# Reports on Member of Parliament grants and discretionary donations in the Cook Islands

# NOVEMBER 2012 – DECEMBER 2014

## BACKGROUND

The Cook Foundation (Cook Islands) is a charitable trust that was established by George Michael Cook in November 2012 ("the Foundation"). The aims of the Foundation are to:

1. Strengthen democracy in the Cook Islands by giving Members of Parliament the opportunity to support any community activities in the Cook Islands and to be accountable to the community ("the MP Program"); and
2. For the trustees of the Foundation to identify any other charitable activities in the Cook Islands the Foundation could support ("the Community Program").

   The objectives of the Foundation are:

   - Protection of life and property
   - Promotion of safety of the public
   - Relief and assistance and protection of people who are victims of natural or manmade disaster, emergency, trouble or catastrophe
   - Relief of sickness and the preservation of health
   - Relief of poverty and financial hardship
   - Preservation, conservation and protection of the environment
   - Prudent use of resources
   - Promotion of waste reduction, re-use and recycling
   - Advancement of education
   - Advancement of religious faith, especially as practiced in the Cook Islands
   - Promotion of social cohesion, goodwill and community harmony
   - Benefit of communities in need
   - Support of charities and charitable purpose

## THE TRUSTEES

The trustees of the Foundation are Antony Will, Niki Rattle, Nadine Newnham and Marie Francis.

Antony Will is the Managing Director Cook Islands Trust Corporation Ltd., a specialist trust company. Antony is admitted as a lawyer in both New Zealand and the Cook Islands and is a member of the Society of

Trust and Estate Practitioners. He has been involved in all aspects of trustee services and trust administration, and has also spoken on trust law at international conferences.

Niki Rattle, Chair of the Board of Trustees, is currently Speaker of the Cook Islands Parliament. Niki followed a nursing career for twenty years and in 1995 was promoted as Secretary General of the Cook Islands Red Cross Society. Niki's many achievements include:

- Chairperson for the largest decision making body of the International Red Cross Red Crescent Movement Conference in Geneva 2011 being only the third women to chair the conference and the first Pacific Islander or person from the Pacific Region
- Achieving the construction of the multi-purpose Cook Islands Red Cross Headquarters as Chairperson of the Project Management Committee for the building and major fundraiser

Nadine Newnham is a Cook Islander and a director of Portcullis TrustNet (Cook Islands) Limited. Nadine is a graduate of Auckland University with a degree in Economics. She spent several years in Hong Kong as General Manager of the Hong Kong office before returning to the Cook Islands to manage the Cook Islands, Samoa and Cayman Islands operations of the group. Nadine has over the past few years been appointed to numerous board positions throughout the country. Nadine is active in many Cook Islands groups and business. She is one of the founders and an executive member of Te Vaerua Community Rehabilitation, which provides much-needed services to the community (www.tevaerua.com).

Marie Francis is a Cook Islander and graduated from the University of Otago (NZ) with a Bachelor of Law. After being employed as an employment mediator for 6 years Marie returned to the Cook Islands in 2006 with her husband to raise her children in Rarotonga. Marie has been employed as legal counsel for Portcullis TrustNet (Cook Islands) Limited since 2007 and was the Chairperson of the Public Expenditure Review Committee from 2008 to 2013. Marie also enjoys working with various charitable organizations.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

An application form is provided for any persons or organizations who want to apply for funds from either program.

For the MP Program a list of the current Members of Parliament is provided to the trustees and each Member of Parliament may request for a donation of up to $2,000 to be made to a community project of his or her choice. It is made clear to the Member of Parliament that this is not an opportunity to reward his or her constituents but an opportunity to benefit any part of the community. These donations are publicized in the local media.

The trustees then review the application for the Community Program to ensure the request is in accordance with the objectives of the Foundation. Sometimes the trustees make further enquiries into the application or make suggestions as to other ways the Foundation can support the applicant. These donations are only publicized in the local media with the consent of the recipient of the funds.

## 2013

The trustees first met on 17 July 2013. An account for the Foundation was opened with BSP Bank, Avarua (formerly known as Westpac Bank). The signatories of the account are any two of the trustees signing jointly.

In November of 2013 the charitable program for the Members of Parliament commenced. Four grants were made to Members of Parliament for community projects.

| Name | Request | Date Paid |
|---|---|---|
| ANGENE, George Maggie | Apii Avarua, Tupapa Culture Art Club, Maraerenga Ekalesia | 11/29/13 |
| GEORGE, Norman | Mapumai Meeting House. | 12/4/13 |
| BROWN, Mark | Equipment for securing houses for cyclone. | 12/5/13 |
| HEATHER, William | Blackrock Safety Rail | 12/5/13 |

became more 'big time'. expense of a trial, and saved use of illicit drugs. ■ SW

At the cheque handover were: (from left) MP Albert Nicholas Jnr, Joseph Caffery, Ruatonga mayor Papa Tangi Kapi, The minister's chief executive Poko Keu, Bob Taripo and left William Taripo. 15072355

# $2,000 goes towards meeting house

A CHEQUE for $2,000 has been donated to the Ruatonga community, thanks to a special community fund.

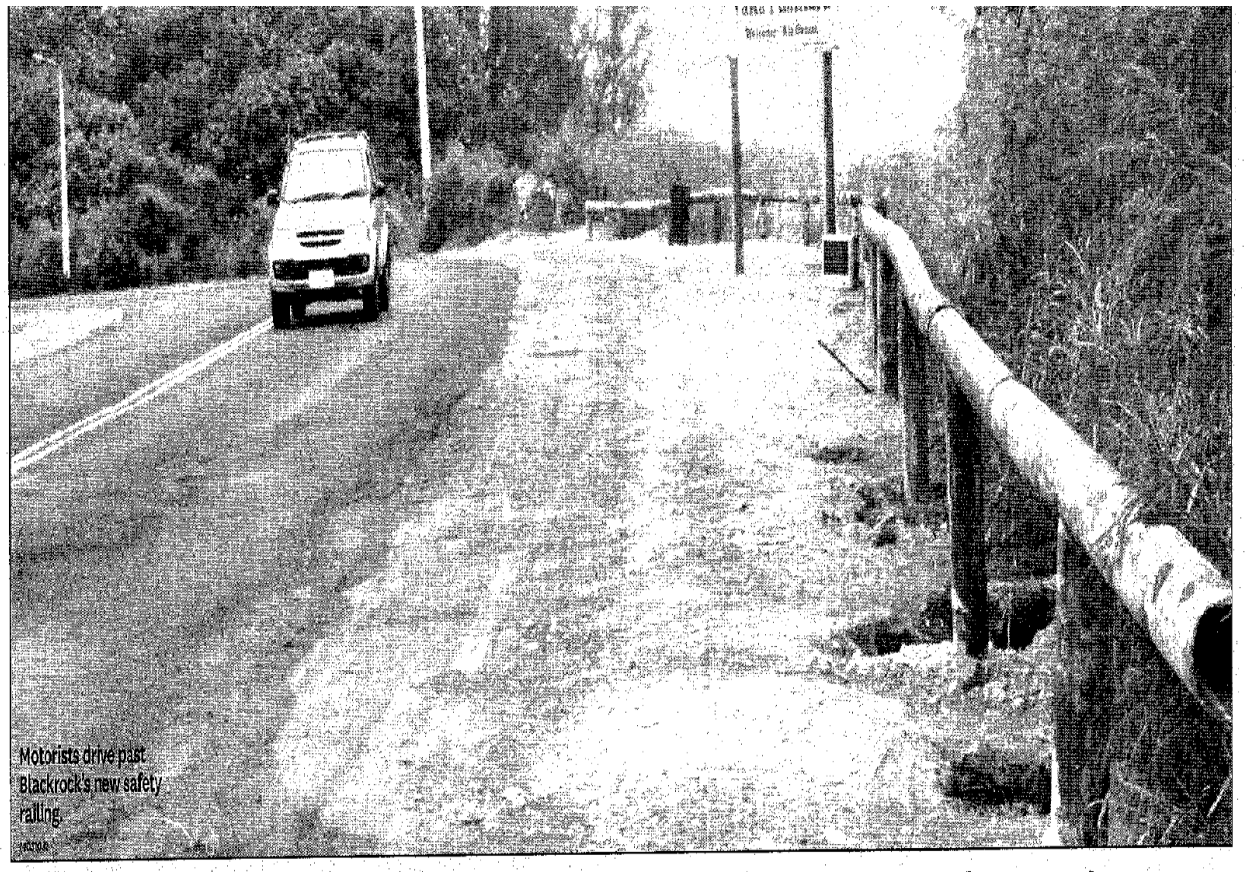
MP and cabinet minister Albert Nicholas Jnr says a special fund is given to MPs each year to help support the community.

"Community groups usually ask for assistance and as an MP, I am able to access this particular fund and allocate the money to whoever needs it," he says.

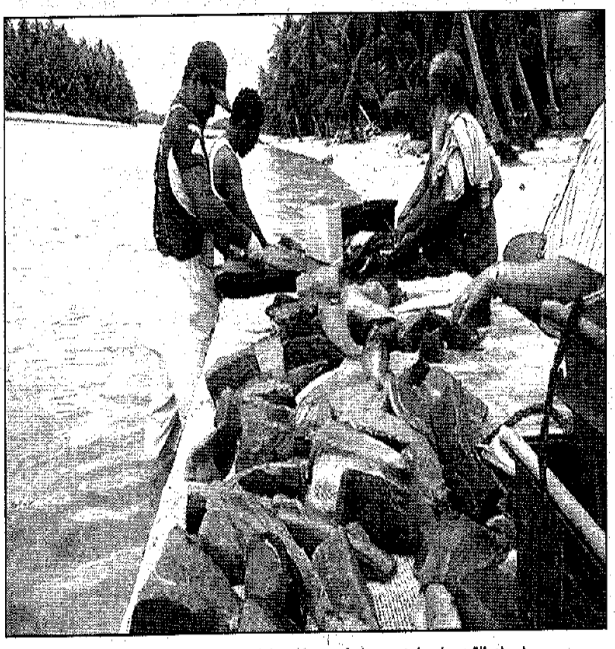
"This fund will help to support the refurbishment of the Ruatonga meeting house. This is only made possible through the Cook Foundation, which continues to work with MPs and the community to identify and support charitable causes in the Cook Islands."

Nicholas thanks the Cook Foundation for approving the fund, with thanks also going to Niki Rattle and her team.

■ Eden Rima



Motorists drive past Blackrock's new safety railing.



There was plenty of fish for hands-on training when Rakahanga School got filleting lessons.

# New safety barrier at Blackrock blackspot

VOLUNTEERS have been hard at work building a new safety rail at Blackrock designed to prevent motorists driving over the bank.

Nono Rangi, head of the Ruaau Community Working Group, said a group of men have given up their time over the past two Saturdays and the railing should be completed this weekend.

"We've got most of the work done. We just need to grind and clean the rails, then put an undercoat on and finish it."

Rangi said the road at Blackrock is a danger spot and a car went over the bank only recently.

"That's not the only one – there have been others before that."

Funding for the project came from the Cook Foundation, a charitable trust set up by United Kingdom resident George Cook.

Member of Parliament William Heather successfully applied for $2000 from the foundation in December.

Rangi said the rails were generously donated by Mac Mokoroa, Infrastructure Cook Islands secretary, who obtained them from Toa Petroleum.

Having the rails donated means there will probably be money left over, which will be put towards other community projects, she said.

"Once we've finished, we'll move onto the back road because there are two or three bridges that need rails too."

■ *Ben Chapman-Smith*

## Rakahanga fishery officer

One  grant was made for a project nominated by a local charity that enabled a young girl with disabilities to attend primary school with a special needs teacher.

***Cook Foundation grant pays special needs student's tuition***

Classroom of children at Te Uki Ou primary school where Ake attends

*Eleven-year-old Ngatamaine "Ake" Potoru has a severe learning disorder in a country whose public school system isn't equipped to accommodate students like her. Te Uki Ou, the only primary school on Rarotonga with a dedicated learning support programme, is privately owned and therefore costly.  Ake's grandparents, who raised her, couldn't afford it. They enrolled her in public school and she struggled. Her teachers had the needs of 30 students to attend, and Ake is a child that requires constant care; she needs help with learning, but also with eating and showering and going to the toilet. Two years ago, because of the Cook Foundation's support, Ake's grandparents were able to send her to Te Uki Ou. Her aunty Tata works there as a teacher's aide, specialising in caring for students with special needs. For two consecutive years, Cook Foundation grants have paid Ake's tuition and Tata's fees.  Because of her aunty's dedicated care and attention, Ake can now attend classes with other children. Tata offers full-time support, sometimes spending her own money to buy Ake things like nappies.  "It's just about being patient with her and having the time to be patient with her,"  says Tata. "About coming to her level."  She says Ake loves the other children and they love her, often offering to guide her down to the beach or show her around the playground. She also says Ake is happy at school, fascinated by animals and fruit and play-doh and colouring. According to an administrator at Te Uki Ou, Ake has shown a "marked improvement in her learning" since she arrived. Her grandparents are tremendously grateful for the Cook Foundation's assistance.*

## 2014

Due to elections that took place in September 2014 a hold was placed on any MP grants for the three months prior to the elections. No grants were able to be made until all election petitions were resolved and Members of Parliament were confirmed. Due to these restrictions only nine grants were made pursuant to the MP Program.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| BISHOP, Teina | Supplies for Tekaaroa School water tank | 1/20/14 |
| GLASSIE, Nandi | Community water tank projects | 1/20/14 |
| HEATHER, Teariki | Arorangi Sports Federation - Water filter station for Raemaru Park | 10/21/14 |
| IOANE, Mona | Donations to 5 churches in constituency | 11/7/14 |
| MATAPO, Tetangi | Tamarua Christian Youth - Odd jobs for vulnerable people | 10/21/14 |
| TUREPU, Kiriau | Water filtration system in the village for community use. | 12/22/14 |
| ISAMAELA, Toa | Community water filtration system. | 12/22/14 |
| NICHOLAS, Albert | Avatiu sports ground - seating for community use. | 12/22/14 |
| NAPA, Selina | Teimurimotia Volunteer Fire Brigade | 12/22/14 |

Nine grants were made pursuant to the Community Program.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Cook Islands Red Cross | Purchase generator to use in emergency situations | 1/17/14 |
| Mauke Disability Clinic | Funds for building housing for Christine Framheim | 2/7/14 |
| Creative Center | Employment support for Margaret Kea | 2/16/14 |
| Cook Islands Family Welfare | Purchase sanitary pads for disadvantaged school girls first menstruating | 3/13/14 |
| Te Vaerua Caregiver Program | Refurbishment of bathroom for Te Maeva Karati | 3/13/14 |
| CI National Disability Council | Tablet to provide communication tool for Mataiti Mataiti | 5/13/14 |
| Atiu Disability Learning | Funding for equipment to create activity for members, and income for the Center | 5/19/14 |
| Te Iti Vaine - Atiu Rarotonga | Funding to purchase equipment to enable fundraising for community projects | 10/21/14 |
| Teenui Mapumai Youth Group | Funding to purchase fence posts to protect community planting areas. | 12/22/14 |

A grant was made at the request of Te Ata O Te Ra, the Mauke Disability Centre.

The island of Mauke has approximately 300 residents. There are virtually no social services, with the extended family traditionally taking care of the disabled and elderly. With a diminishing population that safety net has become a lot less effective and with a number of gaps.

The Mauke Disability Center has active volunteers whose goal is to ensure the elderly and disabled residents of the Island of Mauke will have adequate home care and nursing services. That they can enjoy participation in the life of the Island Community and be supported in their efforts to live life as fully as possible.

***PROFILE:*** *Catherine (not her real name) is a gentle nonverbal woman her late twenties with autism. She is alert and communicates with simple gestures such as handing a glass to someone when she is thirsty. She lives in Mauke in a house with no water, toilet, doors or windows. This house is not hers and does not belong to the family but is adjoining her family's property where her mother and grandparents live and where she receives some support. The grandmother is legally blind and barely able to walk with crutches.*

***RISK FACTORS:***

*- She has pulled out the wiring of the location where she currently sleeps and has caused fires on at least two occasions (The new construction would have no electrical connections, just windows for light).*

*- She is incontinent and damages furnishings inside family residence (New place designed for easy washing of floor and bed. Activities and eating will take place outside on her porch where she has a recently built bench designed especially for her needs).*

*- Periodically Catherine has a mania where she puts sheets, towels, blankets, clothing in water.*

*- There are times when Catherine is able to participate more in the normal family life but her regular Mania cycles create problems for all concerned and it is especially during those periods (which can last several weeks at a time) she needs her own place which is comfortable, safe and suitable to her needs.*

*- Hygiene is an important aspect for Catherine and does not currently having these facilities to assist her in showering and toileting*

***PLAN OF ACTION:***

*- Obtain funding to provide an adequate living environment (Bed, toilet, shower, sink, porch)*

*- Utilize donated manpower : for the building of a cistern and the building of the house.*

*- Employ trained staff to work with family and MDC staff (funding obtained).*