

Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference NEWSLETTER



July 2009

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Identity fraud is reportedly one of the fastest growing crimes and is becoming an increasing regional problem due to emerging and rapidly evolving technologies which enable such crimes to be committed.

PIDC members have reported experiencing a rise in identity fraud at their borders. Members have experienced frauds where impostors travel on false identity documents that have either been obtained illegally or fabricated out of original documents.

The number of identity fraud cases detected has been rising significantly ever since data has been captured in the PIDC Annual Collection Plan and PIDC Immigration Intelligence Bulletins. The increasing cases of identity fraud has been influenced by the growing global connections that the Pacific region now has with the outside world ranging from the Asian, European, African, Middle-Eastern, South American and North American region. With Pacific island states and territories experiencing a surge in visitor arrival numbers, it has also attracted its share of criminal elements bent towards exploiting our border control systems and processes.

However, members have been vigilant at their borders in refusing entry and arresting fraudsters. Members have reported identifying false or altered immigration documents, genuine documents fraudulently obtained, and false or altered supporting documents as well as impostors. However Identity fraud underpins many forms of immigration crime and this continues to be a major area of concern.

The growing concern of identity fraud and immigration related crimes within the region, has been an underlying factor behind PIDCs' prioritization of immigration programmes and trainings in the area of document examination and intelligence analysis within its membership. The Pacific Region Identity Programme, PIDC document examination trainings and intelligence training PIDC coordinates in the region are crucial to strengthening members' expertise and capacity in the area of identity fraud and immigration related crime.

Such programmes and trainings provide the ideal opportunity for members to up-skill immigration officers' in addition to alerting members to the latest trends in identity fraud within the Pacific region.

Calendar of events

- PIDC Institutional Review Meeting: 21 July 2009*
- PIDC Management Board Meeting: 22 - 23 July 2009*
- PIDC Regional Document Examination Course: 8 - 10 September 2009*



From the Chairman...



Poloma Komiti the PIDC Chair writes:

Talofa and Greetings to all our members. 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 of strengthening PIDC's profile at national, regional and international level.

2009 presents yet another year of challenges as we work hard to improve immigration services as well as keeping abreast to changing technologies and the increasing sophistication of those wanting to undertake illegal activities in the region. We shall stand firm in the face of these challenges.

The commissioning of the 2009 PIDC Institutional Review at the first PIDC Management Board meeting held in Palau in early March this year, recognises the need for PIDC to move towards delivering more services of value to members across the wider spectrum of immigration issues in the region. Your openness in sharing your thoughts in this review process will provide an excellent basis of learning and preparing for the future.

My next major task for the PIDC will be to chair the second Management Board meeting in July 2009. This provides an excellent opportunity for us to review the results of the PIDC Institutional Review.

The year ahead looks busy for everyone and we should carry on the good battle. I, as Chair of the PIDC, encourage members to continue participating fully in the PIDC family. Working together and upholding the principles of openness and trust is now very important for the PIDC as we look to the future. I wish you all well.

From the Head of Secretariat...



Viliami Lolohea the PIDC Head of Secretariat writes:

Bula Vinaka to all our members! I welcome you to another year of challenges. The PIDC Secretariat has been busy ever since the 2008 annual conference. The endorsement of the 2009-12 Strategic Plan confirmed and reinforced the commitment of our membership to the PIDC family. It also laid the platform for the 2009 period as we continue to work towards achieving the objectives of the new strategic plan.

Since the beginning of this year PIDC has facilitated a scoping mission by the International Organisation for Migration to Kiribati to ensure that Kiribati complies with machine readable passports by 2010. The Pacific Region Immigration Identity Project (PRIIP) is well under way with the team having completed workshops in Palau, Kiribati and the Cook Islands. The PIDC with Customs has successfully run an intelligence officer training course in April and June with more training expected to roll out in the year. DIAC with the Secretariat is currently coordinating a document examination training expected to be convened in September.

Palau was able to successfully host the first Management Board meeting in early March. The meeting was also a first for its new members Guam and the Solomon Islands who were joined by Australia, New Zealand and Samoa including Palau as an Observer. One important decision emerging out of this meeting was the commissioning of the PIDC Institutional Review. This will mark a new and important chapter in the history of the PIDC as we begin assessing our organization with an open mind to fundamental changes which should augur well for the PIDC family in the future. It is also with this open mind that I encourage all members

to contribute to this very important review. Your opinions about the strengths and weaknesses of the PIDC, and its success in delivering results, will make an important contribution to the Review .

New Caledonia is expected to host this year's annual conference and the Secretariat looks forward to meeting everyone in Noumea. It is certainly turning out to be a busy year for everyone and we urge everyone to be firm in the good cause of protecting our borders .

2009 PIDC Institutional Review



PIDC Management Board members attending the first board meeting for 2009 in Palau.

The Pacific Immigration Directors Conference (PIDC) has made great strides from its origin since 1996 in delivering outcomes to membership based on objectives of past and present Strategic Plans.

The organisation has grown over the years and with it new responsibilities which has been taken on board by the organisation. Since the 1990s, the PIDC has incrementally put the building blocks in place for greater cooperation and collaboration across the region on immigration matters, with an immediate focus on border security.

The PIDC Management Board during its first meeting for 2009 recognised the growing need to move towards delivering more services of value to its members across the wider spectrum of immigration issues, subsequently commissioning an independent review of the PIDC to assess the arrangements required and steps needed for PIDC to be a sustainable and viable organisation in the future. The purpose of the Review is to review the current arrangements of the PIDC;



The PIDC Chairman Poloma Komiti (standing) addressing His Excellency the President of Palau and members of Cabinet.

assess how effective the current arrangements are; and make recommendations on what arrangements are needed in the future to support the PIDC. The key areas that the Review team will be assessing include governance and funding arrangements, service delivery modes, resourcing levels, outputs and outcomes, PIDC as an entity and Government support.

The Review Team has already begun work following their appointment. The PIDC Secretariat based in Fiji has hosted the Review Team from 2 – 9 June 2009. During their visit the Review Team met with government, regional and international stakeholders based in Fiji. They have also conducted interviews with other regional and international stakeholders located within the region. A survey questionnaire has also been sent out to members with an additional working group committee meeting scheduled for July with PIDC Member representatives from the Melanesian, Micronesian and Polynesian region.

Responses from all stakeholders will be crucial to the review process as it provides the Review Team with a reliable source of assessment on PIDC's strengths and weaknesses. The institutional review is expected to further strengthen PIDC's ability to deliver targeted services of value to its wider membership.

Its past and present plans has guided the organisation successfully while the recommendations from this years institutional review is intended to carry the organisation sustainably into the future as we build on the successful platform that has been achieved.

Update on PIDC Core Skills and Curriculum Project

The PIDC training project officer, Taya Fabijanic, has been busy developing modules for the Core Skills and Knowledge Curriculum, soon available to member states for comment before the Annual Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference.

The modules currently developed are: Migration overview, Migration Policy and Legislation Overview, Working with Other Stakeholders, Conflict Management and Cultural Awareness. There are a further eight modules in development, including modules on border security skills, business writing skills, professional ethical behaviour and a compliance skills overview.



Lolyna (right) from Palau Immigration in deep discussion with Batiriiki (left) a customs officer from Kiribati during the intelligence training in New Zealand. The curriculum is expected to include an intelligence component to the modules.

The PIDC secretariat recognises that while all these modules are important, it is particularly excited on the development of modules covering border security skill-sets. A review committee comprising of member state representatives from the Micronesian, Polynesian and Melanesian regions will be providing comment on the border security modules. Other States will have the opportunity to provide comment via the PIDC website from July to September 2009. If you would like to contact Taya directly for any feedback, she can be contacted on taya@pidcsec.org.

NZ Pacific Regional Liaison Officer

Dean Blakemore is the Immigration New Zealand Regional Liaison Officer (RLO) who has been in this role since January 2007. The position is based



Dean Blakemore at his office in Apia, Samoa

in Samoa but covers the entire Pacific region. The role mitigates risks arising in the Pacific and beyond, which would otherwise impact directly on the region. This is achieved by working closely with Pacific Island Immigration Departments to develop capacity and strengthen border management systems, practices and working connections for the benefit of the region as a whole.

There is a strong networking and relationship building component in the role. In addition to Pacific immigration agencies, key relationships are with the PIDC Secretariat, Australian, Canadian and US counterparts, the Oceania Customs Organisation, and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat. Dean is particularly grateful to the PIDC Secretariat and members, for their ongoing support. Suffice to say it has been an exceptionally busy two and a half years setting up the position and developing a regional network of vital con-



Dean (middle) being escorted by Samoan Police and Immigration Officers during the Operation Paradise exercise in 2007.

tacts. Several projects have been finalised and/or recently commenced including a Border Strengthening and co-operation project in Niue, Vanuatu Passport Upgrade Project, Cook Islands Policy and Legislative Review & Upgrade, Immigration and Customs Intelligence Training Programme, Tuvalu Immigration Legislation Upgrade and other activi-

ties. Within Immigration NZ, projects have included training of Pacific-based visa and verification



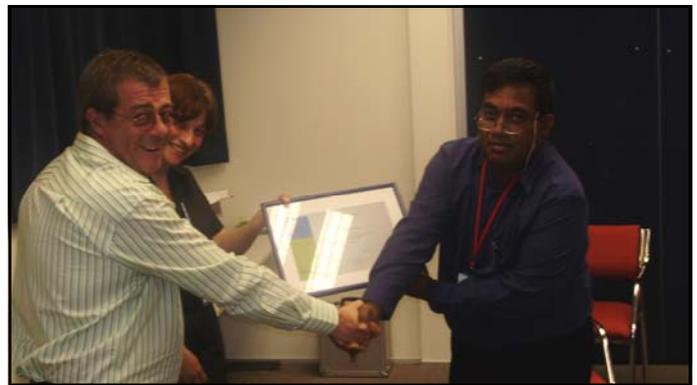
Dean (middle at the back) with the Cook Islands Immigration staff during one of his visit to the Cook Islands

officers, developing and establishing a Third Country National Early Notification Initiative. Assistance has been given to several PICs with the repatriation of third country nationals who have become effectively stranded in the Pacific by having no travel documents or other means to depart from the region. Dean mentions that it has been a real privilege to be part of the Pacific community. *“It has been a highly fulfilling role both personally and professionally and I am grateful for the support I have received particularly from my colleagues in the Pacific, as without their support setting up the role would have been virtually impossible.”* Please feel free to contact Dean directly on any issues with links to the Pacific.

immigration and customs officers in Auckland, New Zealand from 1-6 June 2009. 12 participants from the Solomon Islands, Palau, Vanuatu, Kiribati and two Secretariat staff from the Oceania Customs Organisation and the Pacific Immigration Directors Conference attended the first intelligence officer training programme for 2009.

The programme was intended to build national and organisational intelligence capability in addition to strengthening the networks between Pacific Island Customs and Immigration agencies.

During the one week course a number of participants shared their thoughts on what the training



Burebure (right) receiving his certificate from Shaun (INZ) and Cordula (NZ Customs) after successfully completing the intelligence course.

did for them. Samuel of Vanuatu Immigration highlighted that the course was an opportunity to enhance his investigative and analytical skills in addition to understanding the finer details of information collection, exchange and analysis.

Burebure Kaririki from Kiribati Immigration returned to Kiribati knowing that he would be able to transfer some of these newly acquired skills to his junior officers. The course allowed him to better understand the role intelligence plays within immigration departments and how intelligence networks in Kiribati can better coordinate with PIDC intelligence networks.

Felise Finau in delivering the participants vote of thanks to the Course Coordinators at the completion of the course mentioned how the training had improved the skills of all participants, enhancing their understanding of information analysis and how correct and timely alerts enabled border

First Intelligence Officer Training Hailed a Success



Participants with their training certificates at the completion of the joint intelligence officer training that was recently held in Auckland, NZ.

Immigration New Zealand (INZ) and the New Zealand Customs Service (NZCS) hosted the first intelligence Officer training programme for



Henry (Vanuatu Customs) and Samuel (Vanuatu Immigration) busy taking notes during the intelligence course.

agencies to put in place timely strategic mechanisms that protected their borders from criminal elements.

One of the highlights of the training programme was the field tours participants took when they visited the Auckland Airport and New Zealand National Targeting Centre. Participants were able to study how Customs, Immigration, Quarantine and Police worked together in exchanging and analysing information.

This was in addition to how intelligence alerts were exchanged between agencies in ensuring that their borders were secure from criminal



A New Zealand Customs Officer explaining how their information exchange system operates to course participants.

elements. The course was an eye opener for all participants equipping them with analytical and investigative skills, in addition to enhancing their understanding of information exchange and its links to border control operations. What was more fulfilling about the training experience was the networking that was developed with immigration and customs counterparts in the region. Participants were able to share their experiences and exchange ideas on how cases were handled. Additionally participants were able to draw a lot of lessons from other participants' experiences. The training had certainly provided the perfect platform for participants to update investigative and analytical skills that they could employ to track and arrest criminal elements. Participants at the Intelligence officer training course have highly recommended

the practicality and most importantly the applicability of the training to their respective work places.

2009 Forum Regional Security Committee Meeting



Delegates in a session at the 2009 FRSC that was held at the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat in Fiji. (Photo: courtesy of PIFS)

The Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat recently concluded the 2009 Forum Regional Security Committee meeting. At the meeting the Forum Secretariat Law Enforcement Unit (LEU) tabled the 2009 Pacific Transnational Crime Assessment. This assessment is developed in cooperation with specialist regional law enforcement agencies and Secretariats, including the PIDC, and highlights ongoing transnational criminal activity in the Pacific region.

The Pacific region continues to face complex law enforcement challenges and support to agencies responsible for law enforcement remains a high priority for the Forum Secretariat as well as all countries in the region. These challenges will likely increase as the economic impacts on the global economy create further insecurity, and in some cases act as a catalyst for criminality.

From the variety of investigations undertaken in the last year the region continues to be targeted by individuals and groups attempting to undertake a range of transnational criminal activity. These include the illicit movement of drugs, weapons and people. There are also incidences of new organised crime groups and entities attempting to exploit vulnerabilities in banking and financial sectors. Importantly, the meeting supported the development of collaborative projects between Members,

the Forum Secretariat and law enforcement stakeholders including the PIDC to tackle these issues. There are also several key new areas that the Forum Secretariat and LEU will be engaging in which include, Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW); Security Sector Governance (SSG); and Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV).

The LEU has developed a SALW project focusing upon the control of ammunition for consideration at next year's FRSC meeting. This initiative will help to highlight how the Pacific is responding to concerns in the international community regarding global small arms and light weapons control. SSG is a relatively recent concept and constitutes a framework through which parliament and accountability institutions, civil society, the media and the security sector, interact to ensure reform, transparency, and continuous oversight. Immigration agencies also comprise part of the security sector and so this initiative will include the membership of the PIDC.

PIDC Welcomes New Administration Officer



Rachael Varea the new PIDC Administration Officer

The PIDC welcomes Ms Rachael Varea as their new Administration Officer. Ms. Varea who joined the PIDC Secretariat on the 10th of February 2009 brings on board the secretariat team a high level of experience and expertise in the area of administration.

She has had 7 years of management and project administration experience in various organisations ranging from commercial companies, non governmental organizations to regional and international organizations prior to joining the PIDC Secretariat. Apart from bringing Administration and Financial expertise to the secretariat, Ms Rachael also brings along some website management experience. Rachael looks forward to working with PIDC members in the coming months as we gear ourselves to our annual conference. Her arrival to the PIDC Secretariat comes at a crucial time when the PIDC continues to grow as an organization.

With her vast experience and knowledge in the area of administration, she will certainly be an asset to the Secretariat team. We warmly welcome her to the PIDC Family.

PIDC Departures and Arrivals



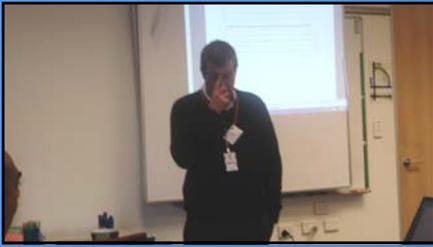
David Stewart receives a gift from Eva during a farewell function that was organised by the DIAC, Suva branch.

Since the last newsletter in December 2008 there have been a number of staff changes in the region. Therefore the PIDC would like to take this opportunity to thank three former Management Board members for their long and active involvement with PIDC over the years.

David Stewart of the Australian Department of Immigration who has taken up a new appointment within the Australian Government. Anita Reedy of Immigration New Zealand who has moved on to the New Zealand Prime Ministers Office. Jeffery Wickham the Solomon Islands Immigration Permanent Secretary who has also been transferred to a new appointment within the Solomon Islands civil service. Their contribution to the PIDC especially as Management Board members providing advice and direction to the Organisation has been valuable and greatly appreciated. We wish them well in their new appointment.

With the departures of these members, there have also been new additions to the PIDC family. Susan Pullar the new Regional Director based at the Australian DIAC in Suva who now replaces David Stewart; Major Nemani Vuniwaqa the new Fiji Immigration Director and Jeffery Deve the Solomon Islands Immigration Director who has resumed work after returning from further studies. We welcome these officers and wish them well in their new appointments.

PIF Secretariat



Burebure of Kiribati listens attentively to the intelligence course tutor.



Members in discussion during the first Board meeting that was recently held in Palau.



Lolyna from Palau Immigration taking notes during the first intelligence course



Faafouina Milford (left) the Assistant CEO of Samoa Immigration and Joe Giramur (right) the Palau Immigration Director taking a break from the Management Board meeting.



Viliani the Head of Secretariat admiring and wondering why this building in Palau is named PIDC.



Intelligence course participants listen attentively to a briefing on NZ customs intelligence work.



David saying some last words to DIAC staff in Suva



Intelligence course participants listen attentively to Customs Officers on a guided tour of the NZ National Targeting Center



Joseph Giramur (right) and Api Fiso (left) enjoying a light moment away from the serious discussions of management board matters.

Shaun caught on camera stressing a point during the intelligence course that was recently held in NZ.