

# I . Institute Overview

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The Ministry of Cultural Development was set up initially under the title of “Arts and Culture” as announced in the Government’s manifesto in 1989. The main business of the Ministry is the preservation, enhancement and perpetuation of the Cook Islands culture. In 1975 a Cultural Division was created under the umbrella of the Department of Internal Affairs. Three years later the cultural division was closed down and merged with the Tumu Korero Division.

The year 1979 saw the cessation of the Tumu Korero Division. In recognition of these difficulties, the present establishment elevates culture to the status of the ministry unto itself. In 1992 the Ministry of Cultural Development was re-established and took up its new premises, which was built to host the 1992 Pacific Arts Festival. Referred to also as “Tauranga Vananga”, the Ministry is made up of five divisions, the National Library, National Museum, National Archives, Anthropology Unit and the National Auditorium. These divisions now come under 4 outputs:

- Cultural Development: Output 1 - Administration
- Cultural Activities: Output 2 - National Auditorium
- Cultural Heritage: Output 3 - National Museum & Anthropology
- National Records & Information: Output 4 - National Archives and National Library

## **Vision Statement**

1. To preserve, perpetuate and enhance Cook Islands Heritage.
2. To maintain cultural traditions and develop an appreciation for this important national resource.
3. To encourage growth and expansion of productive economic, social and educational activities as may enrich cultural art forms.
4. To present where appropriate the varied elements of ancient and contemporary Cook Islands art and cultural forms.
5. To maintain the unique cultural national identity of the people of the Cook Islands.

The Cultural Heritage is a division which holds two units, the National Museum and the Anthropology under its umbrella. A total of 3 staff works in the Cultural Heritage division.

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(Staffs of the Ministry of Cultural Development)

## **A. Anthropology and Heritage Section**

The Anthropology and Heritage Section of the Ministry of Cultural Development was reconstructed from what was originally the Anthropology Division. This division was established in 1974 by the late Sir Albert Henry, the first Premier of the Cook Islands.

In 1974, the Anthropology Division consisted of a staff of six:

Rangi Moeka'a: Anthropologist to government  
Tangata Simiona: Assistant Anthropologist  
Barry Barquie: Junior Anthropologist  
Makiuti Tongia: Assistant Junior Anthropologist  
Awhitia Tavioni: Receptionist/Typist  
Joseph Herman: Chief Administration Officer

In general, the Anthropology Division was set up to assist in the preservation and promotion of the Cook Islands Culture. In terms of actual work, much of it was in the form of recording oral traditions. Once transcribed, the scripts were checked by the Anthropology Division. In 1978, the Anthropology Division was renamed "The Tumu Korero" division. In 1979, the Tumu Korero division closed down.

In May 1990, the Anthropology division was revived as part of the Ministry of Cultural Development. It became known as "Anthropological Services". Kauraka Kauraka, a qualified Anthropologist, was transferred from the Archives to head this section.

In 2008, the Secretary of Cultural Development created a Heritage Division to carry out the Cook Islands projects for the World Heritage Convention. The Cook Islands became a member of the World Heritage Convention on 19 April 2009. For more information about World Heritage see <http://whc.unesco.org>

## **B. Anthropology and Heritage Section**

The Cook Islands National Museum was opened on October 14th 1992 as an institution to display, educate and preserve the cultural history of the Cook Islands. We are not specifically a Museum of Art, Anthropology, Ethnology, Marine Biology or Natural History, but it is a museum with general descriptions encompassing our visual and material culture.

As a new museum, the collection comprises of a number of replicas, of traditional Cook Islands ethnographic materials, housed in foreign institutions. As it is our role to preserve, collect and display the material and visual culture of the Cook Islands, it is one of our main initiatives to

generate and develop an appreciation of one of our most finest resources, our Cook Islands cultural heritage.

## **EXHIBITIONS**

The National Museum is a spacious and modern complex consisting of an exhibition gallery of 200 square metres. The Museum is host to a variety of domestic and international contemporary art exhibitions.

"50 Years of Painting in the Cook Islands" is a retrospective exhibition that focuses on early modern painting in the Cook Islands. It celebrates a specific time period in which this genre emerged and came to be locally regarded as 'art'. It acknowledges the artists who visited these shores and the visual legacy that was left behind. A great part of the exhibition is dedicated to the response to a new kind of artistic process and how local culture came to adopt new ways and methods in which to express and reproduce the living environment around them. Featured in this exhibition is Pomani Tangata, Charles McPhee, Nga Teariki, Tim Manavaroa Buchanan, Ian George, Rick Welland, Edwin Shorter, Joan Rolls-Gragg and Rennie Peyroux.

## **C. Anthropology and Heritage Section**

The establishment of a Ministry of Arts and Culture in 1989 underlined a focus for the Constitution Celebrations. The area of Performing Arts was particularly noted and the work carried out in related fields by other departments was coordinated under one umbrella. The Ministry of Arts and Culture gradually developed into the Ministry of Cultural Development. An active Performing Arts division was accepted as an important sector in the Government's efforts to enhance an appreciation of culture while encouraging income-generating activities.

The Performing Arts division is now known as the "Events" a unit under the umbrella of the National Auditorium (Are Karioi Nui). This particular unit controls the running of the Ministry's four major events every year:

1. Te Mire Atu (The Composer's Competition)
2. Te Mire Ura (Dancer of the Year)
3. Constitution Celebrations now known as the "Te Maeva Nui"
4. Te Mire Tiare (Miss Tiare)

## **Te Maeva Nui**

The first Constitution Celebrations dance festival was held on Friday 2nd August 1968 at Taputapuatea, Avarua. It was highly acclaimed as a vital event in reviving and maintaining our maori heritage.

In subsequent years, it was held at the Constitution Park which is now Te Puna Korero/Sir Geoffrey Henry National Culture Centre. In these early times the Tereora College dance teams were quite prominent in the festival. Over the years, youth clubs became more active in the celebration's competition. There were problems at times. For instance, in 1977 and 1978 there were no competition due to disputes over the judging the previous year. The festival was still held but not as a competition.

In 1989 for the first time all the islands participated in the celebrations. The visiting teams were fully catered for with mattresses, blankets, food and so on for the first time. In 1991, there were no groups from the outer islands. Instead there was full participation from village groups and school teams in Rarotonga.

In 1992, there was limited outer island participation in the Celebrations. However, in 1993 there was full participation from the outer islands and once more the greatest number of groups from Rarotonga participating in the celebrations in recent years.

In 2006, a team of Cook Islanders from Auckland came over to participate in the Te Maeva Nui which increased the number of participating teams for 2006 and 2007.

Overall, the celebrations have become an annual event that all Cook Islanders look forward to. Each year's celebrations will see a great number of activities being introduced into the programme that will make it more meaningful as a cultural celebration.

The Te Maeva Nui have become popular for visitors from all over the world coming in to the country to witness this spectacular event. It is normally held at the end of July right through to the first week of August. A time where Cook Islanders celebrate self-government in the Cook Islands.

## **Turou Takai Marae**

In 1992, government declared the Tauranga Vananga (Ministry of Cultural Development) a national marae called Marae Puna Korero – Fountain of Knowledge and Wisdom. It sits on a land piece called Puaau meaning Flower of the 'Au - Hibiscus Tree. The site was formerly during the New Zealand period an agricultural nursery and before 1821 a traditional marae called Tongatua.

There are two taunga of the marae – taunga karakia for the singing of the pe'e and traditional prayers and taunga tumu marae or head of the marae. They are supported by staffs of the ministry as tiaki, keepers, custodians and guardians of the site.

The ceremony is in three parts. Part 1 is the turou or welcome at the Te Manava Rangatira stone monument on Te aranui o Makea Tauu or Victoria Road. This is done by the taunga karakia.

Part 2 is the garlanding of selected representatives in your contingent with the rau ti under the Orau o Puaau. You will be rakei ia by the Minister or Secretary of Cultural Development. Parts 1 and 2 will be accompanied by the drumming of the ka'ara, pu, pau placed strategically on the karioi terrace and the vivo.

The third part is the entering of the ko'a or lair of the Are Karioi Nui (National Auditorium while the vivo and ka'ara continues. Here you will be welcomed by the Minister of Cultural Development or Secretary of Tauranga Vananga. Inside the ko'a there will be a prayer of thanksgiving and lifting of the tapu of the marae thereby giving you permission to use the marae. At the same time you will be appointed as tiaki custodians and keepers of the marae for the duration of your event.

## **Cook Islands Games**

Over 300 athletes took part in field and athletics events for the Cook Islands Games first week of April. Athletes from Rarotonga, Aitutaki and Mangaia showed good form over the rest of the group for the Pacific Mini Games in September this year.

#### **D. Cook Islands National Auditorium (Are Karioi Nui)**

Built in 1992 the National Auditorium is the largest multicomplex of its kind in the Cook Islands. Events of special cultural significance are held in the National Auditorium as well as international sporting events, conferences, and a variety of stage productions. The National Auditorium is fully equipped with state of the art audio and lighting equipment and has seating for just over 1,800 people.

The National Auditorium is capable of holding stage events, conferences, forums, and indoor sports. These can be of national, regional and international status. Events of Cook Islands cultural significance are held in the National Auditorium. We stand proud in our commitment to our nation's blossoming cultural identity within the wider Pacific and International communities.

For indoor sports it offers an international standard size courts for Basketball, Netball, Boxing and Volleyball with capabilities to cater for Martial Arts, and Badminton. Stage concerts and musical productions are easily accommodated with the main stage capability of holding up to 60 performers

The National Auditorium is a division under Output 2 of Cultural Activities which holds 2 units under its umbrella, those of the Events and Audio Visual units. A total of 5 staff (including the Manager) works in the National Auditorium.

The National Auditorium division is also responsible for the sale of all Ministry productions such as dvds, cds, and videos.

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