

Tepetema/ Okotopa 2019



TE IPUKAREA SOCIETY

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

Kia Orana, Katou katoatoa, teia te nuti no Tepetema/ Okotopa 2019.

Welcome to the September/ October 2019 edition of our newsletter.

We need people like Jacqui Evans in positions of power

Many of us were deeply disappointed by the decision of the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) to not renew the contract of Jacqui Evans in her position managing the Marae Moana Marine Park.

Jacqui who has this year been recognized internationally with the Goldman Environment Prize for her outstanding contribution to marine conservation, put her heart and soul into the Marae Moana. She nurtured the real conservation values of such an ambitious initiative and gained international support for the Cook Islands as a result.

It became clear that it was Jacqui's suggestion to the OPM that it may be wise to move more slowly on seabed mining that has had a significant role in the decision for her final dismissal. She indicated to her superiors that she was supportive of a

10 year moratorium on seabed mining, to allow more time to research the unknown impacts it can have on our Marae Moana Marine Park. Her reasoning was that Marae Moana was established by an Act of Parliament to protect and conserve the ecological, biodiversity, and heritage values of the Cook Islands marine environment. This fact seems to have been ignored by those in power.

We are very concerned that no prior consultation or subsequent explanation was given to the Marae Moana Council, showing a complete disregard for the group established by the Marae Moana Act to play a meaningful role in what is meant to be a multi-stakeholder Marine Park.



Te IpuKarea Society members Jacqui Evans and Liam Kokaua at Moana Nui - The Ocean Speaks conference in Gisborne

This is an embarrassment for the Cook Islands on the world stage. The Goldman Award was for work done in trying to ensure protection of the Cook Islands marine biodiversity and for conservation and sustainable management. The promotion of seabed mining without allowing sufficient time for research on potential impacts is not a good fit with this aspiration.

We need people like Jacqui Evans in positions of power in this country. We need people who genuinely care for the future of our country, our Ipukarea, and not those that want to sacrifice our environment and our natural resources for short term financial gains.

Meanwhile, those that care about our future, like the members and supporters of Te Ipukarea Society, and many others, will continue to keep Government accountable for the impact of their decisions on the environment.

Cook Islands youth speak out on Climate Change

The movement, called 'Fridays for Future', was inspired by 16 year old Greta Thunberg from Sweden who last year took a day off school and sat by herself on the steps of the Swedish parliament, protesting the lack of government action against climate change.

While school strikes have not yet been embraced by Cook Island school children, it does not mean our youth are disengaged. We have some amazing young Cook Islanders who are role models for our youth and who are representing our country on climate change issues in both local and international forums. This is hugely influential on our school children and will help frame the voice of our youth in the Pacific and beyond.

Making waves internationally is New Zealand-based 17-year-old Jimah Ruland-Umata, who has ancestral ties to the Cook Islands. A prefect at Rotorua Boys High School, Jimah came to our attention this month with a powerful address on the voice of Pacific youth in climate change, at the Oceania Ecosystems Services Forum in Christchurch.

A strong and engaging public speaker, Jimah spoke of fighting for the right to stay at home in the Island's in the face of climate change because so much of our culture is rooted in our land and how leaving our land means leaving our culture – something that is unacceptable for future generations.

Then in Auckland, Te Ipukarea Society member Hareta Tiraa-Passfield is a final year university student from the Cook Islands. She joined the strike for climate change action because, she says, she is incredibly proud of the Pacific's stance on climate change. *"Today I strike for my ancestors. Today I strike for the future."*



Jimah Ruland-Umata spoke of fighting for the right to stay home in the islands in the face of rising seas

It is young Cook Islanders such as these who will hopefully inspire others to act. Our young people have much to contribute and their voices need to be heard. So, don't be afraid to stand up and speak your mind!

And perhaps next year more Cook Island students will mobilise and join the international movement to stand together with Greta Thunberg and the rest of the world to strike against inaction on climate change?

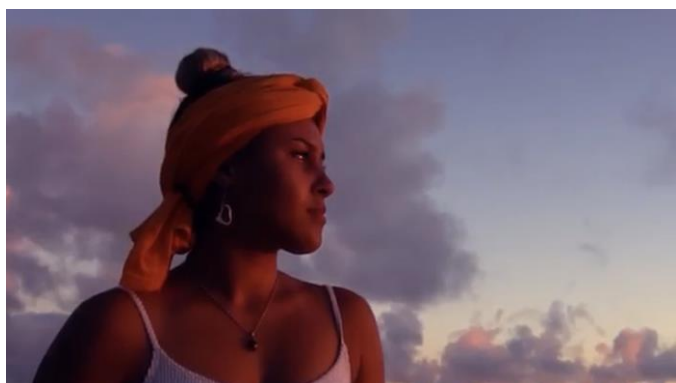


'We are not drowning – We are fighting!' – Hareta Tiraa-Passfield at Auckland climate march

Charlee's video presentation at Global Landscape Forum - New York

Another young Cook Islander speaking out on climate change is Te Ipukarea Society's staff member Charlee Mclean.

Following her much admired presentation to the Global Landscape Forum (GLF) in Germany earlier this year, Charlee was invited to submit a video presentation at the New York GLF on 28 September.



Charlee's video presentation on Oceans and Climate, to the New York Global Landscape Forum

This forum had a climate change focus and Charlee submitted a personalised video focusing on her experiences and love for the ocean and the Cook Islands. The impacts of climate change on our oceans will be significant and Charlee's video shows how determined she is to ensure our oceans are as resilient and healthy as possible.

The video was shown to the 700 audience members live at the forum as well as across social media platforms and emailed to the forum's 70k member's list. Check out the video on <https://youtu.be/cN-5Qu6CCp4>. The links are also available on our Facebook and webpage.

Oceania Ecosystems Services Forum

Te Ipukarea Society staff members Kate McKessar and Mary MacDonald were presenters at the Oceania Ecosystem Services Forum 2019 in Christchurch this month. The forum was fully funded by the NZ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Ecosystem services are the benefits that humans derive from nature, for example, food, timber, clean water, natural pest control, nutrient cycling, pollination, carbon sequestration and recreation.



Mary presents at the OESF Christchurch

Mary presented on the work that Te Ipukarea Society does and showed the 'Save our Suwarrow' video. Mary was part of the team that undertook rat eradication and bird surveys in Suwarrow last year.

Kate gave a presentation on the potential impacts of deep sea mining in the Cook Islands and promoted the concept of a 10 year moratorium to allow for more research on potential impacts. The deep sea is known to be a massive carbon sink providing an essential ecosystem service. Other participants from Fiji, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands gave interesting feedback on their nations' experiences in seabed mining exploration and support for the moratorium approach.

Emma helps school students learn about plants and composting

For the past year Emma Tapaeru Kainuku-Walsh has been a casual employee of Te Ipukarea Society and often does volunteer work too.

Emma together with friend Bernie King recently volunteered their time at Apii Te Uki Ou to pass on knowledge of planting and growing to the tamariki.

"As this programme continues to develop, this will flow into a planting cycle while teaching our tamariki traditional planting methods. Their planter boxes will produce healthy and nutritious growth that will in turn feed the bodies of our tamariki and teach them entrepreneurial mindsets from the ground up" says Emma who runs her own catering business, Nukukai.



Emma and Bernie with students from Apii Te Uki Ou

As another way to encourage our youth into the technology surrounding organic farming and encouraging a move away from chemical fertilisers and pesticides, Te Ipukarea Society has provided worm farms and compost bins to every school in the Cook Islands. This was funded by the Global Environment Facility Small Grant Program (GEF-SGP), with some additional support from the New Zealand High Commission.

Each year the Society follows up with the schools to see how they are doing with their worm farms. Emma recently visited Apii Rutaki to look at their worm bins to set a plan in motion to help develop this programme.



Emma resurrections a worm farm at Apii Rutaki

Congratulations to Emma also for coming first runner up and winning Miss International in the Miss Cook Island's competition held this week! Emma is a true ambassador for our environment and we support her 100% in her future endeavours.

Mana Tiaki Eco-Certification could win you awards!

Many of you will have now seen the Mana Tiaki "green tick" that newly accredited, eco-conscious tourism operators are now proudly displaying. Thanks to funding from the Ridge to Reef project, becoming certified is totally free for 2019!



We already have 40 local businesses who have become eco-certified:

Turama Pacific Travel Group	Manuia Beach Resort
Palm Grove	Aroa Beachside Inn
Ariki Adventures	Ariki Holidays
Etu Moana	Kia Orana Villas
Magic Reef Bungalows	White House Apartment
Muri Beach Club Hotel	Pacific Resort
Blue Lagoon Villa	Rarotonga Daydreamer
Tuoru Holiday Villas	Turangi Holiday Villas
Muri Lagoon Villa	The Sanctuary – On the Beach
The Cooks Oasis Holiday Villas	Eve & Sandy holiday Home
Muri Beachcomber	Kaireva Beach House
Te Puka Estate	Arcadia Retreat
Sands Villas	Ikurangi Eco Retreat
Nirvana Cottage	Club Raro
Moana Sands/Lagoon Resort	KiteSUP
Nautilus Resort	Muri Beach Resort
Royale Takitumu	Storytellers Eco Tours
Paradise Holiday Homes	Dive Rarotonga
Serenity Villas	JJ's Retreat
Discover Marine and Wildlife Eco Centre	The Rarotongan and Lagoonarium

Being Mana Tiaki certified demonstrates a strong commitment to eco- sustainable tourism. Now is the time to consider becoming certified to advance your

business's application to the much anticipated Air New Zealand Tourism Industry Awards.

Three of the awards are environmentally focused including the: Environment Award; the Adventure/Eco Tourism Award and the Business Sustainability Award. The applications for these awards have opened now for the gala event to be held in April 2020. www.tourismindustry.co.ck

For info on Mana Tiaki, check out our Facebook page @ManaTiaki or contact us on 21144 or at admin@manatiaki.org.

Charlee Voyages on the Marumaru Atua Vaka

Charlee spent seven nights on her first voyage as crew on the Marumaru Atua vaka, voyaging to the uninhabited outer islands of Manuae and Takutea.

Charlee was lucky enough to assist staff from the Ministry of Marine Resources to complete their marine and terrestrial surveys on the islands.



Kate and Mary farewell Charlee on her first ever voyage on the Marumaru Atua

"It was amazingly scary how much beauty and wildlife, these pristine islands had to offer!!!" says Charlee.

Hear more of what she has to say about her adventure in next month's newsletter.

Keep Calm and Go Birdwatching

It's that time of year again for New Zealand's Bird of the Year Competition! Bird enthusiasts across NZ are flocking to the online polls for one of the most eagerly anticipated and fiercely contested events on a New Zealand bird enthusiast's calendar.

Will the defending title holder, the Kereru (wood pigeon) retain its crown? Or will it again make international headlines for its penchant for getting tipsy on fermented berries and falling out of trees? Perhaps the young fantailed challenger the Piwakawaka will swoop in to steal the glory? Saving us all from another drunken Kereru acceptance speech.

The NZ Forest and Bird annual event, now in its 14th year, galvanises New Zealanders – they really get into it. There are social media campaigns, celebrity endorsements and even birdy smear campaigns. However, underneath all the fun and skulduggery that this popular event inspires, there is a strong conservation message about native birds, their habitats and the threats they face.

Here in the Cook Islands we are blessed with some amazing birdlife. Perhaps the time has come for a Cook Islands Bird of the Year competition! (not to be confused with the recent Miss Cook Islands event). Seriously, which bird would you vote for?



The Kena or Brown Booby deserves a vote

What about a vote for the impressive, migratory *Teue* (Bristle Thighed Curlew)? Ok, so perhaps not technically 'ours' given it breeds in Alaska but we're claiming it because it has a cool bent beak and it likes to come here for winter holidays. This medium size,

unassuming, brown bird can fly an astonishing 6000 km and is often found sunning itself on atolls such as Tongareva and Suvarrow, or on Takutea, enjoying the tasty shoreline treats.

How about sparing a sympathy vote for our seabirds, like tropic birds, petrels, noddies, and boobies?. No one ever votes for the seabirds. Perhaps they have been unfairly associated with that scavenger and scourge of the land and sea, the widely distrusted Common Seagull (which thankfully, we don't have in the Cooks!).

Some of the birds in the Cook Island's are endemic, meaning they are only naturally found here in the world and nowhere else. Astonishingly some are only found on individual islands. For example, the *Kakerori* (Flycatcher/Monarch), and the *I'oi* (Starling) are only naturally found in Rarotonga. And the *Tanga'eo* (Kingfisher) is only found in Mangaia, and *Kopeka* (Swiftlet) is only found in Atiu!



Everyone's darling, the *Kakerori* brought back from the brink of extinction

One personal favourite is the Rarotonga *I'oi* (Starling). This shy guy with the bright yellow eyes and melodious song used to be abundant in the coastal lowlands of Rarotonga. Now, with the loss of suitable habitat, the *I'oi* hides away in the rugged interior.

Of course, this introverted birdy behaviour is also likely due to the bully boy tactics of the dirtbag Mynah bird, introduced in 1915 to control the Coconut Stick-insect.



The melodic *I'oi* or Rarotonga Starling – once common in coastal lowlands, now hiding in the rugged interior

The Mynah has most definitely NOT been invited to participate in this year's Bird of the Year competition, despite rumours you may have heard to the contrary (rumours we suspect were started by the Myna bird itself). Don't let the bullies win. Be like Napoleon Dynamite and Vote for *I'oi*!



Don't let the bullies win

And then there is the nurturing soft and colourful *Kukupa* (Fruit Dove) which we are certain would give the best birdy cuddles. So many cool Cook Island birds – what should the final pecking order be?

Meitaki ma'ata for all of your continuous support, we hope you enjoyed reading our newsletter. Ka kite, e kia manuia

The TIS Team

TE IPUKAREA SOCIETY INC. (T.I.S.) BOX 649, RAROTONGA, COOK ISLANDS. PH: (682) 21144
EMAIL: INFO@TISCOOKISLANDS.ORG WEBSITE: [HTTP://TISCOOKISLANDS.ORG](http://TISCOOKISLANDS.ORG)

MEITAKI

to our generous supporters

TAERIA

Taeria is a member of the Rarotonga Society of Cook Islands

Turamatutui Bakery

HPM
HAWAII PACIFIC MARITIME LTD

GOLDMINE
Cook Islands Top Jewellery and Gift Store

Sands Villas
RAROTONGA

Kia Orana
VILLAS

BCI
Bank of the Cook Islands

Bergman & Sons est. 1976
Cook Islands Black Pearls

Vonnias

Air Rarotonga
the Airline of the Cook Islands

CITC
SINCE 1891

Pacific Resort
Rarotonga

THE DIVE CENTRE LTD
THE BIG FISH
RAROTONGA - COOK ISLANDS
www.thedivecentre-rarotonga.com

TURAMA
PACIFIC TRAVEL GROUP

NAUTILUS
RESORT
MURI BEACH - COOK ISLANDS

Manuia
BEACH RESORT

KOKA
LAGOON CRUISES

TAMARIND HOUSE

Antipodes

TROPICAL SANDS

//czechmate

ROYALE Takitumu
RAROTONGA - COOK ISLANDS

Rarotonga Printing Ltd

***etu moana**

The Café

JETSAVE
TRAVEL

TUMUMU
Tropical garden restaurant
& Fully licensed bar

Maire Nui Tropical Gardens
& The Hidden Spirit Cafe

Heritage Holdings

MURI BEACH CLUB HOTEL

GOLD

SILVER

BRONZE