

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

The Pacific Judicial Conference is an *ad hoc collegiate forum* of Chief Justices and their delegates from the Pacific Region which assembles biennially to discuss various issues of interest to them and their respective jurisdictions.

The organising and preparation for the 17th PJC took more than a year. It was a long journey indeed and a valuable learning experience for all of us on the organising committee. The committee was guided by the host of the conference, Chief Justice Anthony Ford, assisted by his co-host, Chief Judge Emeritus of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, Clifford Wallace.

As to the logistics, we received valuable help from and were guided by the PJDP. Without their assistance and guidance our task would have been more demanding. I must admit that there were times when we doubted ourselves and at one critical point, when we had only 13 registrations, we had to make a critical decision as to whether we should go ahead with the conference or call it off. After consultation with PJDP, the collective wisdom of all those involved on the committee helped us to make the right decision. The experience made us appreciate more than ever, however, the potential we all have when working as a team.

Financially, we were indeed indebted to both the NZAID and the AusAid for their financial contributions. Without their valuable support the conference would not have been possible.

Although the PJC is held only every two years, we appreciate that it is still difficult, because of their other judicial commitments for many Chief Justices to participate. The fact that so many of you were able to find the time to join us in the Kingdom was indeed a blessing. As host country, we were sincerely privileged to be able to welcome to the Kingdom all the delegates and their spouses.

As to the conference itself, the topics for discussion have been compiled and are attached for your information along with a summary of the minutes of the conference.

From all of us who have involved in the organisation of the 17th Biennial Pacific Judicial Conference, it was one of the most challenging though rewarding experiences that we have had. The success of the conference was made possible not only because of the tireless dedication and efforts of all members of the organising committee but through the efforts and positive attitude of all of the delegates, many of whom skipped other judicial responsibilities to attend and participate. Thank you all for making the event such an outstanding success. We could not have hosted the conference without your participation. Let us all try to get together again at the next PJC in 2009 to repeat the joy and success that we have experienced.

Finally, we hope that the host of the 18th Pacific Judicial Conference, French Polynesia, will have a similar rewarding and successful experience. We wish them all the best in their efforts.

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Mr. Sione Vuna Fa'otusia
Secretary for Justice and Chairman of the Organizing Committee for the 17th Biennial
PJC