

NURTURE THE RELATIONSHIP

# TEU LE VĀ

THE PACIFIC DIMENSION AT AUCKLAND WAR MEMORIAL MUSEUM



TAMAKI PAENGA HIRA

AUCKLAND WAR MEMORIAL MUSEUM







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# Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of our Pacific Dimension

The *Pacific Dimension* creates a framework for Auckland Museum to focus attention on approaches, activities, and ways of working within the Auckland Museum, and between the Auckland Museum and source communities and other stakeholder groups.

A principle that will assist in the articulation of a *Pacific Dimension* is encapsulated in the maxim *Teu le Vā* 'Nurture the Relationship'. **Teu**, beautify, cherish, nurture. **Vā**, the space between, relationship. As well as a physical spatial dimension, *Vā* is also a conceptual space, the relational space. *Teu le Vā*, 'nurture the relationship' is a common expression, entreaty, or lesson in western Polynesia because, as Samoan author and poet Albert Wendt has stated, "our *vā* with others defines us".

The saying compels entities to act appropriately in all circumstances. It speaks to acknowledging and behaving in the proper manner encompassed within principles such as reciprocity, balance, symmetry, respect and mutual trust within the covenant that is a relationship.

Vā is the space between,  
the betweenness,  
not empty space,  
not space that separates,  
but space that relates,  
that holds separate entities  
and things together  
in the Unity-that-is-All,  
the space that is context,  
giving meaning to things.<sup>1</sup>

Emeritus Professor Albert Wendt, ONZ



<sup>1</sup> 'Afterword: Tatauing the Post-Colonial Body' A. Wendt. in *Inside Out: Literature, cultural Politics and Identity in the New Pacific*. 1999.

The *Pacific Dimension* offers pathways of acknowledgement and inclusiveness based on cultural values from the diverse cultures of the *vasa*, the Pacific Ocean; *vā*, space, *sa*, sacred, the 'Sacred Space'.

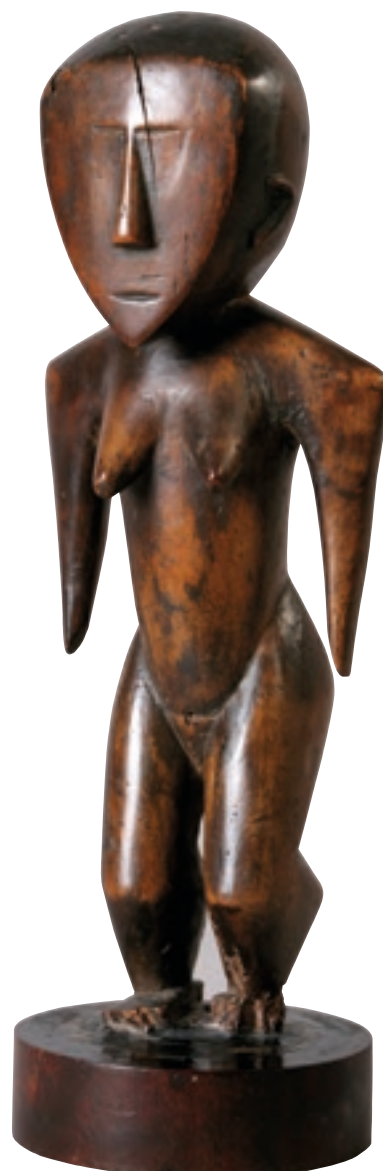
Pacific people are intimately linked by the 'Sacred Space', the Pacific Ocean, and by virtue of the genealogical links with tangata whenua, and New Zealand through social, political and historical links. Pacific people have a special place in Aotearoa, which is recognised within the Auckland War Memorial Museum. For Pacific people in New Zealand the bi-cultural foundation of this place is a given. Mana whenua in Auckland is and has been, recognised by the Pacific communities both formally and informally.

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## 1.2. Context

The Auckland War Memorial Museum's Pacific ethnographic collection is the most diverse and significant collection of its type in the country, ranking as a world-class collection. The collections are broad, both geographically and in material type. They cover all the cultures of the Pacific, from West Papua, northeast to Hawaii and southeast to Easter Island. The collections are essential for display, research and cultural maintenance. They are a strong component of Auckland War Memorial Museum's international reputation and standing as an institution of national significance.

In late 2012 the high level strategic and capital investment plan *Future Museum* was launched. It lays the foundation for transformational change at the Museum over a 20 year period. Developing a strong *Pacific Dimension* framework is a key element in successfully delivering the overall vision and objectives of *Future Museum*. In particular, to address the current under-representation of Pacific peoples in Museum visitor numbers, when compared to demographic representation in the Auckland region; and to more dynamically reflect Auckland's rich contemporary Pacific culture, having one of the largest Pacific populations of any city in the world.



## Future Museum Strategic Context

*We will develop a Pacific Dimension for understanding the context of historic and contemporary Auckland through its relationship with Pacific and Pacific people: seas, journeys, settlement, and contemporary diversity. [pg 12]*

## Future Museum Master Plan Foundation Report

### Developing and delivering a genuine Pacific Dimension

*We see this being delivered in part by the creation of a Pacific centre of research, collection development, and projects including exhibitions and galleries. This will be an embedded and significant part of our content with comprehensive deliverables in research and programming.*

### Content and Interpretation

*The Maori and Pacific galleries will be addressed in the first phase of work, as part of the ground-floor approach exploring 'who we are' (peoples), 'where we are' (land), 'where we came from' (seas, journeys), and 'what's happening now' (current issues). This will include narratives about our city, Auckland, and New Zealand.*



The *Pacific Dimension* aims to help achieve a number of goals in the annual plan

- **Goal one:**  
“Honour and Safeguard the Museum’s responsibility as a War Memorial”, by honouring Pacific contributions in New Zealand’s military history
- **Goal two:**  
“A compelling Destination and Experience”, by being relevant and welcoming for all cultures and backgrounds
- **Goal three:**  
“Accessible beyond the Walls”

*Future Museum* also seeks to align with the Auckland Plan, a comprehensive strategy adopted by Auckland Council in 2011. The plan is a legislated requirement whose purpose is to “contribute to Auckland’s social, economic, environmental, and cultural well-being through a comprehensive and effective long-term (20- to 30-year) strategy for Auckland’s growth and development.”<sup>2</sup> The aim of the plan is to help achieve Auckland’s vision of being the world’s most livable city.

<sup>2</sup> “Why an Auckland Plan”, Auckland Council Website

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### 1.3. Defining Pacific peoples and communities

Auckland has one of the largest Polynesian populations in the world. It is a population that is young, diverse and increasing. It is made up of many different ethnicities, people who have migrated here, but incrementally more who were born here. Increasing numbers are of mixed ethnic heritage, religious denominations and language capabilities but identify as Pacific people.

As described by the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs:

*Pacific people in New Zealand are represented by at least 13 distinct languages and cultural groups. The Pacific population includes people born in the Pacific Islands and in New Zealand.*

*The many Pacific ethnicities are represented primarily by Samoan, Cook Islands, Tongan, Niuean, Fijian and Tokelauan groups, with smaller numbers from Tuvalu, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and the small island states of Micronesia.*

*The Pacific community in New Zealand, numbering 265,974 at Census 2006, has diverse origins. Migration to New Zealand has been significant since the 1950s. Today more than 60% of New Zealanders who define themselves as part of the Pacific community were born in New Zealand and are growing up here.<sup>3</sup>*

Recognising the diversity of the Pacific population in New Zealand underpins the 'Pacific Dimension'. The terms used in this document: 'Pacific peoples' and 'Pacific communities', reinforce the plurality of the Pacific population.

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<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs website



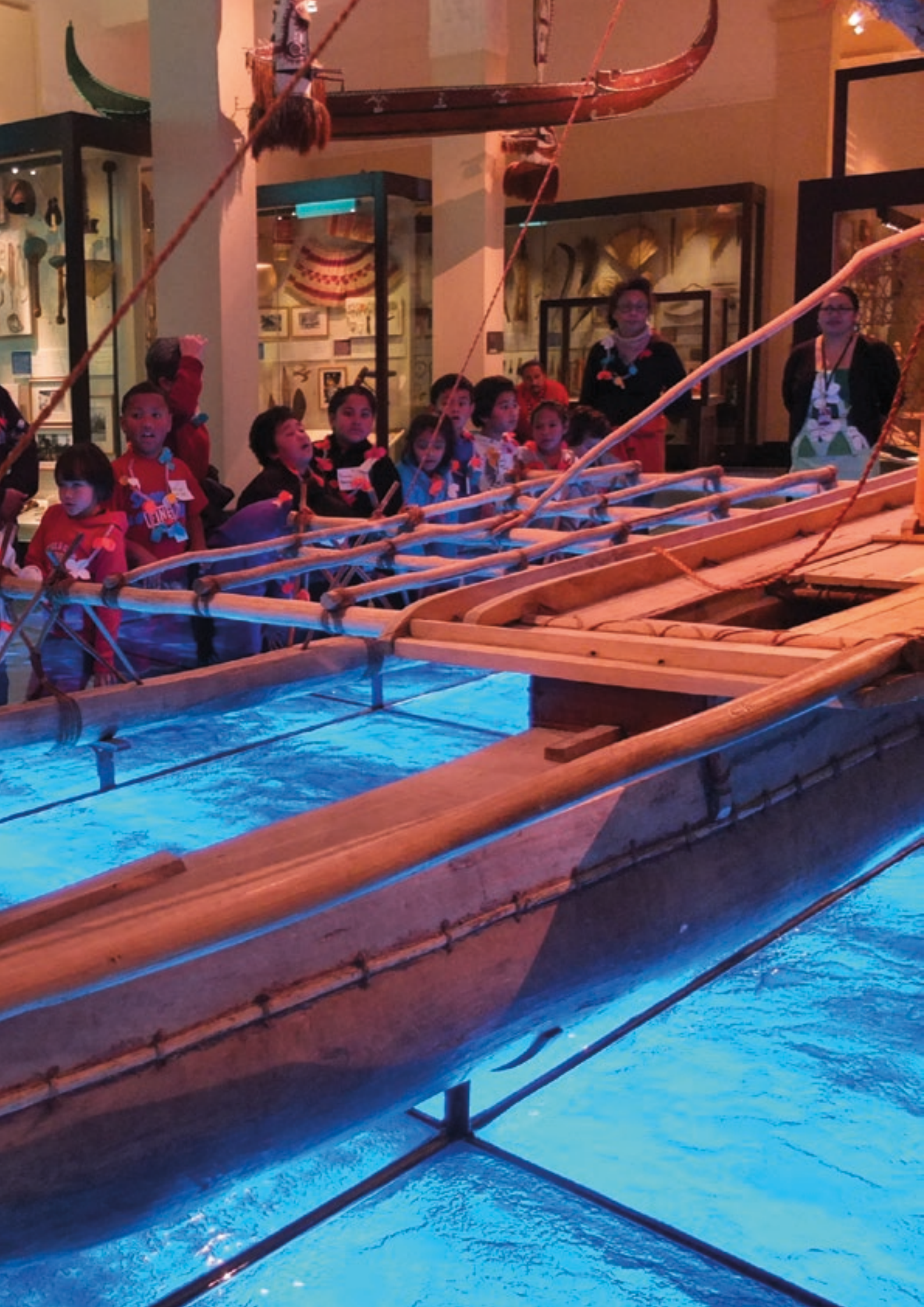
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# Principles and Values of our *Pacific Dimension*







## To te tupuna pakari Kua akapu'apinga ia te mou o te enua

Cook Islands proverb

## From the wisdom of elders the land prospers

The *Pacific Dimension* articulates an operational and philosophical culture for the Museum based on Pacific perspectives and cultural values that make the Museum a respectful, relevant and engaging place for Pacific people, and reflects the stories of Pacific people and cultures. Though Pacific communities are vastly diverse, commonalities can be identified. Some key principles behind the *Pacific Dimension* and some examples of their practical application follow:

- **Meaningful engagement** – develop and sustain relationships with Pacific communities
- **Integrity** – once established, maintain principled relationships
- **Authenticity** – Pacific voices, languages and perspectives are included and valued
- **Reciprocity** – acknowledge rights of source communities and the Museum's responsibilities by actively building capacity and enhancing capability
- **Responsive** – empowering source communities to achieve their aspirations
- **Balance** – recognise mutuality of power, control and involvement
- **Symmetry** – recognise that communities are knowledge holders of items within the collections
- **Enact obligations** – demonstrate value of significant Pacific collections by resourcing the care and storage needs, and building knowledge of those collections
- **Respect** – recognise that contextual information is held within source communities
- **Value diversity** – recognise uniqueness of Pacific cultures, their cultural frameworks and stories; facilitate the preeminence of Pacific languages pertaining to Pacific collections on-site, off-site and on-line

An aim of the *Pacific Dimension* is to link with, inform and support other policies, strategies and guidelines that the Museum currently has, or will be developing. The *Pacific Dimension* paper also acts as a reference document for staff, management and the governing board.



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## 2.1. Key Areas of our *Pacific Dimension*

The *Pacific Dimension* encapsulates the aspirations of significant stakeholder communities, therefore the equitable recognition, support and empowerment of those source communities and their values is essential.



Kiritia kiritia  
Ka kiritia ake ana te papa o Avaiki  
Kia puroro mai te marama  
ki roto ite poiri

Cook Islands pe'e, chant

Disclose oh disclose  
Disclose thy foundations Avaiki  
Lest the light  
embrace darkness

The *pe'e* above covers broad aspects of museological discourse and practice and therefore has relevance to our collective enterprise at Auckland Museum, for example:

- Exhibitions – display more of our stored treasures
- Colonialism – divesting ourselves of colonial views and interpretation of taonga and treasures, and share indigenous world views and knowledge
- Learning and engagement – impart knowledge to students who seek to understand treasures, and encourage inquisitiveness and curiosity as children access knowledge

The following are key areas where our *Pacific Dimension* is articulated:

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## Governance

Aim: The Museum's *Pacific Dimension* is consistently supported and applied.

- A Pacific Advisory Group drawn from the Auckland region works with staff and management to inform the development of projects, programmes, policy and collections, and assist in linking with community networks.
  - Pacific staff within the Museum are supported to work as a group to contribute to the *Pacific Dimension* and the on-going delivery of its resulting outputs.
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## He Korahi Māori

Aim: The *Pacific Dimension* is grounded in a strong relationship with iwi and He Korahi Māori.

- Strong links are created between the Taumata-a-Iwi and the *Pacific Dimension* through enabling appropriate opportunities for the Pacific Advisory Group and staff to share information, dialogue and ceremony.
- We recognise our whanau connections based on genealogical relationships.
- Staff actively engage with the Museum Kaumatua and other Māori staff to ensure that appropriate protocols are followed in relation to Pacific programmes.



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## Engaging Pacific audiences and telling Pacific stories

Aim: The Museum is committed to continuously working to improve engagement with Pacific people and increase attendance figures on-site, off-site and on-line.

### General

- A co-development approach is taken in the planning and delivery of programmes and exhibitions.
- The Pacific Advisory Group acts as a first point of contact.
- Pacific values are woven through our programmes and ways of working.
- We ensure appropriate cultural protocols are followed and supported when working with Pacific communities.
- The Museum identifies, forges and maintains relationships with key local and international Pacific partners.
- Pacific people with specialist talent and appropriate skills are drawn on in the development and delivery of Pacific related projects.
- We understand who our Pacific audiences are and market to them appropriately.
- The ethnic and cultural diversity within Pacific communities is recognised and reflected in what we do.
- We understand and accommodate cultural differences in our working relationships.
- We know who our Pacific audiences are and create offerings and environments that reflect the needs of those various audiences.
- Non-Pacific people are supported and encouraged to understand and undertake appropriate cultural protocols.
- The development of new programmes align with appropriate strategies.
- Museum staff adopt an advocacy role, on behalf of Pacific people, to assist lowering barriers to engagement with the Museum.
- We recognise the important role of food sharing and gift giving in Pacific relationships.





## Exhibitions and galleries

- A Pacific perspective is woven into exhibition interpretation across the Museum where relevant and appropriate.
- The strength of the collections are drawn on to tell stories for, and about Pacific culture.
- The 'living culture' is reflected in exhibitions and exhibition spaces.
- Exhibitions reflect the stories of Pacific people in the Auckland region.
- Pacific languages, voices and personalities are seen and heard within exhibitions and programmes.
- Pacific languages are used in forms of interpretation across the Museum where appropriate.
- There is recognition that Pacific languages are often more widely understood orally rather than in written form.
- We work with Pacific people to develop projects that resonate strongly with Pacific communities.
- The permanent programme is supplemented with short term exhibition projects that bring contemporary Pacific culture to life in the Museum.
- For Pacific communities performance is a significant aspect of life therefore generous spaces are designed to enable this.
- Opportunities are created to utilise creative Pacific talent on an ongoing basis within the programme.
- Pacific cultural values are taken into consideration in the development of exhibition spaces to ensure they are inviting and engaging for Pacific people.
- There are active mechanisms in place to allow visitors to feed information back about collection items.



## Public programmes

- There is a regular programme of events that celebrate Pacific culture and extend learning and scholarship in this area.
- We differentiate between programmes for Pacific audiences, and programmes about Pacific culture, and plan accordingly.
- Pacific content is delivered through the schools programme and outreach programmes on-site, off-site and on-line.
- The Museum has a presence at key off-site Pacific related events.
- Key Pacific celebrations are part of the regular programme.



## Collections

- Collections are physically more accessible to Pacific people and stakeholder groups.
- The Pacific collection has appropriate staff numbers to meet the needs of that collection and facilitate access to it.
- A flexible approach is taken to how collections are accessed by Pacific people.
- Multiple ways of engaging with, and increasing exposure to collections are developed.
- Research of the Pacific collection is actively encouraged and supported.
- There is an active acquisition programme for the Pacific collections.
- Collections are available for loan.
- Cultural considerations are taken into account when handling Pacific collection items.
- The Museum is guided by appropriate advice on issues related to collection management and display to ensure policies follow sound cultural protocols.
- Terminology used within the collection is aligned with the language of origin.



## Capacity building and training

- The Museum is an active participant in building skills capacity within the Pacific community.
- Staff are supported to take part in lectures, symposium and other forums.
- Exchange programmes are encouraged, particularly with colleagues from Pacific Island cultural institutions.
- Internships and work experience opportunities are available for Pacific people to undertake training and research projects.
- Opportunities are created to assist members of Pacific communities to protect, preserve and pass on their cultural heritage.
- Self-representation by Pacific people is enabled.





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# Conclusion



## Fuluhi ki tua ke kitia mitaki a mua

Niue proverb

## Look to the past to clearly see the way forward

The *Pacific Dimension* aims to create a focus and a space within which to consider how we can strengthen the programmes, activities, culture and ways of working within the Museum in line with the goals and objectives of *Future Museum*.

Many of the strategies outlined are expanded on and covered through other Museum plans, strategies and guiding documents that either exist now or are under development, including the Public Engagement Strategy, Audience Development Strategy, Co-development Framework, and the Content and Interpretation Strategy. This paper is designed to help inform these and other strategies.

The *Pacific Dimension* outline is a living document and therefore must be reviewed and updated at key points in the future as required.

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# Supplementary information



In conjunction with this document background information has been drafted about what the current Pacific related activity and programmes look like at the Museum in 2013, and key events that have taken place over the past 15 years. This information provides background that has helped inform the shape of the *Pacific Dimension*.

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#### 4.1. People involved

Ua o gatasi le futia ma  
le umele

Samoan proverb

Let the sennit ring and the  
butt of the fishing rod  
be well matched

Meaning: Let us be united in  
the undertaking

This paper was developed by the Museum Pacific staff reference group – Fuli Pereira (Curator Pacific), Christina Tuitubou (Team Leader Enquiry & Research Services), Vasiti Palavi (Senior Collection Manager Natural Sciences), Ole Maiava (Senior Outreach Programmer), Ma'ara Maeva (Pacific Programmer), Leota Alice Meredith (Community Learning Liaison), Leone Samu (Library Assistant), Andrea Stevens (Online Producer), Sian Kulatea (Family and Early Years Educator), Soane Tatuila (Night Custodian) and Tanya Wilkinson (Project Manager Pacific Content and Interpretation).



## Image list

Cover

Drua, Sailing canoe  
Fiji (12559)

These Fijian drua are truly pan-Pacific being built by Samoan canoe-builders in Fiji, with design and sailing techniques from Tonga and Uvea, and sail rig adapted from Micronesia.

Page 2

Hiapo, Barkcloth  
Niue (999)

Centred on a circular or rectangular internal frame as this example is, Niue hiapo are decorated in free hand.

Page 5

Bowl  
Rurutu, Austral Islands (31542)

Cut from the jaw bone of a whale, this bowl was probably used during the preparation of kava.

Page 6

Goddess figure  
Tonga (32651)

This figure is thought to represent Hikule'o, the primary god of Tonga. With the power to destroy worlds Hikule'o is tethered in Pulotu, sphere of gods, by her brothers Maui and Tangaloa.

Page 7

'Akau tau, Club, detail  
Tonga (34710)

Tu'i Tonga, the sacred king of Tonga, is depicted here wearing his pala tavake headdress with an attendant holding fans.

Page 9

Headband, detail  
Western Highlands, Papua New Guinea (56566)  
This headband is constructed of finely split lengths of bamboo encasing green beetle carapaces.

Page 10

School group visiting Pacific Lifeways Gallery at Auckland Museum.

Page 12

Sisi, Whale's tooth necklace  
Fiji (31896)

Nine whale's teeth are held together with plaited sennit rope with additional binding of un-dyed masi, barkcloth.

Page 13

Staff god, detail  
Cook Islands (31487)

It has been suggested that these staffs recount family lineages, each successive figure representing ancestors and at the head is the god creator, Tangaroa.

Page 14

Adze  
Vanuatu (31495)  
Utilitarian or ceremonial, hafted adzes often exhibit elegant decorative elements such as this one.

Page 15

Kali, Headrest  
Fiji (31812)  
Perhaps better described as 'neck rests', kali are placed at the base of the skull. This example is beautifully shaped from a single piece of wood.

Page 16

Civavonovono, Breastplate  
Fiji (31498)  
Segments of whale's teeth and pearl shell have been cut and carefully joined to form these prestigious breastplates.

Page 16

Mask, Mortlock Island  
Federated States of Micronesia (11570)  
Representing ancestors, these masks are placed within ceremonial houses.

Page 17

'Ahu 'ula, Red feather cloak  
Hawaii (29817)  
These prestigious feather cloaks denote the rank of their chiefly wearer.

Page 18

Pulou, Hat  
Niue (55840)  
This colourful hat of yellow and purple ribbon was made in Auckland by a Niue maker using the coiling technique.

Page 21

Kapkap, Head ornament  
Solomon Islands (35532)  
Intricately cut tortoise shell fretwork overlays a disc of clam shell.

Page 22

Warrup, Drum  
Torres Strait Islands (15809)  
This distinctive hour-glass shaped drum includes cassowary feathers, shells and seeds.

Page 23

Papa, Mat  
Tuvalu (53288)  
The decorative elements on this pandanus mat are achieved with dyed-red and dyed-black pandanus strips.

Images from the Auckland War Memorial Museum collection.

All images by Krzysztof Pfeiffer, except page 10, which is by Mark Smith.

Our thanks to Albert Wendt for allowing us to reproduce his work.









