

PIDC NEWS



PACIFIC
IMMIGRATION
DIRECTORS'
CONFERENCE

9TH PIDC ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2005



Participants of the 9th Annual Conference in Nadi, Fiji

The 9th Pacific Immigration Directors Conference (PIDC) was convened in Nadi, the Republic of Fiji, at the Tanoa International Hotel from the 30th August to the 01st September 2005. Attending the three-day conference were thirty-five participants from 18 countries, including American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji Islands, French Polynesia, Kiribati, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Norfolk Island, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, The Kingdom of Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. A number of observer organisations also participated

The Chief Executive Officer for Home Affairs and Immigration, Dr. Lesi Korovavala welcomed Delegates to the Conference. Dr. Korovavala noted the growing interest in the Pacific region towards harmonising legislation and border security. Calling on the membership to trust in each other's neighbours, he emphasized that the collective approach of the PIDC as absolutely necessary in the new global environment.

Mr. Greg Urwin, Secretary General for the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, delivered the key note address. Like Dr. Korovavala, Mr Urwin tasked the PIDC with forging deeper links with member nations

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PIDC ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2005 (CONTINUED)

and industry partners in an effort to ensure effective regional cooperation and consistent border management systems. Mr. Urwin hailed this year's Conference, which considered and approved its future direction as an important step towards strengthening the PIDC's role as the pre-eminent immigration organisation in the Pacific.

During the course of the Conference, the delegates made a number of important decisions. The members approved the organization's future vision, strategic and work plans. It was a momentous step. Developed by the Advisory Committee



Left – Mr. Mateio Rabura, PNG; Mr. Peter Watters, Australia; and Ms. Ondrae Campbell, Australia.



Left – Mr. Matthew Gibbs, PIDC Secretariat; Dr. Lesi Korovavala (PIDC Chair) Fiji; and Mr. Greg Urwin, Secretariat General for the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat.

in Brisbane and Nadi, the strategy sets forth a realistic means of advancing the PIDC towards becoming the focal point for Pacific immigration issues. Members also agree that the Secretariat would need to be expanded to achieve the aims set out in the Strategic Plan. Therefore it was agreed that members would contribute financially to the operational costs of the Secretariat, and that contributions would be made as soon as practicable and possible.

A number of key presentations were made during the three-day conference. A joint presentation by Fiji Immigration, Navy and Customs where the issues surrounding people movement by sea were examined.

Peter Dawkins of the South Pacific Tourism Organisation discussed the emergence of Chinese tourism in the South Pacific. It was noted that by the year 2020, the World Tourism Organisation predicts China will produce 100 million tourists, making China the largest source of tourists in the world.

Mr. Api Fiso from New Zealand, discussed border management in the Pacific particularly noting that as trade and travelling increase in the Pacific, Advance Passenger Screening (APS) systems are vital to successful border control efforts, as is research and analysis to support the decision making.

A recent WMD Full-Scale Exercise was the topic of discussion by Dawn Ala'ilima, from American Samoa. Part of the exercise tasked American Samoan immigration with a trace back component of the terrorist's route back to point of first embarkation. The exercise was a great success in demonstrating the need for intergovernmental cooperation.

The Delegates congratulated New Zealand for confirming their offer to host the 10th PIDC in 2006. Tuvalu has volunteered to host the 2007 PIDC subject to final government approval. The large turnout and positive steps taken at the 2005 PIDC established it as the pre-eminent immigration organisation in the Pacific region and made this year's conference the most successful in the history of the PIDC.

Michael Keyser – American Samoa



Left – Mr. Andrew Hughes, Commissioner of Police Fiji Police Force; and Mr. Peter Watters.

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PACIFIC NAVAL OPERATION: A SUCCESS

Operation Kurukuru (Fijian for Thunder), was the name dubbed for the 8 day joint naval venture where seven countries namely; Australia, France, New Zealand, Tonga, Tuvalu Vanuatu and hosts Fiji actively participated from 27th May – 08 June 2005.

The purpose of this operation was to have regional south pacific nations engaged in the Pacific Patrol Boat program and practice Civil Surveillance (CS) techniques in a multi asset environment.

Operation Kurukuru involved border control training, small arms and tactical baton training and fire drills. The operation involved 9 naval ships, 2 aircraft and 200 personnel from participating countries. Such exercise would prove to terrorists and other illegal fisherman that the Pacific region is serious about protecting its waters from misuse and illegal activities.



Naval Officers on baton training exercise.



Naval officers, loading ships with rations.

Just like real thunder, operation Kurukuru, struck when every living thing least expected and created a blast. According to Australian Naval News, the Harbour phase 1 –3, saw a request from the Maritime Surveillance Centre in Fiji, resulting in the RFNS Kikau, boarding and apprehending a long liner, which was found operating illegally within Fiji's exclusive economic zone (EEZ). Phase 4 (Sea Surveillance), saw all the training put to practice; this was where mariner skills, boarding operations and first aid exercises were executed.

According to Saipan Tribune News, similar issues were discussed earlier this year in New Zealand where France, Australia and New Zealand forces enforced their existing "FRANZ" tripartite agreement. Relief was brought to natural disaster struck neighbouring islands and also the designing of a surveillance version of the pact to improve the central and western Pacific region's maritime surveillance systems.

Although, the operation was short-lived, the stakeholders agreed that, carrying out such operation would greatly assist the policing of individual maritime boundaries and also believe that it would deter terrorists, illegal fishermen and the illegal movement of people in the Pacific. - *PIDC Secretariat*

REFUGEE DETERMINATION TRAINING

Since the signing of the 1951 Refugee Convention by the Fiji Government allowing it to become a member state in 1972, the relevant authorities dealing directly with this issues were not fittingly addressed. This changed when the DIMIA organized a two-day seminar on Refugee Assessment and Decision Making Training in Suva, Fiji from the 31st May – 1st June 2005. Representatives from the Fiji Police Force, Immigration Department, Customs Authority (FIRCA), Human Rights Commission Ministry of Home Affairs, Australian High Commission and PIDC Secretariat attended this training.

The training covered a wide variety of material associated with



Presenters; (left) Kath Dunham, (far right) Annie Harrison

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REFUGEE DETERMINATION TRAINING (CONTINUED)



Fiji Immigration and Customs Officers participating together at the Refugee Determination training.

refugees and refugee determination. With the theme; "Refugee Assessment and decision-making", the presenters, Ms Kath Dunham and Annie Harrison, discussed how to assess individuals claiming to be refugees, whether it be at the port of entry or while living in the country. A number of topics were covered including: assessing a person's claims upon arrival at the border; conducting refugee assessment interviews; formulating decision records; and making sound decisions on the applicant's claim.

The participants at the training agreed that not only was the message edifying but also one that was very serious in its context. With the increasing number of asylum seekers seeking refuge in the Pacific, this training was essential for both primary and secondary line officers.

The presenters viewed the training as a success and stated that an obstacle they faced was determining the precise information to deliver and estimating the number of participants that were eager to attend. On the final day, presenters saw the training put into use, by initiating group discussion where participants were asked to formulate decision records and make sound decisions based on the case studies provided. Although, the training was only for two days, a great deal was learnt and achieved from the course. – *PIDC Secretariat*.



FIJI ISLANDS REVENUE AND CUSTOMS WELCOMES MOVE



Fiji Island Revenue and Customs Authority Office

The year 2005 saw the materialisation of the cabinet decision to transfer the operation of the primary line and seaport clearances from the Fiji Immigration Department to the Customs Authority (FIRCA) in Fiji. This is somewhat similar to larger countries like Australia where primary line functions are executed by Customs officers and secondary line functions by Immigration.

The decision by cabinet, which was reached on 19th November 2002, came into effect from 1st July 2005. A total of 42 Immigration officials transferred from Immigration Department to the Customs Authority.

The move means that border clearances at Fiji's airports and seaports will now be undertaken by Customs, although Immigration retain the overall responsibility for the entry and exit of passengers across Fiji's borders.

According to executive Customs officers Mr Jone Louie (Acting General Manager Border Control) and Mr Tevita Tupou, with the move will provide Customs access to vital passenger information, which can be used for faster profiling of passengers at the border.

The transfer of border control has further enhanced the management of risks in Fiji due to the faster detection of suspicious goods and travellers as well as the faster detection of suspicious financial transactions (money laundering).



Fiji Island Revenue and Customs officers at a recent workshop in Suva.



With the ever-increasing numbers of tourist arrivals into Fiji, it is important that passengers are processed in the most efficient manner, while at the same time, ensuring that strict border security and border management process are applied in order to protect Fiji and the wider region from terrorism, trans-national organised crime and other illegal activities.

With greater inter-agency cooperation between the Department of Immigration and Fiji Islands Revenue and Customs (FIRCA), border management in Fiji is now better placed to meet the challenges of people movement in the Pacific. – *PIDC Secretariat*.

PACIFIC ROUNDTABLE ON COUNTER-TERRORISM 2005



Left – Ross Arden, Niue; and Alan Ross, Nauru at the 2005 FRSC in New Zealand

At the Pacific Roundtable on Counter-Terrorism held in Wellington on May 2004, participants agreed that it would be useful if members of the Pacific Islands Forum had a process to enable the exchange of information about their approaches and experience with counter-terrorism issues. The Forum Regional Security Committee (FRSC) agreed with the suggestion that a working group should meet to report on progress within the region and on any important trends or issues.

Delegates from the Forum Island Countries and also representatives from the Forum Secretariat, the Secretariat of the Pacific Communities, the Oceania Customs Organisation, the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police and the PIDC came together for the first meeting of the Working Group on Counter-terrorism in Auckland New Zealand on the 13th June.

The meeting covered a wide range of topics. An update on the compliance with international obligations was provided and based upon reports from various delegations, it was clear that there has been considerable progress in meeting international obligations since the Roundtable – however, not always on a comprehensive basis. In terms of regional reporting, the Working Group accepted the importance of keeping the region free of terrorism and required the assistance of members by providing information in a timely manner when requested.

The Working Group recalled that the Roundtable had warmly welcomed the Forum Secretariat's work on a matrix, which would record the region's progress in fulfilling its counter-terrorism obligations as well as technical assistance that regional countries would need to perform this task. The issue of Bio-terrorism was addressed by the Fiji Commissioner of Police and provided an account of a recent Interpol conference on bio-terrorism. It was suggested that regional governments needed to have proper procedures in place to cope with outbreaks of disease whether they were accidental, such as SARS, or deliberate attack.

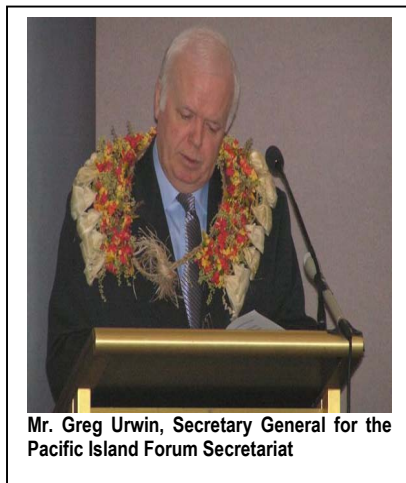
Finally, members of the Working Group indicated that they had welcomed the opportunity to discuss counter-terrorism issues of relevance to the region. Members recommended that the Working Group should meet again immediately in advance of the FRSC and to report to it on the progress in counter-terrorism in the region and upon important trends related to it. [PIDC Secretariat].



Delegates from PNG at the 2005 FRSC.

- *PIDC Secretariat*

FORUM REGIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE MEETING 2005 (CONTINUED)



Mr. Greg Urwin, Secretary General for the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat

Representatives from Australia, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu all met in Auckland New Zealand from the 14-15 June 2005 for the annual FRSC meeting. Observers from American Samoa, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Organisation for Migration, Oceania Customs Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Pacific Islands Chief of Police, Secretariat of the Pacific Communities, the United Nations as well as the PIDC, also attended the meeting.

The Secretary General opened the meeting welcoming all participants. He underscored the work undertaken in recent years to enhance the FRSC and he highlighted the Leader's Vision for the Pacific region that was "respected for the quality of its governance, the sustainable management of its resources, the full observance of democratic values, and its defence and

promotion of human rights".

The paper on Trends in Transnational Organised Crime in the Pacific covered a number of issues including people smuggling and trafficking. Importantly, the Secretariat noted that decisions on regional security could not be made without robust statistics. Attempts to collect regional statistics in a number of law enforcement areas over the last year had been disappointing.

The PIDC submitted and tabled a report on Advance Passenger Information seeking the support of the FRSC in promoting the benefits of early adoption in the region. New Zealand acknowledged the work done on API in the region particularly the progress made by Samoa through the institutional strengthening project undertaken there.

A presentation was made on Pacific regional border management issues including the Pacific Border Management Proposal that recognised the management of Pacific borders was a multi-sector issue. The proposal would create a Working Group to consider "strategic" border related issues and take a collective non-partisan approach to border management.

The FRSC agreed to establish a specialist border management Working Group to be known as the Informal Working Group on Border Management Issues. The purpose of the group is to facilitate the exchange of information between participating organisations, identify common objectives and progress agreed objectives to address priority regional border management issues. - *PIDC Secretariat*.



Participants at the FRSC in Wellington

OCEANIA CUSTOMS ORGANISATION



The OCO activities in the second and third quarters of the year 2005 focussed on three main topics:

1. Cooperation with international and regional partners:

The World Customs Organization (WCO) adopted in June the "WCO Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Sessions. The Framework of Standards is a global initiative to both **secure** and **facilitate** international trade.

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OCEANIA CUSTOMS ORGANISATION (CONTINUED)

Trade” during the 105th/106th Customs Cooperation Council. The OCO is considering the requirements set by the global framework in order to scale them down and adapt it to the features of the Oceania region. Furthermore, the OCO regional cooperation resulted in:

- the participation in the Forum Regional Security Committee (14 - 15 June), and Counter-Terrorism WG and Counter-Terrorism Planning Exercise (13, 16-18 June) in Auckland;
- hosting the Informal Working Group for Border Management Issues (IWGBMI) at the OCO Secretariat in Nouméa in July, and
- the attendance to the 9th PIDC and 34th PICP meeting.

2. Secretariat relocation and selection of a new team

After the adoption by the OCO Members of Fiji as relocation country of the OCO Secretariat, New Zealand and the Head of Secretariat are exploring housing opportunities in Suva. The Secretariat will be in a standalone position possibly co-located with a regional sister body. A new Secretariat team is being selected in order to prepare the move to Suva and ensure a smooth handover.



Mr. Kulufeinga Bloomfield, OCO Trade Facilitation Officer (CTFO).

3. Start of the implementation of the Customs RTFP

The OCO has accepted the role of implementing agency for the Customs component of the Regional Trade Facilitation Programme (RTFP) planned within the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER). This ambitious and comprehensive five (5) year capacity building programme is an important regional challenge. The OCO has appointed a Customs Trade Facilitation Officer (CTFO), Mr. Kulufeinga Bloomfield, as manager of the Customs programme. Kulu previously held the position of the Head of Customs in Tonga.

The OCO continues to move forward providing support to its Members and successful achievement of its goals. – *OCO Secretariat*.

The 8th OCO Annual Conference will be held in Fiji, from 13 - 17 March 2006

NEW FACE IN THE LAW ENFORCEMENT UNIT



Mr John Tanti (Australia) commenced duty at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat in June 2005. John is engaged at the secretariat in the role of the Law Enforcement Capacity and Development Adviser. John works within the Law Enforcement Unit at the secretariat and is focused on further developing programs and strategies as they pertain to all law enforcement agencies throughout the Forum Island Countries.

John has been seconded to the PIFS from the Australian Federal Police (AFP) with which he has been engaged for the past 15 years. John has been involved with the Pacific law enforcement community since 2004 having worked within the AFP's international post in Suva at the Australian High Commission Suva. In that position he was involved in a wide range of law enforcement issues in the Pacific Islands region and developed a strong relationship with numerous law enforcement agencies in the Pacific including Police, Customs and Immigration agencies. He has managed a wide range of AFP Law Enforcement Co operation Program (LECP) projects pertaining to the Pacific Transnational Crime Units and Pacific Transnational Crime Co-ordination

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NEW FACE IN THE LAW ENFORCEMENT UNIT (CONTINUED)

Centre (PTCCC). His responsibilities at the PIFS include:

- Assisting in the implementation and coordination of programmes and or activities undertaken by the Secretariat or by members consistent with the objectives of the various Forum leaders Declarations (Honiara, Aitutaki, Biketawa, Nasonini and Auckland Declarations) and the recently adopted Pacific Plan.

The programmes John is currently focused on include;

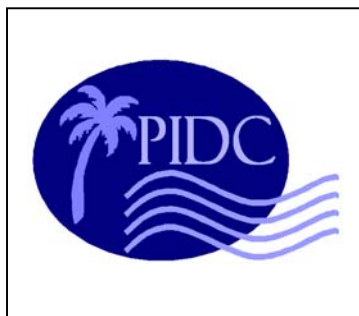
- facilitating a regional Counter Terrorism seminar in consultation with the UK Government, the PIFS and the Pacific Transnational Crime Network;
- chairing a Forum Regional Security Committee (FRSC) established informal working group on border management issues;
- working on the delivery of a PIF border control training programme;
- assisting with PIF delivery of Financial investigator and prosecutor training programmes;

During his two year posting, he is keen to work closely with the PIDC Secretariat and its members with their law enforcement initiatives in the Pacific Region.



John Tanti, Pacific Island Forum Secretariat Law Enforcement Officer

UPDATE FROM THE PIDC SECRETARIAT



Bula and Namaste – The end of another very busy year is almost upon us with December quickly approaching. It has been a year of change and development for the PIDC and Secretariat, particularly with the completion of the PIDC review and the adoption of the new PIDC Strategic Plan and Work Plan at the recent PIDC in Nadi, Fiji.

One of the major outcomes of the 2005 PIDC, was the agreement to expand the Secretariat and to engage a full-time Research Officer to undertake essential research, analysis and reporting on upcoming and important migration issues. It is envisioned that the work undertaken by the Research Officer will assist PIDC members in planning and policy development for the future, and provide the PIDC with more accurate information on migration trends within the Pacific.



Left – Ms. Christine Capron, New Caledonia; and Ms. Nunia Kamikamica, PIDC Secretariat Officer



Left – Mr. Wang Chuan, Coordinator APC; Ms. Wang Dan, APC; and Matthew Gibbs, PIDC Secretariat.

Another important step taken at the 2005 PIDC was the commitment from PIDC members to provide funding for the operation of the Secretariat. It is envisioned that contributions will begin for the 2005-06 period, but all members will be expected to contribute from 2006-07 period onwards.

The next 12 months will remain very busy for the Secretariat. We propose to hold the first meeting of the PIDC Management Board sometime in the New Year to discuss the progress of the Work Plan, and the ongoing development of the Strategic Plan. From both Nunia and myself, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a most successful and prosperous New Year for 2006.

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