



MINISTRY OF PACIFIC ISLAND AFFAIRS

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROSPERITY FOR PACIFIC PEOPLES

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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## **Pacific Starmap set to launch**

Emerging Pacific artists are taking part in a new initiative led by the Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs: the Pacific Starmap web portal is about to be launched this Friday, 29 August 2008 from 6 – 9pm at the Aotea Centre, 50 Mayoral Drive in Auckland City.

The Pacific Starmap website – [www.pacificstarmap.com](http://www.pacificstarmap.com) is the brainchild of acclaimed Samoan actor, Nathaniel Lees, who has been working towards a way by which established Pacific artists can support aspiring individuals and groups in the creative sector in New Zealand.

“This vision has led the Ministry to develop what is sure to become an online hub for the Pasifika arts community. It will inspire, celebrate and grow emerging and successful artists,” says Pacific Island Affairs Chief Executive Dr Colin Tukuitonga.

“The website will act as a point of contact for Pacific artists, with links to information about events, career and business opportunities, personal and professional development,” added Dr Tukuitonga.

The overall goal is to increase the number of successful Pacific artists by providing an effective channel for communicating information that will enhance their artistic potential.

Mr Lees explains his inspiration behind the idea. “I have felt for a long time that a one-stop-shop is needed that showcases the best of Pacific talent that will inspire other emerging artists.’

Dr Colin Tukuitonga says he is really pleased with the outcome.

“I have been looking forward to seeing this project launched, and glad the Ministry is taking the lead by developing an online resource for aspiring Pacific artists. It has taken many people and a lot of time and effort to pull this together. I believe that this website will be popular with new and experienced Pacific artists in New Zealand – and those interested in following the development of Pacific artists from anywhere in the world.”

Artists featured initially include actor Nathaniel Lees, writers Albert Wendt and Sia Figiel, contemporary musician Brooke Fraser, choreographer Neil Ieremia, film director Sima Urale, and sculptor Filipe Tohi. And there are plans to feature a growing list of artists in the future.

“We are looking forward to a good launch and seeing further developments as the site is used as a resource by our Pacific communities,” said Dr Tukuitonga.

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