



– EDITORIAL –

Making the Journal of Pacific Archaeology open access

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In November 2024, the *Journal of Pacific Archaeology* (JPA) shifted from a print publication to a platinum open access online-only journal. Along with this, a range of other changes were implemented to bring the journal in line with contemporary publishing standards, such as the introduction of Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) and a revised required back matter for articles. One year on, we wish to outline both why and how we shifted the journal and reflect on the outcomes of this shift so far.

The publishing landscape has undergone significant shifts over the last decade, with an increasing dominance of digital-only articles that offer open access. At the start of 2024, JPA was not competitive in this landscape, as it was both print and online, with a two-year embargo on new articles becoming open access, and no option to pay an article processing charge (APC) or waive it. The journal did not have DOIs for its articles, nor were articles indexed by online databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, or Web of Science. All of these are important as they enable citation counts for articles and their references, and the journal's impact to be measured. Without these measures, it also means that JPA would not be eligible for a ranking, a metric that encourages people to publish in certain journals.

JPA was already hosted by the Public Knowledge Project (PKP) Open Journal System (OJS), which facilitated the online distribution of the journal since May 2014 (PKP/OJS 2025). This system is relatively inexpensive, and through the subscription, the journal is hosted on an external database, which eliminates the need for a local server and its maintenance. An added benefit of this system is that, as editors come and go, there is seamless continuity within the publishing system, and all updates are handled by PKP/OJS. It also enabled us to make several changes to the journal relatively quickly.

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A subscription to Crossref (2025) was purchased, which is also linked to the PKP/OJS platform. This enabled us to generate DOIs for all current and future articles in the journal, as well as retrospectively for all those previously published. While the article documents themselves were not modified to include the DOIs, these are now available on the article webpage. Options within the hosting system also needed updating, which resulted in the journal being scanned by Google correctly and by extension Google Scholar, so all articles from JPA can now be found through that platform.

The simplest yet largest change was deciding to make JPA open access. Once we had decided to proceed, the actual process involved a single checkbox on the webpage, but doing so required careful consideration. Up until 2024 JPA had a designated layout editor who handled all of the article layouts and was paid by the New Zealand Archaeological Association (NZAA). The removal of the layout editor eliminated a large cost for the journal. This is unfortunate but ultimately made the journal more sustainable for the NZAA to fund given the loss of subscription income. Going online only removed any printing costs, but there were still the PKP/OJS hosting costs, as well as Crossref and its associated costs. The NZAA council supported this change and agreed to provide financial support to JPA in the future. This meant JPA could become a Platinum Open Access Journal. Also known as sponsored or diamond open access journals, these provide immediate access to the journal's content without requiring a subscription fee or licence. Authors pay no article publication charge, and all the costs of publishing the journal are met by one or more sponsoring organisations. This was a significant step for the journal, as it enabled us to apply to be included in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), a database that increased the journal's visibility but also had strict eligibility criteria. The certification was received in 2025.

The loss of a layout editor increased the work expected of the journal's editors, and this has been partially alleviated by requiring all authors to format their submissions into the JPA template either at the time of submission or upon acceptance of their paper. While a fair bit of work is still required by editors to fix any layout issues and copyedit the paper, this is manageable for now. As part of the template, new sections were added to the end of each article, all of which are required for a submission. In addition to the existing "acknowledgements" section, information on funding, data availability, partnerships, conflicts of interest, and author contributions is also required. Many of these are standard requirements for many journals with the aim of increasing the transparency of the research process (e.g. CRediT 2022). The "partnerships" section is one that we developed for JPA, with the aim of encouraging researchers to clearly report the level of community engagement undertaken when the research utilised data from primary indigenous contexts.

To increase the visibility of the journal among researchers, we have applied to be indexed by larger databases, which will eventually enable us to receive a journal ranking. After going through the application and review processes, JPA was accepted into the Scopus Index list and the Clarivate Web of Science index. Both will take time to have an impact, but now that they have been achieved, they will encourage people to submit to the journal. As the journal is now open access, copyright of articles stays with the authors and as such, articles can be uploaded to institutional repositories or online databases such as ResearchGate, where

they will also reach a wider audience than the journal website alone, and further increase the visibility of the research and the journal.

So one year on what impact has all this had? In 2025, the journal is on track to publish the largest number of accepted submissions in a year since 2020, indicating that scholars are now eager to publish in the journal following these changes. Perhaps the most significant change has been the introduction of abstract and file views on the website, the latter of which have seen a dramatic increase (Figure 1). Prior to November 2024, with a few exceptions, total article file views for the journal averaged around 100 per month, whereas since the journal became open access file views per month have ranged from 860 to 6,600. This represents a marked increase in people accessing the journal's articles, which over time will lead to a flow-on increase in research citing those articles.

Moving forward, the journal will continue to develop its editorial policies, especially around the use of artificial intelligence for the writing and editing of research, and best practice when it comes to the use of indigenous data. Not being limited to printed page counts also means the lengths of articles can be reconsidered and relaxed, and the online-only format opens new options for the inclusion of different data types such as 3D models and interactive graphs. For now, however, the journal has a solid foundation to build upon in the future and incorporate some of these developments. We wish to thank all of our authors and reviewers who have helped us to get here, and the ongoing support of the NZAA, we hope you will continue to support the journal.



Figure 1: A) Monthly abstract views from 1 May 2014 – 30 November 2025. B) Monthly file views from 1 May 2014 – 30 November 2025.

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