# waka kuaka

The Journal of the Polynesian Society

VOLUME 134 No. 1, MARCH 2025



The Invisibility of the Realm of New Zealand



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#### THE JOURNAL OF THE POLYNESIAN SOCIETY

## SPECIAL ISSUE: THE INVISIBILITY OF THE REALM OF NEW ZEALAND

Volume 134 MARCH 2025 Number 1

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Published quarterly by The Polynesian Society (Inc.), Auckland, New Zealand Cover image: Tokelau visitors and returning villagers are the first ashore with their mattresses rolled up in mats. The MV *Aoniu* is anchored beyond the reef at Nukunono. Photograph by Judith Huntsman, 1967–68. Image by courtesy of the Anthropology Photographic Archive, Waipapa Taumata Rau The University of Auckland.

Published in Aotearoa New Zealand by The Polynesian Society (Inc.)

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ISSN 2816-1599 (online)

Indexed in Scopus, Web of Science, Informit New Zealand Collection, Index New Zealand, Anthropology Plus, Academic Search Premier, Historical Abstracts, EBSCOhost, MLA International Bibliography, JSTOR, Current Contents (Social & Behavioral Sciences), ERIH PLUS.

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

#### SPECIAL ISSUE:

#### THE INVISIBILITY OF THE REALM OF NEW ZEALAND

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#### CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Rennie Jonathan Unimotu Atfield-Douglas (Hakupu, Avatele, Hikutavake, Niue) has a BA(Hons) in Pacific studies where he explored the reasons for which Niue opted for self-government in free association with New Zealand in 1974. He is now beginning his PhD in health economics focusing on Niue people's experience of this. Professionally, Rennie has held a range of roles at the University of Auckland and worked for a number of years to support Pacific student success. As a developing Niue scholar and historian, his interests lie in deepening understanding of Pacific histories and contributing to the development of the Pacific economy.

T. Melanie Puka Bean is an assistant professor of ethnic studies and gender studies and assistant director of the Center for Pasifika Indigenous Knowledges at the University of Utah. Her current research focuses on Tokelau's diasporic communities in Aotearoa New Zealand and in O'ahu, Hawai'i.

Ioane Aleke Fa'avae (Mutalau) is currently an academic development lecturer Pacific as well as interim team leader for Pacific success at Unitec. Until recent funding cuts, he was teaching a successful tertiary-level Vagahau Niue language course through the Manukau Institute of Technology, the only Vagahau course at tertiary level offered in the whole of Aotearoa. Ioane is also the president of the Mutalau Ululauta Matahefonua Trust and advises on Niue language curriculum for NCEA.

Alexandria Hawley (Diné) received her BA from Dartmouth College in 2019, where she majored in anthropology and Native American studies. She completed her MA in museums and cultural heritage at Waipapa Taumata Rau The University of Auckland as a 2023–24 Fulbright Graduate Awardee. A proud citizen of the Navajo Nation, Alex is invested in Indigenous adornment, agency and cultural perpetuation. Alex is currently completing her residency as an Anne Ray Intern at the Indian Arts Research Center, located at the School for Advanced Research in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Irene Karongo Hundleby (Solomon Islands, New Zealand) is an ethnomusicologist, musician and composer. Irene's research work focuses on documenting Indigenous knowledge, stories and perspectives relating to Pasifika music, arts and culture. Irene is co-facilitator of the Ōtepoti Pasifika Arts Collective, liaison officer for Solomon Islands for the International Council for Traditions of Music and Dance, and co-owner of Relics independent music and hi-fi store in Ōtepoti (Dunedin), Aotearoa. Irene's collaborative work focuses on grassroots projects that aim to improve access, cultural visibility and equality in the arts.

Jesse Koka'ua is a Cook Islander, associate professor and statistician in the Va'a O Tautai Centre for Pacific Health at the University of Otago, Dunedin. His mixed-methods research has investigated benefits of education for the health of Pacific families in Aotearoa. He continues to investigate how Pacific ethnic cultural practices

attenuate the effects of socioeconomic stress and material hardship on health outcomes for families in different Pacific communities. He has published in the area of health, predominantly mental health, prioritising the needs and development of successful Pacific communities.

Marcia Leenen-Young is a senior lecturer in Pacific studies in Te Wānanga o Waipapa at Waipapa Taumata Rau The University of Auckland. She completed a PhD in ancient history and has since transitioned to focus on the history of the Pacific. Her research interests include the historical relationship between New Zealand and the Pacific, Indigenous Pacific ways of telling history, Pacific research methodologies and Pacific pedagogies. Marcia is also the editor of Waka Kuaka: The Journal of the Polynesian Society, the first of Pacific descent.

KDee Aimiti Ma'ia'i (Fasito'outa, Sapapali'i) is an interdisciplinary researcher who straddles Pacific studies, development studies and history disciplines. She is currently a Rhodes Trust–funded DPhil candidate in global and imperial history at the University of Oxford. Her thesis focuses on agricultural development in the Pacific from 1920 to 1980, considering Indigenous agricultural transitions, postcolonial agricultural export, shared ecological realities and postcolonial Pacific regionalism. Her broader work is focused on development in the Pacific region where she investigates postcolonial development, colonial inheritances and foreign policy approaches to identify alternative ethics of Pacific-led development within systems in which the "global" predominate.

Ake (Sally Akevai) Nicholas is a senior lecturer in Māori studies at Waipapa Taumata Rau The University of Auckland. She is a linguist from the Ngā Pū Toru people of 'Avaiki Nui (Cook Islands) who specialises in the documentation, description and revitalisation of Polynesian languages.

Rowan Panther makes lace that weaves together diverse European and Oceanic textile traditions. Panther is responding to the complexities of colonisation and to her mixed Irish, English, German and Samoan ancestry. She is part of the cultural recovery of a European handmade lacemaking tradition that was nearly destroyed by industrialisation. At the same time, she is a participant in the cultural celebration of Pacific craft practices that were irreparably altered by the processes of diaspora. Panther completed a diploma in photography from Unitec in 2002 and a bachelor of fine arts from Elam in 2008. She has exhibited in Aotearoa, Sydney, London, Paris and Munich. Her work is held in the collection of Auckland Museum Tāmaki Paenga Hira, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Pātaka Art + Museum and the British Museum. In 2021 she was awarded the Blumhardt Foundation Dame Doreen's Gift and in 2024 was selected to exhibit at Schmuck, a prestigious annual jewellery exhibition in Germany.

Jess Pasisi (Niue, Ngāti Pikiao, Mā'ohi) is a pūkenga (lecturer) in Pacific studies at Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka University of Otago. Her research work primarily focuses on Niue. Her PhD at the University of Waikato engaged with Niue women's experiences

and knowledge of climate change. Following her PhD, Jess gained a prestigious Pacific postdoctoral fellowship from the Health Research Council of New Zealand to research tau tagata Niue (Niue people's) conceptualisations and experiences of happiness. Her current Marsden-funded research project is mapping Niue texts throughout time and engaging Niue people with tau tagata Niue—created texts.

Emma Ngakuravaru Powell (Atiu, Mangaia) is a senior lecturer at Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka University of Otago where she teaches about Indigenous research methodologies, governance and ethics. Emma's current research focuses on creative and collaborative practice in the academy and the political and cultural imbrications of New Zealand's empire. She is co-director of the Pacific Thought Network at Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka.

Lisimoni Birtha Togahai is the coordinator for the certificate in Niue and Niue master's programme at the University of the South Pacific, Niue campus. She formerly was director of the Department of Education in Niue and has held many education-and language-related positions. She also coordinated several elders' writing groups in Niue as well as being active in other community roles.

Cora-Allan Lafaiki Twiss is of Māori and Niue descent, residing in Waitākere, Aotearoa. In recent years she has been working on developing knowledge around Niue hiapo as a researcher and arts practitioner. Cora-Allan has a thriving hiapo practice with a focus on creating ceremonial tiputa for tagata Niue; for the Niue 50th Pulefakamotu her family presented Prime Minister Dalton Tagelagi with a traditional tiputa of her design. She was awarded a Creative New Zealand Pacific Heritage Artist Award (2020), was selected to participate in the Parehuia residency (2021) and won a Springboard award from Te Tumu Toi Arts Foundation (2021).

Inangaro Vakaafi, of Mutalau, Niue and Kūki ʿĀirani heritage, was born, raised and educated on the island of Niue. With a professional background in journalism and broadcasting, she currently serves as a radio producer for the Pacific Media Network's 531pi brand and also contributes to the network's Niue language programme team. Inangaro also tutors Vagahau Niue online courses for the Centre for Pacific Languages (CPL) and works as a Vagahau interpreter for Straker Interpreting. Additionally, she has served as a language cultural consultant on various projects and studies in Niue and Aotearoa. Inangaro is also author of the children's book Hunt for Niu Tupu (Mila's Books, 2025).

Michelle Ladwig Williams is an independent scholar based in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, with research interests including transnational Pacific identities, Pacific music and dance in Aotearoa, Pacific festivals and transnational youth. She holds an MA in music education from University of Hawai'i at Mānoa and a PhD in anthropology from the University of Auckland. Dr. Williams has previously published in Pacific Arts and Pacific Affairs and has presented regularly at international conferences including the International Council for Traditions of Music and Dance, the Society for Ethnomusicology and the Pacific History Association.

#### 8 Contributors to This Issue

Richard Wolfe has a BFA from the Elam School of Fine Arts (1972) and a PhD in art history from the University of Auckland (2017). He is associate emeritus of the Auckland War Memorial Museum (2013), where he was curator of display from 1978 to 1997. To date he has written or co-authored over 40 books on aspects of New Zealand art, natural and social history, museology and popular culture, and since 1990 has contributed over 70 articles to New Zealand's leading art quarterly, Art New Zealand.