

Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference NEWSLETTER



2008 Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference



Participants at the annual PIDC that was held from the 16—18 September 2008 in Brisbane, Australia.

Immigration Directors from 17 countries across the Pacific attended the 12th annual Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference (PIDC), held in Brisbane Australia from the 16 to 18 September 2008.

The theme for this year was: "People on the Move" referring to the increasing people movements, the strengthening of immigration agencies in the region and the benefits of well-managed migration. Immigration Directors discussed, among other things, the role of migration in economic and social development, identity fraud, people smuggling, human trafficking, and border security issues as part of efforts to strengthen border management in the Pacific region.

The conference also discussed the future direction of the organisation, including how the PIDC could better meet the needs of its members in an increasingly complex environment of international people movement.. The PIDC acknowledged the growing frequency and intensity of people movement in the Pacific and the challenges Pacific island countries face in managing increased migration flows.

Ms Malissa Dryden, Acting Assistant Secretary for the International Cooperation Branch of the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship (DIAC), opening the 12th annual Pacific Immigration Directors Conference highlighted Australia's commitment to the PIDC and its willingness to support and work with PIDC member countries. She noted the Australian Government's Port Moresby Declaration of 6 March 2008 signals a stronger partnership with the Pacific and a renewed commitment to multilateral forums.

She also invited all members to consider how they could contribute to PIDCs' new strategic vision: "Strong government immigration authorities mutually working together to manage the Pacific gateways, and contributing to the regional objectives of security, economic growth, sustainable development and good governance."

In addition to Immigration officials, regional and international observers also attended the 2008 conference. The observers provided a different perspective on border security, refugees, displaced person and transnational organised crime.

DECEMBER 2008 IN THIS ISSUE:

1. 2008 Pacific Immigration Directors Conference.
2. From the Chairman.
3. From the Head of Secretariat.
4. Illegal Migration in the Pacific.
5. Learning New Investigative Skills.
6. Joseph Giramur Shares His Thoughts.
7. Why Do We Need to Strengthen the PIDC Immigration Intelligence Bulletin?
8. PIDC Welcomes New Project Officer.
9. Briefly in 2008.
10. Photo Gallery of the PIDC Family.

Calendar of Events

- I. ICAO/PIDC Kiribati Scoping Mission for MRTD: 24 January 2009.
- II. Bali Process : 24-25 February 2009.
- III. Document Fraud Awareness training, PNG- 22 February 2009.
- IV. Document Examination and Application Training: 23-27 February 2009.
- V. First PIDC Management Board Meeting: March 2009.



From the Chairman...



Poloma Komiti the PIDC Chair writes:

First I would like to extend my thanks to all members of the PIDC family for the work that we have achieved together in 2008. It has been a successful year in strengthening PIDC's profile to reach new heights.

The endorsement of the PIDC Strategic Plan 2009-12 at the recent annual Pacific Immigration Directors Conference in Brisbane provides the perfect platform for our organisation to face the challenges of regional and global migration in the future. The openness of members in sharing both success and failures has always provided an excellent basis to learn from each other and move forward as a region. We will continue to uphold these principles of openness and trust.

My next major task for the PIDC will be to chair a meeting of the PIDC Management Board in March 2009. This provides an excellent opportunity for us to give direction to the secretariat and develop the organisation's work plan in 2009.

The PIDC continues to draw strength from the commitment and dedication of its members. I, as Chair of the PIDC, encourage members to continue participating fully in the PIDC family. Working together is now very important for the PIDC as we look to the future keeping abreast of changing technologies and the increasing sophistication of those wanting to undertake illegal activities in the Pacific.

I wish you all well in the coming year.

From the Head of Secretariat...



Viliami Lolohea the Head of the PIDC Secretariat writes:

Bula Vinaka to all our members! It's the end of the year 2008.

I take this opportunity to give you a run down of PIDC activities this year that have kept us in touch with our members. Mr. Banner-Martin, Commissioner of Police for New Caledonia and Wallis & Futuna successfully hosted the first Management Board meeting. The Board members, Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Palau convened for two days in Noumea. A key recommendation from New Caledonia was assigning the secretariat to establish a group to review the PIDC Strategic Plan 2005 – 2008 and present a 3 year plan at the annual conference in Papua New Guinea.

A review group was formed, comprising of Australia, New Zealand, Samoa, New Caledonia, Solomon, CNMI and Papua New Guinea; the group was a good representation of member countries across the region with different population size, and immigration structure and Dr. Lesi was asked to facilitate. The group met twice leading up to the 2nd MB meeting held in Brisbane in July.

The 12th annual meeting of the heads of immigration was supposed to be held in Papua New Guinea but had to be shifted at the last minute to Brisbane, Australia. The current Chair, Samoa, was re-elected for another term of 12 months. In his keynote address, the Chair Poloma Komiti thanked Australia for hosting the meeting in Brisbane at short notice, enabling the Conference to go ahead and the participants to attend it.

Illegal Migration in the Pacific

As you know, importantly, the PIDC has set down its path and direction for the next 3 years by endorsing its Strategic Plan 2009 – 2012 and Work Plan 2009. In this new plan, the PIDC reiterated

its alignment with the vision of the Pacific Leaders as expressed in the Auckland Declaration in 2004 and the Pacific Plan. The Strategic Plan 2009 – 2012 reflects a strong sense of regionalism while maintaining the national sovereignty of respective member states and their national programmes. As for the Work Plan for 2009, it comprises of some significant work assignments that the secretariat is committed to complete.

On the field, some of our stakeholders were rolling out immigration projects and trainings. The Pacific Region Immigration Identity Project (PRIIP) is well under way with the team having completed workshops in Palau, Kiribati and the Cook Islands. There has been very positive feedback on the PRIIP: as a result of the PRIIP workshop Mr. Burebure, Director of Immigration in Kiribati is the Chair of the Combined Law Enforcement Group and conducts regular briefings with his counterparts. The team will again visit Cook Islands in February 09.

This year again in August DIAC, INZ and PIFS sponsored the 3-day workshop Document Examination and Principal Applications in Vanuatu which was delivered by DIAC officials. A total of 20 immigration officers from New Zealand, Kiribati, Samoa, Marshall Islands, Solomon's and Vanuatu took part in the training which focused on the security features of passports, and how to examine them and spot fraudulent travel documents. The secretariat is happy it had the opportunity to send one of its staff Akuila Ratu.



Viliami in discussion with Akuila at the Secretariat Office.



PIDCs' 2007 People Smuggling, Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration Report makes clear that illegal migration, including human trafficking and people smuggling is not just occurring in isolated incidents in the Pacific.

As international arrivals continue to grow in the region, illegal movements of foreign nationals within the region also continue to grow. Two million people passed through the Pacific island borders in 2007 where an estimated 1.0 million of these were visitors. The size of unlawfully residing population in the Pacific is extremely difficult to estimate. However it is estimated that 0.15 percent of Pacific Islands population are unlawfully present.

The overall picture of illegal migration throughout the Pacific is one of great diversity. For example, members reported refusing entry to African nationals from Djibouti, Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa and Tunisia; they reported victims of trafficking from China, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam; they returned South American nationals to Surinam and Brazil; detected unlawfully residing populations from all over Asia; and identified people smugglers from Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom.



Tourists travel in large numbers to the Pacific to enjoy the beautiful undisturbed scenery and experience island life.

In 2007, people smuggling – facilitating the illegal entry of a person for profit – was reported by the majority of PIDC members. There were 114 instances detected, resulting in 10 prosecutions. Source countries were identified across Asia and the Middle East, with China and the Asian sub-continent countries particularly prominent.

Importantly distinct from people smuggling the act of human trafficking is the acquisition of people by improper means such as force, fraud or deception, with the aim of exploiting them. Six members reported a reason to believe trafficking into their territory occurred. The acts of people smuggling and human trafficking come under the United Nations Conventions against Transnational Organised Crime in the form of two protocols. Although only a few members are signatories to the protocols, the majority have enacted appropriate legislation, with further members developing suitable laws.

Tackling issues of people smuggling, human trafficking and other issues highlighted in the report relating to returns, asylum seekers and vessel movements remains a great challenge for Immigration agencies and other border management organizations. However with the support of the PIDC it is a challenge that can be overcome.



Kiribati Immigration officers verifying and approving a visitor's travel documents on arrival in Tarawa.

Learning New Investigative Skills

Ioane Awerika, based at Bairiki, Tarawa in Kiribati, participated at the Advanced Document Examination Training held in Vanuatu in August 2008. He was one of the 17 immigration officers from the Cook Islands, Fiji, Marshal Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu that took part in the training.

For Ioane the training was an eye opener equipping him with investigative skills to use in the field. Equally fulfilling was the networking he developed with his counterparts in the region. Ioane also learnt the increasing sophistication of criminals in trying to beat border control systems.

The training certainly provided the perfect platform for participants like Ioane to update themselves with the latest trends in fraud documents and with skill they could employ to track and identify illegal documents at their border. Additionally on his return to Kiribati Ioane has been acting as a tutor to his peers at Kiribati Immigration in Bairiki.

Ioane has been utilising his newly acquired skills by teaching his fellow colleagues in Bairiki the finer art of document examination.

Ioane, like other participants at the Vanuatu Document Examination Training course highly recommended the practicality and applicability of the training to his workplace. Ioane has been able to apply the skills acquired from the training in cases requiring expert document inspection.

Ioane now continues his work in Bairiki, Kiribati feeling more confident in dealing with fraudulent documents. Should you visit Kiribati, be assured that Ioane is at the frontline, ensuring that proper investigative checks are made on all passports. Yours wouldn't be an exception to the investigative eyes of Ioane.



Ioane sitting at far right listening attentively to David Godfrey (left) the Document Examination Instructor explaining the finer points of document examination in the Le Meridian in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

Joseph Giramur Shares his Thoughts



Joseph Giramur at his desk in Palau.

PIDC congratulates Joseph Giramur on his promotion as Director of Immigration in Palau. Leading up to his latest appointment, Joseph was the Immigration Supervisor and is well known amongst PIDC members after serving as the PIDC Chair in 2004 and being a PIDC Management Board Member for the last five years. Joseph also had a experienced colorful career with the US Army before joining Palau Immigration. He had served in Vietnam, USA, Alaska, Germany, South America and Okinawa, during which he had earned the Purple Heart medal among 27 other decorated medals. Joseph has brought a vast knowledge of experience in border control into Palau Immigration.

Joseph Giramur shared his views about Palau's involvement with PIDC during the first Management Board meeting in Noumea, "Palau's involvement with PIDC has been one of active engagement and more so as a Management Board member in the last couple of years".

"One of the major benefits Palau Immigration has been able to derive from the PIDC as a member is the lessons member countries share on immigration issues" Joseph said.

Lessons learnt by PIDC members have given Palau the opportunity to access information on immigration best practices throughout the region. Palau normally draws lessons from members' experiences and addresses similar issues at home on such successful practices. "Even though countries are in different environments and jurisdictions, immigration agencies often deal with the same issues at

their borders". PIDC has enabled Palau Immigration to develop its regional and international networks through mutual cooperation and sharing of information on immigration issues such as deportation, removals and overstayers.

The 2007 Exercise Paradise gave Palau and participants from Australia, Samoa, Tonga and New Zealand law enforcement agencies the opportunity to learn how the process between international borders operates in reality. The exercise revealed how important contacts and networks have become in making removals in the region run smoothly.

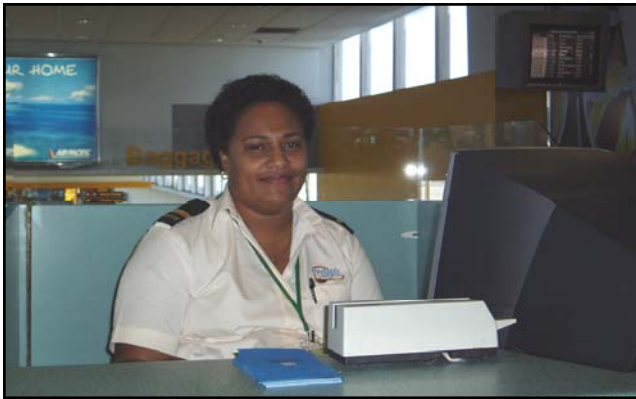
A desire to engage in national and international networks has motivated Palau Immigration to sign a cooperative agreement establishing an inter-agency group. This inter-agency group helps Palau immigration combat transnational crime, terrorism and criminal activities. Palau immigration continues to support this programme and encourages other PIDC members to participate fully in PIDC-led regional initiatives.



The Palau national inter-agency team busy at work in one of its meetings following the signing of the cooperative agreement.

Why do we need to strengthen the PIDC Immigration Intelligence Bulletin?

Since the first publication of the PIDC Immigration Intelligence Bulletin in 2004 the Secretariat has continued to build on strengthening the quality of intelligence reports that's provided to its membership. The PIDC Immigration Intelligence network is coordinated by the Secretariat Office



The PIDC Immigration Intelligence Bulletin provides important information in real time to frontline officers at the airport who are alerted to the arrival of unwanted visitors in a members country.

based in Suva, Fiji. Today, the PIDC immigration intelligence network has become an important component of the PIDCs' strategy to enhance border security while facilitating legitimate travel through members' borders. It has been set in place to promote information sharing with all PIDC members and law enforcement partners in the region.

The increased sophistication of fraudulent activities, which range from small scale criminal operators to the trans-national crime syndicates, has seen a greater need to develop and strengthen the capacity and quality of intelligence network within the region. Increasing globalization has increased the complexity of migration in the region.

By sharing information to build better intelligence trends we can tackle fraudulent and illegal activities together. The PIDC-produced Immigration Intelligence Bulletin provides this valuable tool in the form of reliable information in real time. The Secretariat continues to work towards strengthening this intelligence network and encourages Members to continue supporting this valuable ally – The PIDC Immigration Intelligence Bulletin.



Intelligence Information within the PIDC network becomes crucial in removals or arrest of illegal immigrants moving between international jurisdictions as revealed in the 2007 Exercise Paradise in Samoa.

PIDC Welcomes New Project Officer



Taya Fabijanic the new PIDC Project Officer.

The PIDC welcomes Taya Fabijanic as their new project officer. Taya is currently developing a core skills and knowledge curriculum for immigration officers in Pacific. She is also developing PIDC's new secondment programme for immigration officers.

Throughout late 2008 Taya has sent learning needs surveys to member States and observed work in PNG and Fiji's Immigration agencies. In early 2009 Taya is contacting different immigration agencies, asking for their advice on what immigration officers need to be trained in.

In observing the work in, she is starting to learn the unique challenges working in the Pacific can bring. "I am learning every day how different challenges can happen and different strategies can work," says Taya. "A lot of what I am doing now is just listening and learning with the hope to develop something that helps busy agencies train new staff on the skills they need.

There are a lot of possibilities in what can be done in the Pacific region, but a lot of listening needs to be done to make sure those possibilities will work."

Taya is placed within the PIDC for 12 months, ending in October 2009. She comes from the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship, where she has worked in both training and operational capacities. Taya can be contacted through taya@pidcsec.org for feedback or to ask a question.

Briefly in 2008.....

Immigration issues under the spotlight

In 2008 like in previous years immigration news was rarely far from the headlines. So as the year draws to a close, we take a look back at some of the immigration issues that hit the news in the Pacific.

January 07 - Two ringleaders of a prostitution racket in American Samoa, , both Chinese nationals were sentenced in a federal court in Hawaii for their roles in conspiring to force women into prostitution in American Samoa.

April 15 - The Australian ambassador to the Federated State of Micronesia (FSM) launched a new computerized border management system for the FSM. The new system networks the National Immigration Office in Palikir, the four states immigration officers, the four international airports and patrol ships.

May 21 - A new Papua New Guinea (PNG) Immigration and Citizenship Service office was set up to improve the processing of immigration matters. Government allocated K4.2 million (US\$.15 million) to set up the office. Manpower was expected to increase from 18 to 72 personnel.

June 12 - Fiji Immigration officials uncovered an education scam after an Indian national was stopped at the Nadi International Airport.



Vanuatu Immigration Officers attending the advanced document examination training in Port Vila, Vanuatu.

June 19 - Palau collaborated with other countries such as the Philippines, Australia and Mongolia in the implementation of an information sharing website to strengthen the fight against human smuggling and trafficking.

July 4 - The New Zealand Government announced that selection processes had begun for Pacific Islanders wanting to enter the country under the Pacific Access category.

August 4 - Fiji's Immigration Department issued 40,000 passports this year netting close to FJ\$3 million.

September 25 - Fiji Police charged an Indo-Fijian man who was wanted in Vanuatu in connection with the country's biggest ever fraud investigation. The suspect was also facing charges of impersonation after he allegedly obtained passports on several occasions under different names.

October 6 - Five Torres Strait residents of Australia, detained in Papua are facing jail sentences of between five and twelve years for illegally entering the Indonesia province in an aeroplane.

October 13 - The British Government announced that they would start issuing identity cards to Pacific Islanders or any foreign national living in the United Kingdom from November 2008. The new credit-card sized document shows the holders photograph, name, date of birth, nationality and immigration status. A secure electronic chip also holds their biometric details, including fingerprints and a digital face image.

November 18 - Approximately 800 Tongan Seasonal Workers were expected to leave Tonga to work in the Australian horticulture industry in July 2009.

November 21 - Former Fijian citizens were now entitled to obtain permanent residency status in 2009.

December 17 - Detectives in Papua New Guinea and Hong Kong smashed a Chinese human smuggling network operating between the two countries. The network was believed to involve nationals from PNG and China. PNG Police are now working with their Hong Kong counterparts to track down those who had received the passports as they believed there were more passports when they were stolen and taken over to Hong Kong.

Photo Gallery of the PIDC Family



Management Board members tucking into dinner.



Cook Island Immigration staff with counterparts from Immigration New Zealand.



David Godfrey demonstrates how to handle documents.



Samoa Immigration Officers discussing matters with their INZ - Samoa counterparts.



David Stewart (left) of the Australian Department of Immigration and Citizenship and James Nawareng of the Vanuatu Immigration Department after signing an agreement to roll out the Edison Programme in Vanuatu.



Management Board members deep in discussion at their meeting in Noumea, New Caledonia.



The 2008 Strategic Plan Review Committee meeting in session.



Angelique and Christian of the New Caledonia Border Police.



Management Board members with the French High Commissioner (third from right) in New Caledonia.



Helon of the Marshal Islands busy taking notes during the Vanuatu document examination training.



Participants at the Vanuatu document examination training.



Participants at the 2008 annual conference take some time off from their busy schedule to admire the streets of Brisbane.

