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**FINDING HELP AWAY FROM HOME:
THE EXPERIENCES OF PAPUA NEW GUINEANS STUDYING AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND, ARMIDALE 1996–1997**

by

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CERTIFICATE

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not being currently submitted for any other degrees. I certify that to the best of my knowledge any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.



Monica Kep Katherine Pusal
11th November 1997

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Abstract

The University of New England is a multicultural Institution. Students from over 50 nationalities come to study at UNE. Papua New Guinea is one of the 50 countries represented at UNE. This study is about the experiences of 35 Papua New Guineans who studied at the University of New England during the 1996 and 1997 academic years.

There were four aims of this study. They were to Identify:

- (i) the types of personal and academic difficulties experienced by Papua New Guineans studying at UNE
- (ii) the coping strategies employed by these students in resolving the difficulties they have experienced;
- (iii) who these students prefer to get help from; and
- (iv) the characteristics of the students' helpers.

The thesis constitutes seven chapters—Introduction to the study, Background information on the participants, Literature Review, Research Plan and the Methodology, the Data Analysis and Results, the Discussion on the results and finally the Conclusion and Recommendations.

The data was collected using a survey questionnaire, as the main data collecting method. There were additional informal interviews and subsequent information collected from participant observation.

The survey questionnaire consisted of Likert-scaled items, filling-in-the blanks items, open-ended question items, tick-the-box items (where options were provided for the participants to make their choices). The analysis of data included coding and assigning numerals to the responses. Then simple statistical frequency distributions and tables were applied using the Statview program to most of the data except for the open-ended question items. Findings have been presented in the form of tables, diagrams and graphs.

The findings in the study revealed that there were a variety of difficulties facing Papua New Guineans studying at UNE. The main and most serious difficulties faced were study related problems, financial, family, relationship and personal difficulties. The study revealed that the majority Papua New Guinean students studying at UNE make very little use of formal counselling services and other support services available to them at UNE. Rather, tended to rely on traditional problem-solving methods more so than resorting to the support services available to them on campus.

The study proposed that the University of New England should reassess the ways counselling services are delivered to students from Papua New Guinea and possibly other foreign students studying at UNE. The study proposed further that UNE make a conscious effort to publicise the role of the counselling services and the role of the counsellors it employs to execute counselling duties. Finally, it is proposed that the University review its orientation program for international students at the beginning of each year and develop a major "Get to Know", Self-awareness and "personal development program in terms of actually conducting of workshops for groups of international students. The opportunity to meet and get to know a counsellor personally is critical if students from Papua New Guinea are to be encouraged to use the facilities of the Counselling Service.

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