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Pacific Advisory Group Annual Report 2012–2013

Celebrating achievements. Acknowledging challenges.

Talofa lava, Taloha Ni, Talofa, Bula Vinaka, Kia Orana, Malo e le lei, Fakalofa atu, and warm greetings from the Pacific Advisory Group.

Dear Mayor and Councillors

We're pleased to report back to you on the work the Pacific Advisory Group (PAG) has done in the past year. We have had a busy year in light of the significant achievements and challenges including our communities' response to the threat of earthquake disasters. You will find that our activities reflect our progress and contributions to building vibrant and resilient communities within Wellington city.

Dedication to Malakai Jiko

2013 commenced under a cloud of immense sadness for the Pacific Advisory Group when we received distressing news about the sudden loss of fellow PAG member, Malakai Jiko, from the Wellington Fijian community. Malakai passed away during the New Year holiday period while visiting family in Christchurch. He was a very capable and dedicated member of the Pacific Advisory Group who up until his death was into his second term of service on PAG. Malakai's quiet commitment and tremendous contributions are greatly missed by the Pacific Advisory Group. We dedicate this report to the memory of Malakai, in acknowledgment of his services to the Fijian community and to the wider Pacific Island community of Wellington. May his soul rest in peace.

Composition of Group

13 members from seven Pacific Island communities are represented in PAG. There are two vacancies (Tokelau and Fiji); the latter a result of the passing of Malakai Jiko. Membership demonstrates the diversity of Pacific peoples as a multiple ethnic group residing in Wellington city.

PAG members as at August 2013

Samoa

Anthony Leaupepe (Deputy Chair)

Violet Ekenasio

Fetu Tamapeau

Cook Islands

Danny Kauraka (Deputy Chair)

Stacey Kokaua – Balfour

Tonga

Sainimili Pouvalu

Siofilisi Latu Taufu'ou

Niue

Mailigi Hetutu

Maria Solouota

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Tokelau

Martha Samisoni
(vacancy)

Tuvalu

Manuila Tausi
Teloma Munro

Fiji

Tina McNicholas (Chairperson)
(vacancy)

This group is coming to an end of a term and new members will be representing their communities in the new term.

Celebrating Achievements

PAG's main way of providing feedback and advice to Council has been through engagement with Council staff and Councillors at PAG meetings and submissions to Council or staff. PAG has contributed in various ways at several levels of Council business.

Advice and feedback into the following programs and projects

- Councils long term planning and strategic activities, e.g. Long Term Plan, options for local government reform, the Alcohol Management Strategy, Climate Change, Town Belt
- policies such as Open Spaces and Recreation Policy, Local Alcohol Policy
- Services to households and communities, e.g. bus review, emergency management and preparedness.

Advice and support to facilitate two Mayors (Pacific) Forums.

The Mayors Forums are a useful mechanism for the Council to engage and to present information to the Pacific communities. It provides insights to inform a wide range of activities, services and supports within local government. The Mayors Forums give Pacific people an opportunity to meet with the Mayor and Councillors and discuss specific issues. This past year has focused on Emergency Management and Preparedness and Alcohol Management. PAG assisted with planning and facilitation to ensure the Forums were culturally responsive and appropriate. PAG also provided valuable feedback for ongoing improvements in future years.

- *It Takes a Village to Prepare for an Earthquake.* November 2012 at the Pacific Islanders' Presbyterian Church in Newtown. 150 community members and leaders attended. Pacific Island community groups, churches, and networks continue to promote emergency preparedness with increased awareness and access to information & support at a local level.
- *Let's Talk About Alcohol in our Neighbourhood.* May 2013 at the Ioane Vito Centre in Newtown. 150 people attended to discuss the impact of

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Alcohol use in local communities. The discussions ensured the opinions of Pacific people were considered as the Council develops the Local Alcohol Policy. The forum also included an exhibition of local services available for Pacific communities.

Positively Pacifika Festival – We Are the Ocean

- *Oceanic people are deeply connected by ocean, genealogy, and a shared voyaging history*
- *This is a celebration for all our ancestors who lived and travelled across the Pacific Ocean.*
- *This is also a call to attention for all to address the sustainability of our seas, oceans, and waterways*

PAG actively contributes to planning this event which has grown from strength to strength and continues to build on its success. The festival has become a significant event in the City's calendar. The event is vibrant and reflects the diversity of Wellington's Pacific Island communities, attracting approximately 10,000 people. Highlights of the event were:

- community spirit, performances and youth involvement
- the march/procession through the city
- crowd participation in 'Village activities'
- local talent, a mix of contemporary and traditional performance activities
- strong partnerships established with the Sustainability Trust, Te Papa, & Whitireia graduates
- sponsorship from Niu FM, NZCT, Moana Pacific Fisheries and also local small businesses
- the beach clean-up that was held the following week.

Advice, support, and contributions in the broader community

The relationships forged between PAG, the Mayor, Councillors, and Council staff has increased our understanding and awareness of the broader issues within Pacific communities. PAG regularly contribute to activities in the broader community including health, social services, Pacific Island affairs, and education.

- PAG actively support the establishment of homework and study centres to support children's educational achievement to NCEA Level 3
- active support of language retention activities including the celebration of specific Language Weeks. Niue language week was held for the first time 2012–2013
- emergency preparedness activities and workshops are held within Pacific communities through churches, language retention groups, children's homework centres and forums.

Acknowledging Challenges

PAG acknowledge the work of the Mayor, Councillors, and Council staff to ensure Pacific people have meaningful access to services, information, and support relevant to our needs and aspirations. We trust that our feedback is received in the spirit intended.

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A lot of our work is tied up in advising business units on how best to work with Pacific communities. However this comes at the cost of giving meaningful input into policy and strategy decisions.

We propose developing a Pacific Action Plan/Cultural responsiveness guide that will guide the Council when engaging with the Pacific community and help the Council understand the needs of Pacific communities and ensure they are represented in policy development and planning.

“The purpose of the PAG is to represent Pacific people’s views and provide feedback and advice to Council business units on the Council’s strategy/policy development, planning, service delivery”

From the PAG Terms of Reference.

Looking back on 2013 – Moving forward in 2014

2013 has been a busy year with many achievements, and challenges for our diverse Pacific Island communities including emergency response to natural disasters such as earthquakes.

We mark the loss of our colleague and dear friend Malakai Jiko, a valued member of PAG, advisor to Council, and strong advocate for Pacific people.

Some PAG members will not be representing their communities in the new term and we take this opportunity to acknowledge their individual and collective contributions, they will be missed. We will continue to build on our success and lessons we’ve learnt to strengthen relationships as we move into 2014.

In the new term, the newly formed Advisory group will begin work on prioritising activities of significance to our communities that align with the Council’s vision and long term planning, continue to build on our key activities (forums and festival) and develop a Pacific Action Plan/Cultural responsiveness guide.

Thank you for your continued support during 2012–2013. We look forward to working with the Council in 2014 to support resilient and vibrant communities in Wellington.