face every day,” says Ms Meo-Sewabu says. “It is important to build relationships and trust with Pacific peoples and communities.”

The first student to graduate from the course at the Manawatu campus this year is Sei O’Brien. She says although she thought studying Pacific Development would be easy, the course opened her eyes to the journey of the Pacific People within a New Zealand and an international context.

“Discovering the diversity of cultures and peoples in the Pacific was vast and an incredible journey,” she says. “The course was a roller coaster ride of mixed emotions, especially exploring the history of the Pacific peoples and their achievements. An added bonus was having a Pacific person as the paper co-ordinator. It really boosted my confidence in the course knowing she is from the Pacific, is talking from experience and with great



The Pacific Development Group (from bottom left clockwise) Wheturangi Walsh-Tapiata (co-ordinator), Rebekah Tuileto'a (Deputy Director Student Learning Development Services), Sesimani Havea (Pacific Achievement Facilitator) and Litea Meo-Sewabu (co-ordinator).

passion. I enjoyed the course immensely and recommend it to anyone, particularly to Pacific people who wish to know more about their heritage and culture.”

As a result of doing the certificate, she has enrolled in full-time study for a bachelor’s degree. The certificate was the idea of the Pacific Development Group based in the School of Health and Social Services on the Manawatu campus. It is supported by the Pasifika@Massey Directorate, and by a range of health, education and community organisations.

FRIENDLY FIGURES:

Helping each other is what counts



Photo: Geoff Dale

When children are talking and laughing in class, it usually means they are mucking around, not doing much work. But for mathematics education researcher Dr Bobbie Hunter, it can mean just the opposite, she tells Jennifer Little.

Dr Bobbie Hunter (above)

Dr Hunter – whose love of maths was stimulated by watching her Cook Island mother make intricate tivaevae patterns – and colleague Associate Professor Glenda Anthony have just completed a two-year project working with year 3-5 and 7-8 Pasifika and Māori pupils at two Auckland schools to find out if maths performance and attitude improves when they work cooperatively.

The results of their project – an Education Ministry teaching learning research initiative – are unprecedented, with vastly improved grades and levels of understanding.

“The pupils tell me maths is harder and more challenging, but it’s more fun. They really enjoy it now,” says Dr Hunter, a senior lecturer at the School of Education at Albany.

So successful has this project been that the Ministry of Education has become aware of the need for schools throughout New Zealand with significant numbers of Pasifika and Māori pupils to embrace the “communities of mathematical inquiry” group-oriented approach to nailing numeracy, which Dr Hunter first developed in a project for her PhD completed three years ago.

The latest project, says Dr Hunter, resulted in pupils at participating Flatbush and West Harbour schools improving their maths skills well beyond the expected rate of achievement. Her previous research this current project is based on was recently applauded by Professor Emeritus Courtney Cazden, from Harvard’s Graduate School of Education, as an example of the best research and development in education anywhere in the world.

Don’t be mistaken – collaboration over calculations is no easy-peasy, shortcut road to being a maths genius, Dr Hunter says.

Her approach operates on the basis that the group is responsible for ensuring every member contributes and understands the maths problem at hand. The teacher’s role is to guide and bring attention to individual strengths within the group – a conceptual shift in pedagogical thinking and method.

Discussion and laughter are invariably part of the process in which real learning takes place through a range of carefully designed techniques,

including instructional strategies, scaffolds and prompts that encourage pupils to ask questions, discuss, develop reasoning and “friendly argue” to find a solution.

“It is about working out problems that are challenging and struggling, struggling well, it is to get somewhere further than you are. Struggling is learning,” says Mele, aged 10, who took part in the project.

Early on, the project caught the attention of Professor Marta Civil from the University of Arizona’s Department of Mathematics, who visited New Zealand two years ago to observe classes taking part. She researches

similar group learning models among Hispanic and North American Indian pupils with the aim of improving their maths performance.

She says her work aligns closely with Dr Hunter’s and gives useful insights into how teachers’ understandings of cultural behaviours and influences can reinforce classroom learning and achievement. “We

have these stereotypes about different cultures and we assume there is only one way of learning for everyone,” Professor Civil says. “A lot of students have languages and cultures other than English, and the idea is to find culturally relevant ways to engage them in learning.”

Dr Hunter, who set out to address Pasifika underachievement in maths learning in her PhD, says the notion that some people are naturally good at maths while others are not is false.

“People who are good at maths are those who have been taught well. Most of those who aren’t good, or don’t enjoy it, have been taught badly,” she says.

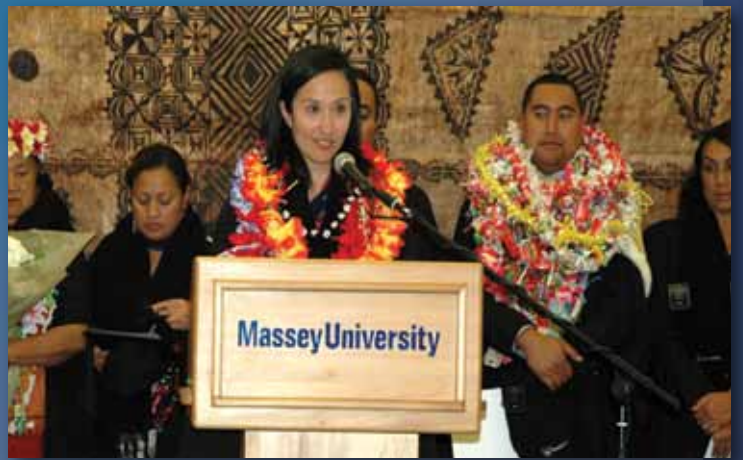
As the fourth child of 10 to a father of Scots-Irish descent and mother of Cook Island descent, Dr Hunter was interested in maths and numbers from an early age, and says a fascination with intricate patterns on the traditional tivaevae quilts her mother made was a kind of tactile, visual entry into the world of numbers, shapes and symmetry.

Her penchant for numbers led to a primary school teaching career starting in Auckland and taking her to England and Papua New Guinea as well as schools throughout New Zealand.

“The pupils tell me maths is harder and more challenging, but it’s more fun. They really enjoy it now.”

MASSEY Graduation

Hats off to Massey's Pasifika graduates!



Clockwise from top left; 2010 Bachelor of Aviation graduate Analena Siu; former All Black Va'aiga Tuigamala speaking at the 2010 Pasifika graduation ceremony in Manawatu; 2010 Pasifika graduates in Wellington; some of the 2010 graduates at Albany; Manawatu 2009 midwifery graduate Kathleen Maki; and 2008 PhD graduates Opeti Taliai and Maria Kerslake.

