



## TE IPUKAREA SOCIETY

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

### Staff Updates

This summer we employed 16 year old, Jade Tierney in the Dame Margaret Karika Internship role. Jade has been a great asset to our team (more on her work in this newsletter). She has now returned to her studies in Year 13 Tereora College. Meitaki Jade and good luck!



Our summer intern, Jade Tierney working hard at the TIS office

We recently farewelled Teuru Tiraa Passfield who completed her short term contract with us.

We are very grateful for Teuru's expertise and the dedication that she demonstrated in helping raise community awareness around environmental impacts of deep seabed mining. Make sure to check

out Teuru's presentation as guest speaker at the upcoming Cook Islands Business & Professional Women event for International Women's Day. 8th March at Muri Club Beach Hotel.

### Maine Mura: Reusable Feminine Hygiene Products



Alanna with the reusable menstruation pads at Apii Mangaia

Maine Mura is our latest project, promoting reusable feminine hygiene products such as moon cups and reusable pads to local schools across each of the southern group islands. Maine Mura aims to address period poverty while also reducing single use disposable hygiene waste.

With funding from UN Women, all interested young women can try these products for free.



Apii Mangaia students learning about Maine Mura

Our Programme Coordinator, Alanna Smith spoke to local young women at Apii Mangaia about these products and gave presentations detailing the proper use and care for the products. Cleaned properly, moon cups can last 10 years and reusable pads, 3 – 4 years.

The programme was well received by the female students at Apii Mangaia, with 100% of the class wanting to try a reusable product.

We were very fortunate to have Tabby Berg as part of the presenting team in Mangaia. Tabby was also able to capture a lot of the presentation through film for upcoming material to be used on social media.

Atiu and Aitutaki are next up to receive presentations both on Maine Mura and Plastic Battle (see below).

### Plastic Battle at Sports Events

Te Ipukarea Society and CISNOC are collaborating to promote the reduction of plastic waste at sporting events.

One simple solution is using reusable drink bottles. Thanks to funding from the Olympic Solidarity Committee, Plastic Battle was formed and was able to supply a neat range of colourful reusable drinking bottles.

These bottles can now be purchased by sports clubs for fundraising purposes. The clubs also pledge to reduce their plastic waste at sports events.

While in Mangaia, Alanna and Richelle Gimpton from CISNOC presented to the students on the impacts of plastic waste and ways we can help reduce the build-up of this particular waste.

For Mangaia the bottles are available from Donna Tuara, who now has an active fitness club on the island.



Tall to short, the epic team in Mangaia for the Maine Mura and Plastic Battle projects, Alanna, Richelle Gempton ( CISNOC) & Tabby Berg

### Our Youth Photography Programme heads to Aitutaki

Off to Aitutaki we went last month for our 3rd environmental photography module. Alanna led the project with support from Teuru and our new intern Jade.



16 members of 'Aitutaki Youth with A Vision' gathered at Tamanu Beach for a mini-workshop to

learn about a range of environmental issues from waste management to birds and marine life.

This project, funded through the US Embassy in NZ, takes the environmental awareness concept and brings it to life through photography. We hope these will inspire eco-conscious, behavioural change amongst our people.

Local Aitutakian, Regina Potini of Blondie's Photography guided the budding photographers and demonstrated the techniques necessary to use the DSLR cameras.

Armed with this knowledge, the enthusiastic students were off to test their new skills visiting challenging sites such as the old quarry and the landfill.



The beautiful Maina was next, a.k.a Honeymoon Island. Students were able to get shots of different plants, the lagoon, Tavake (red-tailed tropic birds), and of course, each other. While photographing, they were encouraged to think about the messages they hope to get across with each image.

We were also lucky to catch up with Andrea George who did amazing work as our summer intern last year, and now works with the Ministry of Marine

Resources at their Araura Marine Research Station (AMRC). She showed our photography project participants around the station and answered their questions about pa'ua (giant clams) and hatchery operations.



Andrea George (left) pictured here with Alanna, and our current intern Jade Tierney, who learned a lot from Andrea's presentation too. We couldn't pass up the opportunity for a photo of these 3 together!

MMR is also where Teuru started her career 10 years ago. As an intern, she assisted with pa'ua spawning and trochus harvest projects under Richard's guidance. Capacity building - we love to see it!!

Final shots picked by each of the young photographers will be blown up onto an A2 sized canvas board and will be showcased back in Aitutaki within the next month. Watch this space.

### **AND IN BREAKING NEWS**

We sneakily entered these Aitutaki photos into a Pacific Climate Photography competition and have now heard that *three of our entries are finalists!*

All finalists will have their photos exhibited across Apia, Auckland, Honiara, Nuku'alofa, Port Moresby, Port Vila, and Suva. Winners announced March 12th. Follow our [Facebook page](#) and [Instagram](#) for updates.

## TIS the Giving Season - Update on Christmas Competition Winners

Congratulations to the winners of our Christmas competitions. Jessica Puiri, Christine Ngatokorua and Moana Partier all scored one of our cool new 1.2 litre insulated water bottles.



And the winners of the best plastic-free Christmas tree (A sustainabilitree, if you will) was the Postrzygacz anau of Oasis Hydroponics with a very creative entry.

## We are Hiring!

We are looking for someone to help us raise awareness about environmental issues facing the Cook Islands.

We need someone who can produce public awareness materials including news articles, social media and TV video adverts.

Ability to speak Cook Islands Maori and tertiary qualifications in a relevant area would be good, but not essential. The terms of this role are flexible and could be full or half time.

If you think this sounds like you, send a copy of your C.V through to us via email, with a covering letter, or pop in for a chat.



## Conservation in the Curriculum

The Ministry of Education invited TIS to present to new teachers that will soon be teaching at Tereora College.



New teachers at Tereora College learning about getting more conservation in the curriculum

The opportunity to present allowed TIS to talk more about the work we do, and how some of those conservation projects can be incorporated into school standards or the learning experience.

TIS has been fortunate to already have been involved in an NCEA level 2 sustainability programme last year with teacher Chris Whitaker from Tereora College. Learnings from this module were shared with the budding new teachers to be, including the value of establishing a learning experience that is local.

### Pa 'Enua Ocean Health Education & Awareness

We are very excited to be partnering with Kōrero o te 'Ōrau and the Cook Islands Voyaging Society on an upcoming project to promote Ocean Health Education & Awareness in the Pa 'Enua.

In April/May some of our staff will spend 6 weeks voyaging on the Marumarū Atua to visit each of our habited islands. We look forward to sharing our various environmental projects and initiatives and working together on this new endeavor.



TIS, KO and CIVS collaborating on upcoming Pa 'Enua project

### Shout out to our Volunteers

So much of what we do is dependent on support from our members and volunteers and this month we want to shout out to Marino Evans.

Marino volunteered to do the video documenting of our panel discussion at the Deep Conversations event at Christmas. He also led the recent epic mission up the Maungatea Bluff.

The hike was a good opportunity to check out the Tavake population commonly observed in front of the Maungatea Bluff Cliff facing edge, as well as taking a couple of first timers up.



Marino Evans leads the TIS team up Maungatea Bluff

### Recycling at TIS

Don't forget our office is always happy to receive a range of clean recyclables to support local businesses. We collect:

- Egg cartons
- Jars (big and small with lids)
- Plastic bread tags
- Clean 'popped' pool inflatables
- Ice cream containers



We are trialling the collection of plastic bread tags to send to New Zealand as part of a [Bread for Wheelchairs NZ](#) initiative. The tags have some monetary value when sold to [partner businesses](#) which recycle the tags into items such

as seedling containers and jewellery. The proceeds go to a charity for wheelchairs in South Africa.

While we would prefer to see cardboard bread tags in the Cook Islands, this might be a good solution to those pesky plastic tags in the meantime.

Please get in touch if your business or school wish to collect bread tags, or if you're travelling to New Zealand and could take a bag of tags over for us.

### Deep Conversations

In case you missed it, our short documentary on deep seabed mining is available on our You Tube channel [Cook Islands Conservation](#).

This video provides an insight into some local opinions on deep seabed mining in the Cook Islands. With the Cook Islands being rich in manganese nodules, the Cook Islands has had significant interest from mining companies and investors, though exploitation has yet to begin.

The Cook Islands is currently completing a tender process for exploration licenses for interested mining companies. Local NGOs are calling for more independent research to be carried out in the Cook Islands to determine what life forms we may have in our deep ocean.

A minimum 10 year Moratorium on commercial harvest has also been called for in order to align with global initiatives such as the UN Decade of Ocean Science.

Many see deep sea mining as yet another layer of stress on an ocean that is already struggling to withstand overfishing, plastic pollution, and climate change, to name just a few.

It is hoped that this short documentary will be the start of initiating at home dialogue on the topic so more community members can become better informed and engaged on this pressing new issue of deep seabed mining.

### TIS Corporate Triathlon Team – EAT MY PLUME

Proud of our Corporate Triathlon team consisting of Alanna, Jade and TIS member Sieni Tiraa plus a big support crew.

The team 'Eat My Plume' (a tongue in cheek comment on seabed mining plumes) came in at an impressive 1 hour 38 minutes.



***We will be starting our 2021 membership drive soon. Contact us or come in for a chat about getting involved with our Society.***

***We look forward to working together, sharing our aro'a for the Cook Islands' environment throughout this coming year.***

***Meitaki from all of us at Te Ipukarea Society.***

# MEITAKI

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