



GOVERNMENT OF NIUE

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TE TAURA WHIRI TE REO MAORI VISITS NIUE

Alofi, Niue – 27 June 2023 – Vagahau Niue Commission in collaboration with the New Zealand High Commission and Tāoga Niue and welcomes Te Taura Whiri i Te Reo Maori.

The visit of Te Taura Whiri i Te Reo Maori is one of the ongoing strategies by the NZ government to strengthen linguistics across the Pacific Islands. “We are focused upon promoting te reo as a living language and an ordinary means of communication. This includes leading the government’s Māori language strategy and creating conditions for Te Reo to thrive” stated by Te Taura Whiri Maori Language Commission.

Niue was invited to take part in the exchange program with Te Taura Whiri i Te Reo Maori in New Zealand last month. The consultation was attended by the Chairperson of the Vagahau Niue Commission, the Director of Education, and a representative from Tāoga Niue and Niue Youth. This week, three Te Taura Whiri members and an MFAT representative were privileged to travel for the Cultural Exchange Visit and share their experience and progress of Te Reo Maori with Niue.

“The exchange program is very welcoming to share and understand the progress of Te Reo Maori in New Zealand. We can only look at our own experience with vagahau and learn from our journey as well, no doubt we have made some very good achievements in the delivery of the curriculum at the schools including ongoing efforts to prioritise the use of vagahau in government and the community as a whole. The visit Te Taura Whiri is also important in re-engaging ourselves with other language experts in the Pacific and enhancing on-going programs to promote and maintain Vagahau Niue” said the Director Tāoga Niue, Moira Enetama.



Photo source from the Department of Taoga Niue

The Team first visited the Lakepa Maleloa pre-schoolers run by Mrs. Mary Magatogia who is fluent in vagahau and after migrating to Niue more than forty years ago. They also met with the Niue Council of Women, the Youth, and schools. Each of these sectors shared and exchanged their own experiences with Te Taura Whiri and visitors in return shared many inspiring stories on their own journey with Te Reo Maori.

Lavea Puheke who attended the session with the Niue Youth is encouraged by the presentation from the Team. "I feel inspired by the work they do for many decades now, Te Taura Whiri have young people working for them who also embraced the advantages of technology to tell their stories. As a narrator for children's stories and Performing Artist, I find the exchange useful, the only downside is that only a few of us were able to attend, perhaps this is something we the youth of Niue need to address and play our part in sustaining Vagahau Niue".

"We have evidence pointing at us, the number of users of Vagahau Niue is declining, we have strategies in place but are not collaborating to change the trend. The Certificate of Vagahau Niue offered at the University of the South Pacific is a milestone that not only reinforces current working strategies under the Department of Education and Tāoga Niue Department but highlights the identity of a Niue person. This is the umbilical chord to our being, we must stay true to our commitment" emphasized the Director Tāoga Niue.

The Chairperson of the Vagahau Niue Commission, Ms. Tifaole Ioane, and the Chairperson of Tāoga Niue Council, Mr. Ben P Tanaki are both thankful for the opportunity offered by the Government of New Zealand and facilitated through the Office of the NZ High Commissioner to Niue. We wish the Team a safe journey back to Aotearoa and look forward to future exchanges.

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