

Tiurai 2018



TE IPUKAREA SOCIETY

Caring for our Environment
Taporoporo i to tatou Ao Rangi

Avana Point Development Receives Strong Opposition

Avana Point in Ngatangia is a site of special social, cultural and environmental importance to the people of Ngatangia as well as Rarotonga. It features the reef passage of Ava Tapu (Sacred Harbour) and Vaerota Marae, the principle ceremonial court of Kainuku Ariki, who is the chief of the local area.

In July a proposal document to construct a residential house site on Avana Point, near Muri, was brought to the attention of the Cook Islands community both here and overseas. The document itself had been put out for viewing in March however slipped under the radar of most of the general public. After Te Ipukarea Society staff conducted a site visit to the area, our Project Officer Liam Kokaua was given the opportunity to present to the House of Ariki (traditional paramount chiefs) during a meeting to highlight the environmental and cultural impacts which could arise from construction on this area of land. On both social media and local news print there has been wide expressions of opposition against this development from the public. Te Ipukarea Society has been actively encouraging the public to register their opposition to the proposed EIA

in written form, sent to the National Environment Service.

Ava Tapu is an area of special significance to Polynesian voyaging history for not only Rarotongan people but people throughout the Pacific. The land beside the passage is currently in a relatively pristine state, and is a special sight for those arriving on traditional canoes into Ngatangia harbour. Our independent coastal engineers have also found massive flaws in the current design plans proposed in the EIA. According to them, there is a high chance of serious damage during extreme weather events to the proposed building as well as the proposed rock gabion wall which is to be installed to protect it.

For these reasons Te Ipukarea Society is strongly against the development of this very vulnerable and culturally important area of land. The outcome of the proposal will not be known until after the next meeting of the Rarotonga Environment Authority.



Avana Passage, or 'Te Ava Tapu' taken from the site of proposed development.

Get Ready for a Plastic Battle

Te Ipukarea Society is working in partnership with SPS (Save Philippines Seas) on a new campaign called 'Plastic Battle'. The aim of the campaign is to reduce plastic pollution, by targeting single-use plastic bottles. This campaign was formulated in response to the visual and environmental impacts plastic waste is currently

having here in the Cook Islands both on land, along our coastlines and within our whole Marae Moana.

The campaign works through partnership with business establishments, promoting alternative sources of drinking water through refilling stations, whereby guests can refill reusable drinking bottles or by up scaling bottled water sold to 1L and above.



An example of Plastic Battle marketing collateral for businesses and water refilling stations to use.

It is hoped that as a result of a successful campaign Rarotonga can aim to reduce plastic waste from entering our environment at the first instant, and hopefully create a behavioural change amongst visitors and our local people to utilise reusable drinking bottles and our local village refill stations.

Two strategic options are provided for businesses to apply in their operation in order to be recognised as practicing under the 'Plastic Battle' criteria, this includes.

Option A

PLASTIC BOTTLE FREE: Stop selling single-use plastic bottled water.

- Plastic bottles will be removed from the restaurant/hotel.
- Filter and provide water in a reusable glass
- Serve water in a glass from bigger containers/water dispensers
- Serve water to rooms in jugs or reusable glass bottles
- Serve water to guests in restaurants in pitchers from water dispensers
- Eliminate juice in plastic bottles or buy from juice companies whose product comes in paper containers or serve fresh fruit juices instead
- To inform guests ahead (e.g., upon confirmation of booking) that single-use bottles will not be available
- To provide guests with or encourage the purchase of reusable drinking bottles during their stay or during island tours. Selling reusable drinking bottles could also be a good branding opportunity for your business.
- **REFILL STATION:** allow walk-in guests to refill their containers for a fee or for free

Option B

SINGLE-USE FREE DAY: You will not sell single use plastic bottles on specific day/s of the week!

- On those special days, you may ban the use of single-use plastic bottles or offer only bottled water in containers 1L and above.
- You may designate two or more days as Single-Use Free Day.
- **REFILL STATION:** allow walk-in guests to refill their containers for a fee or for free

Business establishments, particularly those in tourism destinations, are valuable stakeholders in environmental conservation. Tourism has both positive and negative impacts: while tourism creates livelihoods and employment, the growth of tourism is also often proportional to the waste generated.



Alanna shows the Plastic Battle poster at Ikurangi Eco Retreat, which is participating in the campaign.

Therefore, it is crucial that we start raising awareness with our visiting guests and locals on these environmental issues that in turn will create a demand for eco-friendly products and services, eventually opening opportunities for businesses to position themselves as sustainable and environmentally conscious eco-friendly partners here in the Cook Islands. #ManaTiaki #LoveALittleParadise #PlasticBattle

Pukapuka and Nassau Receive Climate Training

After not being able to officially visit Pukapuka and Nassau following our trip to Suvarrow, Te Ipukarea Society were thankful the two schools were able to come to us in Rarotonga. Being constitution time, Rarotonga was filled with our Pa Enua families and also school students. This opportunity allowed the Te Ipukarea team to complete their waste management – worm farming and composting training sessions with the students from Pukapuka and Nassau as well as

completing our climate change – ‘Learning by Doing’ weather stations project with the schools.

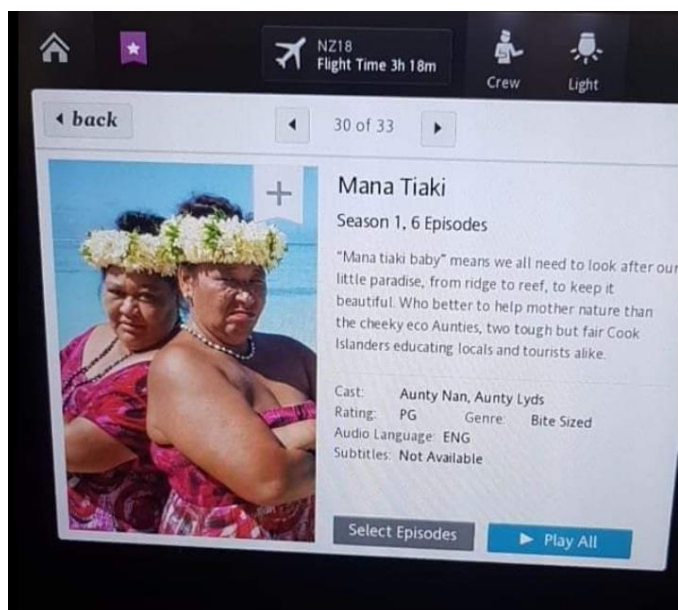


Alanna, Jerimiah and Liam with Pukapuka and Nassau students after the presentation.

The training opportunity also got new executive member Jerimiah Samuela on board with the training sessions and reconnecting with some of his Pukapukan family. Jerimiah was also a part of the recent rat eradication project that took place on Suvarrow. With Pukapuka and Nassau now complete, the waste management and climate change school project has now come to a close. Ata wai wolo to the GEF Small Grants for funding the waste management project and SRICC for funding the Climate Change project.

Mana Tiaki Values Presented on Air NZ Flights

Over the past few weeks the catchy and funny ‘Mana Tiaki’ clips have been aired on local television and at a range of local accommodation’s in-house televisions. Mana Tiaki has just gone international by now being aired on the Air New Zealand in-flight service programme. The Mana Tiaki series are short films created to raise awareness on how to be environmental guardians whilst on holiday in a tropical island such as the Cook Islands. The series was produced through a collaborative effort made by Te Ipukarea Society and Cook Islands Tourism.



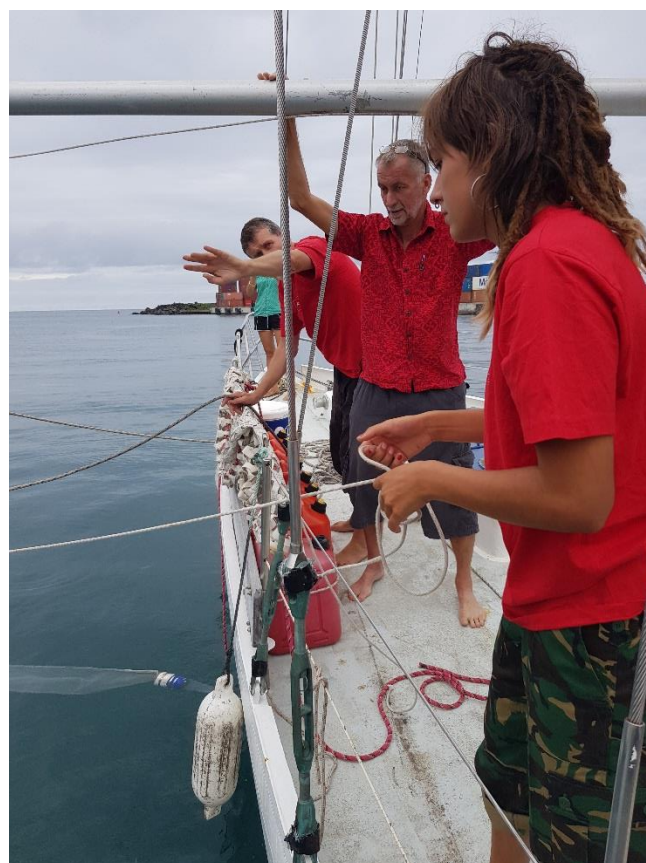
Mana Tiaki, presented by Aunty Lydia and Aunty Nane as seen on an Air New Zealand in-flight television screen.

Both stakeholders work closely with Mana Tiaki projects: Te Ipukarea Society has their Mana Tiaki fundraising campaign running through participating local accommodations and businesses. At the same time, Cook Islands Tourism utilise Mana Tiaki as one of their 'Kia Orana values'. The short series covers five environmental areas to be aware of when visiting a Pacific Island. These include what conservation tips to keep in mind when hiking through inland tracks, how to be environmentally conscious when swimming within a lagoon ecosystem, how to manage litter as well as looking at sanitation issues and water waste management. Te Ipukarea Society were able to work closely with the production team Te Rua Manga in providing the content for the five part series as well as some technical assistance during the filming of the series. Meitaki ranuini to the US embassy for providing partial funding to help assist with this project

Plastic Change Team Visit Rarotonga

A 'Plastic Change' research team arrived on our shores early July after sailing from Tahiti collecting data on plastic waste found whilst sailing across the South-Pacific Ocean. Plastic Change is a Danish organization who work internationally, raising awareness on the consequences of increasing plastic pollution within our oceans and the environment in general. Our team were fortunate enough to be able to board the Plastic Change

research vessel to see how the job was done. Plastic waste is collected through a trail net that would be set out the side of the boat to collect anything from visible plastics to micro plastics that are not visible to the human eye. All debris collected would then be put through various sieve sizes to collect both macro and micro plastics which would then be recorded and quantified. The visitors were able to collect samples around Rarotonga before sailing off to Tonga. You can follow their journey and find out how you can support this great initiative at <https://plasticchange.org/>



The Plastic Change team demonstrate to Kelvin how they trawl for micro-plastics on-board.

How to reduce our environmental impact during our celebrations

With elections season now quietening down, and Te Maeva Nui coming to an end, now is a good time for us as Cook Island people to think about reducing our impact on our environment, especially when we celebrate special occasions. This way we can ensure our islands stay beautiful for the future and remain places we can remain proud to represent on the big stage.

- 1) Traditional kaikai are more enviro-friendly – Cooking food with banana leaves and raurau kikau, drinking nu, and eating with your fingers are better for the environment. Instead of giving away plastic cutlery, foil trays and plastic or polystyrene drinking cups.
- 2) Consider buying less plastic-wrapped products. Food which comes in plastic has normally been processed in factories and are not as healthy as natural foods. For example freshly caught local fish, locally-grown fruit and vegetables are not only plastic-free but they are more nutritious than packaged foods such as fizzy drinks, chip packets, and noodle packets.
- 3) Use reusable bags and water bottles. If everybody used these two items we would cut out two of the most commonly-seen types of litter on our islands: plastic bags and plastic water bottles which are commonly seen in our backyards and beaches.
- 4) Shop smarter – if you need to buy foods from the shop, consider what can be recycled and what can not. E.g. buy beer or other beverages in aluminium cans rather than glass bottles as aluminium is easily shipped off the island for recycling. Also remember that plastic with number 1 and 2 can be recycled while the other numbers can't.
- 5) Grocery shopping? - Support local organic growers. If you are a planter - cease using chemical pesticides and herbicides – most people don't want it in their food as it has potential health risks. Organic is the way to go for both our bodies and for our environment.
- 6) Sort and recycle all your household waste - and place it out of reach of dogs. This makes the job easier for the rubbish collectors and ensures as much of our waste is shipped off our island for recycling as possible.
- 7) Compost your organic waste – food scraps can be composted (if not fed to pigs), leaves and garden waste can be composted instead of burning the waste. If you do need to start a fire, ensure the leaves are completely dry (not

green) and don't burn any plastic as this has health impacts on those who breathe in the toxic smoke released by burning plastic.

Through changing to use some or all of these measures, we can ensure our kaikai's and celebrations create less waste, which will have benefits for our islands and our environment. From us at Te Ipukarea wish everyone in the Cook Islands a happy Te Maeva Nui!



An example of traditional Cook Islands foods at the recent 'Takurua' Cook Islands Cuisine expo. No plastic packaging required!

Meitaki ma'ata for reading our newsletter. We will be back with another edition next month.

Kia manuia,

The TIS team