**SCIENCE OR EMPIRE? CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON EARLY EUROPEAN VOYAGERS TO VANUATU AND THE PACIFIC, 1606-1809**

**5-7 August 2024, Nasonal Universiti blong Vanuatu**

Organised by the Vanuatu Kaljoral Senta and the Nasonal Universiti blong Vanuatu

Although it is rare today to claim that some particular European explorer “discovered” islands or archipelagos in the Pacific, interest in the impact of early European voyagers on Vanuatu and other Pacific nations is evident in the continuous stream of publications, TV documentaries and even statues commemorating their exploits. Views about these European visitors has certainly changed in recent years, often in the direction from supposed heroes to villains, from enlightened scientific enterprises to forerunners of colonial exploitation.

The Conference will concentrate on, although it is not limited to, the voyages of Quiros (1606), De Bougainville (1768), Cook (1774) and Golovnin (1809) which included landings on islands in Vanuatu and interactions with the ni-Vanuatu of the time.

As we commemorate the 250th anniversary of James Cook’s visit to Vanuatu and naming of the archipelago as the New Hebrides, it seems an appropriate moment to ask how should we consider these visits in 2024? What useful information about Vanuatu and the wider Pacific can we recover from their accounts and collections? What about their longer-term legacy for the region, not least in the names of islands that are still current today? Should these visitors be commemorated or perhaps best forgotten?

We welcome papers by local and international scholars, which may be delivered in Bislama, English or French. Please send titles and abstracts by July 15 to Leslie.Vandeputte@univ.edu.vu or to Matthew.Spriggs@anu.edu.au