



**THE FIRST PACIFIC YOUTH LEADERSHIP AND TRANSFORMATION
PARLIAMENTARY SIMULATION**

CHRISTCHURCH, NEW ZEALAND

12 – 16 APRIL 2010

PYLAT COMMUNIQUÉ

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Preamble

The first Pacific Youth Leadership and Transformation (PYLAT) parliamentary simulation was held in Christchurch from 12 to 16 April 2010 and was attended by Pacific youth from numerous schools, tertiary institutions and community groups from throughout Christchurch. The participants acted as members of parliament, including chairperson, Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition, ministers and shadow ministers private secretaries, lobbyists and members of the communiqué drafting committee.

The simulation of Parliament consisted of two parts. The first involved submissions from lobbyists and other speakers from the community to the members of parliament followed by brief discussions. The second part was a parliamentary retreat members of parliament discussed and debated the proposals submitted to them through the select committee. The public submissions were held at the Riccarton Racecourse, Christchurch. The Parliamentary retreat was held at Living Springs, on the outskirts of Christchurch.

Participants would like to acknowledge the significant positive effects and outcomes of the PYLAT programme. The PYLAT programme has created an innovative and effective tool which Pacific Youth can use to voice their opinions. It is the opinion of the PYLAT parliamentarians that this programme be implemented in other cities around New Zealand as well as being repeated in Christchurch in the future.

Participants would also like to express their sincere gratitude and appreciation to the PYLAT organising team. The amount of time and effort put into the programme as well as the amount of support given to the participants has been phenomenal. Our gratitude cannot be expressed enough.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Fundamental to the PYLAT programme 2010 was the idea of sustainable development with particular focus on Pacific Island issues within Aotearoa/New Zealand. All issues were approached with the idea of sustainable development as central to the outcome.

The PYLAT parliamentarians agreed that our understanding of sustainable development encompassed social, economic and environmental aspects. It includes growth that is fair for all, in a way that is non-detrimental to each of the sectors identified.

Treaty of Waitangi

1. Recognising that the growth of Pacific peoples in Aotearoa/New Zealand must occur alongside Maori, PYLAT parliamentarians recommend that the Treaty of Waitangi become formal law.

Health

2. The PYLAT parliamentarians recognise that there are still significant gaps in average outcomes for Pacific peoples compared to the total population in domains such as health. Regarding sustainable development, the leaders urge the government to prioritize Pacific health. Leaders agree that good health is a prerequisite to improved productivity in the workforce and improved academic achievement. Submissions were received on obesity and alcohol and drugs.

Obesity

3. The parliamentarians also recognise that obesity and obesity-related health problems are serious issues for Aotearoa/New Zealand's Pacific Island community, because Pacific Islanders are at a higher risk than the rest of the population. According to a Pacific Health Review by Dr. Colin Tukuitonga, obesity has reached epidemic proportions among Pacific Islanders. Pacific peoples have the highest obesity rates in the country, which currently stand at double the rate of the total population. Obesity is the leading cause of Type 2 diabetes and it is also the most preventable.

4. The PYLAT parliamentarians heard a submission which argued that schools ought to support families in observing healthy eating habits. The parliamentarians agree with this reasoning and believe further that healthy eating starts in the home.

5. The PYLAT parliamentarians recognise the usefulness of government initiatives such as the Healthy Eating Healthy Action (HEHA) and advocate for the continuation of such programmes that provide for:

- Community-based classes focused on healthy cooking and eating habits.
- Community activities that promote physical health

6. The leaders note that although the government is not able to control the private sector, this does not mean it cannot influence what happens in the public sector. For this reason, leaders agree that the 'healthy foods' in schools policy should be brought back.

Alcohol and Drugs

7. PYLAT parliamentarians heard a submission on young people and drugs. The leaders recognise that alcohol and drugs are major obstacles in the wellbeing of Pacific people in Aotearoa/New Zealand. They collectively raise their concern that 44% of all reported violent domestic incidents involve alcohol and/or drugs.

8. Leaders agree that while current awareness programmes reach young audiences, they are ineffective in changing attitudes and behaviour.

9. They recommend that drug and alcohol education is included as a mandatory topic within the health curriculum in secondary schools. A review of drug and alcohol education programmes such as 10. Drug Alcohol Resisting Education (D. A. R. E.) and Students Against Drunk Driving (S. A. D. D.) should be conducted. As part of the review, PYLAT parliamentarians propose that special emphasis be placed on interactive learning techniques such as role-playing and testimony from individuals who have had past experience with substance abuse. PYLAT parliamentarians argue that the long term social and economic benefits of these preventative initiatives far outweigh their short term cost.

Family Violence

11. Family violence is an issue that affects all New Zealanders. The PYLAT parliamentarians noted the grim statistics that in Christchurch there are 450 police reports a month pertaining to family violence. It was also noted that there are challenges unique to Pacific Islanders in addressing family violence such as cultural complexities, unreported violence and minimal youth orientated services. The PYLAT parliamentarians agreed that the ‘Family Violence Its not OK!’ campaign was effective and should continue. It was also agreed that family violence is a critical issue and that the government should put more funding into reducing family violence in Pacific Island communities with services that cater to both victims and perpetrators. The PYLAT parliamentarians affirm that this approach would create and foster healthy relationships, healthy families, and lead to a healthy and sustainable community.

12. Recommendations are:

- Promotion of understanding within Pacific Island communities that will change attitudes and behaviour pertaining to family violence through popular media tools. For example the production of a Pasifika DVD that follows the model of

the Maori TV program “Aunty Moves In” which encourages both parents and children to make better decisions that will contribute to creating a nurturing and safe family environment.

- Informing communities through the use of workshops which will provide effective tools on building healthy relationships including parenting skills. It was recommended that these workshops be held in venues frequented by Pacific Island families such as the church while ensuring that rural communities are also reached.
- Given the taboo nature of family violence in the Pacific Island communities, there is urgency to develop a framework to facilitate the provision of services that are culturally sensitive and user-friendly to Pacific Islanders who are affected by family violence.
- The lack of services provided to offenders of family violence is one issue that is often overlooked. Services for the offenders, aimed at changing the behaviour and attitudes are needed.

Youth Crime

13. Statistics reveal that Pacific Island youth are over represented in youth offences in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The 2009 Social Report states Pacific youth are more likely to come from low socio- economic areas. The lack of youth development programs in these areas has contributed to Pacific Island youth turning to crimes and involvement with gangs.

14. PYLAT parliamentarians unanimously agreed that youth crime is a priority for the government to address and that prevention measures must be put in place. As such, both parties agreed that government funding should be re-directed towards measures which prevent youth from becoming involved in youth crimes. This approach would be economically and socially sustainable. Government will benefit from long term social investment in an area where money is spent on initiatives that mainly focuses on youth who have already committed crimes.

15. It was agreed that prevention measures should be developed together with the communities including local government and youth councils to ensure a sustainable and effective approach towards youth crime.

16. Recommendations for preventative initiatives include:

- A re-establishment of the youth council body in local government with a commitment to include Pacific youth representation. This body will empower Pacific youth to influence decision making on local community issues including youth development programs.
- The use of social networking sites to encourage youth in the general population to participate in the development of youth development programs. This will promote awareness about the programs available within their communities and act as a medium of communication between local government and youth.
- The establishments and operation of youth centres within communities can facilitate Pacific Island mentoring programs that will help create a sense of belonging to their community and assist in empowering them to reach their full potential.
- Encourage creative arts programs that allow youth to express themselves in a constructive way. These programmes will celebrate cultural diversity and act as an instrument for positive change thus contributing to a stronger sense of community identity and awareness of other ethnicities.

Youth action in local government

17. The PYLAT parliamentarian leaders recommend that youth should have more say in decisions made in Local Government. The latest 2010 Local Body Elections statistics show that non- voters are more likely to be people on lower incomes, younger people and members of Maori or Pacific ethnic groups. There is youth under-representation, and Pacific youth under-representation in particular that needs to be addressed. The Local Government is where they would be heard and most importantly where they can get positive outcomes.

18. The parliamentarians agree that:

- a) Youth participation needs to be addressed because of the many challenges young people face such as not knowing how and why to vote, not having the resources, not being seen as a political force and most importantly, not being a priority for spending.
- b) Local councils need more support from the Government. This need not necessarily mean extra funding. However, it requires addressing youth concerns and needs in the community.

c) Youth need to be properly informed about how important it is to vote and participate so that there is an increased chance of having local candidates being elected to represent the ideas and concerns of young people.

19. The parliamentarians recommend that the voting age be lowered to 16 years of age. This would enable more youth participation and encourage them to organise as a political force, resulting in greater voter turnout. Aotearoa/New Zealand led the way with women voting and so it can with young people.

New Media

20. Taking into account the power of social networking sites to reach different demographics, PYLAT leaders recommend that the government utilise these new media to encourage the participation of young Pacific people in the public life of Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Truancy

21. PYLAT parliamentarians agree that truancy issues must be addressed for optimal sustainable development. However PYLAT parliamentarians did not agree with the proposal put forward to them that the answer was to employ more truancy officers to enforce the law. Parliamentarians felt that the current number of truancy officers was satisfactory and that employing extra officers would be an inefficient allocation of resources.

22. Instead the focus should be on bridging the gap between Pacific Island parents and the education system. This would raise the awareness of parents, better informing them on ways to effectively manage their child's truancy.

23. The Parliamentarians recognise the need to:

- a. strengthen relations and build common understanding between students, parents and school officials
- b. ensure the smooth transition between education systems in the Pacific Islands and Aotearoa/New Zealand.

24. PYLAT Parliamentarians recommend the appointment of community Pacific Liaisons persons for each school zone. The number of liaisons officers should depend on the Pacific Island student demographic within that zone.

Integrating Pacific values and knowledge into the education system

25. The PYLAT parliamentarians were presented with the argument that Pacific Island youth are less likely to achieve formal qualifications, which hinders sustainable development. The theory presented was that Pacific Islanders are unable to relate to a western style system of education which impedes on their learning ability and interest in attending school. The proposal was that the Aotearoa/New Zealand education system integrates Pacific values and knowledge, assisting in the alleviation of some of the causes of Pacific students failing in schools.

26. The PYLAT parliamentarians agree that Pacific values should be taught in the education system. Teachers should be made aware of the issues during cultural awareness training. In this respect, it would be similar to Maori values that are integrated into the education system, such as 'no sitting on tables'. An example of a Pacific value to be integrated could include 'greater respect for elders'. PYLAT parliamentarians agreed that this integration would make the education system more familiar to Pacific Islanders which would increase Pacific educational achievement.

27. As part of integrating Pacific values, the PYLAT parliamentarians agree that implementing the recommendations made in regards to the proposed community Pacific liaison roles under the truancy issue would be beneficial.

Religion in the education system

28. The PYLAT parliamentarians agree that although religion is highly valued within the Pacific culture and helps Pacific people form a sense of identity, it is not necessary to change the current place of religion in schools. The leaders feel it is a responsibility held by family and communities to support and nurture spiritual growth of Pacific individuals. Therefore there is no need to alter the current stance of religion in schools.

Structural Poverty

29. The PYLAT parliamentarians gave much thought to a proposal presented by a community action group about sustainable alternatives in combating structural poverty.

30. The submission put forth that our current way of life is not sustainable and under the current economic-political system, poverty is an inherent outcome. A shift in

thinking by policy makers needs to occur that addresses the structure of the system rather than only addressing those in poverty.

31. The parliamentarians are in support of the current community transition initiatives such as community gardens, time bank schemes, and would like to encourage communities to foster these. The PYLAT parliamentarians agreed that an approach needed to be taken to combat structural poverty and that the Treaty of Waitangi be used as a framework for sustainable development in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Unionism

32. PYLAT parliamentarians heard a submission that proposed compulsory membership of unions and a raise in the minimum wage.

33. Leaders agree that unions should not be made compulsory. This is taking into consideration freedom of choice and the union costs involved. Many Pacific people cannot afford the weekly costs of union membership. For people struggling in their financial circumstance, this money could be put to better use. Furthermore, this acts as an incentive to unions to be more innovative in their policies and will ultimately strengthen unionism.

35. On the issue of minimum wage, PYLAT leaders agreed to raise the minimum wage. Recognising the recent rise of the minimum wage on April 1st 2010, the leaders agree that a further wage increase should occur within a reasonable period. A further increase may occur after another two year period has elapsed. This should be done once a review has been carried out to assess the effects of the first wage increase.

36. The proposal of raising the minimum wage using the European model of 66% of the average wage producing an Aotearoa/New Zealand minimum wage of \$16.87 is perceived by the leaders to be too burdensome on the economy.

37. Leaders also agreed that research should be carried out to help change the current Pacific values on job up-skilling and furthering career progression.

38. A recommendation is for the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs to conduct motivational seminars bringing in highly successful Pacific people to share their experiences with Pacific youth. During Christchurch's SPACPAC week, a careers expo is held for Pacific students. It would be useful if higher end professionals such as doctors, lawyers and accountants would encourage students to gain more insight into these professions at an early age. This will help to speed up the process of getting Pacific people off the minimum wage and into higher-income brackets.

39. The leaders suggest looking into options to offset the increase in business costs incurred due to the rise in minimum wage. An example of an option that is specific to the Canterbury Region is the Canterbury Development Cooperation's proposal on the repositioning Canterbury in the national economy.

Repositioning Canterbury in the New Zealand Economy

40. The PYLAT parliamentarians agreed that Christchurch has the potential to grow into a super city like Auckland. The existing Christchurch infrastructure such as its roads, efficient electrical grid, advanced ICT capability and robust export sector, form a strong platform from which this initiative is achievable.

41. However, PYLAT parliamentarians recommend that research be conducted to demonstrate that this bi-nodal economic approach will be sustainable.

42. In particular, the PYLAT parliamentarians encourage the Canterbury Development Cooperation (CDC) to demonstrate clearly how this initiative will directly benefit and empower marginalised communities. Such groups include the poor, Maori, Pacific Islanders, refugee and migrant groups. The process should provide for their participation in decisions which affect them.

43. The parliamentarians would also like to urge the CDC to consider the impact of the agglomeration on such environmental resources as fresh water, air, land and sea. We also advise CDC to consider the risks of accelerated urbanisation upon rural communities and smaller towns and cities in the South Island.

44. PYLAT parliamentarians support economic growth, but this growth must be equitable.

Local Government Act 2002

45. PYLAT parliamentarians considered the submission by the Council of Social Services in Christchurch which addressed the proposed reform of the Local Government Act 2002 (LGA). The LGA Section 3(d) states that it "provides for local authorities to play a broad role in promoting the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of their communities, taking a sustainable development approach".

46. It was agreed that in reviewing this Act, all provisions for the consultation and participation of the community on decisions that will affect them must be retained. This will enable the community to work alongside their local authority to achieve sustainable wellbeing.

47. The LGA allows for local authorities to act more holistically in their governance, adopting methods that require a consultative approach with the community. This Act provides a true democratic platform for the local government and its communities.

48. It is the PYLAT parliamentarians' recommendation that a community awareness campaign is established by the Ministry of Local Government, which focuses on the opportunities for democratic participation in Regional Council decision-making. This is in light of the recent replacement of elected councilors with government-appointed commissioners in Environment Canterbury. PYLAT parliamentarians recognise that the consultation process can be costly and lengthy but believe that it is necessary in achieving sustainable development. The community awareness campaign will help to make this process more efficient and effective.

Mining

49. The PYLAT parliamentarians agree that mining in Aotearoa/New Zealand provides great economic opportunities and benefits to New Zealanders. The PYLAT parliamentarians strongly emphasize that Aotearoa/New Zealand owned mining companies take precedence over foreign owned and that at least 50% of minerals extracted remain within the country to enhance Aotearoa/New Zealand's green economy potential.

50. The PYLAT parliamentarians agree that a more comprehensive feasibility study is required prior to commencing any mining in conservation and non-conservation areas. Amendments to Schedule 4 should not proceed until such research is completed. The feasibility study should encompass a comprehensive environmental and economic analysis determining whether mining in these areas is sustainable, and whether the land and environment may be restored to its present condition.

51. The PYLAT parliamentarians agree that a thorough consultation process should be conducted on all affected local iwi, residents and businesses.

52. The PYLAT parliamentarians agree that an appropriate proportion of all revenues from any mining activity should be invested into a conservation and environment restoration programme.

53. The PYLAT parliamentarians recommend that government funding to this industry is in the form of:

- Subsidising exploration for high value mineral resources.
- Subsidies for furthering consultative research.

- Funding domestic research and development and future production of raw minerals.
- Funding development of emerging technologies

Fisheries

54. There is an over-representation of Pacific peoples prosecuted for over-fishing. PYLAT parliamentarians recommend that the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs and the Ministry of Fisheries collaborate to increase awareness of fishing regulations, quotas and fish size.

Pacific Businesses

55. The PYLAT parliamentary leaders recognise that Pacific involvement in business is vital for a sustainable economy. Increased Pacific involvement in business results in a more diverse business environment where competition is increased due to the increase in numbers, as well as a more varied source of ideas for business innovation.

56. To encourage Pacific involvement, PYLAT parliamentarians see that role models are an important factor in increasing involvement. This should involve seminars and a more direct mentoring role by those already in business, which can be facilitated by the Ministry of Pacific Islands Affairs or other government agencies.

57. PYLAT parliamentarians recognise the importance of networking in the business sector. Further educational workshops are recommended.

58. To further encourage business involvement, Pacific youth need more exposure to the operations of the real world business environment. It is the view of PYLAT parliamentarians that internships or spending a day with commercial entities will help to stimulate the interest of Pacific youth. The Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs can be used to help facilitate this.

59. PYLAT parliamentarians recommend that the provision of ongoing assistance is important for the sustainability of new Pacific businesses entering the market. Advisory services for businesses can assist in this.

60. PYLAT parliamentarians also recognise that awareness of alternative options in the fields of professions and trades is needed, especially in the wake of the current economic climate.

61. The recurring theme is that government agencies are needed to form partnerships with private enterprises so the agencies can act as a point of contact.

Art

62. Art is an important and positive outlet of Pacific cultural expression. PYLAT leaders listened with concern about the restructuring of Creative New Zealand which adversely affected Pacific Island representation in decision making in the arts. This restructure threatens the viability of careers for Pacific artists who reside in the South Island.

63. Acknowledging the contribution that Pacific artists have made to Aotearoa/New Zealand art and culture, PYLAT parliamentarians recommend that increased funding and representation be allocated for Pacific arts within Creative New Zealand.

64. Recognising the importance of the Pacific contribution to Aotearoa/New Zealand art, PYLAT parliamentarians agreed that increased funding should be directed at Pacific scholarships, exhibitions and artist-in-residence programmes for emerging artists.

Tourism

65. PYLAT parliamentarians recognise that sustainable tourism has a large role to play in the development of Pacific Island cultures in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

66. The PYLAT parliamentarians recommend that Aotearoa/New Zealand Pacific Island cultures be incorporated into the country's tourism marketing campaign. This is primarily due to the fact that Aotearoa/New Zealand is home to the largest population of Pacific Islanders who bring both unique cultures and art to Aotearoa/New Zealand and to the world. By incorporating Pacific cultures into the tourism marketing campaign this will provide many business opportunities to Pacific Islanders residing here in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Immigration

67. Pacific peoples are industry leaders in caregiving. PYLAT parliamentarians agreed that healthcare (which includes caregiving), be added to the immigration list of skilled occupations.

68. PYLAT parliamentarians recommended that the Pacific Islands be included in the list of Free Visa countries which includes nations such as Brazil, South Africa, and Argentina. This would enable people in the Pacific to travel to Aotearoa/New Zealand for up to 3 months on a free visa.

69. To deter overstaying, PYLAT parliamentarians recommend that harsher penalties are enforced on those that overstay and those that assist, as a deterrent to breaking the conditions of entry.

70. PYLAT parliamentarians recommend that the \$45,000 minimum cap for work to residence policies be amended to an adjustable average according to the profession. For example, if an Aotearoa/New Zealand caregiver is paid an average of \$35,000 per annum, then a Pacific Island caregiver who secures work at that salary should be eligible for a work permit.

Fiji

71. The PYLAT parliamentarians received a submission about Fiji's current political situation. After the 2006 coup, the New Zealand Government imposed travel bans for individuals involved with Bainimarama's regime from entering Aotearoa/New Zealand. The PYLAT parliamentarians agree to keep the current travel ban because they do not condone the undemocratic actions of these individuals.

72. PYLAT parliamentarians are in favour of maintaining a healthy relationship with Fiji because they are our Pacific neighbours. However, they agree that the relationship cannot progress further until democracy is returned to Fiji.

73. PYLAT parliamentarians support continued work of NZAID. It is recommended by PYLAT parliamentarians that the government looks into effective ways of promoting Fiji's return to democracy, keeping in mind the complexities within Fijian politics.

Signed

Josiah Tualamali'i _____
(Prime Minister)

Riki Welsh _____
(Leader of the Opposition)

Fine Koloamatangi _____
(Chairperson, PYLAT Parliamentary Select Committee)

Christchurch, Friday 16 April 2010.