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Cook Islands NSDA2020+ now in draft stage

Voices from the Pa Enea are resonating into the national blueprint for the Cook Islands our National Sustainable Development Plan 2020+

Having completed consultations in Atiu, Mangaia, Mauke, Mitiaro, Pukapuka and Tongareva, the initial drafting is now in process. The final consultation to gather feedback in general will take place in Aitutaki in late June before the period of consultation that will focus specifically on the draft documents.

The Cook Islands NSDA2020+ will be the guiding document for the nation, steering us all towards a vision of well-being. There will be three documents developed that unite all sectors and areas for endorsement in August this year.

The 100-year vision of wellbeing which the Cook Islands will aspire to across the next 100-years, the 25-year frameworks that span a generation will be the overarching document to follow to achieve this, and the 5-year strategy that highlights what must be achieved every five-years with actions being tracked and monitored to highlight progress and areas that need more attention and action.

“We have been working on developing our NSDA2020+ for a year now and are coming very close to completion, having heard the voices of as many people as possible in our consultations,” said Ms Valentino Wichman, Director of Central Policy and Planning of the Office of the Prime Minister.

“We’ve made every attempt to capture the concerns of those we heard, having balanced public thoughts and opinions against research for verification. We are hopeful that when we seek the input for our draft documents that we hear from as many people as possible. The final product endorsed will be that upon which our Cook Islands bases decision making, so let’s make sure we contribute to it.”

Areas of concern raised often from those in the Pa Enea included the high cost of living especially transport and freight costs, the isolation and the need to address this with affordable options, as well as the need for basic essentials such as safe water and internet access.

On Rarotonga a wide range of issues were raised, however it was clear that while the need to strengthen our Cook Islands culture was discussed in Rarotonga, this was not of immediate concern in the Pa Enea as they felt that culture was living in their daily lives.

As public consultations were ongoing, a team of researchers was also working to review the feedback provided.

This has resulted in a team of drafters developing initial text and content which will be made available for public consultations and feedback from end of June through to the early July. It is planned the Cook Islands NSDA2020+ will be endorsed during the first week of August this year.

“We’re really excited to see for this next stage to happen and we thank everyone that has made the time to share their thoughts and input with us, so we have an NSDA2020+ that is owned by all,” said Ms Wichman.

“Our Cook Islands national blueprint is a significant one which will be the basis of all we do as a nation, collectively. As such everyone will have a role to play in making it happen - we want to make sure that everyone owns it and that we are able to achieve our vision of wellbeing faster than a hundred years.”

While a 100-year vision is established, work toward achieving this will be planned against both 5-year and 25-increments which allow for progress and changes to be taken into account over the next 100 years.

Should you wish to find out more, or share your thoughts with Ms Valentino Wichman and her team, please contact valentino.wichman@cookislands.gov.ck