

Getting to Know You

Noa Petueli Tapumanaia, Chief Librarian and Archivist – Tuvalu National Library and Archives



Who are you and where are you based?

My name is Mr. Noa Petueli Tapumanaia and I am based in Funafuti, the capital of Tuvalu. I am the current Chief Librarian and Archivist of the Tuvalu National Library and Archives (TNLA), which is under the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

What are your current holdings?

Mostly printed materials, we have colonial collections about Tuvalu, separation collections, and cultural heritage collections in the archives sections.

What services do you provide?

In my current position I:

- Offer high-level administration to my department. At the same time, I provide information to archives users and library users.
- Identify fragile archival materials, send them for preservation and make working copies to be accessible to the public.
- Manage the development of access tools and the movement of all archival records.
- Manage budget, policies and procedures, outreach and awareness programs.
- Manage and maintain archival and library databases, finding aids and inventories.

Can you tell us about a recent event, acquisition or change you'd like to highlight to ARANZ members?

TNLA recently purchased books to replace its old collection; the cost of the collection was \$130,000.00 FJD. The collection includes audio books for children, new reference for children, fiction and non-fiction for adults and children, and alphabet charts.

The Tuvalu Government signed an MoU last year with Prosentient Systems to host our first ever Electronic Library and Digital Archives, which will be implemented by the TNLA.

Tell us about some of the challenges you face in your role or archive?

The biggest challenge the Tuvalu Archives is facing at the moment is a lack of space. The archive is getting smaller and it is not safe to house Tuvalu archival records as the building is very old. As a Chief Librarian and Archivist, I fear for the safety of my staff and of course Tuvalu archival records. One day these records will be totally destroyed if a proper facility is not built to house them properly.

A challenge I face is that sometimes I believe my voice falls onto deaf ears. So, it is my duty to conduct outreach and improve archives awareness, to make people aware about the situation of these records. I truly love this role, to me it is very important, sometimes emotional

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and embarrassing. But I have a passion for the job which drives and motivates me to do what I do best - finding solutions to protect and prolong the life of Tuvalu archival records for future generations.

What do you enjoy most about the work you do?

Well, I really enjoy reading about what happened in the past. Sometimes I learn things that truly improve my capacity as a native Tuvaluan. I enjoy every moment reading and imagine the hardship my forefathers went through in trying to free Tuvalu from the power of colonialism. At times I feel that if only the people of Tuvalu took some time to come and read about their history, perhaps people might have the same understanding of what happened in the past.