

Celebration of the Tokelauan Language


#pacificstars

Vāiaho o te gagana Tokelau

Population

- Of the 295,941 total Pacific population in the New Zealand Census 2013, approximately 2.4 percent or 7,173 Pacific people identified themselves as Tokelauan.¹
- The Tokelauan population growth was 10 percent during 2001-2006. The data shows the rate of growth has slowed to 5.1 percent during 2006-2013.²
- The Wellington region is home to the biggest Tokelauan population in New Zealand and the world, with almost 50 percent living in the region (49.1 percent or 3,525 people). Of those living in the Wellington Region, the majority reside in Porirua City (56.9 percent), compared with Lower Hutt City (27.5 percent), and Wellington city (8.3 percent).³
- Based on Census 2013, there were almost 1,383 Tokelau people living in Tokelau.⁴

The **Wellington** region is home to the biggest Tokelauan population in New Zealand



Tokelau Language Spoken in NZ⁵

For people identifying with the Tokelauan ethnic group living in New Zealand on 5 March 2013:

- Women were more likely than men to speak two or more languages, at 44.4 percent and 40.2 percent respectively;
- English was the most widely spoken language, spoken by 93.6 percent or 6,537 people;
- Tokelauan was the second-most common language spoken (31.9 percent or 2,229 people), this proportion was a decrease from 2006 (38.1 percent);
- Those born in New Zealand were less likely than those born overseas to speak Tokelauan, at 18.7 percent and 69.5 percent, respectively.



Helpful words | Kupu fehoahoani⁶

Salutations Kupu fakafeiloaki	
Mālō ni	Hello
E ā mai koe?	How are you?
Ko au e mālohi, Fakafetai	I am well, thank you
Tulou	Excuse me
Ulu tonu mai	Welcome
Tōfā	Good-bye
Fakafetai lahi lele	Thank you very much
Ke manuia koe i te Alofa o te Atua	May you be blessed in God's love
Ke fakamanuia e te Atua ia Tokelau	May God bless Tokelau
Days of the week Na aho o te vaiaho	
Aho Gafua	Monday
Aho Lua	Tuesday
Aho Lulu	Wednesday
Aho Tofi	Thursday
Aho Falaile	Friday
Aho Tōnai	Saturday
Aho Hā	Sunday

1: Source: Contemporary Pacific Status Report, p6

2: Source: Contemporary Pacific Status Report, p57

3: Source: www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/ethnicprofiles.aspx?request_value=24713&parent_id=24706&tabname=&p=y&printall=true

4: Source: www.tokelaunso.tk

5: Source: www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/ethnicprofiles.aspx?request_value=24713&parent_id=24706&tabname=&p=y&printall=true

6: Source: Ministry for Pacific Peoples Tokelau Language Resource

Months of the year (traditional and literal translation) | Na tau o na mahina

Toe Palolo/Ianuali	January
Mulifā/Fepuali	February
Takaoga/Mati	March
Uluaki Hiliga/Apelila	April
Toe Hiliga/Me	May
Uluaki Utua/Iuni	June
Toe Utua/Iulai	July
Vainoa/Aukuho	August
Faka-Afu/Hetema	September
Kaununu/Oketopa	October
Oloāmanu/Novema	November
Uluaki Palolo/Tehema	December

Everyday expressions | Na kupu e fakaaoga i nā aho takitahi

Kai te manaia!	Awesome!
Te lelei ō koe	Well done!
Ko au e fehoahoani atu kia te koe	I will help you
Fakatakitaki ki ei	Give it a go
Io fakamolemole	Yes please
Hēai fakafetai	No thank you
Manuia te po Zion	Goodnight Zion
Kā fai te tātou tatalo	Let us pray
Kā uhu te tatou pehe	Let's sing our song

Grow an environment for Gagana Tokelau⁷

In order for us to thrive in the pursuit of excellence with *Gagana Tokelau* we need the right conditions and environment to help us. Discuss together (as students and educators, as peers, as a family, as professionals) what you are already doing for the Tokelauan language in your *kāiga* (family), *āoga* (school), *lotu* (church) or *fakalāpotopotoga* (community organisation). Plan how you could improve your spaces, resources, practices, or policies further.

For instance, in the Early Childhood Education and school setting a teaching team may discover that while they are using the language, it is only as a language of instruction – e.g. *tū ki luga* (stand up) or *nofo ki lalo* (sit down).

You might aim therefore to:

- Build more descriptive or conversational type phrases into your programme
- Better utilise the language expertise existing in your community (elders, community leaders, parents, organisations and children) to help you to do this
- Create a safe space for educators to try out new ways of using *Gagana Tokelau*, and to build their confidence
- Play board games and cards using *Gagana Tokelau*
- Plan times where you try your best to speak only *Gagana Tokelau*

For more information check out: www.learn Tokelau.co.nz/documents/TauGagana.pdf

Tokelau Proverbs⁸

1. He toeaia i te mulivaka

Literal meaning: An elder at the helm always brings reassurance.

Message: There is no substitute for the wisdom and experience of an elder in times of difficulty.

2. Nohe mānumanu ki te ika kae mānumanu ki te kupega

Literal meaning: Do not be too concerned about the fish, but be much more concerned about saving the net.

Message: There are things in life which are important to save and preserve for the future, and the language is chief amongst them.

3. Te pakeve ke tū tō galu

Literal meaning: The young trevally (fish) create their own wave on the reef to avoid being stranded.

Message: Young people must learn to be resourceful and self-sufficient.



7. Source: Ministry for Pacific Peoples Tokelau Language Resource
8. Source: Tokelau Language Week Poster 2017

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