



Front row L-R: Karen Skinner, Tutu Taiera, Sierra Keung, Faamoana (Moana) Leilua, Saveatama Eroni Clarke, Nigel Chang, Steve Kidd
 Second row L-R: Katie Dee, Judy Matai'a, Enroy Talamahinar, Joseph Tuitavake, Vania Wolfgramm, Tracy Atiga, Michael Langley, Gaye Bryham, Lesley Ferkins
 Third row L-R: Sarah Rennie, Chris Morrison, Wendy Baker, Sandy Thompson, Letticia Jones, Simon Devoy, Mike Hester, Bruno - Puluno Siasau
 Fourth row L-R: John Kirkup, Stephen Gee, Danny Gautusa, Kevin Senio, Glenn Flavell, Andy Baker, Baruch ter Wal, Vaughan Bridges

Cultivating Pacific Leadership in NZ Rugby

The prominence of Pacific rugby union players' on the field, particularly in Auckland, the largest Polynesian city in the world, isn't reflected in non-playing roles but initiatives are under way to cultivate leadership throughout the sport

THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY PLAYS A VITAL PART IN RUGBY FROM club to professional level. In Auckland, however, the contribution is largely on the field and not reflected in non-playing roles such as coaching, refereeing, administration, management and governance. Recognising the need to cultivate Pacific leadership throughout the sport, New Zealand Rugby (NZR) and Auckland Rugby partnered with AUT's Sport Performance Research Institute New Zealand (SPRINZ) to set up *Navigating Two Worlds* (N2W).

N2W was designed with the establishment and guidance of a Pacific Advisory Group, including La'auli Sir Michael Jones, Saveatama Eroni Clarke, Peseta Sam Lotu-liga, Kevin Senio, Tracy Atiga, Motu Tony, Cynthia Ta'ala and Faamoana Leilua.

The voluntary programme offered leadership development and mentoring to two groups (a Pacific Leadership Group and a Club Leadership Group) aimed at increasing the number of Pacific people in non-playing leadership roles. Another key objective was to create greater understanding of Pacific culture by current (mainly NZ European) office holders in clubs across Auckland.

AUT sport leadership and governance, Professor, Lesley Ferkins says, "We realised, from initial research, that both cultures needed to come together at a grass roots or local club level. As well as supporting Pacifica players to find a path into leadership positions, we needed to help rugby management understand the Pacifica perspective on leadership. There was great willingness on both sides to come together. "We have Western-based NZ Rugby culture and we have Pacifica culture; both with strengths to offer when it comes to concepts of leadership."

Throughout the project, progress was discussed at a series of talanoa. A final talanoa was held at the Eden Rugby clubrooms, giving participants the chance to share stories of what they had learned from leadership and cultural development workshops, as well as time spent mentoring and being mentored.

Attending were NZR executives, including NZR Chair Brent Impey and CEO Steve Tew, who heard about the desire for a leadership model drawing on Pacific and Māori culture.

WEAVING PACIFIC VALUES INTO RUGBY

Many offered the Pacific take on what it means to be a leader, summed up in two Samoan proverbs which are echoed across all Pacific cultures: *Ole ala ile pule ole tautua* (the road to leadership is through service) and *O le tele o sulu e maua ai se fagota, e mama se avega pe a ta amo fa'atasi* (my strength does not come from me alone, but from many). Counties Manukau Steelers manager Faamoana Leilua spoke of a desire to change the perception of humility as weakness when it's a strength, especially for Pacific leaders.

Counties Manukau board member Andrew Baker: "I learned the value of shoulder tapping Pacific players who show leadership promise, rather than expecting them to come forward. Success depends on those around you, opening the door and walking someone through."

The importance of making whānau feel more welcome in clubrooms, and how getting to know a player includes getting to know his or her extended family, were also emphasised by many. One club, for example, has a zero-tolerance policy on racism and has introduced a kava night inviting all members to participate. Other clubs have encouraged their Pacific players to wear their traditional dress at after-match functions and prizegiving.

For Counties Manukau board member Andrew Baker, the impact of encouraging and opening doors was a highlight of the programme

and points to a possible need to reconsider how people are currently 'recruited' to leadership positions.

"I learned the value of shoulder tapping Pacific players who show leadership promise, rather than expecting them to come forward. Success depends on those around you, opening the door and walking someone through. It's not easy when we're focused on models of leadership that are very competitive."

A clearly articulated insight shared, by both cohorts, was that people contribute their leadership to rugby because they recognise the power of sport to build communities. "This shared belief is potentially a foundation stone of partnership among all parties involved in N2W," says AUT's Sport Leadership and Management Department Head, Gaye Bryham. "Recognition that leadership starts with self, then others (team and club), and then the system saw many sharing their views about the importance of rugby clubs focusing on youth leadership development, incorporating mental health and connecting with the health and education sectors."

At the conclusion it was clear that participants on all sides want to continue building a combined leadership framework and extend the programme to beyond Auckland, says leading Pacific Advisory Group member, Tracy Atiga.

"We are wholeheartedly committed to the rationale of taking this ahead."

NAVIGATING 2 WORLDS

- Two streams: Club Leadership and Mentoring Group and Pacific Leadership and Mentoring group
- Overseen by a Pacific Advisory Group specially set up for the project
- Clubs involved were from Provincial Unions within the Auckland Region

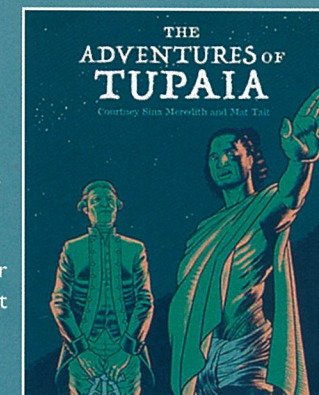
BOOK PREVIEW

THE ADVENTURES OF TUPAIA
 Written by Courtney Sina Meredith
 Illustrated by Mat Tait

The Adventures of Tupaia tells the incredible story of the Tahitian priest navigator who sailed on board the Endeavour with Captain Cook on his first voyage to Aotearoa.

Tupaia grew up in Ra'iatea, one of the French Polynesian islands, becoming a high-ranking 'aroi and master navigator. He met Cook in Tahiti and sailed as part of Cook's crew on the Endeavour across the Pacific to Aotearoa. Tupaia's encounters between tangata whenua and the crew as the ship sailed around the coast revealed the important role Tupaia played as a translator and cultural interpreter.

Written in dramatic prose and verse by Courtney Sina Meredith and stunningly illustrated in graphic style by Mat Tait, this book is an engaging read based on a remarkable time of discovery, which is being celebrated in Aotearoa to mark 250 years since Cook's historical first voyage.



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