

28.03.21

Malo lava Climate Change Commissioners,

I am writing this after a weekend with the Untouched World Foundation team at Peel Forest considering the types of leadership we need to address the significant challenges ahead for our environment, wellbeing and many other areas. I want to thank you all for the emphasis in your consultation documents that we have areas of success to build on. We must keep sharing across Aotearoa, and the world that there is hope, and that we can make the difference we need. As part of this, there is an opportunity to highlight the examples of the resolve that can nurture this belief and collective action. I encourage you to please read what we share about Pacific Peoples response to climate and other adversity over generations – and consider recommendations around us building a “it is not too late” attitude as we say in our co-authored article.<sup>1</sup> I also encourage the Commission to make specific recommendations that we continue to do more and go deeper while also strengthening communities, and mental health and wellbeing supports so that we are able to collectively act, and keep the faith that we can make tomorrow better.

I was surprised to not see a focus in the report about our national responsibility to work in collaboration across the Pacific. With Tokelau as a dependent territory of New Zealand, our other Realm relationships, and Aotearoa being a Pacific country, two broad references in the first 9 chapters to MFAT do not cover this intricate part of who we are. There is a piece of work the Commission must do to centre the leadership we must collectively be part of in our wider neighbourhood, and particularly with the symbiotic relationship across the Realm of New Zealand, and Pacific more broadly. Additionally we need to see in our reports that an additional external motivation to act to address climate impact is as we see written in Professor Damon Salesa’s “New Zealand’s Pacific” that every day we as a nation must work to atone for our painful colonial balance sheet.<sup>2</sup> I do not think an Aotearoa alone approach addresses nor situates us as a Pacific country, nor enables all the deep opportunities that there could be.

I also wanted to ensure you were aware of a few Pacific Youth reports with their thoughts I would

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<sup>1</sup> Hayward B. Salili D.H. Tupuana'i L.L. Tualamali'i J. It's not “too late”: learning from Pacific Small Island Developing States in a warming world. *Wiley Interdiscip. Rev. Clim. Change*. 2020; 11: 612  
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/wcc.612>

<sup>2</sup> Salesa, D. I. (2009). *New Zealand's Pacific*. In G. Byrnes (Ed.) *The New Oxford History of New Zealand* (pp. 149-172). Melbourne: Oxford Univ Pr. URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/2292/15752>

like you to please considered as part of your deliberations. The 2017 Pacific Youth Parliament hosted in Christchurch called for a number of things.

### **2017 Pacific Youth Parliament Act:<sup>3</sup>**

#### **“14 Environment**

- (1) PYP declare that New Zealand is not doing enough to address climate change and environment issues.
- (2) We propose the following measures to be considered by the New Zealand Government
  - (a) A national initiative to phase out cars that use petrol, with a goal in mind of 100% electric cars across New Zealand to reduce our reliance on fossil fuel.
  - (b) The Afforestation Grant Scheme is a funding program designed to help establish 15,000 hectares of new forest in NZ between 2015 and 2020. PYP affirm its support for this and encourage the Government to continue with more programmes such as this.
  - (c) PYP encourage businesses to consider how they can avoid cutting down historical and native New Zealand trees. (d) PYP affirm its dissatisfaction with the Emissions Trading Scheme which we do not believe is effective. PYP call for a review of how the current system works, with the idea of moving away from a financial incentives scheme. We believe that If allowing a country to emit more carbon just because they can afford it is immoral. We propose a working group be set up to create a new system which includes young people, and is perhaps founded on Pasifika values.
  - (e) PYP declare its support of a Taonga Tax which would be added to existing border charges for international visitors. PYP would ensure the tax is sufficient without being over burdensome. Options could include tourists only having to pay this tax if they have been in the country for more than six months.

#### **17 Refugees**

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- (2) PYP want to see consultation, discussion and information sharing on how the refugee quota works and who is given priority. We want to see that New Zealand is playing its part in looking after our Pasifika islands that are sinking.
- (3) At this stage it is unlikely that it would be physically possible to thwart the sinking of the Pacific islands beyond an expensive multinational project raising the islands or lowering the sea level.
- (4) PYP stress that immediate and intensive action needs to begin now for looking at taking in refugees from the sinking island nations. New Zealand would need to consider how it can help these people preserve and grow their culture and language in a safe way in New Zealand. We believe the

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.parliament.nz/media/3868/pacific-youth-parliament-our-movement-act-2017.pdf>

Government needs to start cross departmental discussions on the costs involved and how to house and look after this group.

(a) PYP's recommendations around housing needs to take into account possible refugees, as does current Government policy.

(b) PYP would encourage the Government to get businesses thinking about this issue.

Additionally, these thoughts and calls from the Pacific Youth MP's were also reflected in the 2018 Government Inquiry into Mental Health and Addiction report – He Ara Oranga.

“Further, the sector must be well positioned to effectively care for Pacific climate migrants whose mental health and wellbeing may be significantly and adversely affected by the challenges of displacement from homelands because of rising sea levels.”<sup>4</sup>

Finally I would also ask Commission staff to please read through the Pacific Youth Leadership and Transformation Trust coordinated youth submission from Christchurch on the Zero Carbon Bill and consider the ambitions of the young people here.<sup>5</sup>

Thank you for this opportunity to contribute, for holding so many of our hopes, I will be keeping your talanoa in my karakia.

Fa'amalosii!

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of stylized initials 'JT'.

Josiah Tualamali'i

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<sup>4</sup> He Ara Oranga - Page 89 - <https://mentalhealth.inquiry.govt.nz/assets/Summary-reports/He-Ara-Oranga.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCEN\\_EVI\\_87861\\_EN17397/66d00d668c10c001703a445a1d9e10323f4cd631](https://www.parliament.nz/resource/en-NZ/52SCEN_EVI_87861_EN17397/66d00d668c10c001703a445a1d9e10323f4cd631)