**LIST OF PANELS, PHA 2021**

If you would like to present a paper as part of a panel listed below, please contact the panel convenor to seek approval before submitting your abstract to the conference organising committee. We recommend contacting panel convenors before 30 June. Scholars proposing papers unrelated to the panels are welcome to apply.

**Global Encounters and Indigenous People: In the imaginary and in their own words.**

Professor Lynette Russell [Lynette.Russell@monash.edu](mailto:Lynette.Russell@monash.edu)

The four panellists are working on an Australian Research Council Laureate Program entitled *Global Encounters & First Nations Peoples: 1000 Years of Australian History*. The project focuses on the twin streams of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander’s experiences of newcomer arrivals, and the long history of outsider fascination with the Great Southern Land. Global Encounters works with both European language materials, and Indigenous textual sources; oral histories, material culture, and other traditional and non-traditional archival resources. In this panel each speaker will explore an example of global encounters recorded in the words of the participants. This panel is designed to highlight the project, the early work, and seek input from scholars and interested others. *Global Encounters & First Nations Peoples* will undertake a comprehensive analysis of Indigenous knowledge traditions surrounding the arrival of people from the sea, and explore oral traditions and narratives. In parallel, the project compares and contrasts archival records for Australian encounters through the perspective of agents of European Empire, Northern and South-east Asian commercial interests, and Melanesian mariners. Maps, ships records, archival records and museum collections relevant to encounters on the Australian coastline will be analysed and collated.

**Histories of the urban Pacific**

Kate Stevens [kate.stevens@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:kate.stevens@waikato.ac.nz)

Pacific societies are increasingly urbanised, and urban life has created distinct environmental, economic and social challenges and opportunities across the region. Most scholarship – largely from geography and anthropology – positions these challenges as relatively new phenomena. However, the processes of urbanisation across the region have deeper roots which warrant greater historical attention. Building on an earlier generation of scholarship on ‘port towns’ and current work by Damon Salesa and Clive Moore, this panel explores how colonial towns have transformed into modern Pacific cities, and the implications of this for individuals, societies and island ecologies. The panel examines the intersections between urbanisation, colonialization and post-colonial modernities in the Pacific region. We draw on case studies ranging from Fiji to New Zealand, and explore the varied facets of urban life. We take a broad definition of Pacific urban spaces, and welcome paper submissions examining urban Pacific and indigenous communities across the New Zealand, Australia and USA along with those focused on the islands.

**In their own publications: Pacific acts of writing in the early twentieth century**

Alice Te Punga Somerville [alicet@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:alicet@waikato.ac.nz)

Although historians have attended to the wealth of oral histories, manuscripts and other unpublished texts produced by Pacific people, and literary scholars have been interested in Pacific publications with a focus on the late 1960s and beyond, there is room for careful and expansive consideration of Pacific writing published in the first half of the twentieth century. Specifically, this panel focuses on periodicals, literary publications and religious texts produced by Indigenous Pacific people during this period. While some publications were solely authored and brought to print by Pacific people, others were produced through collaboration or other kinds of relationships with others inside and beyond the region. To varying degrees and in various ways, publications by Indigenous Pacific people from this period demonstrate a dynamic approach to writing, a complicated relationship with the technologies of writing and printing, and the sheer potential of the published text for writers and for readers. Some publications from the period were produced in colonial languages, but many are in Indigenous languages; these remain under-engaged and underestimated, partly because engagement – indeed interest or even visibility – depends on scholars with proficiency in Pacific languages to be engaged in historical research. Ultimately, these periodicals not only draw out attention to the very literate and transnational worlds of many Indigenous Pacific in this period, but also about the work that can be done – the questions that can be asked and the archives that become newly visible – when Indigenous Pacific scholars engage in this kind of historical work.

**In Their Own Words: Pacific Islander Migrations**

Terava Casey [terava@hawaii.edu](mailto:terava@hawaii.edu)

In Our Sea of Islands, Epeli Hau’ofa described the world of Oceania as anything but small, “it is huge and growing bigger everyday.” His theory of world enlargement by Pacific Islanders, the expanding view of connectivity crossing regional, linguistic, cultural boundaries “crisscrossing an ocean that had been boundless for ages,” inspires a history of the Pacific that foregrounds Pacific islander migrations and movements across time and space. This panel seeks to locate the diverse histories of Pacific islander migrations and conceptualizations of movement that in their own words expand the notions of world enlargement. What are the ways Pacific islanders defy rigid boundaries? How do their migrations impact home and host communities? What are the historical processes that have led to their migration? Applicants to this panel are welcome to draw on Hau’ofa’s theory and any of the above stated prompts to join the growing conversation of movement, mobility and migration in Pacific History.

**Indentured Labourers in Fiji**

Subhash Appanna [subhash.appana@usp.ac.fj](mailto:subhash.appana@usp.ac.fj)

The indenture system was an innovative, post-slavery response to the ever-increasing labour needs of the British Empire. Indentured labourers were recruited and shipped to the colonies from (mainly) India. Some two million labourers moved to these colonies and many stayed back to establish a new home and a new identity in their adopted lands. The story of their trials and tribulations is documented to some extent, but more research is needed in the area. Of particular interest would be follow-up researches on what happened after the indenture system was finally abolished in 1917.

**Island Wisdoms: Pacific Philosophies**

James D. Sellmann [jsellmann@triton.uog.edu](mailto:jsellmann@triton.uog.edu)

Members of this panel are desperately seeking the goddesses of wisdom in the islands. The panel hosts papers that assist the process of bringing Pacific philosophies into the academy for classroom, research, and further academic debate. Papers may engage any approach that explicates Pacific cultural ways of knowing what and how (epistemology); ways of living well (morality and ethics); ways of reasoning (logic), especially nondual, correlative logic; ways of being in the world, or ways of understanding reality (cosmology and metaphysics).

**Library Innovations and Pacific History Collections**

Elizabeth Reade Fong [fong\_e@usp.ac.fj](mailto:fong_e@usp.ac.fj)

Innovation drives today's crowded information world. It has long been recognized that consideration of the past is essential in the process of current and future planning and development. What is least understood is the role of records and historical collections of archives and libraries in the process. The intention of this panel is to have librarians and archivists share innovative projects through which they have opened up their valuable collections to Pacific nations and the world for development and posterity.

**Managing and improving access to Pacific Island archival collections**

Kylie Moloney [ky\_moloney@yahoo.com.au](mailto:ky_moloney@yahoo.com.au)

Pacific Islanders have successfully managed significant historical archival collections, often with minimal resources, for centuries. These highly significant collections of unpublished audio, photographic, moving image and manuscript collections are rich archival sources that can further contribute to the history and stories of Pacific Islanders. This panel will share some stories of Pacific Island archives and archivists, their significant collections and how they are managing and improving access to these important collections. The panellists will discuss the key challenges they face; as well as innovative practices being using to manage the collections and improve access in a Pacific Island way. Pacific Islanders will be mentored and supported by professional archivists to develop and write the papers.

**Militarisms and Memories in Micronesia between Japan and the United States: New Waves in Documentary Filmmaking**

Ryota Nishino [look4ryota@gmail.com](mailto:look4ryota@gmail.com)

In recent years a handful of documentary filmmakers have probed the complexities of memories of the Asia-Pacific war and contemporary militarism in Micronesia. These films contribute to written works by Poyer, Falgout and Carucci (2001), Camacho (2011) and most recently Dvorak (2018) that de-centre war stories dominated heavily by American and Japanese narratives, and emphasise the complex positions of Micronesian memories. The panel proposes to screen (or provide clips and/or online interactive access to) at least three of these documentaries during the conference, including “Island Soldier“ (dir. Nathan Fitch, 2017), “Tarinae” (dir. Ōkawa Shiori, 2017) and “Swimming Lessons” (dir. Ono Kenji, 2012), and to conduct a round-table discussion between directors and conference participants to discuss multiple moot points about their angles of seeing and story-telling. Amongst the key concerns are questions of each filmmaker’s approach to the documentary as a medium, the different artistic touches, the assumed or intended finality the narratives present in the documentaries, and the articulation and silencing of Islanders’ presence, voices and memories, as well as the filmmakers’ exercise of empathy with the Micronesians. The latter two aspects pertain to self-reflexivity of the filmmakers attempts to confront their own country’s pre- and post-war colonisation and wartime violence on Micronesia. Though not limiting to these questions, the panel will interrogate underlying nationalisms in the dual imperial narratives of the United States and Japan, and illuminate alternative Micronesian narratives. The panel will contribute not only to the burgeoning interdisciplinary field of history and documentary films (Rosenstone, 2006), but also to the wider field of visual anthropology in which the Pacific and Pacific Islanders form a crucial and critical component (Landman and Ballard, 2010).

**Naming Histories: Nomenculture and Pacific Pasts**

Tarcisius Kabutaulaka [tkabutau@hawaii.edu](mailto:tkabutau@hawaii.edu)

Throughout Oceania, histories are inscribed on landscapes, seascapes and people. They are “written” in tattoos and facial motifs, on sacred sites, on structures built by our ancestors and in the names of places and peoples. This panel will focuses on how Pacific Islands/er histories are remembered and told through the names of people, landscape and seascapes. The papers will examine indigenous nomenclature as a form of Pacific Islands historiography and discuss the changes that have occurred and the impacts on Pacific Islands histories. The remapping and renaming of landscapes and seascapes by Europeans and other non-Pacific Islanders, and the privileging of paternal names over individualized names that tell stories, have erased or changed the ways in which we remember and retell Pacific pasts and the ways in which we relate to landscapes, seascapes and to each other. The papers will draw from different parts of Oceania and framed through the lens of history, geography, anthropology, law and political science. The panel will contribute to broader discussions of Pacific Islands historiography. Some of the questions that this panel will address are: How does indigenous nomenclature inform Pacific Islands historiography? How are names used to remember and tell Pacific pasts? How did Europeans and other non-Pacific Islanders’ remapping and renaming influenced Pacific Islands history? What can and should Pacific historians do to reclaim the naming of Pacific pasts?

**Pacific Islands Universities: Culture and Criticism in Regional, National and Transnational Histories.**

Jacqueline Leckie [jacqui.leckie@otago.ac.nz](mailto:jacqui.leckie@otago.ac.nz)

In 1988 Pacific Universities was edited by Ron Crocombe and Malama Meleisea, and in 2018, Jacqueline Leckie wrote a commissioned history of the University of the South Pacific. Both of these publications have their limitations and it is well over-due to write the history of Pacific universities. This panel explores the pivotal role that universities in the Pacific have had as critical and independent institutions within the colonized and the post-colonial Pacific. We take a historical approach to explore how tertiary institutions have been (or could have been) bastions of critical thought and academic freedom in the region, especially to address issues of governance and corruption or critical issues, such as international threats to the environment. The panel will consider the autonomy of Pacific Institutions and their viability in the face of fluctuating funding. We address how tertiary institutions have navigated the tension between Pacific regionalism and Pacific nationalism. Importantly, we also look at how Pacific universities have been crucial during the past 60 years in building youth cultures, identities, resistance, creativity, and innovative pedagogies and research.

**Papua New Guinean voices from the colonial past**

Helen Gardner & Jonathan Ritchie helen.gardner@deakin.edu.au

Over the span of the colonial era, the Indigenous inhabitants of what is now Papua New Guinea were shrouded in the colonial archive or appeared in highly specific ways reflective of the colonial enterprise. It is the voices and words of the colonial occupiers which dominate: Indigenous peoples might be acknowledged as members of specific groups or bounded regions eg. ‘The Chimbu’ or ‘the villagers of Kabakada’; while individuals might appear if they caused trouble to the colonial administration, or were of assistance, such as luluai, bos bois on plantations or were particularly influential converts to Christianity. By and large, however, Papua New Guineans had minimal textual input until the flourishing of Papua New Guinean education and Indigenous literature in the 1960s. To restore the centrality of Papua New Guinean experiences under colonialism, creative approaches to the colonial archive are needed. Drawing on the diversity of sources within the archive, including plantation records, war memoirs, missionary diaries, patrol reports, and oral accounts, participants in this panel we will question the nature of the sources, the place of Papua New Guineans within them and the best means of drawing Indigenous voices from recalcitrant documents. This panel welcomes papers on the following: The question of orality in Papua New Guinean colonial history; Reading colonial archives from Papua New Guinea against the grain; Recognition of the distinctive perspective of different colonial voices; Representation of Papua New Guineans by colonial authors; Construction of Papua New Guinean histories by Papua New Guineans.

**Photographing the (Modern) Pacific**

Max Quanchi [quanchi.amqfu@gmail.com](mailto:quanchi.amqfu@gmail.com)

The panel's approach to modern photography is open, from the start of the Pacific War, 1941 to recent times. The panel is open to empirical or theoretical examination of individual images, photographers, studios, albums, postcards, lantern slides, travel photography, official reports, expedition photography, domestic photography, illustrated books, photojournalism, propaganda, and links between photography and art, literature, science, anthropology, gender, fashion, and history. Any photograph or body of photography published or in repositories, from or about the Pacific Islands (excluding NZ, Australia) is the centre of interest. An edited publication or journal special issue is proposed. Proposals outside this theme are welcome. The first History of Photography panel at the PHA was at UH-Hilo in 1996, followed by panels at ten subsequent PHA conferences, most recently at Cambridge (2018).

**Re-centering Women's Power and Agency in Pacific Islands Histories: Looking to the Past in Search of Ways Forward**

Monica C. LaBriola [labriola@hawaii.edu](mailto:labriola@hawaii.edu)

Oral and other indigenous historical traditions reveal much about the complex yet often misinterpreted positionality and power of women in many Oceanic communities. Marshallese origin stories, for example, depict women as creators of land and resources; navigators and first settlers; mothers of sacred family networks and chiefly lines; callers of winds and tides; producers, keepers, and teachers of sacred knowledge; peacemakers; and leaders. In many such stories, women play prominent roles alongside and in front of men, demonstrating not only women’s value and power within culture, but also their centrality within indigenous historical traditions and historiographies. Today, women draw on these traditions in a variety of contexts to push back against male dominance and male dominated leadership and to assert their own authority. That said, women and women’s power and agency have been largely overlooked in written histories of Oceania, and most notably in the region called Micronesia where women are largely absent from written histories despite their profound status and authority with regard to land, family networks, sacred knowledge, and decision making—as well as their centrality to indigenous histories. In an effort to advance calls by Epeli Hau‘ofa (2000) and others to continue to reshape Pacific Islands history and Teresia Teiawa’s (1993) commitment to re-centering women’s power and agency histories of the region, this panel seeks to revisit indigenous historical traditions that feature women and women’s authority, and to explore how indigenous women deploy these traditions as reminders and sources of women’s power and empowerment. Papers will also reflect on how these traditions and efforts might offer an indigenous theoretical foundation for new approaches to history centered on women and women’s power and agency. Papers focused on the region called Micronesia are particularly encouraged, however all proposals are welcome.

**Rethinking Decolonisation in Papua New Guinea**

Alex Golub [golub@hawaii.edu](mailto:golub@hawaii.edu)

Although the era of decolonization is often described as a story of rising national consciousness leading to successful struggles for independence, these stories offer at best partial accounts of how decolonization proceeded in many cases. In Papua New Guinea, where people across a wide sociological spectrum express significant nostalgia for colonialism, decolonization is often described as the moment when things took a turn for the worse. Nor is this colonial nostalgia just a retrospective evaluation of the past. While there were some significant demands for independence in the later 1960s, the initial impetus for decolonization came from the United Nations. How can we use new evidence based on oral histories and archival work to tell the story of the independence and decolonisation eras without relying on more common narratives of local struggle for self- determination that frame independence movements in African and Asian contexts in the mid 20th century? In this panel we examine decolonization as a moment in which communicative networks undergo major transformations, ones that move well beyond the more expected change from top-down colonial dictats to Andersonian horizontal publics. In some cases, decolonization became the context for more pronounced provincial-level and ethnic-level networks that almost entirely excluded national concerns. In others, decolonization produced stronger connections between the former colonial power and specific regions of Papua New Guinea that became sites of important tourist interest. In still others, decolonization initiated international bureaucratic oversight. Papers in the panel address decolonization in Papua New Guinea as an early moment in the development of new communicative networks that downplay, deny, or denigrate the national.

**Rethinking World History from Pacific Island Perspectives**

Paul D'Arcy [paul.darcy@anu.edu.au](mailto:paul.darcy@anu.edu.au)

This panel involves a review by the academic editorial team of the content and rationale underlying the soon to be released *The Cambridge History of the Pacific Ocean in Two Volumes*. This 600,000 word collection has 78 contributors drawn from 23 nations and 4 Pacific territories seeking greater self-government. The previous Cambridge history of the Pacific was published 24 years ago in 1997. This new collection anticipates the shifting tectonics of global economics, demography and political ecology, and provides a long durée viewpoint from first human settlement of the Pacific until the present to better understand the mounting tensions and emerging environmental and political conflicts over Pacific Ocean spaces increasingly central to world history. The depth and breadth of this coverage requires that this project gives voice to diverse traditions involving a number of means of expression such as oral traditions, poetry, navigational lore, and chants evoking elements of the natural world and ancestral spirits, as well as historical linguistics, archival studies, archaeology, genetics, geology, botany, marine science, art history, literary analysis, and visual media history. The volumes are designed for senior undergraduate level students and members of the general public interested in the long history of Pacific societies. The format of this collection facilitated the presentation of diverse approaches. The collection will be published both as a two-volume hard copy standard library reference work, and in electronic format to enable specific chapter downloads for student research projects and special interest researchers, with links to related chapters and the overall table of contents.

**Sāmoan multiplicities**

Philipp Schorch & Safua Akeli Amaama [philipp.schorch@ethnologie.lmu.de](mailto:philipp.schorch@ethnologie.lmu.de)

Contemporary Sāmoa is an anomaly in the sense that it is separated into the independent state of Sāmoa and the unincorporated U.S. territory of American Sāmoa. At first sight, then, there exist two Sāmoas. Yet, both political entities have grown out of and continue to be organized through the relations between multiple islands and their genealogically inscribed districts and affiliations. Moreover, in the 21st century, Sāmoan diasporic populations are found in Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia, Hawai’i, the west coast of the USA, the UK and beyond. It has been commonly recognized that this spatially and temporally distributed and multiplied Sāmoanness is being (re)constituted through the dialectics between continuity and change, solidity and flexibility. Yet, is unclear from which source this dialectic capacity stems, and through which registers it becomes performed. We hypothesize that experi¬ences of Sāmoanness are spatially embedded – in landscapes, journeys, and multiple localities – and, simultaneously, temporally negotiated – through memories, narratives, and genealogies. Furthermore, we speculate that Sāmoan experiences emerge from sources and through registers that reach deeper and transcend the capacity to be expressed ‘in their own words’. Zooming in on the interplay of bodies, environments and material entities – such as so-called ethnographic objects and work of arts spread around the globe and housed in museum collections – might offer us novel insights into why and how Sāmoanness remains intact despite ongoing transformations: being reshaped but not ruptured, maintaining its integrity within flexible boundaries. We thus invite historically grounded perspectives from across the disciplinary spectrum – from archaeology through history and anthropology to the arts – to study Sāmoan multiplicities past, present and future.

**The nuclear era in the Pacific Islands**

Nic Maclellan [nicmaclellan@optusnet.com.au](mailto:nicmaclellan@optusnet.com.au)

Between 1946 and 1996, the United States, United Kingdom and France conducted more than 310 nuclear tests in Australia and the Pacific Islands. During this fifty-year era of nuclear weapons testing, there were significant impacts on health and environment, especially for the civilian and military personnel who staffed the test sites and for neighbouring atoll communities. Much scholarship on the nuclear era in the Pacific highlights the role of international organisations like Greenpeace or the World Council of Churches. However, there were protests against these tests by island leaders, beginning in the 1950s. This activity expanded throughout the twentieth century, with the creation of the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP) movement in the mid-1970s and growing activity by Pacific churches, trade unions and women’s organisations. The voices of Pacific islanders leading these protests have often been underplayed in many histories of the nuclear era. Proposals are welcome for the following areas: Papers on 'the nuclear era in the Pacific islands'; Papers and presentations on 'the history of the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific (NFIP) movement'; Testimonies from nuclear survivors, from French Polynesia, Marshall Islands, Kiribati and Australia, including Fiji’s nuclear veterans; papers on 'Anti-nuclear protest in Fiji, 1970s to today'.

**Virtual Crossings: The Politics of (Re)Collecting Pacific Pasts and Futures**

Kirisitina Sailiata [ksailiat@macalester.edu](mailto:ksailiat@macalester.edu)

This panel is organized around the politics and practice of crossings. Our work coalesces around a shared commitment to disciplinary crossings and trespassings, in other words, the many hearths of history, to pursue questions around collective memory, innovative teaching, and Oceania. As scholars trained and based within the United States and teaching Pacific Studies and Pacific History across a range of disciplines and institutions in the U.S., we are committed to and invested in expansive pedagogical strategies. Research on Pacific Islander communities in the US is still nascent despite the long and rich histories of mobility and interactions spanning the last two centuries. How do we write Indigenous Pacific histories from our respective locations? How do we leverage institutional resources to create rigorous and accessible content? How do we use the classroom as spaces in which to experiment with the skills and forms of popular education projects? How have the recent turns in digital humanities and Indigenous studies intersected in generative but also troubling ways? What can community engaged research and pedagogy look like across long distances as they become ever more diasporic and transindigenous?

**When their own words describe a world in common**

Dario Di Rosa [dariodirosa385@gmail.com](mailto:dariodirosa385@gmail.com)

In the last decades Pacific scholarship has done much to put Pacific Islanders’ voices back into once Western-dominated colonial narratives of the region. In particular Indigenous cosmologies have been explored to make sense of the encounter between Pacific Islanders and Europeans on that metaphorical space that Dening (1988) called ‘the beach’. For good historiographical and political reasons, ‘difference’ – especially cultural difference – has dominated scholarship analysing either Europeans’ projection of Otherness onto Islanders, or Islanders’ own cultural understanding of Europeans’ actions and motivations. While such framing has proved to be precious to address the colonial period and create a sense of shared identity among the newly independent countries, the panel contends that under the current neo-colonial situation it might be useful to look at how Islanders live and experience a world Islanders and outsiders had (and have) in common, the one shaped by the forces of Capitalism and monotheistic religions. Which insights can Indigenous voices, retelling the colonial past in order to comment on the present, offer about the experience of exploitation and life under neoliberalism? Which contexts were and are shared by Islanders and outsiders, and which historical and social conjunctures enable(d) such shared spaces? Is it possible to compose Pacific histories that might foster social and political consciousness in order to form alliances across the colour line and along other common interests (i.e. class)? These are only some of the questions, among the many that the shifting perspective outlined above prompts, that the panel invites to address through empirical, historiographical, and theoretical contributions.

**Words about fighting, fighting about words—Contrasting narratives of the Pacific War**

Jonathan Ritchie & Ryota Nishino jonathan.ritchie@deakin.edu.au

The urgency to record and preserve the testimonies of people with living memories of the Asia-Pacific War has never been greater. 2020 marked the 75th anniversary of the War’s end, and by this time few with first-hand memories of the conflict still survive to tell their stories. The generational shift has affected not only how we remember the wartime past, but also how the War itself has been represented in the historical record and how historical representations re-imagine, re-make and even contest history. One example of this is the retelling of the Kokoda campaign of 1942, which until relatively recently has centred primarily on Australian perspectives separate from those of others who took part in it, often for contemporary parochial purposes. The War is too complex to be treated in this way, however. The diversity of its impacts varies by locality, occupation, gender, age, ethnicity, and in many other ways. Our panel invites presentations that bring deeper and more nuanced understandings of the War and its impact on those who took part in it. Taking advantage of this conference’s location in Suva, we specifically invite Pacific Islands presenters who can bring their own, or their community’s, understanding of the War. At the same time, we invite presentations which explore the War’s complexity from the wider, Pan-Pacific region. In particular, we are attentive to the multiple ways of creating, recreating and engaging with memories, including story-telling, poetry, art, song, dance, print and pictorial media, and we invite abstracts that encompass such alternative means. The panel highlights a seminal concern about testimonies and memories turning into narratives that adopt lives of their own, and seeks to shed light on multiplicity and contestation over the meanings of War.

**Writing and teaching national histories in post-colonial Pacific countries**

Marc Tabani & Bergmans Iati [marc.tabani@free.fr](mailto:marc.tabani@free.fr)

Except for Timor-Leste (geopolitically and culturally situated at the crossroads of Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands region), Vanuatu was the last Pacific State to achieve its independence (July 1980). For several decades this country has faced many difficulties in managing aspects of its dual colonial heritage. Among these, the provision of appropriate history textbooks for students has been a persistent problem. The publication in English of the manual *Histri Blong Yumi: An Educational Resource* (which was translated into French in a slightly different version) is symptomatic of the way a double colonial heritage sometimes still opposes the two language communities. More recently, Vanuatu’s Ministry of Education has launched a substantial program of standardizing a national history curriculum for primary and secondary students that will focus on Vanuatu’s own history and current concerns. Vanuatu is now confronted with an additional challenge with the recently proposed national bilingual state university which would complement the existing South Pacific University branch in Port-Vila. This endeavor also raises many questions concerning how to write and teach Vanuatu’s national history. Both co-organizers of this session have been directly involved in ways to meet this challenge. Bergmans Iati, a ni-Vanuatu academic, has directed the national curriculum program and is in charge of the new national university project at the Ministry of Education. Marc Tabani edited the French version of the *Histri Blong Yumi* textbook. The panel aims to bring together scholars, teachers, administrative officers, and textbook authors from Pacific countries to share experience regarding establishing history national curricula, establishing teaching institutions, and writing effective national history textbooks.