Engage or die: a non traditional response to old problems

PARBICA 17, Suva

Opeta Alefaio

National Archives of Fiji
Establishment

- Established in 1954 as the Central Archives of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission
- Became the National archives of Fiji 1970
- Public Records Act Cap. 108
- Legal Deposits Act Cap. 109
Traditional Challenges

- Low awareness
- Poor funding
- Low staffing
- Poor staff retention
- Ignoring us maximus
- No accessible formal education
- Capacity building of any kind
- Constantly putting our fires
Solid Foundations

- Acknowledge our forbears for laying the foundations
- Forbears made the most of their training and held true to traditional archives values
- The world has grown
- Can we?

Central Archives 1969
How do we go forward?

• Look past our problems to get past our problems.
• Need to from being a traditional (re-active) archive to a proactive archive
• If you do that are you still an archive?
• Exhibition training? No.
• Curatorship training? No.
• Historian? No.
• Marketing training? No.
• Public need? Yes!
Can’t ignore these facts

• Between 8,000 and 10,000 researchers annually (1% of population)
• Most of the public does not know that we exist, much less what we do...
• Many who are aware we exist are intimidated by the archives, too afraid to even enquire, assume nothing is accessible, view us with suspicion.
Archives = Community

Students arriving at the World Book Day in rural Tailevu

Student in traditional costume

Female students investigating at the archival display walls
Growing connection

- Taking Archival services to the people
- Prioritising rural and isolated communities
- Cyclone Winston affected this activity in 2016
- 2017 Already scheduled 21 but anticipate achieving 30 – 35 by years end.
Rotuma Island

- Land records
- Publications
- Historical photos
- Historical AV
- Deed of Cession to Britain made into poster for homes and schools
- All given free

SDG 16.10 “Access to Information” – Rotumans seeing their land and genealogical records for the first time
150th Commemoration of Pacific Indenture Labour
“Without the presence of National Archives most of the descendants will still rely on the verbal history relayed to them through stories. They are now confident that what they know is something that was recorded during that time then and there and are reliable information. Many of them were so moved they had tears in their eyes when they returned from your tent.”

»Org. Committee Chair - Paterasio Nunu
Technology Obsolescence
Problem? Opportunity?

- 2006 – 200,000 historical photographs & 2000 hours of historical footage brought to NAF for “temporary” storage
- NAF approached creating agency numerous time for action......
- 2013 secured $1M for successful restoration and digitisation
- Repackaged and aired on free to air TV
- “Back in Time” first two seasons amounted to 70 episodes
- Season three is to run over 40 episodes
Trial and Error
Happy Fiji Day weekend everyone! Tomorrow Fiji turns 45. Here are some images from our birth day. God bless Fiji.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY FIJI!
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Today (08/09/16) is the 50th Anniversary of International Literacy Day.

Theme: Reading the Past, Writing the Future.

M5214 Hearing impaired children at the Fiji Crippled School 1968.
5 Sept is International Day of Charity.

M3976 Children of St. Christopher's Home having morning tea, 1989.

"Charity is one of the best investments we can make in our common future. On this day of International Charity, I call on people everywhere to be part of our 15-year partnership for humanity, and to help make the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for all. - Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. #charity #fiji #sustainablegoals #sustainabledevelopment"
March 22 World Water Day
8th March is International Women’s Day. The theme for 2016 is ‘Planet 50-50 by 2030: Step It Up for Gender Equality’.

Photo: Ten of the girls selected to join the British Army, 1961
Happy Diwali folks. A time for reflection and gratitude for the good things in our lives.

MB4348 - A potter moulding clay to make diyas and pots at Nasinu, 1980.
Celebration time, Jan 28th is Chinese New Year!

5321 - Chinese orchestra at Albert Park in Suva, 1953.
July 30 is the International Day of Friendship.

M734 - Suva market and people, 1958.

"On this International Day of Friendship, let us resolve to cherish and cultivate as many warm relationships as possible, enriching our own lives and enhancing the future." — UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon

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Imanuel Edwards Love this pic... tells us much 😊
Like · Reply · Message · 4 August 2015 at 13:39

Benedetto Julie Suia A big credit to you for keeping all the photos, Varaikatelevu.
Like · Reply · Message · 0 · 4 August 2015 at 15:56

Salome Waqairatu Se yawa ga o koro na momo ni nabau
Like · Reply · Message · 0 · 4 August 2015 at 15:56

Write a comment...
"Daddy’s home again: one of the returning Fiji soldiers joyfully greets his baby." Neg. No. 696. 05/08/1944.

Nov 11 is Remembrance Day.

"FIJI REGIMENT HOME AFTER BATTLING JAPS IN PACIFIC
The Fiji Infantry Regiment, which has been attached to the United States Fourteenth Corps, have recently returned to Suva after fifteen months of service overseas. These Islanders, from the British Colony of Fiji, have seen action at Guadalcanal, Kolombangara and Bougainville. These pictures show men of the first Battalion, Fiji Infantry Regiment, on their arrival back in Suva.

#LestWeForget #WeWillRememberThem #RememberanceDay #Archives #NAF"
• G533 - Beqa villagers traditional fish drive, 1947. May 22 was 2016 International Biodiversity Day. Theme: Maintaining Biodiversity; Sustain People and their Livelihoods.
• (7.7k likes, 246 shares, 100,990 people reached)
Business gobledigook?

- Business and management standards and frameworks
- Fiji Business Excellence Awards
- Provides training:
  - Leadership
  - Strategic Planning
  - Customer Engagement
  - Employee Engagement
  - Knowledge Management
  - Operations Management
Impact?

- Bigger footprint – Newspaper articles etc.....
- Grown Trust:
  - Vola ni Kawa Bula
  - Exams Unit
  - Births Deaths & Marriages
- More staff 19 to 33 (likely a few more this year)
- Major funding increases
- External validation (FBEA)
- Now sought after to contribute
A primary school student curiously views the historical footage exhibited at Nabavu village, Rewa.