

Media release
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**Pasifika learners, families and communities to benefit from
cultural competency in schools initiative**

University of Auckland educator professional development service, Tui Tuia, has been jointly¹ awarded the contract by the Ministry of Education to deliver the Tapasā Professional Learning Development initiative in schools throughout New Zealand.

Tapasā, a cultural competencies framework for teachers of Pacific learners, is a tool that can be used to build the capability of teachers of Pacific learners across the education sectors. It has been developed in collaboration with key Pacific community stakeholders who have participated in a series of talanoa workshops with education practitioners, parents, families and communities and the Ministry of Education.

Tui Tuia director, Yvonne Lim says, “The government’s Action Plan for Pacific Education (APPE) is a strategy to ensure Pasifika learners, families and communities enjoy educational success as Pasifika. Building Pasifika cultural competencies across the education workforce is one of the APPE’s key targets. Skilled and confident teachers and leaders are important for Pasifika educational success.

“We know that the education system can do more to ensure equitable outcomes for all learners and their families. Tapasā supports teachers’ journeys towards better understanding the identities, languages and cultures of Pacific peoples.”

Tapasā is designed to support leaders, teachers, kaiako and centre/school boards to engage with Pacific learners, their families and communities in culturally sustaining ways.

Tui Tuia’s delivery began in Term 2 and targets early learning services, primary, intermediate and secondary schools across the North Island.

Tui Tuia has a collective expertise in Pasifika education, led by the organisation’s lead facilitator Tofilau Niulevaea Siliva Gaugatao and Dr Tanya Wendt Samu, senior lecturer at the University of Auckland’s Faculty of Education and Social Work. Both have been studying and developing teacher education initiatives based on Tapasā since its release in 2018. The development team includes Dr Jacoba Matapo, also a senior lecturer at the Faculty of Education and Social Work, who is leading the project for the early learning sector, and Pasifika facilitators Dagmar Dyck and Kema Perez.

Mr Gaugatao says, “Underpinning our approach to delivering Tapasā is that it is informed by Pasifika knowledge, ways of being and approaches to practice that are research-informed, led by a teacher’s strengths and empowering for all participants involved. Our approach is flexible, responsible and reflective, in other words, ‘one fits one’. We will tailor the initiative to the strengths and needs of individuals and groups of teachers and leaders and their learning journeys.

¹ Tapasā will be co-delivered by Tui Tuia and Tautai o le Moana Trust

“Our hope is our Tapasā professional learning and development initiative will be a transformational tool to uplift and support teachers and leaders across the education sectors to achieve the vision for Pasifika learners, their families and communities.”

ENDS

The definition of Tapasā

Tapasā is a Samoan term. The closest English language translation would be the word ‘compass’.

Tapasā serves as a guide or pathway in a malaga or a journey and extends beyond the finite and physical limitations of a compass. In earlier times, our Pacific ancestors successfully voyaged across oceans by reading the stars and constellations, marking the winds and mapping the currents as their tapasā. With the blessings of the Creator God and guidance of ilamutu (spiritual guide) and unity and fortitude in times of adversity, these voyagers reached the far corners of the Pacific.

This traditional definition of tapasā is borrowed and applied within the context of the Tapasā framework. Here, Tapasā serves a twin purpose of being a guide for teachers as they navigate their own journey of becoming more culturally aware and competent, and as a symbol of the learning pathway that Pacific learners’ and their families undertake.

About Tui Tuia | Learning Circle

Tui Tuia | Learning Circle delivers quality education and mentoring programs designed to inspire, uplift and help prepare schools and kura, whānau and communities for the challenges of today and tomorrow.

Our alignment with the University of Auckland enables us to deliver services and solutions that are grounded in best-in-class research, insights and innovation.

Our passionate and experienced team works alongside leaders, teachers and school communities in New Zealand, Australia and the Pacific, co-constructing Professional Learning & Development (PLD) initiatives that focus on lifting professional practice and improving outcomes for learners.

Our offering includes Leadership, Cultural Capability for Māori and Pasifika, Mātauranga Māori and te reo Māori, Curriculum Design as well as specialist services like Reading Recovery, Literacy support and Learning Languages initiatives.

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