

Mē (May) 2019



TE IPUKAREA SOCIETY

*Caring for our Environment
Taporoporo i to tatou Ao Rangi*

Kia orana

Katou katoatoa. Teia ti Nuti Pepa no te Marama o Mē

We hope you enjoy reading the May edition of our newsletter.

TIS AGM – 24 years and still going strong!

On Thursday 23 May Te Ipukearea Society held its 23rd Annual General Meeting, marking 24 years since the Society was formed in 1996.

Special guest speaker on the evening was Jacqui Evans, who won the Goldman Environment Prize last month. Rather than talk about the prize itself, Jacqui chose to give a little history on how the Society came to be established. She is well qualified to do this, having been one of the founding members back in 1996 (when she was 12 years old, she said!).



Goldman Environment Prize winner Jacqui Evans is the guest speaker at the TIS AGM

Jacqui explained that the need for an environmental NGO became apparent because of the large reduction in the size of the public service, from around 3500 in the early 1990s to around 1500 after the reform process. This meant that a lot of the work that should have been completed by the Cook Islands Conservation Service (now National Environment Service) would not get done.



TIS members at the AGM

The Society existed as a purely volunteer organization for the first 14 years of its life, until some funds were found to start employing a part time youth coordinator for 12 months. A few years later more project funds allowed the Society to employ a Coordinator, and Jacqui was the successful applicant for that position. She remains committed to the work the Society does, and was made a life member 2 years ago, along with several other founding members. One of the strengths of the Society that Jacqui highlighted was the very sound financial management, which is reflected in the annual external audits that are conducted for presentation at the AGM.

Following Jacqui's presentation, the AGM got down to business, with the Society president Teina Mackenzie, delivering the President's report. She highlighted a number of the achievements of the Society in the five focal areas covered in the Strategic Plan. These are waste management, ecologically sustainable development, climate change, biodiversity, and youth. The full President's Report can be found on the Society's website, tiscookislands.org.



TIS President Teina Mackenzie presents her annual report

After Teina's presentation, the independent auditors report was presented. Following a review of the financial records, contracts, bank statements etc, it was the unqualified opinion of the auditor that the income and expense report was free of any misstatements, and fairly represents the income and expenditure for the Society for the 12 months till March 31, 2019.

Next on the agenda was the election of office bearers. The meeting agreed to retain the 2 patrons selected at the 2018 AGM, Kamoe Mataiapo Ian Karika and Tinomana Ariki. Re-elected were 6 of the previous 8 executive committee members. These were Teina Mackenzie as President, Avaiki Aperau as vice President, Sabine Janneck as treasurer, and Jessie Sword, Hayley Weeks, and Patricia Tuara. New executive members are Anna Rasmussen, along with long time Society supporter and another of the founding members, Jolene Bosanquet as secretary.



New TIS executive committee members for 2019/20

Te Ipukearea Society would like to thank everyone that attended the meeting and signed up on the night.

We would also like to especially acknowledge our Gold corporate sponsors: CITC, Bank of the Cook Islands, Turamatuitui Bakery, Goldmine, Manuia Beach, Hawaii Pacific Maritime, Turama Pacific, Vonnia's, Bergman's, Manuia Beach Resort, The Big Fish Dive Centre, Kia Orana Villas, Nautilus Resort, Ariki Holidays, Pacific Resort Group, Edna Torea Allen, Sands Villas, Palm Grove and Air Rarotonga. Also our Silver corporate members: Royale Takitumu, Koka Lagoon Cruise, Tamarind House, Antipodes, Tropical Sands and Czechmate computers. Along with our Bronze level supporters Maire Nui Gardens, The Café, Heritage Holdings, Rarotonga Printing, Jetsave Travel and Tumunu and our only Aitutaki member, Etu Moana.

And of course all our individual and family members that represent the high level of community support for the Society.

Mana Tiaki Eco-Certification Workshop

On Tuesday 14th May, TIS hosted a workshop to help tourist operators to complete their Mana Tiaki Eco-certification applications for 2019.



The workshop was well attended by accommodation tourist operators most of whom have now successfully become Mana Tiaki eco certified.

We are grateful to TIS Gold corporate member Nautilus for providing the venue and catering for the workshop. We are planning another workshop soon, this time focused on tour operators so watch this space!.

If you want any information on the Mana Tiaki Eco-certification programme, please contact admin@manatiaki.org or pop into the TIS office next door to Bamboo Jacks.

SSV Robert C. Seaman

On the 20th of May, the SSV Robert C. Seaman pulled into Avatiu harbour during its five week educational voyage. TIS intern Charlee McLean was lucky enough to take part on an inside tour of the ship where she had the opportunity to meet with students, professors, engineers and seafarers to

discuss life and experiences on board the SSV Robert C. Seaman.

Registered in the US, the vessel is dedicated to oceanographic science research. This entails the sampling of seawater and marine life for close study – which teaches students about the ocean and traditional sailing.

The ship is one of two tall ship scientific research vessels operated by the United States-based Sea Education Association (SEA).



The SSV Robert C. Seaman departs Avatiu harbour

A typical day out at sea would be to stop twice a day, to send a CTD sampling frame over board. This frame allows students to take measurements and usually has a rosette of water bottles that can collect up to 24 samples at depths chosen by the operator. These water samples can then be used in the laboratory to undertake a wide range of physical, chemical and biological investigations.

The next day the ship left Avatiu port enroute for Palmerston, collecting data on its journey.

This was the SSV Robert C. Seaman's second visit to the Cook Islands and we look forward to a return visit.

Ethical and responsible Tuna Fisheries in the Cook Islands

TIS technical director Kelvin Passfield and the society's president Teina MacKenzie both attended a workshop by community leaders and fisheries experts which focused on setting a Natural Currency Standard for tuna fisheries. The eventual aim is to establish an accreditation for tuna caught in the Cook Islands that will require environmental, social, and cultural requirements to be met.



Workshop attendees heard from representatives of corporations like Walmart, Patagonia, and Norpac fish exporters from Hawaii. The advice was that there is a guaranteed global market for fish sourced ethically and responsibly. “We position the Cook Islands as being the most well-managed fishery and put controls in place – it’s going to take some policy – and the market is there,” said Dr John ‘Jack’ Kittinger of Conservation International.

Kelvin noted he was pleased to see workshop facilitators “encouraging government to put the future first.” TIS president Teina Mackenzie, said the workshop initiated an important conversation.

“A big part of this was not looking at this fisheries issue in isolation,” she said. Adopting a new way of thinking will allow the Cook Islands to be “true to our word”, she said, and to build trust not only with consumers but also with people and communities

allowing their resources to be utilised.

Dr Stephen Brouwer, a fisheries scientist with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community - SPC, said he found among participants from the Cook Islands a “very strong sense of environmental stewardship.”

It was widely agreed that a key component of any venture based in the marine space should be ensuring the benefits of Cook Islands resources come back to the people of the Cook Islands.

Support local businesses and reduce your plastic use

In the Cook Islands, we are reliant on the importation of many items and most of these are individually pre-packaged. Everything from food items, water bottles to beauty and cleaning products are all packaged in containers and bottles designed to be used once, and then discarded.

Local resident Catherine Ben, co-founder of The PakMan Store has hopped on board the waste reduction train and has set up an Ecostore liquid refill station. This has made a range of cleaning and personal care products available on the market from laundry detergents to shampoo, conditioner, liquid soap and body wash. This not only encourages customers to go ecofriendly but is a cheaper alternative too. Why not save yourself a couple of dollars by refilling instead of purchasing a new product?

Catherine says she wants to “encourage people to bring back any Ecostore empties they may have lying around so we can forward them on to customers, leading them on a cheaper, more sustainable pathway”. Catherine adds “it’s just another way of keeping the bottles out of the landfill”. Check out their Facebook page @ThePakManStore



The refill station at the PakMan store

Lucy McDonald, owner of local online business Paradise Supplies, sells a range of cleaning and personal care products that are both friendly to the earth and which can be purchased in bulk sizes. This is convenient for home, business and accommodation use, allowing people to refill their own smaller containers as required.

A large number of the products are sold in concentrates which can be diluted considerably, both saving money and significantly reducing plastic waste! Lucy points out that when diluted at a standard strength, her multi-purpose environmental cleaner can cost as little as 70 cents per 750ml bottle and when diluted further as a window and glass cleaner, is only 21 cents per bottle!. "That is cheaper than vinegar and smells much nicer too!" says Lucy. Many of their products are phosphate free, bleach free and septic tank safe which is so important for the health of the lagoon. You can contact Lucy and her team at www.paradisepplies.net



Lucy McDonald and her team at Paradise Supplies

In our throwaway society, single use and disposable products such as nappies and menstruation products are a big environmental problem. From the resource heavy production costs to the toxic chemicals and leachate released when they decompose. Plus they keep piling up in our landfills.

It has been estimated that the average woman uses 16800 menstrual pads in her lifetime. The non-biodegradable, plastic component in a menstruation pad can take between 200 – 500 years to decompose, leaving a legacy for your great great grandchildren.

Local resident Julia Evans, operates her RedPak feminine hygiene business out of her house on the main road in Tupapa (look for the sign!). As well as organic products, RedPak specializes in biodegradable and reusable products including washable menstrual pads, liners and moon cups. Julia is especially concerned about the waste created by disposal of menstruation products in the Pa Enea, given the lack of available renewable products and the limited space available in landfills. Julia says that she plans to create packs of reusable feminine hygiene products to donate to schoolgirls in the Pa Enea and is currently seeking funding to assist in this. Check out RedPak on Facebook @MyRedPak or call 73 266 for free delivery in Rarotonga on orders over \$10.



Julia Evans displaying RedPak's range of organic, biodegradable and reusable feminine hygiene products

Another great local supporter of eco-friendly initiatives and producer of low waste products is Donna Smith. Donna makes re-usable nappies under the brand name Moeau Made. As well as being an excellent alternative to disposables, Donna's reusable nappies come in a range of bright colours and look gorgeous on babies' bottoms.

Donna's reusable nappies are a one-size-fits-all nappy up to approximately 13kg (2-3 years old), using adjustable clip buttons to allow for growing waists and thighs. They come with an absorbent bamboo insert and cost \$30 each. Donna also offers a starter pack for \$300 which includes 10 nappies, bamboo inserts, liners, a phosphate free laundry powder and a fantastic lined nappy bag for daycare

or when you're out and about! Phone Donna on 58833 or check out her Made Moeau webpage on Facebook @moeauservices.



Donna Smith's locally made reusable nappy starter pack

CITC Pharmacy also sell Bambino Mio New Zealand made reusable nappies (\$39.90) and reusable swim nappies too (\$29.90). Both are velcro-adjustable. Contact the pharmacy for more details and information.

It is important that we consider other measures in addition to recycling in an attempt to provide a cohesive strategy to reduce our total national wastage. Being careful about what your purchase item is packed in is a good place to start!

Meitaki ma'ata for reading our monthly newsletter

Kia orana e kia manuia