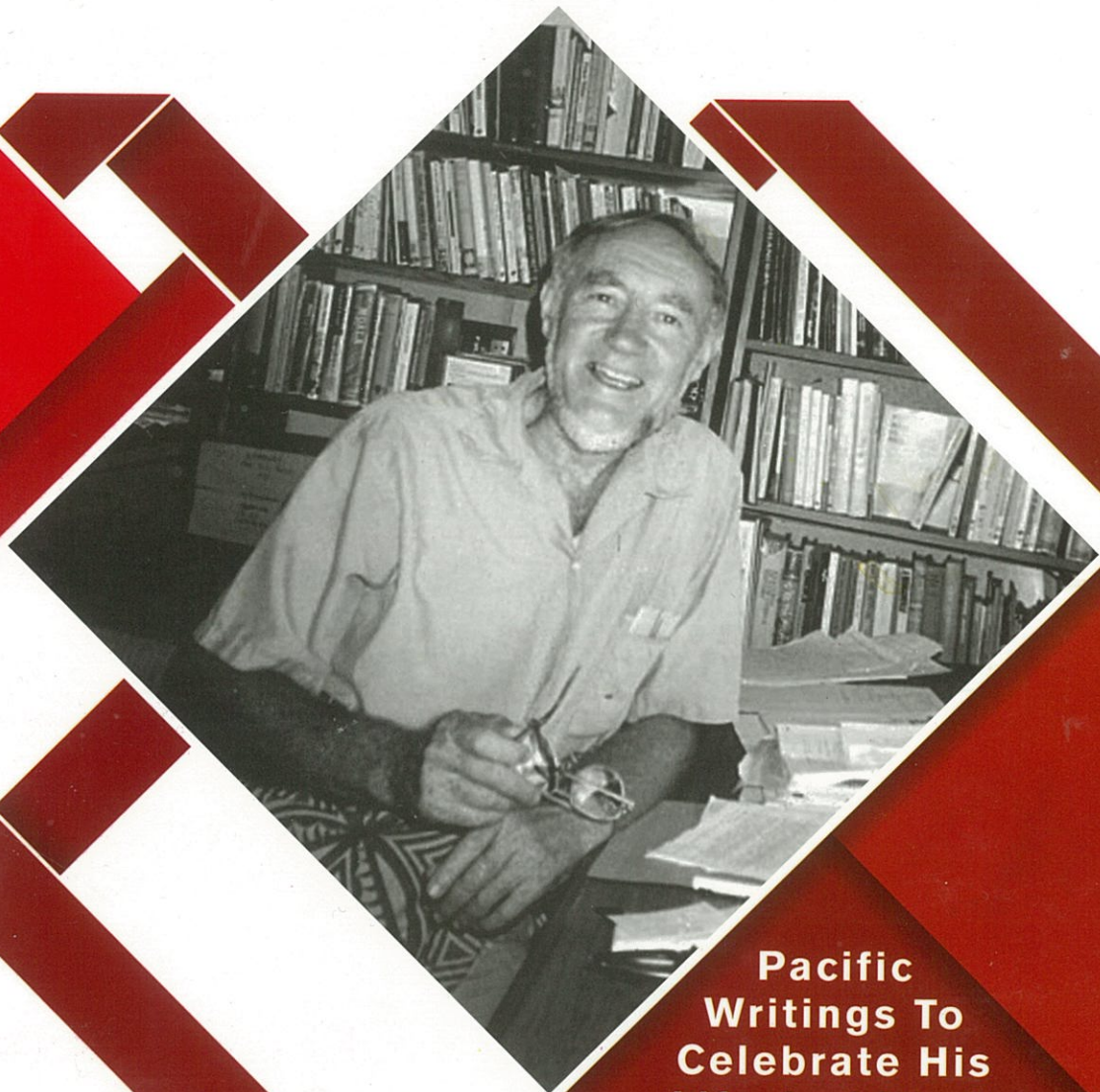


# RON CROCOMBE E TOA!



Pacific  
Writings To  
Celebrate His  
Life And Work

Foreword by Emeritus Professor  
Albert Wendt ONZ CNZM

**USP**  
COOK ISLANDS

**Ron Crocombe: E Toa!**  
**Pacific writings to celebrate his life and work**

edited by  
Linda Crowl,  
Marjorie Tuainekore Crocombe,  
and Roderick Dixon

USP Press  
Suva

2013

USP Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Ron Crocombe : e toa! : Pacific writings to celebrate his life and work / edited by Linda Crowl, Marjorie Tuainekore Crocombe, and Roderick Dixon. – Suva, Fiji : USP Press, 2013.

651 p. ; 25 cm.

ISBN 978-982-01-0901-8

I. Crocombe, R. G., 1929–2009. I. Linda Crowl.  
II. Marjorie Tuainekore Crocombe. III. Roderick Dixon

DU28.13.C65R76 2013

920.71

Copyright ©	Authors for their individual chapter; University of the South Pacific for the book in its entirety
Development	USP Cook Islands, Cook Islands Research Association, & the Crocombe Family
Book design & typesetting	Mark Garrett
Cover design	Woods Creative
Proofreading	University of the South Pacific, Cook Islands and Fiji
Indexing	Linda Crowl
Printing	Oceania Printers, Suva

Front cover: Ron Crocombe in his study at home on Rarotonga  
Back cover: Portrait of Ron Crocombe by his grandson Dominic Crocombe

## Foreword

---

While working in the Cook Islands, Ron Crocombe met and married Rarotongan Marjorie Tuainekore Hosking, beginning a life-long partnership that established, developed, and fostered an 'extended' family throughout Oceania, on the Pacific Rim, and around the world. Their networks linked scholars, indigenous experts, officials, artists, bureaucrats, business people, and many others, creating synergies that fostered and produced more and more studies about the Pacific. Through the years, the Crocombes' pace of research, writing, and publishing did not slacken, setting an example for others to follow, particularly in fostering collaborative research between scholars and 'non-scholars.' They encouraged study about anything and everything Pacific.

This book is divided into broad categories of land, politics, history, and culture, showing the wide-ranging interests of the Crocombes and the writers they inspired and encouraged. As to be expected, many chapters discuss the Cook Islands, where the Crocombes returned year after year and based themselves in 'retirement.' Other chapters analyse and discuss the historical, cultural, linguistic, political, and other kinds of links radiating throughout our region. The chapters range from discussions of particular topics to discussing Ron himself.

This very Pacific book is an example of the cross-cultural, interdisciplinary, all-encompassing way in which Ron and Marjorie worked. Whether you read the book as a whole or according to your individual interests, you will gain insight into how Ron and Marjorie have helped the development of Pacific peoples and nations. And their deep love of those.

It is a splendid and marvelous tribute to Ron and Marjorie, showing the respect and aroha/alofa the authors have for them.

*Emeritus Professor Albert Wendt ONZ CNZM*

## Contents

---

Foreword	3
1. Introduction <i>Linda Crowl &amp; Marjorie Tuainekore Crocombe</i>	7
2. Eulogy for Papa Ron: Ronald Gordon Crocombe <i>Taturoanui (Tata) Graham Crocombe</i>	13
<b>LAND</b>	
3. Cook Islands land tenure and laws: Problems and practical solutions <i>Iaveta Short and Ross Holmes</i>	25
4. Geomorphic developments of the coastal landforms on Rarotonga, Cook Islands, South Pacific Ocean <i>Hiroshi MORIWAKI, Toshiro NAGASAKO, Mitsuru OKUNO, Kei KAWAI, Gerald McCormack, George Cowan, Paul T. Maoate</i>	60
5. Land matters in Papua New Guinea and the Pacific <i>Alan Ward</i>	75
6. A history of efforts to resolve customary land disputes in Vanuatu <i>Howard Van Trease</i>	90
<b>POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE</b>	
7. Cook Islands political reform: Toward 2055 <i>Jon Tikivanotau M. Jonassen</i>	105
8. Ron Crocombe on Papua New Guinea's first development plan, 1968 <i>Tè'o I.J. Fairbairn</i>	131
9. Negotiating a political cul-de-sac: Traditional leadership and local governance in Kiribati <i>Ueantabo Neemia Mackenzie</i>	142
10. Regionalism and cooperation for justice in the Pacific Islands <i>Mere Pulea</i>	150
11. Ron Crocombe's contribution to the promotion of law at the University of the South Pacific <i>Don Paterson</i>	167
12. Self-determination, decolonization, and the United Nations: Links, lessons, and future options, with particular reference to the Pacific Islands <i>Edward P. Wolfers</i>	173

- 13. Ron Crocombe and writing on ethics and corruption 195  
*Peter Larmour*
- 14. Non-governmental organizations and Pacific Islands development: 208  
Fifty years of observations  
*Diane Goodwillie and Ruth E. Lechte*
- 15. Cook Islands non-governmental organizations: Encouragement 224  
from Papa Ron Crocombe, te tane kamaatu  
*Vereara Maeva Taripo*
- 16. Pacific studies in France: geopolitics and legal systems 230  
*Maryvonne Nedeljkovic*

**HISTORY AND RESEARCH**

- 17. Regional cooperation and integration and regional identity: 259  
Pan Pacific and Pacific Islander  
*Morgan Tuimaleali'ifano*
- 18. Of missionaries and mariners: Marists, Milanese, and the 268  
Vicariate of Melanesia, 1845-1859  
*Hugh Laracy*
- 19. Islander publishing, Presbyterian presses, textual governance, 284  
and national identity in Vanuatu  
*Linda Crowl*
- 20. From the New Guinea Research Unit to the National 303  
Research Institute  
*R.J. May*
- 21. Indigenous national histories 312  
*Hugh Laracy*
- 22. The Road from Laucala Bay 316  
*Brij V. Lal*

**CULTURE, ART, EDUCATION, LANGUAGE, AND MEDIA**

- 23. The making of a vaka moana on Atiu 335  
*Upokoina Teiotu*
- 24. Living Heritage: The Cook Islands Library and Museum Society 358  
*Moana Moeka'a and Jean Tekura Mason*
- 25. Cook Islands art: Origins, new eras, and prospects 387  
*Mahiriki Tangaroa*

3  
7  
13  
ions 25  
nga, 60  
ate 75  
atu 90  
105  
n, 1968 131  
142  
150  
167  
e to 173

26. A personal journey with computers and technology, by way of the University of the South Pacific <i>Maureen Hilyard</i>	414
27. Language ecology of Palmerston Island <i>Sabine Ehrhart</i>	423
28. Pacific youth connecting through Poly <i>Tagaloatele Peggy Fairbairn-Dunlop</i>	440
29. Cultural translation and film-making in the Pacific <i>Vilsoni Hereniko</i>	458
30. From Pacific Studies to cultural policy: Applying the 'money where your mouth is' principle <i>Elise Huffer</i>	468
<b>RON CROCOMBE: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE</b>	
31. Atiuans and Papa Ron Crocombe <i>Paiere Mokoroa</i>	477
32. Ron Crocombe and Harry Maude <i>Doug Munro and Geoffrey Gray</i>	485
33. On the road...going home.... <i>Vaine Rasmussen</i>	504
34. A discerning Socrates: Ron Crocombe and the churches in Oceania <i>John Garrett</i>	516
35. Ron, mentor and friend <i>Albert Wendt</i>	521
36. Professor Ron Crocombe: Giant among men <i>John Herrmann</i>	529
37. Ron Crocombe and the future <i>Anthony van Fossen</i>	540
38. Ron Crocombe: Essay in photographs <i>Marjorie Tuainekore Crocombe and Narida Hinano Crocombe</i>	552
39. Tributes <i>People of the Pacific</i>	571
40. With sincere appreciation <i>The Crocombe Family</i>	607
Illustrations	614
Acronyms	620
Glossary	624
Index	631

## From the New Guinea Research Unit to the National Research Institute

R.J. May

### THE EARLY YEARS

Shortly after the establishment of The Australian National University (ANU), in 1953, three ANU academics — Oscar Spate, Cyril Belshaw, and Trevor Swan — were invited by the Australian government “to investigate the economic structure of the Territory [of Papua and New Guinea] with a view to suggesting gaps in knowledge which it is most essential to fill and lines of advance which hold most prospect of producing positive results” (Spate et al. 1953). Although research was not a particular concern of the group, it did note in passing that “knowledge and informed discussion [were] probably lacking” in relation to the formulation of social objectives of policy in Papua New Guinea (PNG), and it called for “careful research and thoughtful thinking [*sic*]” as a foundation for intelligent social and economic policy. Eight years later, in 1961 — five years before the establishment of the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) — ANU’s Research School of Pacific Studies (RSPaS), then under the directorship of Sir John Crawford, created the New Guinea Research Unit (NGRU). Its mandate was “to carry out work on problems of an inter-disciplinary nature which have both practical importance and scientific interest.”

The unit had an executive officer (David Bettison), initially based in Canberra, and a research fellow (Nigel Oram) looking after operations in Papua New Guinea. Operations in Papua New Guinea included assistance to ANU staff and other visiting foreign researchers. Bettison and Oram were joined in 1962 by a young Ron Crocombe, who had recently completed his PhD at ANU, on land use and tenure in the Cook Islands. NGRU was “controlled” (the word used in contemporary ANU documents) by a committee comprising Professors Sir John Crawford, J.A. Barnes, and J.W. Davidson and Drs Harold Brookfield and David Bettison. Bettison headed NGRU until 1965 when Crocombe replaced him as field director in Port Moresby.

NGRU’s original premises in Port Moresby were two galvanized iron sheds in the depot of an oil exploration company in the industrial suburb of Badili, opposite the Burns Philp staff clubhouse. With some partitioning and the installation of ceiling fans, one shed was converted into offices while the other served as a library. A house had been acquired for the foundation field director on nearby Three Mile Hill, but when Bettison departed in 1965, NGRU was moved there; the underfloor area was walled in to create offices while the upstairs was used as accommodation for visiting researchers. In 1968 the unit moved to a new building complex at Waigani, across from the newly established UPNG. There was a small general staff, mostly Papua New Guinean, led (from 1964 to 1973) by a field



manager, Jim Toner.<sup>1</sup> Toner retains fond memories of Ron Crocombe. "He had no time for the diversions and irrelevant activities favoured by other academics," Toner recalls, "and once wrote, 'The work of this Unit is to do research and publish the results,'" an injunction which Toner affixed in large letters on the inner door of his office.

The 1960s were exciting times in what was then the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. Although the Australian government at that time was slow to accept the Territory's imminent progress to independence, some people saw the inevitable change coming and sought to facilitate it. Following the report of a United Nations Visiting Mission led by Sir Hugh Foot in 1962, which criticized Australia for its lack of clear planning, the pace of change quickened. The Legislative Council was replaced by a part-appointed, part-elected House of Assembly and Papua New Guinea's first national general election was held in 1964. The public service expanded and localized, efforts tried to increase the output of cash crops — particularly smallholder coffee — and various initiatives identified and supported local entrepreneurs. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) was invited to carry out an economic survey of the Territory, and its report (commonly referred to as the "World Bank report") was published in 1965. The journal *New Guinea and Australia, the Pacific and South-East Asia* (often shortened to *New Guinea*) was launched in the same year under the editorship of Peter Hastings and actively sought contributions from Papua New Guinea's emerging nationalist elite. A Papua and New Guinea Society was also formed at this time and generated further discussion of constitutional and other issues. Dr H.C. Coombs, governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia, set up a Papua New Guinea Department in the Bank's head office in Sydney and a branch in Port Moresby and began sponsoring a number of Papua New Guineans through universities in Australia and subsequently UPNG, which took in its first students in 1966. NGRU was energized by, and contributed to, this growing momentum.

The unit's early research focus was on land use and productivity, and internal migration and urbanization (subjects that remained central to the unit's work throughout its existence), and emphasis was placed on "the interdisciplinary and applied character of the Unit's work." Contributors to this research included, as well as Oram and Crocombe, Dawn Ryan, Nancy Bowers, L.L. Langness, Diana Howlett, Anton Ploeg, and Sachiko Hatanaka; they worked with local informants. Ilinome Tarua conducted research supported by NGRU at Crocombe's initiative, well before Papua New Guineans were formally appointed to NGRU staff. A grant from the Rural Credits Development Fund of the Reserve Bank of Australia boosted research on subsistence agriculture and cash cropping, with early studies by Peter Krinks, Ian Fairbairn, Bob Kent Wilson, Ben and Ruth Finney, and Eric Waddell.

Following the World Bank report of 1965, and the subsequent appointment of an economic adviser (Bill McCasker) to the Australian administration, two major papers produced in Port Moresby (TPNG 1967, 1968), broadly endorsed the IBRD's recommendations (which in fact embodied little change of direction from existing policy) and sought to set the course for future economic policy. Many saw these as favouring expatriate-led develop-

<sup>1</sup> Toner later became the first field manager of ANU's North Australia Research Unit in Darwin, which was largely modelled on NGRU.

opment over indigenous participation in the cash economy, and there followed a lively debate about economic development strategies, in which Crocombe and others from ANU and the Reserve Bank of Australia took a prominent part. Crocombe argued for greater emphasis on Papua New Guinean participation in the economy, and was supported in this by Reserve Bank economist Pike Curtin, by John Kaputin, and by others.<sup>2</sup> (See Fairbairn, this volume.)

In 1964 NGRU coordinated a major study of the elections for the first House of Assembly. This was the first of an unbroken series of studies of Papua New Guinea's national elections, in which NGRU and subsequently the Institute for Applied Social and Economic Research (IASER) and the National Research Institute (NRI), along with ANU and other international scholars, have been continuously involved.

From the start, dissemination of research by unit staff and others was seen as an important function of NGRU, and in 1963 the first issue of a long series of *New Guinea Research Bulletins* was published, on *The Erap Mechanical Farming Project*, by Crocombe and G.R. Hogbin. By October 1969, the unit had produced 32 *New Guinea Research Bulletins*, with Crocombe author or joint author of four of the first seven. *Bulletin* 32 provided a detailed survey of social science field research and publications from 1962 to 1967. Later, a series of summaries of selected monographs, in simple English, Tok Pisin, and Hiri Motu, was added, and in 1975 a discussion paper series.

In 1967, on Crocombe's initiative, NGRU, UPNG, and Administrative College collaborated in organizing the first of the celebrated Waigani Seminars. Toner recalls that an approach was made to the Burns Philp staff club committee to hold the seminar in the staff clubhouse opposite NGRU, but that "members were wary of an intellectual invasion until [Toner] pointed out the benefits to their lunchtime bar trade." A selection of papers from the first Waigani Seminar, which was on *New Guinea in Transition*; indigenous participation in business, industry, politics and society, was published as *New Guinea Research Bulletin* No.20. The Waigani Seminars came to provide an annual focus for debate about a range of issues in the lead-up to independence in the Melanesian states.<sup>3</sup>

Following Crocombe's departure for the newly established University of the South Pacific in 1969, the NGRU directorship was taken over by New Zealand geographer Marion

<sup>2</sup> The World Bank report (IBRD 1965) was reviewed by Curtin 1965, Coombs 1965, Schaffer 1965. Contributors to the subsequent debate on the economic adviser's reports included Wilson 1968; Curtin 1968; Crocombe 1968/1969; Kaputin 1969; Arndt 1969; Shand 1969; Fisk 1969; Crocombe 1969; Epstein 1969; Reay 1969.

<sup>3</sup> The second Waigani Seminar, in 1968, was on the history of Melanesia; the third, from which three papers were published in *New Guinea Research Bulletin* No.35, was on the indigenous role in business enterprise; subsequent seminars addressed politics in Melanesia (1970), change and development in rural Melanesia (1971), priorities in Melanesian development (1972), law in Melanesia (1973), education in Melanesia (1974), the Melanesian environment (1975), and agriculture in the tropics (1976), and all these resulted in substantial publications (see references at the end of this paper). Thereafter, the seminars did not always happen annually, but some significant publications resulted from them. In the 1990s the Waigani Seminar died out, but when revived in 2008, Crocombe returned as a keynote speaker and helped edit the proceedings, *Living History and Evolving Democracy in Papua New Guinea 1964-2008*. A list of the Waigani seminars is available at <[www.pngbuai.com/600technology/information/waigani/WaiganiSeminars1967-1997list\\_published.pdf](http://www.pngbuai.com/600technology/information/waigani/WaiganiSeminars1967-1997list_published.pdf)>.

Ward, and in 1972 by Ron May, who was recruited from the Reserve Bank of Australia to become the unit's fourth, and last, field director. By then, the NGRU establishment had peaked at eight research fellows, one research officer, and three research assistants. In 1974, the unit appointed its first Papua New Guinean academic, Boio Bess Daro, who produced a discussion paper on Josephine Abaijah and the Papua Besena movement.

In the 1970s, and particularly after the election of Gough Whitlam as prime minister of Australia, the movement towards independence in Papua New Guinea accelerated. Following the 1972 election, Michael Somare became chief minister of the first fully elected government of Papua New Guinea. Self-government followed in 1973 and independence in 1975. The new government lacked experience but had enthusiasm and vision. In seeking to draft and carry out an ambitious agenda of reform and democratic consolidation, the Somare government sought expert advice from a variety of sources, including NGRU researchers: David Stone became a permanent consultant to the independence Constitutional Planning Commission (CPC); Ross Garnaut was a member of the Bougainville Renegotiation Team and the Tariff Advisory Committee before being seconded to the Department of Finance in 1975; (now Dame) Marilyn Strathern assisted in the preparation of village courts legislation and some aspects of law reform; Diana Conyers was attached to the Central Planning Office to help organize district planning in Morobe and subsequently helped establish the provincial government in Bougainville and the Village Development Task Force; May served on the board of the Bank of Papua New Guinea and provided some assistance to CPC; and the unit was part of a government-led Joint Programme of Studies in the Transport Process, which Marion Ward had helped initiate. NGRU also collaborated with UPNG in a major nationwide study of internal migration and urbanization, which had significant policy implications.

UPNG itself became a hive of nationalist rhetoric and activity, drawing committed scholars from around the world. The annual Waigani Seminars in the 1970s attracted prominent international speakers, emerging Melanesian political leaders, and large crowds of students and interested locals. The 1972 seminar had as keynote speakers Ivan Illich, René Dumont, and Lloyd Best, and included on the programme many of the emerging nationalist leaders of the region.

In 1973 then director of RSPacS Anthony Low, who had come to ANU from the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, wrote of NGRU, "There has been no more successful socio-economic research institute in a third world country during its period of terminal colonialism." But with independence approaching, and UPNG well established, it was decided within RSPacS that maintaining NGRU in Papua New Guinea was no longer appropriate, and initiatives were taken to hand the unit over to the PNG government. The Institute of National Affairs, a private sector think tank that has contributed substantially to the discussion of policy issues over the years, had its first meetings in the seminar room of NGRU in 1974.

#### THE INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH

During 1974-1975, discussions were held with relevant parties in Papua New Guinea, and legislation was drafted for a Papua New Guinea Institute of Applied Social and Economic

Research. The transition was accomplished in 1975, and IASER was formally launched on 1 January 1976. IASER was governed by a council, initially chaired by Bank of Papua New Guinea governor Sir Henry To Robert, which reported to the Minister for National Planning and Development. May was invited to stay on as foundation director of the new Institute.

As its first major activity, in 1976 IASER organized a seminar attended by representatives from government departments and agencies, colleagues from UPNG, and members of the private sector to discuss research needs and priorities. The wide-ranging discussion helped to define the early IASER research agenda endorsed by the IASER council in 1976. This focused on (1) population, with specific reference to demography and the effectiveness of family planning programmes; (2) assessment of government services, with special reference to extension services; (3) organizational bases for local development, including local and provincial government and development associations; and (4) rural development, with specific reference to implementation of land policy, constraints on economic development and rural outmigration. It was also noted that although questions of macroeconomic policy appeared not to have been given high priority at the seminar, a vigorous effort should be made to recruit someone with skills in this area (May 1976; IASER 1981).

May was succeeded in 1977 by UPNG economist John Conroy, who was in turn succeeded in 1982 by UPNG geographer Richard Jackson. By 1980, research staff numbers had risen to 26, with 16 expatriate staff and 10 national staff. Among IASER's early national staff were Mel Togolo, Aruru Matiabe, Kundapen Talyaga, Ila Temu, Anton Goie, Morea Vele, and Chris Haiveta. During the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, IASER consulted regularly with government and a substantial part of IASER's funding came from research conducted on behalf of other government departments and agencies.

In 1984, the directorship was localized with the appointment of Bougainvillean Ephraim Makis. Makis was tragically killed in an apparent raskol (rascal, bandit) attack and was succeeded by historian John Waiko. Waiko resigned in 1992 and was elected to the National Parliament in that year. He was succeeded by Wari Iamo. Iamo resigned in 1994 to contest a national by-election, and was replaced by Ila Temu as acting director, but Iamo returned in 1995 for a further term after failing to gain the seat.

### THE NATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE

In 1985, there was a move to incorporate IASER within the National Planning Office, but support was substantial for maintaining its independence — including support from then Minister for National Planning Bebes Korowaro — and it remained an independent entity. Three years later, the scope of IASER was expanded by the transfer of the Education Research Unit from UPNG, and in 1989, the National Executive Council approved a change of name to National Research Institute — a title formalized by legislation four years later. In 1994, NRI also absorbed the Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies (created in the early 1970s under the direction of Ulli Beier) and the National Film Unit, but the following year these two bodies were returned to the National Cultural Council.

During the 1980s and 1990s, much of IASER/NRI's research focused on the national economy, integrated rural development projects and community development projects;

ive Bank of Australia to  
GRU establishment had  
arch assistants. In 1974,  
ss Daro, who produced a  
ement.

hitlam as prime minister  
ia New Guinea acceler-  
chief minister of the first  
ent followed in 1973 and  
e but had enthusiasm and  
of reform and democratic  
from a variety of sources,  
ent consultant to the pre-  
oss Garnaut was a member  
ry Committee before being  
) Marilyn Strathern assisted  
pects of law reform; Diana  
p organize district planning  
government in Bougainville  
board of the Bank of Papua  
nit was part of a government-  
ich Marion Ward had helped  
nationwide study of internal  
lications.

d activity, drawing committed  
minars in the 1970s attracted  
litical leaders, and large crowds  
as keynote speakers Ivan Illich,  
gramme many of the emerging

o had come to ANU from the  
sex, wrote of NGRU, "There has  
e in a third world country during  
ce approaching, and UPNG well  
ng NGRU in Papua New Guinea  
) hand the unit over to the PNG  
sector think tank that has contrib-  
the years, had its first meetings in

**ECONOMIC RESEARCH**  
parties in Papua New Guinea, and  
ite of Applied Social and Economic

demography and internal migration; decentralization and local government; law and justice issues; conservation; and developments in the forestry sector. The Division of Education Studies also maintained a steady flow of education research reports.<sup>4</sup> Among a number of international scholars who contributed to this research and policy dialogue as members of IASER were Michael Walter, Alan Stretton, Ngo Van Lam, Louise Morauta, Patricia Townsend, Joe Peasah, Andrew Axline, Anthony Regan, Sinclair Dinnen, and Colin Filer. Visiting researchers also contributed to IASER's output. However, competition for skilled national research staff intensified during the 1990s and 2000s, at the same time as the research capacity of government departments and agencies has declined, and this has limited NRI's ability to respond to the demands on its resources from government and outside-funded consultancies.

In 1998, NRI survived another attempted move to terminate the independent research institution, when the economic adviser to the Skate government, Pirouz Hamidian-Rad, proposed the abolition of several statutory bodies as a cost-cutting measure. This proposal was eventually resisted, and Hamidian-Rad was later arrested on charges of misappropriation. Five years later, the work of NRI suffered a further setback when its director, Beno Boeha, was accused of financial mismanagement. Richard Jackson returned briefly as acting director before the appointment of Dr Thomas Webster in 2004.

Webster, an educationist who had also served as acting administrator of the Western Highlands Province and executive director of the UPNG Open College, quickly reinvigorated NRI, securing assistance from the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) for a new building programme (the NGRU building in 2004 was much as it had been when constructed in 1968), several research advisers under the Advisory Support Facility (including May, who returned to NRI for several months in 2005-2008), and funding for its research programme.

From 1996 to 2011, NRI comprised four research divisions: Economic Studies, Political and Legal Studies, Social and Environmental Studies, and Education Studies. In 2011, however, the institute was reorganized to fall in line with the pillars of *Papua New Guinea Vision 2050* (National Strategic Plan Taskforce 2009) and to facilitate interdisciplinary research. Its research activities are now organized under three "pillars:" People (human capital); Wealth Creation (wealth creation, natural resources, and growth nodes); and Institutional Strengthening (institutional development and service delivery).

A major focus of NRI's recent work has been on land reform, which has been identified by successive governments as critical to Papua New Guinea's development. NRI's principal researcher for this project has been Papua New Guinean economist Charles Yala, with strong support from Dr Webster. A National Land Summit was convened by Webster, as chair of the Land Summit Coordinating Committee, in 2005 (Yala 2010). Although emphasis was placed on the need to arrive at "a land reform initiative that was truly home-grown," fittingly, Ron Crocombe was invited back to take part in the summit. Subsequently, a National Land Development Taskforce and a National Land Development Advisory Group, chaired by Webster, were created to oversee reforms. A

4 complete list of IASER/NRI publications may be found on the NRI website, <[www.nri.org.pg](http://www.nri.org.pg)>.

overnment; law and justice  
The Division of Education  
orts.<sup>4</sup> Among a number of  
olicy dialogue as members  
, Louise Morauta, Patricia  
nclair Dinnen, and Colin  
However, competition for  
2000s, at the same time as  
s has declined, and this has  
rces from government and

ate the independent research  
ent, Pirouz Hamidian-Rad,  
:ting measure. This proposal  
on charges of misappropria-  
back when its director, Beno  
sson returned briefly as acting  
04.

administrator of the Western  
en College, quickly rein vigor-  
or International Development  
lding in 2004 was much as it  
rs under the Advisory Support  
l months in 2005-2008), and

ns: Economic Studies, Political  
d Education Studies. In 2011,  
ne pillars of *Papua New Guinea*  
d to facilitate interdisciplinary  
three "pillars:" People (human  
urces, and growth nodes); and  
l service delivery).

d reform, which has been iden-  
w Guinea's development. NRI's  
zw Guinean economist Charles  
al Land Summit was convened  
ing Committee, in 2005 (Yali  
arrive at "a land reform initiative  
is invited back to take part in the  
Taskforce and a National Land  
: created to oversee reforms. Act

has been since the 1960s, land reform remains a complex and vexed issue, which continues to challenge researchers and policy makers.

Other recent research projects have included decentralization, local service delivery, and sub-national politics; corruption; electoral reform and political party development; national development and planning; and human immunodeficiency virus / acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS).<sup>5</sup>

Since the 1970s, IASER/NRI has had its ups and downs, but it has established a solid reputation for the independence of its research and its capacity, within the limited resources available to it, to respond to demands from government for policy-oriented research and advice. In this, it draws on traditions established in the 1960s, of which Ron Crocombe was a major architect.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Jim Toner, former field manager with NGRU, for his recollections of the early years of NGRU, and to Jim Robins of NRI and Colin Filer of ANU, who helped piece together the history of IASER/NRI. This paper draws on an earlier history of NGRU (May 2006).

#### REFERENCES

- Arndt, H. June/July 1969. An Answer to Crocombe – I: Too many invidious and invalid comparisons? *New Guinea and Australia, the Pacific and South-East Asia* 4(2):54-59.
- Brammall, J., & Ronald J. May, eds. 1975. *Education in Melanesia*. 8th Waigani Seminar, 5-10 May 1974. Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea and Canberra: Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University.
- Coombs, H.C. June/July 1965. Pennies and Politics: a Reserve Bank in New Guinea. *New Guinea and Australia, the Pacific and South-East Asia* 1(2):62-69.
- Crocombe, Ron. December 1968/January 1969. That Five Year Plan: For New Guineans—token development. *New Guinea and Australia, the Pacific and South-East Asia* 3(4):57-70.
- Crocombe, Ron. September/October 1969. The Economy – I: Crocombe to his critics, The debate goes on... *New Guinea and Australia, the Pacific and South-East Asia* 4(3):49-58.
- Crocombe, Ron, and G.R. Hogbin. 1963. *The Erap Mechanical Farming Project*. *New Guinea Research Bulletin* No.1. Port Moresby: New Guinea Research Unit.
- Curtin, P.W.E. March/April 1965. The World Bank Report: A review. *New Guinea and Australia, the Pacific and South-East Asia* 1(1):52-58.
- Curtin, P.W.E. March/April 1968. How to be inconsistent: General development—but whose? *New Guinea and Australia, the Pacific and South-East Asia* 3(1):19-24.
- Foyi, B.A.C., and T. Varghese, eds. 1976. *Agriculture in the Tropics*. 10th Waigani Seminar, 2-8 May 1976. Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea.
- Epstein, Scarlett. September/October 1969. The Economy – II: The plan and its assumptions. *New Guinea and Australia, the Pacific and South-East Asia* 4(3):59-63.
- Fisk, E.K. June/July 1969. An Answer to Crocombe – II: How fast do you go? *New Guinea and Australia, the Pacific and South-East Asia* 4(2):64-71.
- Logia, K.S., ed. 1970. *The History of Melanesia*. 2nd Waigani Seminar, 30 May – 5 June 1974. Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea and Canberra: Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University.

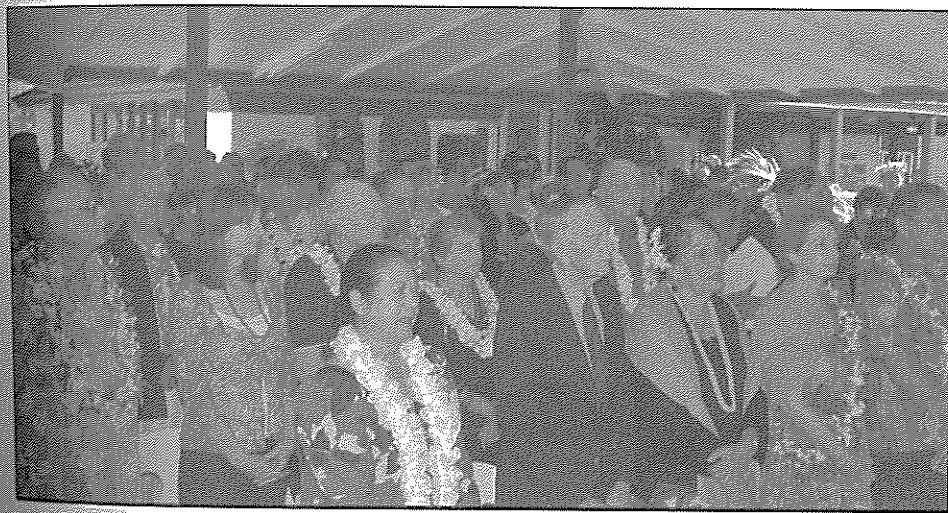
<sup>5</sup> NRI's 2011 work plan is detailed on the NRI web site, <www.nri.org.pg>.

- Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research (IASER) 1981. *The First Five Years. Report of the Papua New Guinea Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research*. Boroko: Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research.
- International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD, World Bank). 1965. *The Economic Development of the Territory of Papua New Guinea: Report of the Mission Organised by IBRD*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press.
- Kaputin, J. 1969. Australia's carpetbaggers. *New Guinea and Australia, Pacific and South-East Asia* 4(1):35-42.
- May, R.J., ed. 1973. *Priorities in Melanesian Development*. 6th Waigani Seminar, 30 April - 5 May 1972. Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea and Canberra: Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University.
- May, R.J., ed. 1976. *Research Needs and Priorities in Papua New Guinea*. Monograph No.1. Boroko: Institute of Applied Social and Economic Research.
- May, R.J. 2006. Northern exposure: the New Guinea Research Unit. In Lal, Brij V., and Allison Ley, eds. *The Coombs: A House of Memories*. Canberra: Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University, p.95-100. <https://digitalcollections.anu.edu.au/handle/1885/44509>
- National Strategic Plan Taskforce. 2009. *Papua New Guinea Vision 2050*. Port Moresby: National Strategic Plan Taskforce, Government of Papua New Guinea.
1967. *New Guinea People in Business and Industry: Papers from the First Waigani Seminar*. 18-22 May 1967. Canberra: New Guinea Research Unit, Australian National University.
- O'Connor, J., T.S. Epstein, and G. Nash. 1970. *The Indigenous Role in Business Enterprise: Three Papers from the Third Waigani Seminar, 1969*. Canberra: New Guinea Research Unit, Australian National University.
- Reay, Marie. September/October 1969. The Economy - III: But whose estates? The Wahgi smallholders. *New Guinea and Australia, the Pacific and South-East Asia* 4(3):64-68.
- Schaffer, Bernard. June/July 1965. Thoughts at Goroka: Sins of the World Bank team. *New Guinea and Australia, the Pacific and South-East Asia* 1(2):72-79.
- Shand, R. June/July 1969. An Answer to Crocombe - III: In defence of nucleus estates. *New Guinea and Australia, the Pacific and South-East Asia* 4(2):60-63.
- Spatc, O.H.K., C.S. Belshaw, and T.W. Swan. 1953. Some Problems of Development in New Guinea. Report of a Working Committee of the Australian National University. Canberra. Typescript.
- Territory of Papua and New Guinea (TPNG). 1967. *Economic Development of Papua and New Guinea*. Port Moresby: Administrator, Territory of Papua and New Guinea.
- Territory of Papua and New Guinea (TPNG). 1968. *Programmes and Policies for the Economic Development of Papua New Guinea*. Port Moresby: Administrator, Territory of Papua and New Guinea.
- Ward, Marion W., ed. 1972. *Change and Development in Rural Melanesia*. 5th Waigani Seminar, 14-20 May 1971. Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea and Canberra: Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University.
- Ward, Marion W., Susan C. Tarua, and May Dudley, eds. 1970. *The Politics of Melanesia*. 4th Waigani Seminar, 9-15 May 1970. Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea and Canberra: Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University.
- Wilson, R. Kent. January 1968. The Economy: Priorities in development. Why not clothing, furniture, brick and assembly industries? *New Guinea and Australia, the Pacific and South-East Asia* 2(4):40-47.
- Winslow, John H., ed. 1975. *The Melanesian Environment*. 9th Waigani Seminar, 2-8 May 1975. Canberra: ANU Press.
- Yala, Charles, ed. 2010. *The Genesis of the Papua New Guinea Land Reform Program. Selected Papers from the 2005 National Land Summit*. Monograph No. 42. Boroko: National Research Institute.
- Zorn, Jean G., & Peter Bayne, eds. 1975. *Foreign investment, international law and national development*. 7th Waigani Seminar, April-May 1973. Sydney, Melbourne, and Brisbane: Butterworths.

Zorn, Jean G., & Peter Bayne, eds. 1975. *Lo bilong ol manmeri: Crime, compensation and village courts*. 7th Waigani Seminar, April 1973. Port Moresby: University of Papua New Guinea.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr Ron May is Emeritus Fellow at the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Program, College of Asia and the Pacific, and Convenor of the Centre for Conflict and Post-conflict Studies, Asia Pacific, School of International, Political and Strategic Studies, The Australian National University. Dr Ron May, The Australian National University, Canberra ACT 0200, Australia, Ron.May@anu.edu.au



Participants at the Festschrift Conference, Rarotonga, Cook Islands, 12-13 August 2010 (photo: The Rarotongan).

rs. *Report of the Papua  
of Applied Social and*

. 1965. *The Economic  
by IBRD*. Baltimore:

: *and South-East Asia*

30 April - 5 May 1972.  
chool of Pacific Studies,

nograph No.1. Boroko:

V., and Allison Ley, eds,  
Asian Studies, Australian  
'1885/44509

resby: National Strategic

Seminar. 18-22 May 1967.

ss *Enterprise: Three Papers*  
Unit, Australian National

s? *The Wahgi smallholders.*

ank team. *New Guinea and*

cus estates. *New Guinea and*

velopment in New Guinea.  
Canberra. Typescript.

it of *Papua and New Guinea.*

for the *Economic Development*  
and New Guinea.

. 5th Waigani Seminar. 14-20  
rra: Research School of Pacific

itics of *Melanesia*. 4th Waigan  
uinea and Canberra: Research

r, *Why not clothing, furniture*  
*and South-East Asia* 2(4):40-47  
minar, 2-8 May 1975. Canberra.

Program. *Selected Papers from the*  
Research Institute.

al law and national development  
bane: Butterworths.