

MEDIA RELEASE

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Inaugural **Rotuman Language Week 2018** **06th to 13th May 2018**

'OTOU FÄEAG TA : RAKOA . 'INEA'IA . MAÛR'AKIA
MY LANGUAGE : LEARN IT . KNOW IT . LIVE IT

For a more a detailed programme and information – please visit www.rotuma.website
And please use this link for a Wikipedia article on the language
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rotuman_language

The Rotuman Community of Aotearoa/New Zealand is excited to announce their first-ever **Language Week**.

Next month's week-long celebration of Rotuman culture is being organised by the Auckland Rotuman Fellowship Group Incorporated (ARFGI).

And in another first, they have also created a **Language Chart** to help those new to the language, and which will be of particular benefit for the younger generations.

Chairperson Mr Faga Fasala said, ***"We took the initiative using our own funds and resources, to move things forward and help save our unique language"***.

The Group hopes that this may also inspire other ethnic groups, including Rotumans, who live in other cities and countries throughout the world, to hold similar events.

"Language is what makes us who we are, and is part of our culture and identity", Mr Fasala said, ***"And it is our duty to preserve this invaluable taonga"***.

The Group hopes the week's activities will help bring people together, and showcase Rotuman culture. ***"We invite all Kiwis to come and join us, and celebrate being Rotuman"***, Mr Fasala added.

"It has not been easy for our community to keep our language alive in Aotearoa", Mr Fasala said, ***"We pay tribute to our elders and leaders, who for the last 30 years, have continued to celebrate our culture in New Zealand, and for helping keep our customs and traditions relevant"***.

A separate media event is also being organised as part of the activities, in the hope that this will help introduce the unique Rotuman culture to the wide-NZ public.

"Each day of the week has been allocated to the different groups within our community", Mr Fasala stated, ***"With the Elders, Youth, Sports, Cultural, Music, Advocacy and Religious leaders hosting their own days"***

Rotuman people are a separate ethnic group with their own distinct language, culture and identity, and originate from the polynesian Island of Rotuma.

Rotuma consists of the island of Rotuma and its nearby islets, and is located in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, about 500 kms north of Fiji, and 500 kms west of Wallis & Futuna.

Rotuma was annexed by the British on 13 May 1881 ('Rotuma Day'). Although Rotuma is its own nation, it is currently administered by Fiji as a dependency.

The Rotuman language is listed on the UNESCO List of Endangered Languages as "Definitely Endangered".

Rotuma is described as an 'untouched paradise' with some of the world's most pristine and beautiful beaches.

For more information : please email : info@rotuma.website, or telephone Mr Faga Fasala 022-4028249 (Chairperson, ARFGI) & George Nonu 021-08792415 (President, ARFGI Youth)