

Honourary Archivist calls for digitisation of records

By Len Garae

HONOURARY ARCHIVIST, ANNE

Naupa, has urged the relevant authorities to consider it a priority to digitise all relevant records for safekeeping, and for all urban and island communities to work together as a priority, to collect those parts of history, custom and culture that will be lost if they delay recording them.

The veteran archivist who is better known as "Mrs. Anne Naupa", made the call at the Official Launching of International Archives Day Exhibition in the National Archives Building on June 9.

She said the American author, John Steinbeck, once wrote: "How shall we know who we are without our past?" Memory, however, is more than simply the ability to remember what has gone before; memory allows us to learn and adapt from past experiences as well as to build relationship for the future.

She said the annual celebration of International Archives Day on 9 June is therefore fitting global reminder that in today's world, a nation's or community's memory, including our archival records, our record keeping and our records management is of prime importance if we are not to lose our national and community identity.

Vanuatu is an active ICA member and an archivist will be attending the ICA Congress in Seoul on the nation's behalf later this year.

"Vanuatu also belongs to UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme, with its ongoing compilation of a World Heritage Register; and we can be proud that in recent years Chief Roimata's Domain has been placed on this Register, along with anthropologist Bernard Deacon's early 20th century writings on customs and culture on Malekula," she said.

Archives are an incredible and community resource. They are the document by-product of human activity and such are an irreplaceable witness to past events, underpinning democracy, the identity of individuals and communities and human rights. Records are crucial to holds as accountable. But they are also fragile and vulnerable.

Following ICA international-principles, the National Archives of Vanuatu works to protect and ensure access through raising awareness, setting standards, finding opportunities for professional development

and enabling useful dialogue between archivists, policy makers, creators and users of archives.

"Our documentary, photo, film and sound Archives staff work towards good archival management of the nation's records in addition to ensuring the physical protection of our records social, political and cultural heritage," she continued.

There are challenges- there are always challenges.

However she stressed that there are always challenges and what comes first to mind is the urgent need for Vanuatu's oral history to be documented and digitised so that it is safeguarded for future generations.

She recalled, "In early 1990s, as a History and Social Science teacher at Malapoa College, I accompanied a group of year 10 students on a field trip to the Malvatumauri Nakamal in this Complex.

"High Chief Willie Bongmatur, then President of Malvatumauri, had very kindly agreed to give a talk on how and why the Malvatumauri Council of Chiefs had been established.

"I expected Chief Willie Bongmatur to talk for about an hour and then give a short time for students to ask him questions.

"We started promptly at 2pm. Chief Willie Bongmatur spoke for three hours; his story showed beyond all expectations a truly accurate, deep, detailed knowledge and command of his topic and he shared his oral history according to oral tradition.

"Without referring to a single document, he gave precise dates, times and locations off all the main meetings, discussions and custom ceremonies in respect of Malvatumauri. He barely paused for breath.

"His presentation was masterly and mind blowing.

"I and the students who were present on that occasion will never forget that afternoon.

"My only regret is that I had not thought to have taken along a tape recorder on which to record his talk.

"My failure to think ahead on this occasion haunts me to this day. How much of our oral history has been and is being lost because we do not think to document it? This is an ongoing challenge particularly for the Vanuatu Cultural Centre and, indeed for all of us.

"Over the last few years groups from several islands actually have begun to come together-in harmony and



Veteran Archivist calls for recording and safekeeping of history

friendship-to preserve and keep alive their customs and culture through documentary recording in books, photos, music and film.

"The Erromangan Cultural Association is one of these.

"With donations mainly from the Christensen Fund, this Association has produced children's readers in the Sie language, an illustrated, comprehensive customs and culture of Erromango book in four languages-Sie, Bislama, English and French, a collection of traditional "tempor" chants and songs that give the genealogy of land use and land boundaries on Erromango, and filmed documentary on woman's custom dances.

"This year's project includes the planning of tapa trees after Cyclone Pam to ensure future preservation of tapa cloth making skills. All of these activities may be described as keeping memory alive.

"A challenge for all our communities and, indeed, families.

"Archives, Harmony and Friendship'. I am sure that as we walk through this fine Archival Exhibition we shall be inspired to play our own personal part in keeping the flame of Vanuatu's heritage alive. I leave you with the motto of the National Archives of Vanuatu: Holem Taet Memori Blong Nesen".



Mrs. Evelyn Toa, President of MAV. Photo: Heather Maraki

MAV elected as GENDER member under IFJ

By Glenda Willie

THE MEDIA ASSOCIATION BLONG VANUATU

(MAV) has been elected as a new member of the steering Committee of GENDER under the National Executive committee of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) this week.

President of MAV, Mrs. Evelyn Toa was part of the 29th World Congress of IFJ in Angers in France this week and has witnessed the announcement; a week just after the association (MAV) gained its full membership in IFJ.

The IFJ congress occurred in Angers 90 years after its founding conference in Paris in June 1926.

Mrs. Toa said "becoming a member of committee of the International Federation of Journalists is a breakthrough not only for the Media in Vanuatu but in the Pacific region, with continuous strong support by IFJ Australia."

President of the Pacific Islands News Association (PINA) Moses Stevens congratulated MAV for its achievement adding that MAV is the only active national media association within the Pacific region.

important notice to westpac customers

On 29 January 2015, Westpac announced the proposed sale of its operations in various Pacific jurisdictions including Vanuatu to the Bank of South Pacific Limited (BSP).

Under the Westpac Customer Banking Agreement and the Deposit Accounts for Consumer and Business Customers Terms and Conditions, Westpac may transfer all deposit accounts (including any deposit facilities and funds held in such accounts), held in Vanuatu, and services related to those deposit accounts, to a third party on a nominated transfer date.

Westpac notifies its customers that from a proposed nominated transfer date of 1 July 2016:

- Bank South Pacific (Vanuatu) Limited (BSP Vanuatu), a subsidiary of BSP, will assume all obligations and liabilities in relation to these deposit accounts and services that are transferred; and
- In order for BSP Vanuatu to continue to provide you with banking services, Westpac may as part of that transfer provide your personal information to BSP and / or BSP Vanuatu.

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