



AUCKLAND ROTUMAN FELLOWSHIP GROUP INCORPORATED

Serving all Humanity

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MEDIA RELEASE

28 September 2020

NZ Minister, Phil Twyford, visits Rotuman Language Classes

On Saturday, as Lockdown restrictions were relaxed, the **Auckland Rotuman Fellowship Group Incorporated**, recommenced their Language and Culture Classes.

The Group invited Government Minister **Hon Phil Twyford** and also Local Papatoetoe-Otara Auckland Council Board Chairperson **Lotu Fuli** to be part of the Rotuman Community's efforts to save their endangered Pacific language.

Minister of Transport & Economic Development, Hon Phil Twyford, who took part in the classes and learnt a few Rotuman words, commended the Group for keeping their language and culture alive in New Zealand.



"It is so heartening to see the **Rotuman Elders passing on their language and culture to the Youth**", Minister Twyford said, "Auckland is the world's largest Pasifika city, and we must all continue to work together to celebrate our diversity"

Local Council Board Chairperson Lotu Fuli added, "Today I am inspired to continue encouraging my children to speak our Samoan language at home"



Classes are held every Saturday afternoon at the **NZ Rotuman Community Centre** at 35 East Tamaki Rd, Papatoetoe, Auckland. The Centre is part of the Whānau Community Collective.

The Group, which has been holding classes for several years now, were forced to suspend the get-togethers due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Chairperson Faga Fasala said the free classes are open to everyone, "We want all Kiwis to come and learn with us, and celebrate the Rotuman culture"



General Secretary Rachael Mario said "Language helps define us, and is part of our culture and identity. We are committed for the sake of our younger ones".



"It has not been easy for our community to keep our language alive in Aotearoa", Mr Fasala added, "We pay tribute to our elders and leaders, who for over 30 years, have continued to celebrate our culture in New Zealand"

(continued below)

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. Rotuma was annexed by the British in 1881

Although Rotuma is its own nation, it is currently administered by Fiji as a dependency.

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

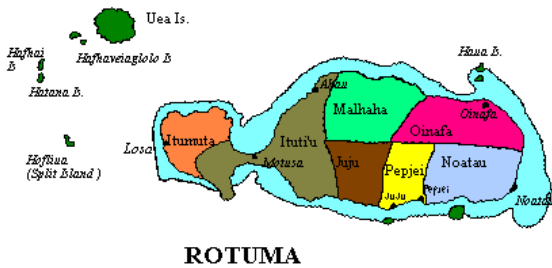
The Rotuman language is listed on the UNESCO List of Endangered Languages as "Vulnerable".



Noa'ia e Mauri

ROTUMAN LANGUAGE & CULTURE CLASSES

5pm to 7pm : Saturdays from 26 September 2020
35 East Tamaki Road, Papatoetoe, Auckland, Aotearoa-NZ



For more information : please email : info@rotuma.org, or telephone Mr Faga Fasala 0275-784731 (Chairperson, ARFGI) & Ms Rachael Mario 021-2559956 (General Secretary, ARFGI)