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## **Media Release**

### **New Zealand Delegation Receives Māori King's Support at FestPAC in Hawai'i**

The New Zealand delegation heading to the Festival of Pacific Arts in Hawaii, led by the Arts Council of New Zealand's Komiti Māori Kura Moeahu, Bonita Bigham, and Puamiria Parata-Goodall, is also set to champion the same message of 'Kotahitanga and Pacific unity' similar to Kīngi Tūheitia Pōtatau Te Wherowhero VII.

"The New Zealand delegation's vision is about kotahitanga, uniting our Pacific people and our traditional treasures to Hawai'i. Having the Māori King there only strengthens our collective message to the Pacific and indigenous people," says Kura Moeahu.

Kiingi Tuheitia has been actively meeting with Ariki from across the Pacific since the Hui-ā-motu at Tūrangawaewae earlier this year, delving into matters close to the Pacific's hearts. He will further those discussions at the Inaugural Traditional Pacific Leaders in Hawai'i during FestPAC.

Rahui Papa, spokesperson for Te Kīngitanga, says Kiingi Tuheitia is excited to return to the festival for the first time since the Covid pandemic.

"In many ways, this is like a family reunion where we celebrate our common whakapapa to the Pacific through traditional art, song, dance and storytelling. It is a celebration of Kotahitanga and the ties that bind us."

The New Zealand delegation will consist of 85 artists, and Te Whānau-ā-Apanui will occupy half of the positions. Their approach centres on strengthening traditional relationships and cultural exchanges and engaging in inter-Pacific trade agreements.

"We are honoured to have our Patron, Kiingi Tuheitia, attend FestPAC to exemplify Te Matatini's commitment to fostering a sense of unity, connection, and celebration of indigenous art and culture. His presence highlights the importance of cultural exchange and collaboration on a global stage," says Carl Ross, Chief Executive of Te Matatini.

FestPAC isn't just about showcasing art. Members of the New Zealand delegation will also discuss topical issues nationally and internationally, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and endangered art forms. One of the youth ambassadors plans to discuss challenges affecting rangatahi male mental health in a move to find real solutions.

Over 2,500 delegates from 28 Pacific nations will gather in O'ahu for ten days of cultural exchange, celebration, and strategic discussions at various venues across the island.



More details on the festival agenda can be found [here](#).

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