

## II. Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventory

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### 1. National inventory

There is no national inventory of intangible cultural heritage for the Cook Islands. There is however an inventory of oral traditions collected and a list of national performing arts festivals and competitions since 2003 on DVD and Video cassette.

#### 1) Inventory information

The Ministry of Cultural Development holds a collection of oral histories recorded in the 1970's from holders of traditional knowledge. These orators were well known in their communities for their knowledge of historical events and were believed to have been trusted sources of information.

The collection was recorded by the members of the Tumu Korero Division who were assigned to collect these histories to publish into resource materials for the school curricula.

In their most basic form the collection comprises of recordings on audio cassette. These are then transcribed to produce manuscripts for editing and corroboration. The collection currently holds the audio recordings and transcripts of the recordings which are the items on the inventory list.

#### 1.1) Title(s)

- a) Cook Islands oral history collection – National Archives
- b) Oral Traditions project – Anthropology Division

#### 1.2) Number of inventories

#### 1.3) Number of designated items

- a) 100 audio cassettes, 10 manuscripts
- b) 80 audio cassettes, 120 digital video camera recordings, 3 manuscripts,

#### 1.4) Frequency of designation

- a) Inventory is closed, there is no more activity surrounding this inventory.  
Just for viewing purposes only.

b) Items are added to this oral traditions project collection periodically each year.

#### 1.5) Date of most recent update

Most recently the Anthropology Division of the Ministry of Cultural Development has undertaken the task of continuing the recording of oral traditions. Since 2000, the Division has recorded oral traditions from the remaining elders that still possess customary knowledge. These recordings have not been added to the older collection in the National Archives, as they still require indexing and is an on-going activity for the Anthropology Division.

#### 1.6) Establishment of an expert advisory panel

There is no expert advisory panel established as the National Archives are mandated by the Public Records Act for the custody of all Government Records. Their roles and responsibility regarding the handling of these records are defined in the Act, which provides the necessary guidelines to manage these records.

#### 1.7) Responsible governmental organisation

The National Archives is the responsible organisation for the oral traditions collection. It is a Division of the Ministry of Cultural Development. The safekeeping and storage of all Government documents are the foremost role of the National Archives. They continue to provide that service to Government as well as records management advice and training.

Mr George Paniani is the Chief Archivist and the Public Records Act empowers the Archivist to retain or destroy records accord to strict guidelines. Contact phone 24-493 archives@oyster.net.ck

### 2) Designated heritage - Oral traditions.

The subject matter of the recorded ranged from genealogies, the arrival of the founding ancestors of each community, songs, chants, mythology and cosmology.

#### 2.1) Categories

The Archive inventory is categorized into community groups such as islands or districts as is the case on the island of Rarotonga. Eight islands have their oral traditions collected as well as the three Vaka or districts on the island of Rarotonga. These eight islands and the three vaka form the categories of the inventory.

## 2.2) Criteria

The Oral Traditions collection has restricted access because of the fragility of the documents and recordings. Photocopies of the documents are not permitted they are for viewing purposes only.

## 2.3) Designated heritage items:

The collection has not been further categorized into domains or other detailed information. The inventory is a basic list of the oral traditions collected with a reference number and the title of the each narrative.

## 2.4) Heritage associated items

There are no associated heritage items for oral traditions however names of sites where historic events took place are mentioned in the accounts and are still considered important today.

## 2.5) Information regarding holders/bearers

Information holders are named on the recordings and manuscripts themselves. Unfortunately no further information of these people is recorded. Being well known members of their respective communities the background data of these information holders are not required. Nonetheless, facts concerning information holders are necessary considering the time lapse since the recordings were made. The new generation that are current users of the information would most likely not be familiar with the background of these orators.

Therefore it would be useful to compile facts on information holders that were recorded to supplement the inventory.

## 2.6) Provisional designated items

There are no provisional designated items in the collection

- i. If the inventory-making is underway, please indicate the steps already taken or plans for the future.

Inventory making is planned in the form of cultural mapping. This activity will identify the holders of ICH and other practitioners in the cultural sector. In the 2011-12 Business Plan of the Ministry of Cultural Development cultural mapping is the first step towards formulating a national strategy to encourage creative industries in the local communities. It is intended that cultural sector will undergo training and development within the next five years to empower the practitioners of ICH to engage in economically viable activities. This will assist in preserving the heritage through practice and performance. At the same

time adding economic value to the heritage in terms of providing a form of income for the experts. One example is the dance teams in the country that perform at various tourist accommodations. On the one hand the heritage is being passed on to the younger generation through the recruitment of new dancers and musicians. This transfer of knowledge and skills serves to preserve the heritage. Additionally these performers are also awarded a portion of the payment given to the groups by the commercial entity.

The inventory will also provide baseline data with regards to the trend relating to ICH experts. If the numbers are stable or increasing, then this indicates a positive future for that form of ICH. If the data reveal a decrease in the number of ICH experts, then the heritage is in danger of being lost. And more so if there are no practitioners in that particular field of ICH. The knowledge and skill may still exist, if not used or practiced then it is more than likely to disappear.

### 3) Reference materials

- explanation note, photos.

► Non-governmental inventory

There is no non-governmental inventory of intangible cultural heritage in the Cook Islands.

While Non-government groups actively engage and practice ICH, they do not hold inventories of ICH in their respective field. Non-Governmental Organisations operate in tiny segregated groups

CKI Tivaivai Association – Do not have a list of practitioners of the art of Tivaivai making.

CKI Library and Museum Society – List of museum artefacts only (NIL)

CKI National Vision Arts Society –

National Council of Women – nil list of tivaivai practitioners

CKI Christian Church – inventory of Cook Islands Imene Tuki composed and sung by each of their 64 congregations (NIL)