



# Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference Newsletter

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## Message from the Chair

Warm greetings to the PIDC family.

Our organisation will long remember 2016 as a busy year marked by rapid change and growth. Firstly, PIDC now has legal entity status. This status finally gives the Secretariat the ability to more effectively provide better service to Members to advance initiatives in several agreed priority areas. This is great news for Members and a significant achievement for us all. For those who have participated or supported in making this long held PIDC dream a reality, we as an organisation thank you for your service and your support.

Secondly, PIDC now also has a new location. After being hosted in Fiji for many years the Secretariat as of August 2016 is now based out of Apia, Samoa. On behalf of Members I have thanked the Government of Fiji for their warm support over the years and have also thanked Samoa for offering to host the Secretariat. As we go forward and grow from strength to strength as a PIDC family, we will continue to look to Fiji, Samoa and other founding Members of the PIDC organisation for guidance and support.

Finally, PIDC has finalised a new set of foundation documents to guide its operations and the activities of its Secretariat. We have finalised new financial, governance and employee regulations and also aligned strategic performance measures with donor funding objectives to ensure more streamlined approaches. On top of the recruitment of a new head of Secretariat and the various capacity building activities that PIDC has supported, like I stated earlier, 2016 has been a busy year.

However, even with these significant changes and the various tasks completed, there is still much work to be done. We must now look to focus on mapping out a clearer and more strategic direction for our organisation. It is essential we now move to identify what we want to see occur in the future for our region and for our individual administrations and work towards developing strategies and activities to make these a reality. As such, the PIDC Board is now looking to shift its focus from supporting the **Secretariat's transition** to Apia and acquisition of legal entity status, which has been a necessary priority for the past 18 months, to a more strategic approach on how to best place the organisation in meeting its key objectives in supporting Members. We look forward to the support and engagement of the wider Membership and the Secretariat as we undertake this important work and map out our future together as an organisation. As your current



Chair, these are exciting times indeed.

On that note, I would like to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a prosperous new year.

Damien Jacklick  
Chairperson of PIDC



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## Secretariat Corner



Greetings to you all from the PIDC Secretariat office in Apia.

We are happy to re-launch the PIDC Newsletter which will allow Members to be briefed and kept up to date on a

regular basis of activities occurring within our immigration family. This Newsletter will be released on a quarterly basis and we encourage all Members to contribute domestic news items and issues of interest for future publications.

In terms of the establishment of the Secretariat in Apia, with the arrival of Akui-la's family last month to Samoa, all staff and their families are now settled in Apia for their first Samoan Christmas.

We are happy to advise that the Secretariat shifted into its new permanent office in the Development Bank of Samoa last month and we would like to extend a big thank you to Agafili Shem Leo and Samoa Immigration for hosting the Secretariat temporarily since August in one of the vacant offices assigned for Samoan Cabinet Ministers and also for the assistance in transporting office equipment and furniture.

While the final shift into the new offices in November was straight forward in itself, it represented a significant milestone given the number of decisions and activities undertaken by the Board, Secretariat, Members and the host government leading up to its final achievement. A big congratulations to all those involved and all the hard work they put in.

In terms of providing an update of some of the key activities undertaken by the Board and Secretariat since PIDC Secretariat shifted to Apia include:

- finalising of all staff employment and insurance contracts as well as immigration and tax issues;
- finalising review of PIDC Foundation documents as agreed to by Members

at the 2016 Regular Annual Meeting;

- tender for construction contractors and supervision of office works;
- negotiation of office service contracts and purchase of office equipment and furniture;
- coordination of October PIDC Board meeting in Cook Islands;
- provision of support for two DIBP funded workshops in Australia on Facial recognition and vessel search;
- provision of support for regional workshops or meetings linked to PIDC interests hosted by UNHCR, UNODC, PICP and OCO; and
- hosting of a sub-regional workshop to update the PIDC Model Legislative Framework.

In terms of upcoming priorities for the first half of 2017, the Secretariat is committed to implementing a number of activities mandated by both the PIDC Board and Members. With the support of Members, the Secretariat is looking to complete the drafting of the Annual PIDC Report on Irregular Migration in the Pacific, finalise Members' Training Needs Analysis, support the formation and activities of a Working Group on Information Sharing, support a legislative framework gap analysis for up to three Members, organise and host a regional executive level Immigration Leadership and Management programme, finalise the PIDC Model Legislative Framework and support the immigration related decisions in 2016 by Pacific Islands Forum Leaders on advancing labour mobility and a region wide Business Travel Card.

A crucial activity we would also like to highlight for Members is the agreed process for renaming the organisation as agreed to in Majuro. Members are encouraged to participate and support the renaming process for the organisation and are reminded to submit proposed names and logos for consideration by 20 January 2017.

We look forward to engaging with Members to advance PIDC activities in 2017 and are excited with the work to be undertaken.

On that note, the Secretariat would like to wish all its Members, partner organisations and stakeholders a peaceful and tranquil festive season and the very best for 2017.

*While the final shift from the temporary office space into the new offices was relatively straight forward, it represented a significant milestone given the hard work undertaken by the Board, Secretariat, Members and the host government....*



## PIDC Secretariat relocates to Samoa



*Signing of the Headquarters Agreement between the Government of Samoa and the PIDC Board*

*The Conference also adopted a change of name from the initial “South Pacific Immigration Directors” (SPID) Conference to “Pacific Immigration Directors Conference”. This change in name was made to broaden its membership to include other Independent territories and states in the Pacific.*

The PIDC Secretariat officially relocated to Samoa and formally began operations in Apia from August 2016. PIDC now operates as a legal entity status in Samoa and has been provided diplomatic privileges under its headquarters agreement with the Samoan Government.

Our journey to Samoa began when PIDC was established in 1996. Members at that first meeting decided to set sail on a “vaka” that has taken us to where we are now and setting our sights further into the horizon knowing that we can only grow bigger and stronger from this point forward.

Prior to 1996 Immigration agencies in the region did not have any regular annual forum to meet, discuss and pursue common objectives on immigration issues affecting the Pacific Islands. As part of its ongoing effort to implement the objectives of the Honiara Declaration, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat organised and funded the inaugural Conference in 1996 that initially brought together Immigration Directors from Forum member countries. The Pacific Islands Forum Secretary General at this meeting noted that it was up to delegates to decide how best to coordinate and cooperate in the future.

Consequently members at this first conference in 1996 decided to continue holding this meeting as an annual forum as it provided the only platform for discussions on how immigration agencies could strengthen regional cooperation but more importantly learn and adopt international standards and best practises of protecting our borders.

At its second Annual Conference in 1997, members considered and adopted a Charter that established the objectives, roles and responsibilities of the Conference. The Conference also adopted a change of name from the initial “South Pacific Immigration Directors” (SPID) Conference to “Pacific

Immigration Directors Conference”. This change in name was made to broaden its membership to include other Independent territories and states in the Pacific.

In 2001 members decided that PIDC should have a permanent Secretariat, which was initially based in Brisbane, Australia. In 2002, with the assistance of the Forum Secretariat and Fiji Immigration, the PIDC Secretariat was relocated to Suva and was housed within the Pacific Islands Forum compound. In 2005 the first seeds to obtain legal entity status were planted when Fiji as the PIDC Chair led discussions on how PIDC needed to obtain legal entity status. It then took the PIDC family another 11 long years of discussions and negotiations culminating with the signing of the Headquarters Agreement in Apia in June 2016.

As the PIDC sets sail into uncharted waters, we can all agree that in spite of our limitations our strength lies in our unity

and collective efforts in working together to address national, regional and global border control issues in the Pacific. The opening of our new office in Samoa signifies this unity and goes a long way to enhancing our service as the regional immigration body for the Pacific.



## PIDC Regular Annual Meeting for 2016



*Delegates representing 17 States and Territories from across the Pacific at the 19th PIDC Regular Annual Meeting held in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands from 19th to 21st July 2016.*

Directors of Immigration representing 17 States and Territories from across the Pacific met for the nineteenth annual conference of the Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference (PIDC), in Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands from 19th to 21st July 2016.

Meeting under the theme of 'New Beginning and Growth', PIDC Members met with representatives of partner regional and international organisations to discuss a number of common immigration issues including the effective management of borders, the collection and sharing of data/information, technical assistance and capacity building activities and the role of labour mobility in economic growth.

In her opening remarks, Her Excellency Madam President, Dr Hilda C. Heine reminded delegates that the need to improve border security and protect borders against irregular migration while simultaneously facilitating the movement of people were national objectives which every sovereign country shared.

Ms Vaosa Epa, Vice Chair of the PIDC and Samoa Public Service Commission member also noted that given the importance of the conference to regional coordination and collaboration, it was satisfying that the organisation had achieved significant milestones over the past twelve months.

Key achievements included the signing of the

Headquarters Agreement between PIDC and the Government of Samoa, the new opening of the Secretariat in Samoa and the recruitment of the new PIDC Head of Secretariat Mr Ioane Alama.

"We are excited to see the establishment of the new Secretariat in Apia and look to moving forward as an organisation to develop activities and programmes that support Members given the ever increasing numbers of people travelling internationally within the region" said Mr Damien Jacklick, PIDC Chair and Head of Immigration for the Republic of the Marshall Islands.



# *Immigration Directors' Conference Organisation Undertaking Renaming Process as the Organisation Rebrands*

Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference (PIDC) has invited its members to submit by 20 January 2017 possible names and logos for the organisation. PIDC was established in 1996 and at its second Annual Conference in 1997 Members considered and adopted its name as the "Pacific Immigration Directors Conference". This initial name reflected the functions of the organisation in its early years where immigration heads would meet annually. It was also made to broaden its membership to include other Independent territories and states in the Pacific. Over the years the functions of the organisation has moved away from annual meetings to now include providing technical assistance and policy advice that supports improvements to the management of international people movement, strengthening border management and security and building capacity for immigration agencies in the Pacific.

Members at the 2016 Annual Conference held in Majuro endorsed the concept to change the name of the PIDC to correctly reflect what the organisation has grown into under its legal and permanent status supported by a Secretariat that is active throughout the year. While there was no reference



*Immigration agencies in the Pacific that were the first to sign the PIDC Memorandum of Understanding marking the final steps to PIDC becoming a legal entity status in 2014.*

*The recommendation would ensure that the proposed new name and logo communicates a clear and vibrant message that reflects the core values and priorities of the org*

to change of logo in the renaming process, the Board has considered using the opportunity to explore a change of logo that is in line with efforts to rebrand the organisation as we continue to explore how we can better communicate the objectives and mission of the organisation.

The Board Governance Sub-Committee will be working closely with the Secretariat to gather and review proposed names for the organisation and subsequently make recommendations to the Board. The recommendation would ensure that the proposed new name and logo communicates a clear and vibrant message that reflects the core values and priorities of the organisation. The selected name will have agreed to a number of set criteria to guide the selection process that includes the relevance of the proposed name and logo to stated PIDC objectives; fitness for purpose; brevity; and appropriateness and impact of acronym. The Board is expected to subsequently select a name that would then be circulated to the wider Membership for its consideration and endorsement.



The selected name and logo with accompanying description will be circulated for Members to consider and possibly endorse by 31 March 2017. At the 2017 regular Annual Meeting, the organisation as part of its activities will officially launch its new name and logo.



## *PIDC Secretariat Office closes its Office in Fiji.*



*These relationships that have been established in Fiji will be strengthened as we begin a new journey working out of our new office in Samoa*

On 31st July 2016, PIDC closed another chapter of its short history when it officially closed its office in Suva after operating in Fiji for twenty years. The first PIDC Office had originally set-up its first office at the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat in 1996 and has progressively outgrown its role from hosting annual meetings to supporting and providing technical expertise and advice to immigration agencies across the Pacific. The organisation has continued to grow and the signing of a Headquarters Agreement in Samoa was a significant milestone for our organisation since it first began exploring legal entity status options in 2005. The signing of the PIDC Headquarters Agreement in June 2016 was the culmination of years of intense discussions and negotiations across the PIDC family as members worked towards obtaining the organisations legal entity status.

Operating out of level 5, FNPF Plaza, Suva in Fiji the PIDC Secretariat had always enjoyed a strong working relationship with all Fijian government stakeholder agencies, regional and international organisations based in Fiji and most importantly with the Fiji Immigration department. These relationships that have been established in Fiji will be strengthened as we begin a new journey working out of our new office in Samoa.

In closing the Secretariats office in Fiji, PIDC Members agreed to donate all PIDC furniture and equipment to a Fijian rural school badly damaged by Cyclone Winston. In 2016 Fiji had been devastated by Cyclone Winston, a record Category 5 hurricane. The Fijian Government had sought donors to support cyclone rehabilitation works with affected schools through an "Adopt a School Programme". PIDC had in this regards selected Nakorotubu Primary School in the province of Ra which is located in one of the hardest hit regions. All office equipment were transported to Nakorotubu Primary School and handed over in a formal ceremony at

the school. A traditional ceremony was accorded to the Secretariat before the signing of the handover documents outlining in detail all items that were handed over in the donation.



The presence of the entire school community including students, teachers, parents and community members was an acknowledgment of the **entire communities' appreciation for the provision of high quality office equipment** that would be utilised by staff and students. Teachers and parents expressed their appreciation to PIDC for the immense donation **as the equipment and office furniture have brightened the life's of teachers, students and parents.** The handover ceremony marked the Secretariat's last official engagement in Fiji as it now begins re-establishing its presence in Samoa .

## PIDC Board Looks to Future for Pacific Islands Security and Growth



Board members in discussion at the recent Board meeting that was hosted by the Cook Islands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Immigration at their department Board room in Rarotonga.

The Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference (PIDC) Board met in Rarotonga from 17 to 19 October 2016. As the Board's first meeting since the PIDC Secretariat's relocation from Fiji to Samoa in August 2016, the pri-

of labour to the region noting that labour was one of the 5 key issues that was recognised in the regional Small Island States Strategy and as such looked forward to the possible support that PIDC could provide Member administrations.



mary theme for the meeting was to finalise remaining transition and policy document matters and reset the organisation's focus to more strategic and outward looking issues to best position the organisation in supporting Member administrations to meet their national obligations moving forward.

To open the meeting, Cook Islands Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Immigration Ms Tapaeru Hermann noted that immigration was a key driver for economic growth and shared the national challenges her administration faced in managing the approximately 130,000 tourists entering a country with a population of 15,000. Ms Hermann acknowledged the importance

PIDC Chair and Head of Marshall Islands Immigration Mr Damien Jacklick in acknowledging the warm invitation by Cook Islands Immigration to host the Board Meeting stated "the PIDC family was established to support Members manage their immigration issues, strengthen their border control measures and enhance their efforts to promote economic growth. We are excited that PIDC has created a solid foundation with the establishment of the Secretariat in Apia and can now look to ensure that this important regional resource can work to meet both the current and future needs of our Members".

Key issues discussed in the Board meeting included the renaming of the PIDC to better reflect the activities, objectives and values of the organisation and the development of work programmes to modernise Members legislative and policy frameworks, build the capacity of PIDC immigration officers, and enhance the capacity of Members to share information to support border control measures. Deputy Director for New Zealand Immigration Mr Toosavili Nigel Bickle acknowledged that immigration, labour mobility and economic growth are strongly linked and this required immigration agencies to now provide policy advice in areas traditionally outside their scope of attention.

## New Zealand's first people trafficking conviction

On 15 September 2016, a jury found Faroz Ali, a New Zealand resident from Fiji, guilty of 15 people trafficking charges and 16 aiding and abetting illegal workers to enter or remain in the country unlawfully. Mr. Ali also pleaded guilty to charges of exploitation, including failing to pay workers the minimum wage.

Mr. Ali's wife and sister-in-law both ran travel agencies in Suva, Fiji and recruited workers to be brought to New Zealand. The workers testified that they were charged large sums of money for the opportunity to work in New Zealand. Mr. Ali, the jury was told, facilitated their unlawful entry into New Zealand and employed them in breach of their visa conditions. The workers were paid little to no money and lived in poor conditions, including being made to sleep on the floor.

The Crown prosecutor told the court, "Instead of having the opportunity to work and make money they were exploited, left with nothing and had to return home to Fiji ashamed and having to explain to the people they had borrowed money from that they had been ripped off." Mr. Ali was sentenced to nine years imprisonment in December 2016.

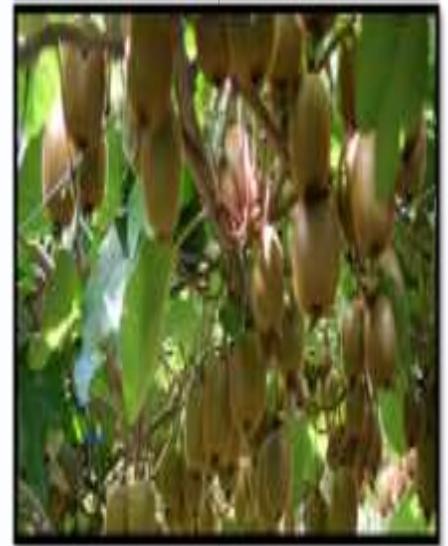
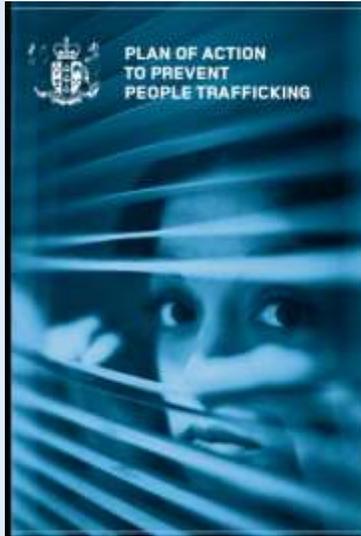
People Trafficking is a serious crime in New Zealand and is punishable under the Crimes Act 1961 with imprisonment for up to 20 years, a fine of \$500,000 or both. New Zealand's whole-of-government approach to combatting people trafficking is encapsulated in the Plan of Action to Prevent People Trafficking, which is led Immigration New Zealand under the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE).

## French Polynesia Immigration Hosts PIDC Head of Secretariat

The French Polynesia Department of Immigration welcomed the Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference (PIDC) Head of Secretariat Mr Ioane ALAMA and provided a tour of the Tahiti-Faa'a International Airport. Mr Alama, who was attending the 45th Pacific Chiefs of Police Conference (PICP) that was held in Tahiti from 19-22 September 17 as an Official Observer was invited along with

officers from New Zealand immigration, police and Customs. The Department hosted the visiting delegation on 21st September 2016 and also provided the visitors with a tour of immigration operation control of sailboats (verification of entry declarations, search for irregular entries) coordinated by the French Polynesia DPAF Nautical Unit in the Tahiti lagoon.

The PIDC Secretariat was appreciative of the opportunity to meet with immigration officials from the French Polynesia Immigration, and discuss lessons on common practices and procedures. Mr Alama stated "PIDC is always looking to share lessons and discuss threats to our borders and we are very grateful for the opportunity to meet with French Polynesia on their home soil to discuss some of these important issues. One key takeaway is French Polynesia's willingness to support regional border protection activities through information sharing and also their eagerness to engage with the wider Pacific Islands immigration community.



**Migrant workers from Fiji were allegedly trafficked to work in the kiwi fruit and construction industries in New Zealand.**



**French Polynesia hosted the 45th Pacific Chiefs of Police Conference (PICP) in September 2016**

## Pacific Protection Learning Programme Integration Workshop

In 2016, the Pacific Protection Learning Programme was launched to assist Pacific Island Countries to develop protection-sensitive and sustainable responses to forced migration and statelessness. Participants from Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu, Palau, Federated States of Micronesia and Solomon Islands



Participants from Fiji, Samoa, Vanuatu, Palau, Federated States of Micronesia and Solomon Islands participating in the UNHCR workshop. (Photo source: UNHCR)

are currently taking part in the inaugural cycle, which started in September 2016 and will be completed in February 2017. The programme includes distance learning modules, mentoring sessions with resource persons, and individual projects. A second cohort of 20 participants to be identified from 14 Pacific countries is expected to be commenced from May to November 2017.

UNHCR Canberra conducted the first

Pacific Protection Learning Programme Integration Workshop in Nadi, Fiji from 7-9 November 2016 with 15 participants from six Pacific Island States and the Head of the Secretariat of the Pacific Immigration Director's Conference. Each of the participants is developing a country-specific proposal on policy development, accession, capacity building and advocacy in consultation with UNHCR Canberra. (Source: UNHCR)

## Facial Image Comparison Assessment Training in Australia

Australia's Department of Immigration and Border Control with the support of PIDC delivered a Facial Image Comparison Assessment Training from 28 November- 02 December 2016 in Canberra, Australia.

The Training course provided participants with advanced skills in detecting imposters. The DIBP trainers were highly skilled and experienced in facial image comparison and imposter detection guided participant through the duration of the course. Recent irregular people movement trends occurring in the region continue to highlight the increasing occurrence of imposter detection at a number of airports in the region. The detection of imposters requires specific skill sets and knowledge of facial image comparison between any travelling document and the presenting traveller. The course continues to be popular amongst immigration agencies and officers continue to develop their detection skills through this specialist facial image course.

## Pacific Regional Protection Meeting

UNHCR and the Government of Fiji jointly hosted the Pacific Regional Protection Meeting on 29-30 November 2016 in Nadi, Fiji, with support of the Pacific Immigration Directors Conference (PIDC). The two-day conference was attended by 30 senior officials, heads of immigration departments and ministry representatives from 13 Pacific Island countries, the Secretariat of the PIDC and observers from the Fiji Legal Aid Commission, Fiji Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Commission and UNDP. The conference provided an opportunity for representatives of Fiji, the Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu to exchange lessons learned and good practices, and to identify key actions necessary to effectively support persons in need of international protection throughout the Pacific. The delegates considered international and local developments relating to mixed migration, refugee protection, statelessness, and climate-induced displacement in the meeting and how these impact on Pacific Island states, with a view to enhanced regional and sub-regional innovation and cooperation. (Source: UNHCR)



Delegates from 13 Pacific Island states participating at the Pacific Regional Protection meeting that was hosted in Fiji. (Photo source: UNHCR)

on Pacific Island states, with a view to enhanced regional and sub-regional innovation and cooperation. (Source: UNHCR)

## PIDC Model Legislative Framework Workshop

The Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference (PIDC) Secretariat hosted a Pacific Immigration Model Legislative Framework workshop in Samoa from December 05-08 as part of efforts to support Members modernise immigration legislation and processes to align with relevant international standards and best practices. Modern and robust legislation forms the foundation for strong organisational processes that should allow PIDC Members to better manage immigration and border control related matters and contribute to national economic growth policy discussions.

The workshop brought together immigration experts from around the Pacific to review PIDC's current model legislative framework. The Chief Executive Officer for the Prime Minister's Office in Samoa Mr Agafili Shem Leo opened the meeting and reiterated the importance of this regional gathering noting that the discussions would help the region identify international standards and best practices relevant and appropriate to our domestic and regional realities. "Whilst we all seek to ensure that we comply with international immigration related obligations and adhere to best practices, the reality is that most of the PIDC Members do not have the financial resources or technical expertise to individually determine what these are".

The weeklong discussions reviewed PIDCs' existing Legislation framework providing the opportunity for participants to identify a range of priority legislative provisions that needed to be highlighted in the changing migration landscape and in essence to determine what was relevant for the Pacific environment.

The legislative review working group discussed various immigration policies, concepts, model provisions, procedures and circumstances within the region and used the platform to discuss key immigration priority concerns of Pacific Island Countries and Territories, and future proofing of our immigration systems and processes. The changing migration landscape continues to challenge border control process, systems and policy making decisions and member's ability to respond effectively within a robust framework.

Some key areas revisited included the need to develop more policy guidance especially in areas for managing labour mobility as well as discussions on development of provisions for managing threats caused by returning foreign terrorist fighters, cruise ships and criminal deportees ensuring these activities were coordinated with partner regional bodies such as Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police, Pacific Transnational Crime Network and Pacific Islands Law Officers Network also working in this space.

The Workshop was very fortunate to have present very experienced immigration legal and policy advisors from Immigration New Zealand; immigration expert representatives from Polynesia (Cook Islands), Micronesia (FSM), Small Island states (Tuvalu); legal and policy experts from Samoa; and the PIDC Secretariat.

## 4th Border Management Conference on Technical Cooperation & Capacity Building for Border Management

The 4th Border Management Conference on technical cooperation and capacity building for border management was held at the Centara Grand & Bangkok Convention Centre in Bangkok, Thailand from 9-11 November 2016.

The conference brought together representatives from authorities responsible for border and identity management and immigration; international and regional organizations; as well as industry to discuss how to best adapt to rapidly changing migration realities and new cross-border mobility patterns to identify priority fields for the development of innovative and well thought-through processes, procedures and systems that would create efficient, safe and dignified solutions.

The conference aimed to share technical state-of-the-art border management solutions with governments, immigration, border & identity management agencies, airlines, airports and other participants throughout the region. The conference also explored priority implementation mechanisms, potential roles of various national agencies, as well as privacy & data protection safeguards. New technologies, best practices in information sharing and other border & identity management developments were also discussed.

Four PIDC members attended this international conference that included Papua New Guinea, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu. There are already proposals that the next conference should extend its remit to include more on identity management such as in civil registries as catalysts to forming the groundwork of the next border management conference.



*PIDC Members attending the Border Management Conference in Bangkok. (left-right) Mr Solomon Kantha (PNG) Dr Lesi Korovavala (Conference Chair and IOM Rep), Mr Damien Jacklick (RMI), Mr Salasopa Puti (Tuvalu) and Mr Masdon Fugui (Solomon Islands)*

## *Immigration Officers participate for the first time in International Pleasure craft Search Course (5-9 December)*



*Vessel search participants head out to sea. (Photo source: French Polynesia Immigration)*

The Australian Border Force hosted an “International Craft Search Course” in Sydney from 05-09 December 2016 which was attended by 5 immigration officers from the Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Samoa and Tonga. This was the first time that immigration officers from the Pacific participated in the international pleasure craft search course. The inclusion of the immigration officers was supported by the Pacific Immigration Directors Conference (PIDC) as it provided immigration officers an opportunity to learn the investigative techniques of customs led vessel searches in addition to networking amongst participants. The officers agreed that the highly intensive training course enabled officers to acquire new investigative skills and techniques and highlighted the need for coordinated planning and officer safety. Participant immigration officers highly recommended continued participation of other immigration departments for any future training opportunities.

“I have learned techniques and methods of searching for prohibited items on a vessel. We have acquired skills and knowledge that we

really need in Kiribati. This training has been so beneficial for Kiribati and the Pacific Islands” shared Mr Teeta Moantewa from Kiribati Immigration.

Mr Philippe Babbour from French Polynesia added that the training course presented a good opportunity to know other immigration and customs participants who willingly shared their experiences, expertise and knowledge during the duration of the course in addition to the high quality of information that was delivered by the trainers. “It was very good and the friendship between all the participants from immigration and customs was proof that wherever you’re from, we can work together to protect our region; the Pacific”.



*Vessel Search participants undergo some water skills activity as part of their course requirements. (Photo source: French Polynesia Immigration)*