**PACIFIC CONSTITUTIONS RESEARCH NETWORK CONFERENCE**

**4 – 6 DECEMBER 2017**

**UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC, EMALUS CAMPUS, PORT VILA, VANUATU**

Constitutions are of fundamental importance to democratic governance and the rule of law. In recent years the constitutional foundations of many Pacific states have given rise to a number of socio-political challenges, including coups, clashes between human rights and custom, weak political accountability and political instability. These challenges have given rise to a vibrant body of case law, as courts try to negotiate the relationships between introduced institutions and local practices and come to decisions that promote the ongoing development of democratic states. There have also been major constitutional reform activities in many Pacific island countries in the past ten years, and some territories will soon be hosting independence referenda.

In 2016 the University of the South Pacific (USP) established the Pacific Constitutions Research Network (PCN) to promote discussion of, and research into, these important constitutional issues. The first conference of the PCN was held in November 2016. The conference was multi/inter-disciplinary and speakers approached constitutional issues from a variety of perspectives, including socio-political, case law analysis, and textual analysis. Both scholarly and policy oriented approaches were presented. The programme and papers can be found at <http://www.paclii.org/pcn/events.html>.

It was agreed to hold a second conference in 2017.

**This is a preliminary call for papers and panels for the 2017 conference**. We welcome paper and panel suggestions from all disciplines and covering a wide range of topics relating to constitutions in Pacific island countries. Papers are particularly encouraged in the following areas, which were all identified as important themes and trends at the 2016 conference:

* Constitutional reform and renewal
	+ Processes of reform; how to do constitutional reform
	+ The substance of constitutional reform proposals
* Developing democracy
	+ The role of the courts in overseeing the executive and the legislature
	+ Accountability mechanisms other than courts
	+ Women in politics and leadership
	+ Independence movements
	+ Constitutions and political stability
* Realising constitutional rights
	+ The relationship between custom and constitutional rights
	+ Due process

Please send an abstract of between 100 – 300 words; or a proposal for a panel with nominated speakers to leeanne.sackett@vanuatu.usp.ac.fj by 1 August 2017 using the pro formas below.

**NOTES**

*The conference organizers are in the process of securing funding, but it is unlikely that there will be a general scholarships fund in 2017.*

*In order to maximize participation there is unlikely to be any conference fee.*

*Remote presentation using skype or other ICT may be possible, for those who want to present but are unable to participate in person.*

Thank you on behalf of the conference organisers.

**PACIFIC CONSTITUTIONS RESEARCH NETWORK**

**CONFERENCE 4 – 6 DECEMBER 2017**

This form is for expressing interest in participating in the 2017 PCN conference, and also registering membership.

Please delete the sections/responses that do not apply to you.

Return the form to Lee-Anne Sackett leeanne.sackett@vanuatu.usp.ac.fj

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

Attendance

* I am interested in attending the workshop in person
* I am unable to attend but would like to participate virtually (via skype/prerecorded presentation/circulated papers). *NOTE: We have limited ICT capability and virtual participation is not guaranteed, but want to make this event available as widely as possible.*

Assistance

* I would need assistance to attend. The level of assistance I would need is
	+ Full support of travel from (please complete details)
	+ Accommodation
	+ Partial support for (either a particular amount or what types of costs you would need covered)
* If you are seeking assistance are you:
	+ A postgraduate student (note degree you are enrolled for and institution)
	+ An early career academic (in first 5 years)
	+ A Pacific Island National
	+ A lawyer/judge/policy practitioner

If you are seeking assistance list 3 main publications in the area of Pacific Constitutions, or note involvement in practical constitutional reform activities

Paper/panel proposal

* I want to attend but do not want to present
* The title and abstract of my proposed paper is:
* The title and summary of my proposed panel is:

**PACIFIC CONSTITUTIONS: MULTI-DISCIPLINARY RESEARCH NETWORK**

Please delete the sections/responses that do not apply to you.

Return the form to Lee-Anne Sackett leeanne.sackett@vanuatu.usp.ac.fj

**MEMBERSHIP OF PCN**

I want to join the Pacific Constitutions Network (PCN)

The email list

* I have already joined the PCN google group
* I do not want to join the PCN google group
* Please add me to the PCN google group, using this email: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The website

* I do not want to be listed on the website as a PCN member or
* Please add the following information to the members listing on the website (you can leave sections blank if you do not want information published)
	+ Family Name
	+ First Name
	+ Current Employer/position
	+ Contact details
	+ Main constitutional research interests (countries, discipline focus, subject themes)
	+ Membership of other related research networks

The network

To make a sustainable network we are looking for contact points at different organisations. These contact points will help to get information out to PCN members and to attract new PCN members. PCN members who have associations with journals that may welcome contributions relating to Pacific consitutions.

* I do not want to be a contact point
* I would be happy to be a contact point for (list organisation and/or publication)