

An Ocean of Books

Annual review 2011

Our dream is simple and achievable.

We want to see school libraries in the Pacific full to overflowing with quality books that will capture the imagination of children and inspire them as they progress through school.

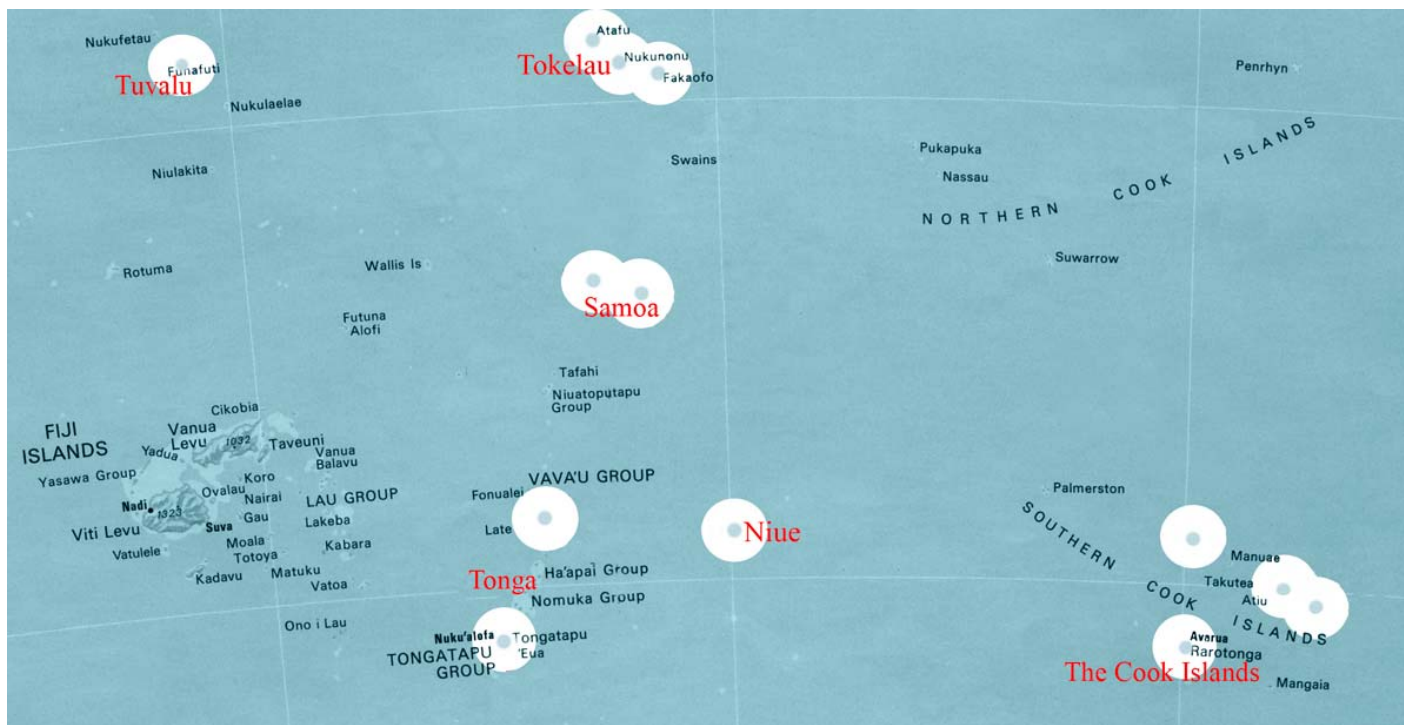
Because we believe that children who learn to read will eventually read to learn, we are dedicated to getting books into Pacific school libraries. We want every child in the Pacific islands to have the same opportunity for a good education that our children in New Zealand take for granted.

With the help of our supporters, including Scholastic New Zealand and Reef Shipping, we have shipped over 27,000 books to 48 schools in our first 12 months (3.25 books per child).



(photo supplied)

Students in Apia, Samoa, with donated books.



Where we're sending books.

Our story

An Ocean of Books was launched in 2010 after Jeff Evans witnessed the lack of resources available at Niue High School during a visit. "The students were hungry to learn, but honestly, the resources are stretched beyond belief." Jeff initially auctioned off a couple of photographs taken in Niue to raise funds to purchase a digital camera for Niue High School's Art Department. "It was a start, but of course I wanted to do more, so An Ocean of Books was born."

While it took awhile to formulate a coherent plan, Jeff knew that schools and publishers in New Zealand would support him. "Looking back, it was a classic case of just doing it and sorting out background challenges as they occurred. If I had waited to get all our ducks in a row before launching we would have missed so many key opportunities: foremost being an introduction to Neil Welham and the team at Scholastic New Zealand."

That introduction led to what was probably a one off opportunity to show Scholastic NZ that we could deliver on our promises. The initial challenges were two-fold: How to get the books transported to the islands, and how to pay import taxes and duty in the islands.

The transport was organised after a meeting with All Black great Michael Jones, a director at Reef Shipping. Michael instinctively knew that getting more quality books up to school libraries is one step along the way to improving the educational prospects of Pacific youngsters, and he agreed to ship a pallet of books a month as a community service for the island nations that Reef Shipping serve.

Likewise, a bit of fancy negotiating once the appropriate government ministers were identified saw letters confirming that all taxes and duty charges would be waived coming from Niue, Tonga, Tuvalu, Samoa and the Cook Islands.

"Fortunately we proved ourselves and our relationship with Scholastic has since grown from strength to strength."

Scholastic New Zealand has gone on to donate an incredible 33,083 books in our first year, and that alone has allowed us to do more than we ever imagined possible. Scholastic's involvement has really stretched our horizons and given us the confidence to think big.

Michael Jones and Jeff Evans pose with books destined for Samoa for the Central Leader.

Waves of books on way to Pacific kids

By LUKE PARKER

Photographer Jeff Evans is determined to get as many books to Pacific Island schools as possible.

The Te Atatu resident is the man behind the non-profit company, An Ocean of Books.

"We want to get books into school libraries in the central Pacific that will inspire kids as they

progress through school," he says.

Mr Evans was in Niue and came up with the idea after seeing how under-resourced the schools are.

He contacted Scholastic New Zealand and was thrilled when the company donated a large number of books.

Now he's keen to supply more to primary, intermediate, and se-

condary schools in Niue, Tonga, Samoa, the Cook Islands and Tokalau.

Former All Black Michael Jones is also behind the project.

The Avondale resident is a director at Reef Shipping – the firm shipping the books to the Pacific Islands.

"We have sent 3473 books,"

says Mr Evans. "We're hoping to send

a shipment to Te Kaaroa School in Aitutaki. The school lost everything when Cyclone Pat hit in February. Half of it is now being run out of the headmaster's home."

Mr Evans says schools in New Zealand are coming on board to do their part as well.

■ Email info@anoceanofbooks.org for more information.

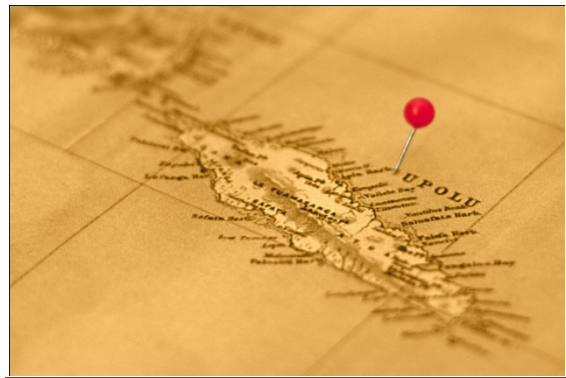


Books galore: Jeff Evans, left, and Michael Jones with boxes of books being sent to schools in the Pacific Islands. Photo: JASON OXENHAN

Our Key Supporters.

An Ocean of Books is fortunate to have some incredibly generous corporations supporting our program, and we couldn't have been anywhere near as successful without their support.

We thank them all, along with the numerous individuals, schools and public libraries that have also supported us.



Scholastic New Zealand

Neil Welham and the team at Scholastic New Zealand are our major book sponsors. With 33,083 books donated to our programme during 2010-2011, their contribution accounts for 76% of the new books we have received.

Reef Shipping

All Black legend Michael Jones, a director at Reef Shipping, has been an important supporter of our work since our inception, pledging to transport a pallet of books per month as a community service for the island nations that they serve.

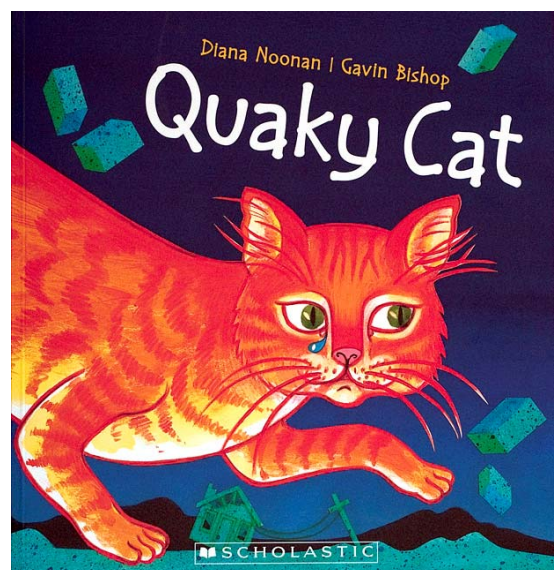
Lock and Partners

Karl Morton of accountants Lock and Partners has been a key supporter of An Ocean of Books since we became a registered charity and he continues to provide invaluable ongoing support for our organisation.

Storage King, St Lukes

The team at Storage King, St Lukes have helped to house our operation by providing two units at a greatly reduced fee. Their support has been as important as anyone's in helping to make our programme a success.

Key Fact: In January 2011 Scholastic donated 7,900 copies of Quaky Cat for us to distribute throughout the Pacific. 100 copies of the book are being sent to each school when we ship them their library books, along with a request that a copy is given to each new entrant on the first day they attend school.



Highlights

Niue

Niue is pretty special to us as the inspiration for An Ocean of Books came shortly after Jeff visited Niue in 2009. While on the island he was asked to give a career talk to senior students at Niue High School. While public speaking isn't exactly his forte, he jumped at the opportunity to share his experiences with the students. "The kids were great and I was immediately struck by their thirst for knowledge and their enthusiasm."

While the students couldn't be faulted, the general lack of resources available at the school was a real surprise, "The students were hungry to learn and the teachers were doing a good job considering the resources available to them, but what really caught my eye though was the state of the school library. It was full of old, worn and uninspiring books."

Spending time with Niue's students was the catalyst for An Ocean of Books, so it was only fitting that our very first shipment was sent to Niue's two schools.



Tokelau

Getting books to Tokelau was especially satisfying for us as one of our founding trustees, Fuli Pereira, is originally from the tiny nation; although we initially found Tokelau's remote location somewhat of a logistical challenge.



(Photo supplied)

Students of Tialeniu School, Fakaofu sort through books donated by An Ocean of Books.

With 3 schools spread across the nations three atolls of Atafu, Nukunonu and Fakaofu, we were keen to ensure we got some great books into the libraries.

Once again we were able to enlist the assistance of an education department to help get the books to the schools. In this case, Lili Tuioti of the Tokelau Department of Education helped arrange shipping for our precious cargo and ensured there were no hiccups in Samoa where the boxes were transferred to Tokelau's supply ship.

(Left)

Louana Trego of Nukutere College, Rarotonga, with donated books. (Photo supplied)

Tuvalu

For a long time it was looking like we wouldn't be able to live up to our pledge to send books up for Tuvalu's 10 primary schools. Having worked with Tuvalu's Director of Education, Katalina Taloka, for some months we still hadn't managed to secure shipping to the far flung group of islands. Reef Shipping, our carrier of choice, doesn't serve Tuvalu (which sits approximately 8 degrees below the equator, straight above Fiji) so we were at a bit of a loss as to how to get the books where they needed to be.

Then a stroke of luck: in February 2011 we were introduced to Alan Foote of **Pacific Direct Line** who agreed to ship the books for us. Thanks to Alan and PDL, 1,586 new books are now available for students in Tuvalu's primary school libraries.



(Above) Te Kaaroa SDA school, Aitutaki after Cyclone Pat struck in early 2010.

(Right) Jessica Neddleman with books and supplies ready to ship to Aitutaki.

Aitutaki, Cook Islands

When Auckland primary teacher Jessica Neddleman witnessed the remnants of Te Kaaroa SDA School first hand a couple of months after Cyclone Pat had slammed into the idyllic island she knew she had to help. "The main school building was still unusable and half the school was being taught from the principal's home. In addition most of the school's supplies had been lost in the cyclone."

Back home, Jessica engaged the help of her school who donated much needed resources and then contacted An Ocean of Books to help with the shipping and to add precious books to the cargo.

It was easy for us to agree to support Jessica. She had already proven herself to be organised and motivated, and she shared our philosophy that if you are working for a good cause help will eventually arrive in one form or another. She really just needed a little assistance to get over the line. Jessica was an inspiration to us.



Schools which have received books

Cook Islands

Arorangi School, Rarotonga
Nikao Maori School, Rarotonga
Nukutere College, Rarotonga
Titikaveka College, Rarotonga
Te Kaaroa SDA, Aitutaki
Takitumu School, Rarotonga
Pukapuka School, Pukapuka
Tauhunu School, Manihiki
Tukao School, Manihiki
Mauke School, Mauke
Mitiaro School, Mitiaro

Tonga

Ma'ufanga GPS, Tongatapu
Navutoka GPS, Tongatapu
Ha'alalo GPS, Tongatapu
Pangaimotu GPS, Vava'u
Taoa GPS, Vava'u
Vava'u Side School, Vava'u
Pangai GPS, Ha'apai
Hihifo GPS, Ha'apai
Ha'atu'a GPS, 'Eua
'Ohonua GPS, 'Eua

Samoa

'Auala Primary, Savai'i
Faga Primary, Savai'i
Patamea School, Savai'i
Sagone Primary, Savai'i
'A'ufaga Primary, Upolu
Falefa Primary, Upolu
Mulivai Primary, Upolu
Maluafou College, Apia

Niue

Niue High School
Niue Primary School

Tuvalu

SDA, Funafuti
Nauti, Funafuti
Lotohoni, Nanumaga
Kaumaile, Nanumea
Lotoalofa, Niulakita
Webley, Niutao
Vaipuna, Nui
Tutasi, Nukufetau
Faikimua, Nukulaelae
Tolise, Vaitupu

Tokelau

Matauala School, Atafu
Matiti School, Nukunonu
Tialeniu School, Fakaofu

Vanuatu

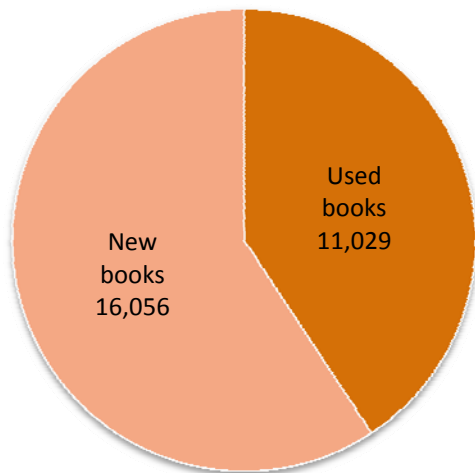
St Patrick's College, Ambae
Primary school, Ambae

Other organisations

Samoa
EduTain after school programme
Loto Taumafai: school for people with disabilities

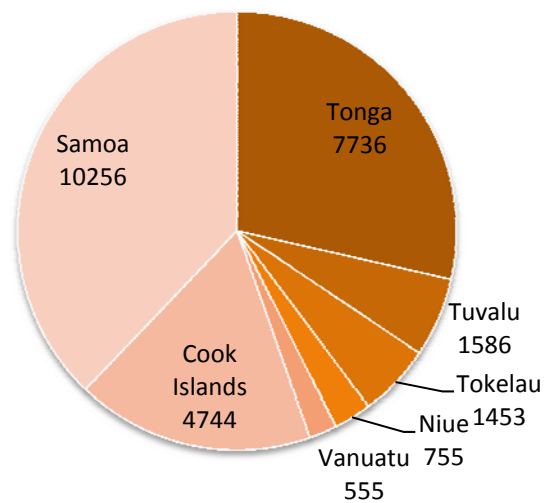
Key Fact: We work with the Education Departments of each Pacific Island nation we send books to and ask them to advise us which schools are the most in need of our books. That way our books get up to where they can do the most good.

27,085 books shipped to 48 school libraries

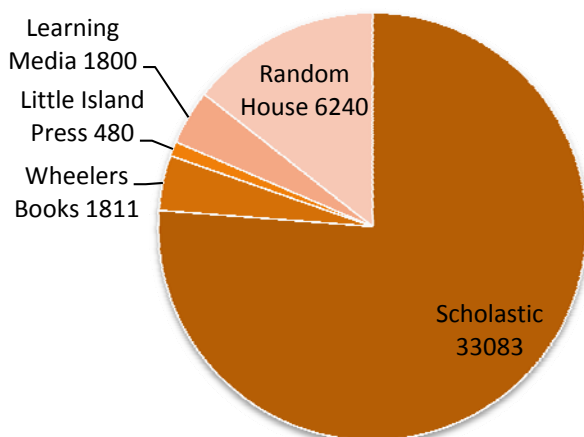


Key Fact: 59.3% of books sent to school libraries in the 2010 – 2011 year were new books. The remaining 40.7% were pre-loved books donated primarily by Kiwi families or via multi-day book collections held in schools.

Number of books shipped to each Island



Source of new books



We believe that if children learn to read, they will eventually read to learn.

That simple belief is one of the main forces behind our drive to fill Pacific school libraries with quality books – books that will capture the imaginations of children and inspire them as they progress through school.



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Trustee: Fuli Pereira

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