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**Trip Report**

**PMB Fieldwork in Honiara, Solomon Islands**

**10 – 19 January 2017**

**Summary:**

The main purpose of this trip was to complete the copying of the National News Bulletins of the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC) initiated by the Bureau in 2015. In 2015 I worked with two SIBC staff and digitised the SIBC National News Bulletins for the years 1980-1990.

On this trip two SIBC staff and I digitised the SIBC National News Bulletins for the years 1991-1998. These Bulletins were typed on single-sided A4 paper. Over 28,000 digital images were taken and processed creating the following PMB title:

**PMB 1414 Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation, National news bulletins, 1980-2015. PDF. Available for reference.**

In 1998 the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation shifted to a new format and began using News Boss, a database for storing news bulletins. During the Solomon Islands tensions the News Boss database crashed and there was no back up. All of the National News Bulletins for the period 1998-2008 were lost when the database crashed.

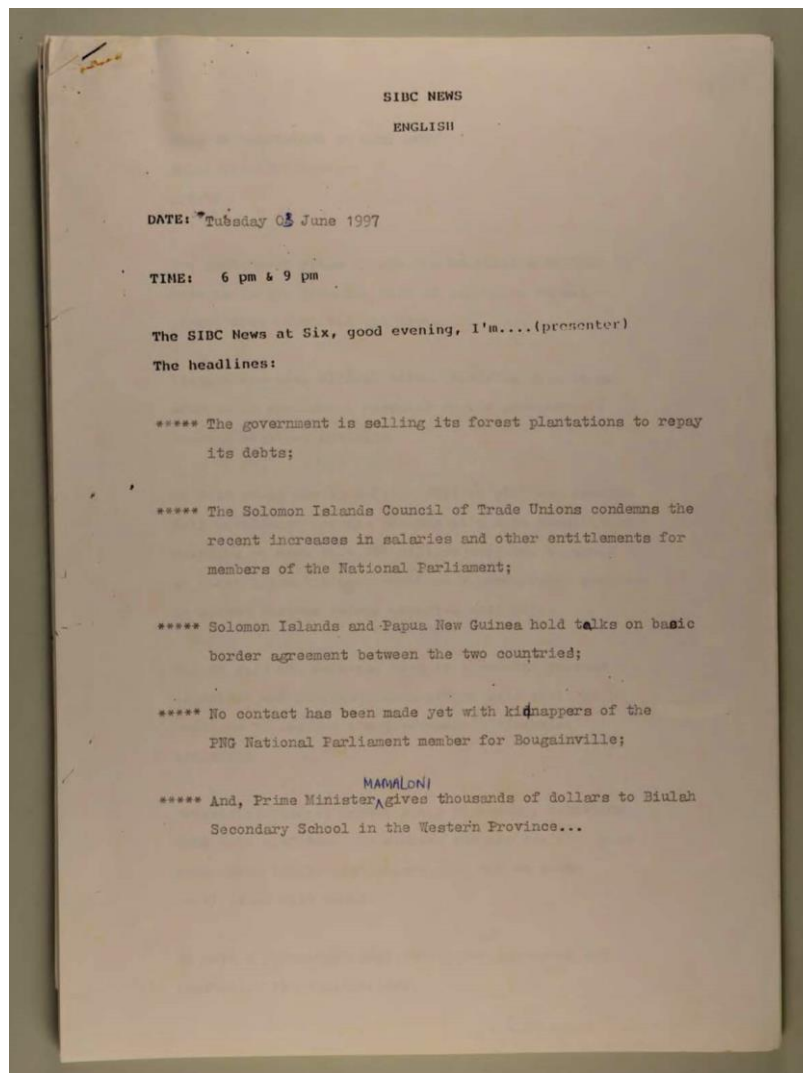
The National News Bulletins from 2009 – 2016 were extracted from the News Boss database and given to the Bureau electronically. These files will be processed by the Bureau and added to the PMB catalogue.

During my stay it was mainly hot and dry in Honiara with the odd downpour of tropical rain in the late afternoon and evening. The market was full of delicious mangoes, pineapples, bananas, limes, avocados and pawpaw. The town of Honiara felt relatively quiet as it was January and many people had not returned from their Summer holidays back home in the provinces. There was hardly an ex-patriate person to be seen as RAMSI has all but withdrawn from their work in the Solomon Islands, the Goldridge mine has been closed for some time and the Kolombangara forest work has reduced considerably in the past few years. There were many school children around the streets of Honiara as they were on school holidays. Much excitement occurred on two days during my stay when the school rankings and listings were published for Form 3, Form 6 and Grade 6 students.

## Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation

I arrived in Honiara on Tuesday 10 January and was met at the airport by Salei Rukasi, Thelma Nieng and Jimmy Sa'asi from the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation (SIBC). The archive boxes containing the National News Bulletins for the years 1991-1998 had been transferred the day before to the National Archives of the Solomon Islands (NASI) by the SIBC staff. We travelled straight to NASI and set up our equipment to begin scanning the SIBC News Bulletins the next day. Salei Rukasi, the SIBC Librarian, had visited NASI and negotiated for us to work at NASI to digitise the SI National News Bulletins using their Avison AV8350 document scanner which scanned the pages as .TIFF files.

*"Here is the national news from the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation read by..."  
(PMB MS 1414)*



The first page of the SIBC National News Bulletin from Tuesday 3 June 1997  
(PMB MS 1414\_1997\_06)

The Bulletins are the English scripts read by the 6pm, and sometimes 9pm, radio newsreaders. They are usually in two parts per bulletin with an average of 5 stories per part (total approx 12-14 pages per day). Each of the two parts begins with a news headlines page. The Bulletins contain local news, including reports on events, quotes from

government officials, statements from political parties etc. Subjects include elections, court matters, education, development plans, health issues, sport, unions, weather events, fishing, cross border activities. They don't contain international news except for nearby Pacific countries.

The Bulletins are single sided, typed, mainly letter and A4 sheets, arranged in chronological order in bundles per month, then daily within. Each of the daily sheets is usually sequentially numbered in pen in top right corner. The bundles were arranged in reverse date order, so before any scanning could take place the bundles were re-arranged so that the earliest date of each month was scanned first. I am most grateful for Thelma Nieng and Jimmy Sa'asa, from SIBC Library, for assisting me with this work.

Thelma Nieng, Jimmy Sa'asi and I developed a workflow agenda that included re-ordering the National News Bulletins, digitizing the Bulletins using the Avison sheet feeder scanner and then post-processing the documents into PDF and OCR-ing the Bulletins so that the text is searchable. We worked hard for 10 days copying the news bulletins.

We had to undertake some maintenance of the Avison scanner because there was lots of dirt and dust that jammed up the scanner. We used cotton buds and isopropyl alcohol to clean the rollers, pads and glass of the scanner after each month of scanning.



**Step 2.** Thelma Nieng, SIBC Librarian, using the Avison scanner to digitize the SIBC National News Bulletins



**Step 3.** Jimmy Sa'asi using the Avison scanner to digitize the SIBC News Bulletins

The digital files and listing of the SIBC News Bulletins will repatriated to the SIBC at the completion of the project.



Thelma Nieng, Kylie Moloney and Salei Rukasi at our celebration afternoon tea!

On the final day of work, the staff at SIBC organised an afternoon function to celebrate our achievement of digitising over 28,000 pages of the Solomon Islands National News Bulletins.

**Other PMB work in Honiara**

I presented a talk to staff of the National Archives of the Solomon Islands about the Bureau's digitisation equipment and use of ICA-AtoM software. The staff were very keen to learn about the Bureau's digitisation workflows and asked many technical questions about digitising and using the open-source software ICA-AtoM.

On my final day in Honiara I met with Hilda Lamani, one of the owners of the Solomon Star newspaper, and Ofani Eremae, the editor of the Solomon Star newspaper, to discuss the possibility of the Solomon Star newspaper granting the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau the rights to digitise historical issues of the newspaper. Hilda Lamani agreed to allow the Bureau the rights to digitise the Solomon Star newspaper. The Bureau will digitise the microfilms from PMB Doc 428 – Solomon Star newspaper (1982-1987) and then work with other institutions, including the Solomon Star, to digitise the issues 1988 to the present.

**Thank you**

I would like to thank the following people for their support and assistance during my stay.

Salei Rukasi, Thelma Nieng and Jimmy Sa'asi from the Solomon Islands Broadcasting Corporation.

Bernard Rizu, Louisa Laekeni, Mike , Abby and Margaret Infiri from the National Archives of the Solomom Islands.

Hilda Lamani and Ofani Eremae from the Solomon Star newspaper.

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Pacific Manuscripts Bureau  
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