



OCEANIA SPORT INFORMATION CENTRE



**10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY
1997 - 2007**

**Oceania Sport Information Centre
1997 – 2007
10 Year Anniversary**

Introduction

The establishment of a regional sport information centre was the brain child of Ms Nerida Clarke, who was the Director of the Australian National Sport Information Centre at the Institute of Sport in Canberra. The Australian Institute of Sports in Canberra often played host to a number of Pacific athletes on scholarship through the ASP (Australian South Pacific Sports Program). During their stay at the AIS they often frequented the sport information centre asking for sports related information. These requests continued even after the athletes returned to their respective countries. It is due to the numerous requests often received by the NSIC that prompted the idea of setting up a regional information centre for sports that would cater to the needs of Pacific Islanders. This was back in the late 1980's when access to information was not as readily available as it is today.



Torch relay during the official opening

Historical Development

In 1988 the NSIC took the idea one step further by conducting a needs assessment survey of all regional National Olympic Committees. The idea received overwhelming support from the NOC's which prompted the NSIC to make a proposal to ONOC in 1989. ONOC with the support of the NSIC made a proposal to the IOC to fund the regional sport information centre. Although the idea was well received but unfortunately the proposal was accepted by the IOC. It was apparent that the ONOC initiative came a few years too soon during a time when the IOC was going through some major changes in the administration of its program and affairs.

Chronological Development of OSIC

- 1988 – Needs Assessment Survey
- 1989 - First Proposal To ONOC by the Australian Sport Commission NSIC
- 1995 – Second Proposal to ONOC was excepted
- 1996 – Proposal to UNESCO For a Grant of \$US25000
- 1996 - Meeting with Key Stake holders in Fiji
- 1996 - Proposal by ONOC To IOC at Cancun, Mexico with the support of key stakeholders
- 1997 – Establishment of OSIC at the USP Library which was officially opened by the USP DVC (Professor Rajesh Chandra)
- 1998 – Launching of OSIC Website by Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch
- 2001 – OSIC Review by Allan Cockerill (Australian Sports Commission)
- 2002 – Mr. Jacques Rogge & ONOC Executive Board visit to OSIC



Dr. Robin Mitchell, Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch, Professor Rajesh Chandra and Mr. Kevan Gosper during the OSIC Website Launching.

OSIC Advisory Committee

Although the initial proposal to the IOC was not accepted this did not deter Nerida from pursuing her dream of establishing a regional sport information centre. In 1995 after a lapse of about six years the Australian Sport Commission held discussions with the Fiji Government, Ministry of Youth and Sports and the University of the South Pacific Librarian, Ms Esther Williams. After the discussions an Advisory Committee was formed with representatives from the Ministry of Youth and Sports (Ms Ana Mocolutu), ONOC (Robin Mitchell & Dennis Miller), USP (Ms Esther Williams, Mr. Randy Thaman, Mr. Bob Tuxson & Mr. Albert Miller). During the same year (1995) Nerida with the assistance of the IASI (International Associations of Sports Information) made a proposal to the ICSSPE for their formal support.



The first OSIC Advisory Committee - Professor Randy Thaman, USP Librarian – Dr. Esther Williams, Dr. Robin Mitchell and Ms. Nerida Clarke

Proposal to UNESCO and the IOC

In 1996 with the support from the IASI and the ICSSPE a proposal was made to UNESCO for funding paving the way for a second proposal to the IOC which was meeting in Cancun, Mexico. With the support of the following organizations; IASI, ICSSPE, UNESCO, ONOC, USP, ASC and the Government of Fiji, the group which was led by Nerida Clarke, Mrs. Sophie Raddock (President of FASANOC), Mr. Kevan Gosper (President of ONOC), and Dr. Robin Mitchell made the proposal to the IOC. The proposal was finally approved by the IOC almost 10 years after the initial proposal was made to ONOC. The funding for the Oceania Sport Information Centre was initially for two years (1997 – 1999) with a review to be made in 2000 during the IOC Assembly in Sydney.

Establishment of OSIC

"OSIC was established under a joint initiative of the Oceania National Olympic Committees and the University of the South Pacific, supported by the Australian Sports Commission's National Sport Information Centre and UNESCO".

After all the approvals and lobbying taken care of, it was time to set up the actual OSIC office. Esther Williams who was the USP Librarian in 1997 agreed with the support of the Vice Chancellor, Mr. Isikia

Solofa, to set up the OSIC office in the old office space that was occupied by the USP Law Librarian. Setting up the office within the USP Library was a logical choice since it already had all the IT equipments and facilities plus the expertise. Although the OSIC office was already established the number of sports related resources was limited and outdated.

For the first 3 months (June – August, 1997) the Centre was run by Mr. Mosese Latu, a Library Assistant who was reassigned from the USP Library to look after OSIC. The OSIC Coordinator was officially appointed in August 1997 for a period of two years.



IOC President, Mr. Jacques Rogge & ONOC President Mr. Kevan Gosper signing the OSIC guest book in 2002

A Tribute to Mr. Mosese Latu

Mosese Latu was the first Library Assistant for OSIC when it opened in 1997. In fact Mosese ran OSIC for the first three months (June – August 1997) before the appointment of the Coordinator. Mosese was a long time employee of USP and had worked in the library for over fifteen years before he was appointed by the USP Librarian to oversee the daily affairs of OSIC.

Although Mosese was an experienced Library Assistant, his knowledge in sports information was limited. In 2000 arrangements were made with the National Sport Information Centre of Australian



for Mosese to be attached with the NSIC in Canberra for two weeks. After receiving the news of his attachment Mosese was excited with anticipation and looking forward to the challenge. This was going to be the first time that Moses was going on an overseas attachment since joining the USP Library.

Unfortunately Mosese never made it to Nadi because flight PC 121 from Nausori to Nadi was involved in a fatal accident over the highlands of Viti Levu killing all on board. The untimely death of Mosese created a temporary set back for OSIC. Mosese had laid the ground work for the OSIC collection. Mosese was totally committed to the success of OSIC and would always found ways of getting the job done even if it meant working extra hours. He was an avid sports fan who saw his new appointment as an opportunity and a challenge to further his professional development.

After Mosese's untimely death the OSIC Library Assistant position had to be re advertised within the Library. The position was then awarded to Mr. Samu Nakalevu who had also vast experience as a Library Assistant. Unfortunately Mr. Nakalevu only worked at OSIC for about 6 months before he accepted a position at the South Pacific Commission Library. The Library Assistant position was again advertised internally and Ms. Luisa Korodrau was appointed. Shortly after the appointment of Ms Korodrau she resigned and took up a new position with the South Pacific Commission Library.

The current OSIC Library Assistant is Ms. Taufa Domona who has been with OSIC since the departure of Ms Korodrau in 2001. Taufa has become an invaluable member of the OSIC staff through her personal commitment and dedication.

OSIC Collection

Before OSIC was established the USP library only had a handful of sports related resources, most were outdated and irrelevant to the needs of today's coaches, sports administrators and athletes. Donations of books and other resources were initiated by the Australian Sports Commission and ONOC. Nerida Clarke was able to secure a number of boxes of books from the publishing company Human Kinetics through her contacts with Mr. Tim Rainer, Director of the company.

During the first few years we accepted anything and everything just to boost our collection. Subscriptions were also made to a number of sporting magazines to increase the range of the collection. Arrangements were also made to acquire resources through the USP Library Acquisition Department for sports and physical education related books and audio visual materials. This arrangement with the USP Library greatly boosted the number of resources available to users and also provided timely support for the newly established sport and physical education courses at USP. The entire Sports Collection could be accessed through the USP Library catalogue (www.usp.ac.fj/library).

The increase in the interest in sports science and sports related courses has prompted OSIC staff to make sure that the USP library has the latest resources. The introduction of the new degree program in sports science at USP and the diploma and certificate programs at the Fiji Institute of Technology has further enhanced the need for up to date resources in this subject area.



OSIC Serial Collection and reading area

South Pacific Games Archives

After the establishment of OSIC, it was designated as the official archive for the South Pacific Games by the Games Council where past results and records of the Games could be kept and preserved. Work in this area was started by the late Moses Latu who photocopied SPG related articles from the three daily Fiji Newspapers and the Pacific Island Monthly. This project has been continued by Taufa Domona who has spent a significant amount of time researching and indexing results and general information on all the South Pacific Games. Taufa has managed to indexed records of the South Pacific Games from 1963 – 1979.

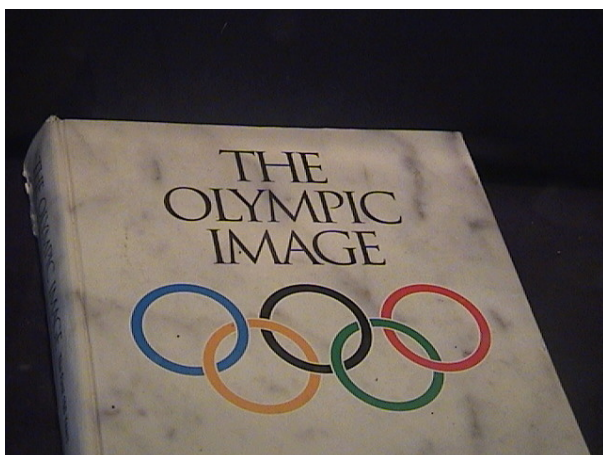
The OSIC serial collection

Prior to when OSIC was officially opened the NSIC with the assistance of the USP had subscribed to about 12 sport and physical education magazines. These included the "Sports Illustrated", "Sports Management", "Texas Coach", "Quest", "ICHPER.SD Journal", Exercise and Sport Sciences Reviews", just to name a few. Within a period of 10 years the sports and physical education related resources in OSIC and the USP Library have increased from 400 in 1997 to over 2000 titles. The collection now boosts some of the latest publications available in the market today.



Special Collection

Over the past ten years OSIC has managed to collect an extensive number of resources from a number of sources such as the IOC, ONOC, FIBA Oceania, Australian Sports Commission, Oceania Baseball, Oceania Softball, FASANOC, Oceania Badminton, and Oceania Table Tennis. OSIC also received some historical documents from Tony Isaacs who donated his private collection of Athletics results from all the South Pacific Games since 1963 and the South Pacific Mini Games. The collection also included results of a number of prominent Pacific Island athletes throughout their career in the sport of Athletics. The “Tony Isaacs” collection also includes pictures of former athletes from the region.



OSIC also has a substantial number of Olympic publications in its collection. The Olympic collection includes Bid Documents from countries bidding to stage the Winter and Summer Olympics Games. These rare documents were kindly donated by IOC Members Dr. Robin Mitchell and Mr. Kevan Gosper.

For the past 10 years OSIC staff have been indexing and collecting results from all the South Pacific Games and South Pacific Mini Games since they started in 1963 and 1982 respectively. The South Pacific Games collection has become an invaluable resource for sports journalists, researchers, students, and individuals from around the world who collect results of regional Games as a hobby. It has been OSIC’s long term goal to compile a comprehensive report on the history of the South Pacific Games in association with ONOC and the Pacific Games Council.

Launching of the OSIC Website

A year after the opening of the Centre the National Information of Australia and the Australian Sports Commission created a website for OSIC (www.oceaniasport.info). The website which was launched by Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch during his visit to the region in 1998, was going to be OSIC’s gateway to the world. Unfortunately the website never lived up to our expectations mainly due to the fact that maintenance and updating of the site was all done in Canberra by the NSIC. Due to technical difficulties OSIC staff could not update and maintain the site on regular bases. New items for the website had to be sent to the NSIC from where it was loaded onto the site. This arrangement for obvious reasons did not work out, ultimately resulting in the site being neglected.

The original OSIC Website was launched by Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch in 1998 and was redesigned by Allen Cockerill of the National Sport Information Centre of Australia in 2002. The new website site was the result of recommendations from a review of OSIC by the NSIC. After several years a new OSIC website is now under construction with the assistance of SportingPulse, which is responsible for the ONOC and the National Olympic Committees websites. The site will be user friendly making it easier for OSIC staff to maintain and update. The new OSIC website is now accessible at www.oceaniasport.com/osic.



Mr. Juan Antonio Samaranch during the launching of the OSIC website

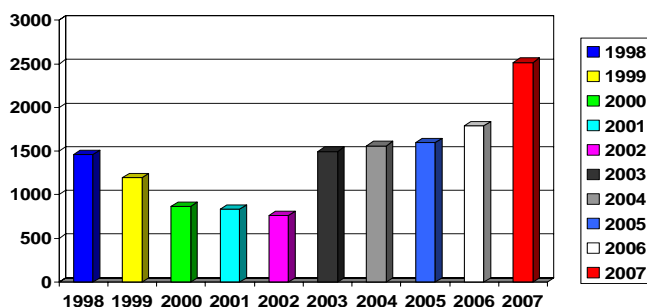
OSIC Usage and Statistics

“Usage of the resources is open to anyone with a legitimate, serviceable request for sport information.”

Over the years we have built up a steady number of users majority of whom are students representing a number of educational institutions based in Fiji. We have also received a substantial number of requests from regional NOC's and individuals. We have also catered to researches from Fiji and abroad.

Looking at the statistics presented in the graph the first 4 years saw a gradual decline of usage from about 1500 in 1998 to about 700 in 2002. In 2003 number of users again increased to about 1500. The increase continued up to 2007 where it reached an all time high of more then 2500. Statistics have indicated that a significant number of users were tertiary students from the USP and FIT – Sports Education Programs.

Statistics Breakdown 1998 - 2007



We anticipate a similar trend for 2008 due to the continued development and interest in the field of sport education throughout the region.

The development of the new website has increased our profile throughout the region. Since January of 2008 we have averaged almost 800 hits on our website.

The Future of OSIC

OSIC has established itself a solid base for the past 10 years although initial funding was only earmarked for two years (1997 – 1999). It has established itself as an excellent example of how a number of organizations can work together to make the dream of establishing a regional sport information centre a reality. The idea that was initiated by Nerida Clarke of the Australian Sports Commission, National Sport Information Centre received support from a number of prominent organizations such as ONOC, UNESCO, ICSSPE, USP, and the IOC, which has continued its financial support for the past 10 years. Without the financial backing of the IOC sustaining such a project would be very difficult.

The establishment of the Centre has definitely paved the way for other regions to follow in their efforts to establishing regional information and resource centres for sports. Although OSIC has been relatively successful in the past 10 years, more could be done to ensure services are enjoyed by the wider community.

Here are a few key areas that need to be looked at to ensure that the Centre is being fully utilized and appreciated.

♣ Location

Although current arrangements with USP have worked well for the past 10 years, concerns have been raised of the physical location of OSIC. Since OSIC is located within the USP Library access for many public users have been difficult due to entry restrictions onto the USP campus. Although number of users have increased for the past 5 years it is not a true reflection of the needs for sports information in the community. There are aspirations that in the future OSIC will become part of the ONOC plan to establish a permanent headquarters in Suva which will house all ONOC programs. OSIC will then be housed within the ONOC complex making it more accessible to members of the general public.

♣ Funding

Future funding of OSIC by the IOC looks positive. Funding has been based on each Olympiad (4 Years) cycle after the initial 2 years funding from 1997 – 1999. The first two years (1997 – 1999) funding was \$US60000 which then decreased to \$US30000 a year for the 2001 – 2004 Olympiad. Funding for the 2005 – 2008 Olympiad increased to \$US50000. There was a one off increase in 2007 of \$US20000 to cater for the shortfall due to the depreciation of the American dollar and increase in staff salaries. More than 90% of the funding goes to staff salaries. Suggestions have been made for OSIC and the Oceania Sport Education Program (OSEP) to combine and share its financial and human resources ensuring a secure future.

♣ Challenges

One of the biggest challenges that OSIC staff have faced in the past 10 years is our inability to work closely with the NOC's in establishing their own information and resource centres. Although a number of National Olympic Committees have attempted to establish such a Centre, most have fallen way short of expectations. Attempts by OSIC staff have been relatively unsuccessful mainly due to the fact that such a project is way down on the priority list of most NOC. Lack of space is a major contributing factor, especially when most NOC's are struggling to find permanent homes.

The National Olympic Committees receives an adequate number of free coaching and sports related resources such as magazines, books and audio-visual material from the International Sporting Federations and the IOC. Most of these resources are often left in boxes and unutilized. However, fresh efforts are being made by OSIC staff to ensure that this important initiative is realized in each National Olympic Committee. We are looking at utilizing the University of the South Pacific Centre Libraries to work with the NOC's in organizing their collection so that it becomes more accessible to members of the sporting fraternity.

- ♣ **OSIC Website.** A new look website is being developed by SportingPulse. We hope that the new website would give OSIC some much needed PR in the region and abroad.

Photo Gallery



OSIC Advisory Committee



Opening Ceremony Torch Relay



Handing of Torch to Professor Rajesh Chandra USP DVC



Professor Rajesh Chandra and Mr. Samaranch

Mr. Jacques Rogge and ONOC Dignitaries during their visit to USP

