

## Pacific court officials meet

Thu  
23 Jun, 2011

Members of an executive committee for the Pacific Judicial Development Programme (PJDP) will meet in Rarotonga next week to discuss the ongoing education of judicial and court officers as well as the improvement of associated systems within the Pacific region.

The meeting follows a five-day workshop of PJDP national coordinators this week at the Edgewater Resort and Spa in Arorangi.

PJDP programme executive committee (PEC) member and Cook Islands senior Justice of the Peace John Kenning is taking part in both the workshop and next weeks meeting.

He says there are five PEC members including the chief justices of Samoa, Vanuatu and Palau Patu Sapolu, Vincent Lunabek and Arthur Ngiraklsong respectively.

Also on the committee is Tonga chief registrar Manakovi Pahulu.

She too is taking part in this weeks workshop.

PEC members will meet with representatives of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, through which funding for the PJDP is being provided, as well as programme contractors.

The Federal Court of Australia is engaged as the programmes service provider.

PJDP team leader Dr Livingston Armytage is in the Cook Islands with fellow Australian workshop participants PJDP programme manager Lorenz Metzner, judicial monitoring and evaluation advisor Cate Sumner, customary dispute resolution advisor Matthew Zurstrassen and judicial administration diagnostic advisor Jennifer Ehmann.

The goal of PJDP is to strengthen governance and rule of law in Pacific island countries through enhanced access to justice and professional judicial officers who act independently according to legal principles. Its purpose is to support Pacific nations to enhance the professional competence of judicial and court officers and the systems and processes they use.

It aims to deepen understanding about the nature, role and potential of traditional dispute resolution practices with a view to adopting an integrated approach, create harmony throughout the Pacific in respect of codes of judicial conduct.

It also encourages developing documentation about the sustainability of judicial development in the Pacific for consideration by the regions chief justices.

PJDP also includes projects for regional interaction involving Pacific leaders, the formation of a regional support strategy for registry process and systems, the collection of data for monitoring of regional judicial performance, training qualifications, the development of orientation and decision-making training, the commission of two new

benchbooks (judge guide books) and the provision of an incentive-based mechanism for funding applications.

- Rosie Manins

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