



Minutes of the Tongan Stage Committee held at James Cook High School staff room; Thursday February 2021; 4:30 pm

In attendance:

Massey University – Carlos Tupu, Vika Namoa (Sponsors)

Fane Fusipongi Ketu'u – Tongan Stage Co-ordinator & James Cook High

Sacred Heart College – T. S. Wong

Tamaki College – Osaiasi Kupu

Marist College – Sinai Siakumi & Ross Mcilwick

Kia Aroha College – Sinai Vakautu

Mt. Roskill High School – 'Atelaite Tuafolau, Mafi Malanga (Punake)

Southern Cross Campus – Tevita Kaufusi and students

Selwyn College – Liziana Fa'asolo

Alfriston College – Natahlya Silbery – Martin

Avondale College – Tiana Ilolahia & students

Wesley College – Richard Smythe and students

Selwyn College – Soane Tatuila Pusiaki (Punake)

Avondale College – Joseph Buchanan

Auckland Girls' Grammar – Tatiana Ha'angana and students

Manurewa High School – Sola Vuna

Otahuhu College – Tina Otunuku

Epsom Girls Grammar – Hepi and 2 leaders

Seddon High – (Mum & Son)

The meeting opened in prayer – Tevita Kaufusi

Apologies: Lute Langi OHS, Papatoetoe HS, Onehunga HS, Papatoetoe HS and Hillary College.

Guest Visitors: Fane acknowledged in attendance Carlos Tupu and Vika Namoa who were representing our sponsor – MASSEY UNIVERSITY. Grateful thanks were made to the University. Mention was made too for our Tongan Speeches sponsor for this year: The Ministry for Pacific People – MPP.

Fane explained that due to the COVID interruption last year, the arrangements for 2021 would continue to follow those of 2020. JCH would host the stage this year and the PolyFest theme was that from 2020. Mt. Roskill High School would host the stage for 2022. Dates of the festival this year are Wed 14 to Sat 17 April.

Fane further explained that a second plan was instigated by the festival organisers in the event of another COVID lockdown. A document outlining this alternative plan involved schools making recordings of their performances and speeches and to have them made available to be streamed across the internet permitting the competition to proceed. Details are given in the 'Contingency Plan' document.

AGENDA

- 1) **Schools' Registrations:** 10 schools had registered to date. Questions from the floor sought clarification about a clash with a Rugby event for senior boys on Saturday 17 April. Fane



explained schools need to register and then explain their difficulty to perform on Saturday. It is only upon registration that Fane can adjust the schedule to assist. **Register FIRST – then SHIFT.**

Some schools had explained they were in recess for this year following their policy of participating only in alternate years.

- 2) **Stage Sharing:** With the cancellation of the event last year and the festival closing for the weekend of the 2019 festival; the event had lost much money. Stalls and contractors still had to be paid without a source of revenue due to these closures. The event remains viable this year due to the kind and generous support of our sponsors. To this effect, there are to be only 4 stages. There will be a separate Maori stage, a separate Samoan stage, the Niue and Diversity stages will be combined in to one stage and there will be a shared stage with the Cook Island and Tongan performances.
- 3) **Tongan Speeches will be much fewer in number.** Fane asked schools to be mindful that we had the use of the Samoan stage for speeches on Wednesday 14 April from 11:30 am to 5:00 pm only. This restricts us to only 5 or 6 speakers in total. Could schools please review their speakers with a preference given to seniors this year and present only their best speaker for the competition otherwise we will be continuing well into the evening.
- 4) **Judges.** The judges for 2021 will be those who were to judge last year. They have been asked in the light of the understanding that the festival is a school event with an academic focus to help students gain NCEA awards. As such, there is a shift from appointing our traditional punake to judges from academia.
- 5) **Punake:** Concern was expressed that some punake were setting a high payment figure for their services. This was an unjust expectation and placed a large burden on school communities to provide this sum of money. Fane explained that no other stage paid their tutors – that other tutors had given their service in the spirit of serving our youth to proudly learn and uphold our cultural traditions. Only Tongans paid their punake. Mention from the floor was also made that some families who had their son or daughter as leaders felt an obligation to bestow expensive gifts of mats and money. This problem for the Tongan communities had found it's way to the Komiti Fakahaere. In response, Fane explained that it is to be the teacher in charge that is in control, not the tutors or parents. Teachers needed to be strong. Fane explained she will not enter dialogue with punake; she will restrict her communications to the teacher in charge of the performance group for each school. Fane asked for teachers in charge to take real control of the group.
- 6) **Trophies:** Could schools please return any outstanding trophies they may still have in their possession. An early stocktake is necessary to help plan trophies for the prize giving ceremony.
- 7) The **second stage meeting** will be held at James Cook High on Thursday 18th March at 4:30pm. Could school teachers and senior leaders please attend for further updates.
- 8) The **leaders' Conference** scheduled for this Saturday 27th February has been postponed. A new date and venue will be sent to all schools' TIC when this is made final.
- 9) Fane explained there were only **5 weeks left** before the Festival so schools should get their plans in place and register.
- 10) The **MASSEY UNIVERSITY representatives** thanked Fane for her tireless and often thankless energy and time to see to the functioning of the stage, pledging their unconditional support for her as she organises and runs the stage. Support from the floor was by spontaneous acclimation.
- 11) Tina closed the meeting in prayer at 5:30pm.