

MEDIA RELEASE

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Inspirational pioneer a huge loss for Pasifika communities

Pacific Island Affairs Director of Communications and Relationships Magila Annandale today paid tribute to Agnes (Eti) Mary Laufiso, 69, a teacher and pioneer who passed away in Dunedin on the weekend.

Mrs Laufiso became known nationally through her involvement with PACIFICA, a national Pacific women's organisation set up in 1977. PACIFICA became the platform for self determination of many of New Zealand's first wave of migrant Pacific women.

"The Pasifika community has lost a champion of grassroots communities," Ms Annandale said.

"Eti was passionate about the importance of education for Pasifika peoples, and she demonstrated that commitment when she worked at the Ministry of Education."

Mrs Laufiso's vision was to push for greater educational outcomes for Pasifika communities, through targeted Pacific educational strategies.

She was also an early advocate for the need of early childhood Pasifika centres (ECE) and education for Pacific youth.

Through her involvement with PACIFICA she was part of Anau Ako Pasifika, an innovative home based early childhood programme designed for Pacific parents.

She was instrumental in establishing a number of organisations including the Pacific Aids Trust and was involved in many initiatives to further the development of Pacific women and families.

"She will be missed immensely by the Pasifika communities and her husband Filipino and children Pip, Michael, Maria, Tilly and Mafutaga," said Ms Annandale.
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