



Ministry of Finance
& Economic Management
Government of the Cook Islands

Economic Development Conference

*Working together to build
quality growth.*

15 November 2019

**Main Report: Record of
Stakeholder Contributions**

Executive summary

The Cook Islands Ministry of Finance and Economic Management held an *Economic Development Conference 2019: Working together to build quality growth* on 15th November 2019 with the aim of gathering community, government and business input to inform the development of the Economic Development Strategy 2030.

The interactive conference included two panel sessions and three breakout discussions. These were run using facilitation techniques to lead a structured conversation about delegates' vision for the future of the Cook Islands economy, the key economic development constraints, and opportunities to be pursued.

This report provides a high-level overview of the outcomes of these sessions and all outputs collected from delegates.

Throughout the conference a number of cross-cutting themes were identified:

- The economy is not just about Gross Domestic Product, it's about allocation and management of our scarce resources – people, land and environment.
- Maintaining the Cook Islands' culture and values is critical to the future of the nation and its people.
- Education should be the basis for any economic growth.
- The health of our people should be the number one priority.
- The environment is our comparative advantage, and we need to maintain it to be able to build our economy.
- The economic strategy for the Cook Islands needs to be inclusive of all of our islands.
- Our people are our greatest asset. We need to focus on providing opportunities for our people to want to remain here.
- We need to capitalise on technology, including skills and training not just implementation.
- There is a need to review our taxation policy for business, tourism services and the Pa Enea, and look at wage parity (see page 36 for more detail).
- Collaboration between public and private sectors is critical for achieving sustainable development.

Participants demonstrated a high level of engagement throughout the conference and there was robust discussion about the opportunities for the Cook Islands in the next decade. The ideas generated during the conference have been captured in full as part of this report to ensure all perspectives were heard and able to be used as part of the development of the Strategy.

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The conference

The Cook Islands Ministry of Finance and Economic Management held an *Economic Development Conference 2019: Working together to build quality growth* (the conference) on 15th November 2019 at the National Auditorium. The conference aimed to gather community input to inform the development of the Economic Development Strategy 2030 (the Strategy).

Over 160 people attended the event, representing a cross-section of leading Cook Islands business, community and government members.

Two panel sessions and three facilitated breakout discussions were run to discuss and gather ideas about the future of the Cook Islands economy, key economic development constraints, and opportunities to be pursued. The topics of these sessions were:

- equity and access
- efficiency, productivity and transformation
- investing in quality growth.

A team of local public servants moderated the panel sessions and facilitated the breakout discussions. They were supported by a team from Australia, which was engaged in the design of the conference program, facilitation training and reporting on the outcomes of the conference.

Panel discussions

There were two panel discussions during the conference to help set the context of discussions for participants. Panel participants were provided questions to prepare for, and then delegates were invited to ask panel members additional questions.

The first panel was about equity and access and efficiency, productivity and transformation. Panel members were:

- Rebeka Buchanan – Centre Coordinator/Manager Punanga Tauturu Inc
- Petero Okotai – Chief Executive Officer, Cook Islands Investment Corporation
- Dr Teina Rongo – Chairman, Kōrero O Te `Ōrau
- Phillip Henderson – Chief Executive Officer, Bluesky Cook Islands

The second panel was about investing in quality growth. Panel members were:

- Ewan Smith – General Manager, Air Rarotonga
- Ana-File Heather – Owner, Fave Designs
- Dr Stefano Moncada – Board Member of the Islands and Small States Institute, University of Malta
- Jamie Short

A summary of the questions asked by the moderator and audience, and a summary of responses are provided at [Appendix A: Panel discussions](#).

Economic vision

Delegates at the conference were invited to write down their economic vision for the Cook Islands for the next ten years. As anticipated, responses varied based on delegates' individual values, and a range of responses were collected.

Vision statements fell under a series of key themes:

- education
- health
- environment
- traditional culture and equality
- public and private interaction
- sustainable growth.

A potential vision statement for the Cook Islands based on the input from participants could be:

The Cook Islands has a diverse, stable economy that supports our people and our environment to prosper.

All the economic vision statements collected have been classified by theme in [Appendix B: Economic Vision](#).

Conference topic 1: Equity and access

The first breakout session of the conference was around equity and access. Quality economic growth requires equitable distribution of economic gains, benefits from the natural environment and access to opportunity. This topic focused on three key aspects – economic equality, sharing the benefits of growth and equal access to basic necessities.

Participants identified the following areas of focus for the Economic Development Strategy:

- We need to ensure we incorporate all our islands into the Economic Development Strategy.
- We need to provide proactive information and services such as education and health to all our citizens.
- Land access remains a key issue when we discuss economic development.
- We need to increase our financial literacy, including teaching it in schools and ensuring all our public servants understand our financial position so they can make smart choices about how to spend our money.
- We need to focus on our youth, increasing and retaining skills and providing opportunities.
- We need to better utilise and embrace technology.
- Preserving our culture and sense of community is a key aspiration regardless of how we develop, or how our economy grows.

Detailed outputs and discussions can be found in [Appendix C: Equity and Access](#).

Conference topic 2: Efficiency, productivity and transformation

The second breakout session for participants was a discussion around efficiency, productivity and transformation. Sustained long-term growth requires improvements in productivity. Producing more output for the same, or fewer, inputs creating a more efficient and effective government sector, and a more complex, diversified economy.

Participants identified the following key areas of focus in this topic:

- Our government needs to create partnerships using opportunities already available to us. We need to upskill our staff and learn from the private sector.
- We need to promote our culture and heritage as key selling points in tourism.
- We need to investigate appropriate levels of taxation (for business, tourism services and the Pa Enua) that encourage economic growth while ensuring we have enough funding to provide basic services.
- Access to the internet and new technologies will encourage new and returning businesses, leading to economic expansion.
- The government needs to be more transparent and open – we need to increase our communications with the community.
- We need to analyse our existing data sets and use this valuable information to improve our services.

Detailed outputs and discussions can be found in [Appendix D: Efficiency, Productivity and Transformation](#).

Conference topic 3: Investing in quality growth

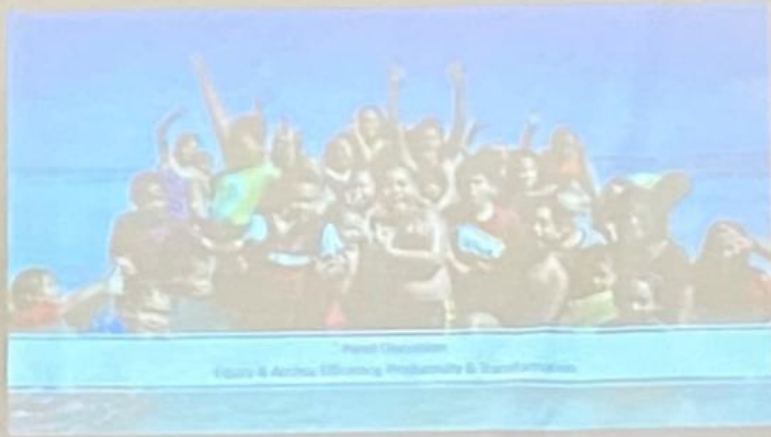
The final breakout session of the day was a discussion about investing in quality growth. While pursuing growth is a key driver of economic planning, the local context needs to be considered to ensure that growth remains sustainable. Growth that outstrips sustainability is likely to result in adverse economic, social or environmental outcomes. To ensure sustainability, investment - both public and private - is required. Investment both stimulates demand for goods and services and builds the future capacity of local businesses. To ensure quality economic growth, we must ensure that social and environmental factors are adequately considered and that the natural limitations to growth are factored in when developing economic plans.

When discussing investing in quality growth, participants identified several themes:

- Our culture, traditions and language are our comparative advantage, and we need to preserve them and value our Indigenous knowledge as we grow our economy.
- Our environment is pristine and should be protected.
- Tourism is the foundation of our economy. We should continue to invest in this industry by extending it to more islands, targeting desired tourists, creating investor guidelines and pursuing new opportunities e.g. low season events. We should also invest in hospitality services.
- We need to consider what is a sustainable amount of tourism and whether we need to cap tourist numbers.
- Our economy should be diversified beyond tourism, and we should be encouraging small business innovation and investment in the knowledge economy.

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- Labour shortages, foreign workers and migrant skills screening need to be addressed. We need a national population policy.
 - Education is critical for securing our future. We need to invest in more in-country study opportunities and scholarships focusing on upskilling people, especially women.
 - Many of our educated people leave the Islands, so we need incentives for them to return and stay.
 - As social issues (e.g. domestic violence, mental and physical health, safe pets) arise, we need to address them. The health of Cook Islanders should be a focus. We need Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD) to be eradicated, better understanding of how to improve health, improved family planning, and access to clean water.
 - Our government's budget process needs to change. The tax system should be modernised, and we must ensure adequate consultation on decisions and consider tax-free zones in the Pa Enea.

Detailed outputs and discussions can be found in [Appendix E: Investing in Quality Growth](#).



Appendix A: Panel Discussions

Panel discussions

There were two panel discussions during the conference, in which panel members responded to pre-prepared questions and questions from the audience. This section provides an overview of the discussion.

Panel one: Equity and access; efficiency, productivity and transformation

The first panel was held in the morning, before the equity and access; and efficiency, productivity and transformation breakout discussions. Panel members were:

- Rebeka Buchanan – Centre Coordinator/Manager Punanga Tauturu Inc
- Petero Okotai – Chief Executive Officer, Cook Islands Investment Corporation
- Dr Tiena Rongo – Chairman, Kōrero O Te `Ōrau
- Phillip Henderson – Chief Executive Officer, Bluesky Cook Islands

Question 1:	There are variances in access to basic necessities (food, clean water, shelter).
Do you think that all Cook Islanders have access to basic necessities? If not, what can be done to address any inequality in access?	Access requires money, so vulnerable or struggling people have less access to basic necessities. We see struggling families, especially dependent woman and children having poor access to work (for example, women who have stayed at home to care for children then the relationship breaks down).
	Short term funding is hard to access.
	Information access is unequal, and it can be hard to find out where to go for support. Punanga Tatuturu is known for domestic violence support, but also provide support for at human rights issues, environment of their people and those who are suffering. They are a knowledge base that not everyone knows about.
	The Pa Enea have less access to both basic necessities and information.
	Early intervention is critical.
Question 2:	Education is the driver of economic growth. Our education system is teaching people to leave the country, contributing to migration.
What do you think can be done to drive productivity and efficiency improvements to ensure a more dynamic and diverse economy?	“We’re not teaching them to be Cook Islanders”.
	Economy is not just about Gross Domestic Product (GDP), it’s about the allocation and management of scarce resources – people, land and resources. We need to consider how we’re managing our resources.
	The economy is there for the people now and in the future.

The National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) is not well understood. We have a scorecard for development showing current status to help determine where to focus but not a plan yet. There is a lot of criteria that are currently rated 'yellow', and we need to invest more in data to understand who is vulnerable and where we actually stand.

We know, for example, there is more money in Rarotonga, but the standard of living when you take things like happiness into account, may be higher in some of the Pa Enua. We need to keep people as the focus.

The happiest, most connected to environment and culture is the island that is most disconnected from Rarotonga due to poor transport. They eat local food, follow traditional practices. If you need the local environment and are dependent on it then you will protect it.

We cover huge areas of the sea, making the challenges in the Cook Islands unique. We need to use the combination of our peoples' knowledge to find solutions. We need to start investing in better systems of governance.

In 2003, we held conference and one option presented then for high growth was to mimic "Hawaii", with tourism over 150 thousand, high foreign labour, high foreign direct investment. This is where we are now despite saying in 2003 that it is not what we want to be. Everyone else wants what the Cook Islands had 30-40 years ago as a way of life – our culture, how we treat our environment – while we are running away from it.

We need good governance, but there is not enough governance in place. We are still discussing the same topics that we were ten years ago.

We need to ensure people are happy. In the Pa Enua our most vulnerable people are the hardest to reach.

Growth is disadvantaging Indigenous peoples.

Our Pacific Ocean is a carbon sink, but we are destroying the environment.

To diversify our economy, we may need to look at what our economy is now, to then see what we may need to reduce and/or add. Tourism keeps rising but it's not translating to revenue because the tourists are not spending – what is the quality of tourism that we want?

Question 3:

The Cook Islands is undergoing an ICT transformation, how do we best harness the new opportunities these changes will offer?

The Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous (VUCA) world we live in means that it's hard to predict the future.

From the perspective of ICT, the cable will make a huge difference, but we don't have to wait for the cable to start making changes – we can start now.

We're in the 4th industrial revolution, including virtualisation and minimising harm of network.

Cook Islands has the biggest concentration of fax machines in the world.

Bluesky has economies of scale in ICT services that they can pass on to customers such as hotels who need to outsource their whole ICT requirements.

**Question 4:
From the Floor**

Do you think ICT is the best way to push development through the wider Cook Islands?

The priority to me is education. How do we improve and deliver that across the majority without the human resources (e.g. teachers) that we need? Through education we can solve other issues by developing 'thinkers'.

We have the potential and capability. We just need to channel it in the right way.

We leverage our current capability quite well.

Technology can improve access to Pa Enea.

We need to develop a digital workforce to play on a global stage. We need people who know how to innovate and utilise this 4th digital revolution.

**Question 5:
From the Floor**

Do we have the tourism industry we want, and if not, how do we manoeuvre it, so it serves the needs of the Cook Islands?

There is an opportunity to improve the quality of tourism and this is an aspiration we need to be explicit about. We need to put in the work to make sure we make the best of it, and we need to be aware of the risks.

**Question 6:
From the Floor**

Do you think we're ready to graduate to a developed nation?

We need to be mindful that social issues remain and continue investing in those areas. Graduation doesn't automatically lead to investment in these areas.

As economies progress there will be periods of inequality and then we close the gap. Some parts have to progress faster and then you bring the others along with you.

Panel two: Investing in quality growth

The second panel was held after lunch, before the investing in quality growth breakout discussions. Panel members were:

- Ewan Smith – General Manager, Air Rarotonga
- Ana-File Heather – Owner, Fave Designs
- Dr Stefano Moncada – Board Member of the Islands and Small States Institute, University of Malta
- Jamie Short

Question 1:

How have you managed to attract and retain quality staff at Air Rarotonga?

You need to start with the intention of retaining quality staff.

Aviation requires international standards and highly qualified people, and positions compete with Australia and New Zealand. Air Rarotonga want Cook Islanders to be their staff.

Air Rarotonga employ thirty indigenous Cook Islanders, all of whom have spent the last two years of secondary schooling or more in New Zealand to achieve the educational standards required.

There is a gap in the secondary education results from the Cook Islands. It would be transformational to bring Tereora College front and centre, expand it to include agriculture, tourism, IT, to get to a level 3 or 4 and provide seamless pathway to employment.

Most small-medium businesses don't have the resources to support school leavers in the same way as large companies, therefore the large companies have responsibilities to support local development.

We are under-educating our children and importing unskilled labour. We need to put a more positive obligation and incentives on all employers to provide training.

Education master plan has a goal that 60 per cent of school leavers go to tertiary education. Soft loans from government and loan repayment through community service are options to reduce barriers to cost of tertiary education. There is some support from government and private sector but in-country there are limitations (e.g. 30 scholarships to go to New Zealand and only 5 for in-country). I would like to see incentives around in-country training.

We will require a transformational approach because we spoke about this 10-20 years ago and nothing has really changed.

Only 25 per cent of population go beyond year 11 at school. 80 per cent of population have no formal qualification. 75 per cent of working population earn less than \$25,000 per year.

Question 2:	The majority makeup of private business on the island is small-to-medium.
How have you managed to attract and retain quality staff?	Access to capital is the biggest constraint. The Business Trade Investment Board has grants, but they weren't enough to start Fave Designs, so they had to take personal loans to reach the start-up costs. This is prohibitive for many people.
What challenges or constraints are faced when setting up business? What changes could make it easier to set up a small business?	There is limited access to information, or programs on how to set up a business - how to register your business, set up tax, etc. There is no incubator or hub, which could be a good solution to facilitate young entrepreneurs starting up and the initial growth phase.
	Space is another constraint. In town there has not been significant development in 30 years and there are no rental spaces available.
	There are staff shortages, especially for skilled staff that are willing to work for available wages. For example, Fave Designs has had a shop for 4 years, and trying to employ only locals, but they want high wages for less work.
	There are changes we can make like creating an incubator, accelerator programs, and going into schools to get students thinking entrepreneurially and then help them move into incubator phase.
	We lack capital, labour and land, making it is very hard to succeed. We need links to what's happening in other small markets with similar challenges. Success stories often result from partnerships between public and private, and there is a lot of scope here so it should not be resisted.
	Freight and inventory management is a big challenge in retail. E.g. A New Zealand gas leak stopped planes before Christmas one year, causing supply issues.

Question 3:	The most important sectors to focus on are education and infrastructure. Society sometimes grows faster than politics, so how do you provide vocational training and support for younger people who want to leave education to go to work.
How can small island states can achieve growth without placing too much pressure on their economies and communities?	Government intervention is important. Most national income in the Cook Islands comes from tourism, so we need to protect that, and government intervention could be seen as a good thing. We look at short term results to justify action, but for small countries, short term thinking is counter-productive because it can work against wealth accumulation in the medium and long term.

The method of strategy development, including broad consultation, is participatory which is the way to have every citizen own the strategy and feel empowered by it.

Question 4:

When we consider sustainability and land limits, what does that look like?

We know there are limits to exploiting natural environments and development has moved faster than sustainability. With infrastructure, new developments have a lack of controls, meaning wetlands and lowlands are being filled for new establishments to be built. Land is being cleared for structures and agriculture, causing issues with runoff water, among other issues.

When establishing construction, we need to look at natural resources that are being used on-island – they will be depleted eventually. We should introduce the idea of reusing and repurposing products.

Tourism growth is causing conversion of wetlands to buildings. There has historically been a lack of control, but the environment act is being reviewed to see what is not covered. That, alongside the infrastructure act, will ensure more controls are and will be in place. The future looks brighter, and enforcement of these stronger controls will be the next step.

Education is a key part – we need to make students aware of opportunities that are coming and ensure they receive the necessary training to enforce the new standards and codes.

**Question 5:
From the Floor**

Given that the future relies heavily on tourism and the service industry, what could our service ethic be going forward to support growth, and is this an important factor going forward?

The visitor value proposition is to see a unique Polynesian culture showcased, where quality is front and centre. Cook Islanders are hospitable, not servile. Highlights for visitors invariably includes the hospitality of the local people, and a ‘very high level of service’ is not what we are aiming for.

**Question 6:
From the Floor**

What’s the maximum number of visitors to maintain quality growth? When will we say we are full, to maintain friendliness? Hospitality and kindness have a limit.

There must be a limit on visitors. There is a visible limit to how many people we can accommodate on any given night. We need to be talking about the numbers on-island at a point, rather than the number of daily arrivals. There were 2.5 thousand visitors on census night, out of total population of 15 thousand.

We have already reached the infrastructure limit in the high season; our infrastructure is not open-ended. We do need to shift some of the visitors into the low season, as numbers fluctuate. Even in tourist areas, there can be no visitors at all during low season. We need to consider who’s coming, and how we modify tourist behaviour.

We don't know what the island services (e.g. wastewater treatment, solid waste disposal) limit is, and we should find out that number.

Some things that have worked well in shifting tourist numbers are identifying gaps during the year and focusing on attracting tourists in those months. This requires a different strategy to determine what to offer in that period. For example, Malta had only summer-tourism as a country of 500 thousand people with two million visitors in the summer months. Policy changes and incentives have shifted these numbers to the shoulder periods, through focusing on culture, conferences, other types of entertainment and other business that only happens in that period (sometimes making that business happen only in that period).



Appendix B: Economic Vision

Economic vision

At the conference, delegates were invited to write down their economic vision for the Cook Islands for the next ten years. As anticipated, responses varied based on delegates' individual values, and a range of responses were collected.

There were a few key themes that vision statements fall under. These themes are:

- education
- health
- environment
- traditional culture and equality
- public and private Interaction
- sustainable growth.

Below are all the economic vision statements collected, classified by theme.

Education	<p>CIG provide interest-free loans for people to do in-country tertiary education. Could it be paid back as service to the country?</p> <hr/> <p>Build a strong workforce by offering full-time undergraduate study in the Cook Islands.</p> <hr/> <p>Grow University (USP) and the Cook Islands Tertiary and Training Institute (CITTI) to upskill our people across all sectors. Teachers training, nurses training, trades.</p> <hr/> <p>Education</p> <p>Problem: Girls still dominate senior education.</p> <p>Solutions: Embrace teaching methods from boys collected in NZ. More options for boys.</p>
Health	<p>Education and public health-based approach to drug prevention and rehab, not criminalisation.</p> <hr/> <p>A healthy Cook Islands – people, financially, culturally, environmentally.</p> <hr/> <p>Health</p> <p>Problem: 10 years more Non-Communicable Diseases.</p> <p>Solutions: health education in schools, encourage people to embrace better health practices and good living.</p> <hr/> <p>To have a healthy lifestyle on the island and improve our infrastructure.</p>

Environment

10,000 Kuru trees planted by 2026 to produce export and local-consumption of gluten-free flour.

Introduce organic farming everywhere.

Let's lead the world in seabed harvesting.

Promote sustainable seabed minerals activities.

Ensure seabed harvesting happens so the dependence on tourism is relieved and the welfare of Cook Islanders becomes sustainable.

Change the way we view agriculture and invest more in these practices without youth to better sustain our livelihood.

Environment

Problem: 10 years waste an even bigger problem.

Solutions: Policies to reduce packaging bottles, etc on imported goods, and import quality products that last.

In ten years, our people are leaders in environmental sustainability and green growth is taking the Cook Islands forward in its development. Locally appropriate technology.

Traditional culture and equality

Cook Islands for Cook Islanders – our Cook Islands people are still smiling!

Language revitalisation of Maori.

Cook Islands women to run our country!

Develop our youth and Pa Enea and have a more local workforce.

A progressive and healthy nation, confident in their identity and content on keeping it a paradise.

Evolve in harmony with our culture and environment.

A Cook Islands which values its cultural heritage, health and safety of its people.

Equality, fairness and assure economic growth.

Need to encourage basic creative skills like painting, drawing, singing, playing instruments, design, to create new industries

Economic growth balanced with improved human wellbeing and a protected environment.

Equal distribution of income and wealth in the Cook Islands.

Public and private interaction	Business round table. Think tank of private sector representatives.
	We urgently need a national population plan for 30+ years to underpin our National Economic Plan.
	Private sector is the foundation to economic growth.
	Strengthen the public and private partnerships.
	Family enterprise vs big business: What mix of this do we want? How can we encourage global businesses?
	For government to responsibly govern.
	Have a government that is righteous and have a heart to see the Cook Islands saved.
Sustainable growth	#CookIslandersforCookIslands. The Cook Islands is economically and environmentally stable. Cook Islanders in Cook Islands job/business and decision-making roles.
	Diversify the economy away from tourism.
	Economic development that supports out environment, society and culture for the benefit of Cook Islanders.
	Pay rise now.
	An engaged, inclusive and barrier free Cook Islands for all. Real disability-inclusive development.
	Grow wealth, add value, development of Cook Islands.
	A prosperous Cook Islands for us and our future generations.
	Primary Industries
	Problem: 10 years – less people involved in it.
	Solutions: Needs to be encouraged to build a resilient, non-dependent nation.
	Resilient Economy – sustainable, independent, efficient, effective, productive.
	Economic and labour contributions from returning Cook Islanders to pension reliability and improved health and education facilities.
	Free internet.
	A financially secure Cook Islands.
	Sustainable economic development.



Appendix C:
Equity and
access

Equity and access

During the equity and access breakout discussion groups the discussion tool “1,2,4,8” was employed.

Initially, individuals did silent brainstorming, then formed small groups to discuss their ideas and finally joined a larger group to prioritise their outcomes.

There were seven key themes identified with regards to equity and access:

- education
- employment, skills-building and foreign workers
- health
- transport
- land and housing
- basic necessities and essential services
- government, finance and taxation.

Themed priorities

The prioritised outputs from each group are presented below, consolidated into the key topics.

Education	Ensure equity of access to education across the Cook Islands, including the Pa Enea.
	At a recent national education conference inequity in education was raised. Need to improve teacher quality, more investment in training and education.
	Financial literacy program, including superannuation.
	Better early education for critical years 1-3. No policy or regulation and insufficient access, presenting both opportunity and risk.
	Educated people are leaving the Cook Islands.
	Scarce options for education due to depopulation of the Pa Enea.
	Formal and informal (e.g. Home) options to be pursued. Life skills to train youth groups who will be future parents and contribute skills. Sharing indigenous knowledge.
	Improving education pathways particularly for the Pa Enea.
	Lack of in-country vocational training. (E.g. Plumbing skills in high demand, but limited professionals). CITT to incorporate trade skills, private sector could provide on the job training. Important to ensure accreditation recognition for training. Invest in our people.
	Focus on youth – building capacity of country and investing in younger generation to develop and maintain these skills within the people of the islands.

	<p>Financial challenges exist for tertiary education. No student loans, look at loan options that can be repaid through service.</p> <p>Education output is not aligned with today's employment.</p>
Employment, skills-building and foreign workers	<p>Limited employment opportunities in the Pa Enea. Government is the largest employer and this needs to be shifted to the private sector (Increased investment in people and greater access to financial support).</p> <p>Access to foreign workers competing for jobs, whilst unskilled foreign workers are replacing school leavers.</p> <p>Local vs expats income. Migrant workers vs local workers and working conditions.</p> <p>Focus on human capital to develop economic opportunities of workforce. Improve development, training and education of local workforce including minimum and living wage.</p> <p>Consider citizenship in our community make-up.</p> <p>Status of people who have come from elsewhere but call Cook Islands home and their ability to contribute.</p>
Health	<p>Need improved quality and access to health care.</p> <p>Free healthcare.</p> <p>Taking all residents (not just Cook Islanders) into consideration. Poor access in the Pa Enea.</p> <p>Need equity in health services e.g. no doctors in the Pa Enea.</p> <p>Need better IT to facilitate equity e.g. remote communities in New Zealand use iPads for diagnosis.</p> <p>Reactive healthcare system - need more awareness, prevention, proactive messages.</p>
Transport	<p>Lack of equity access for the Pa Enea. Limitations in shipping limits economy and equity and access in northern areas.</p> <p>Needs to be sustainable, reliable, regular, affordable.</p> <p>Many opportunities exist for Pa Enea people to develop products and services, but unreliable transportation reduces viability.</p> <p>Vulnerable groups require improved transportation.</p> <p>Boats/access for Pa Enea should be provided by government.</p>

	<p>Growing produce and transportation costs to/from the Pa Enuu is an issue. Should incentivise and prioritise agricultural practices, and government assistance to reduce cost of transportation to the Pa Enuu.</p>
Land and housing	Lack of affordable housing and accommodation.
	Lack of housing for people coming to Rarotonga from the Pa Enuu and foreign countries can impact employment options.
	Land system is not equitable. Often the most influential get land. Time to revisit the land laws. Lack of transparency.
	Limited land for both agriculture and housing.
	Agricultural issues. We could be the “food basket of the world”, requiring a lot of clearing, lack of correct equipment.
Basic necessities and essential services	Lack of water security and access to safe drinking water.
	We should be forward thinking around drought and climate change, particularly in the Pa Enuu and the north. Need to innovate to improve our resilience.
	We should install more water tanks for storage.
	The Pa Enuu are disadvantaged and have restricted access to essential services and basic necessities (education, transport, health, communication, infrastructure, ports, airport, roads, shipping, emergency services). These conversations need to be relevant to the Pa Enuu, so they see value in being part of the journey.
	Lack of access to infrastructure for the Pa Enuu – including in transport, water, energy.
	Quality of sanitation should be improved. More household sanitation, environmental toilets.
	Food security also an issue. Increasing demand for gluten free flour. Could work together with Samoa, Tonga, Fiji and other islands to plant trees to export variety, mill to flour and export.
	Insufficient access to childcare facilities.
	Disabled community, LGBTQI, disadvantaged, elderly, children, mental health sufferers need support and access to information.
Government, finance and taxation	Lack of transparency in government processes. Processes must be transparent to provide equal experience and access.
	<p>Cost of borrowing/risk in investment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit risk • Availability

-
- Competition
 - Lack of data is an issue for business
 - Access to good data will help
-

Tax free threshold and minimum wage to be reviewed. Tax credits (business and personal).

Goals must be realistic based on economic reality.

Issue of poor access to capital equity – e.g. mortgage interest rates are too high. Utilising superannuation funds to recognise investments and bring down costs and introducing banking regulation possible solutions.

High cost of living and reliance on imported goods, particularly in the Pa Enea.

Disparity of costs between the Pa Enea and Rarotonga. Ease of access to fundamental services will lower costs, e.g. lowering costs and increasing reliability of shipping.

Government should set finances aside in budget to support the Pa Enea.

Need to define, develop and regularly review minimum standards for health, education and housing, regularly reviewed.

Need to be proactive in identifying issues as they emerge and get to root cause rather than fixing the symptom.

Consider removing VAT for the Pa Enea.

Reliable information and data required to ensure appropriate decision-making.

Poor access to financial security e.g. Land and loan access

Risk of small community syndrome. Mindset change required to actually progress economic development (central government vs mayor vs island council).

Inclusiveness is an area to focus on – community engagement, citizenship, participation, corruption, informal access.

Disparity in how we promote the islands – mainly the main two, so what message does that send to the rest of the world? Need to ensure we include everyone and make processes transparent, ensuring access to events and consultation.

Business planning e.g. BTIB courses, need more to support this.

Diversification of tourist investment e.g. Airbnb. Comes with some risk.

	Economic activity - Balance of trade, cost of borrowing (credit = country risk), mortgage sales and foreign investment purchases.
Culture	<p>If Pa Enea had equal access to benefits it might encourage them to stay and continue their culture.</p> <p>Need to balance business and cultural dynamic.</p> <p>Change management is essential—will create certain inequities if not managed appropriately.</p> <p>Concerns around “loss of personality” – not wanting to lose culture at cost of access etc.</p> <p>Tuakana (elders, older sibling) have significant experience of islands and family. We should look within and work alongside rather than flying in expertise.</p>
Environment	<p>Environmental inequity with over-fishing in Pa Enea but wealth going to Rarotonga and overseas.</p> <p>Environmental impacts and how environmental disasters impact the Pa Enea far greater than Rarotonga.</p> <p>Use the ocean – dynamic. It has the ability to take things away and bring things to us.</p> <p>We need minimum environmental standards for quality of life.</p> <p>Climate change is a key topic globally but ‘buries news’ in Cook Islands. Need to start planning for communities and infrastructure, and the Pau Enea.</p>
Information technology	<p>Data information/management will enable connection between islands. Government service delivery IT accessibility is key.</p> <p>Information access and awareness – needed to strengthen organisations, share information across public services.</p> <p>New technology is here but limited ability for maintenance and use.</p>

Group Priorities

The information below presents priorities from group discussion in entirety, with no consolidation of duplicates.

During the Equity and Access breakout discussion groups delegates were invited to do an individual brainstorm to capture all their ideas as well as small group discussion. These are provided in a separate file.

Group one	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We need to ensure that we have equity of access to education across the cook island, and especially in the Pa Enuu. In the recent national conference on education, it was raised that there wasn't equity in education. We need to improve the quality of our teachers and capitalise on our IT, we need more investment in our training and education, we need this to ensure that they can engage in the economy of the Cook Islands. 2. Equity in health services, we need better IT to do this for example in remote communities in New Zealand who use iPads for diagnosis. 3. Transport to the north affects equity and access.
Group two	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of affordable housing and accommodation, mainly for outer island peoples coming into Rarotonga which makes it hard for them to be employed here. 2. The land system is not equitable. Often, it's the most influential in families who get more lands. It is time to revisit the land laws. 3. Lack of equity access for Pa Enuu. There are limitations in shipping and activities which limits the economy and equity in those areas.
Group three	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information access and awareness is needed to strengthen our organisations, need to share our information across our services particularly in our public services. How can we get our outer areas engaged in processes like this using effective outreach? 2. Transport and shipping for Pa Enuu is needed to be sustainable, reliable, affordable. There are lots of opportunities for outer island people to develop good products and services but with unreliable transportation, this is difficult to make the most of. Vulnerable groups require improved transportation. 3. Water security is needed access to safe drinking water, need to be forward looking and think about drought and climate change in our planning, particularly in the Pa Enuu and our north. Need to look at ways to make water and innovate so that we can improve our resilience.
Group four	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve access to basic necessities. A lot of work to be done to improve access to all of these especially in the Pa Enuu. 2. Need to focus more on human capital to develop the economic opportunities of our workforce. We need to improve the development, training and education of the local workforce. We need to look at minimum wage and living wage etc. Migrant workers vs local workers and working conditions. 3. Land access is an issue. 4. There is a lack of inclusiveness, we need more meaningful participation in our community. Inclusiveness is an area to focus on including community engagement, citizenship, participation, corruption, informal access.

	<p>5. The notion of citizenship as part of considering what makes our community. What status do people who have come from elsewhere but call this place home – what status do they have non-Cook islanders to full contribute to the community.</p>
Group five	<p>1. Pa Enea have many disadvantages and a lack of access to basic necessities. When we have these conversations, we need to make things relevant to them so that they see the value in being part of the journey. There is a lack of access to infrastructure for the Pa Enea including in transport, water, energy. There is a huge disparity in how we promote the islands – mainly the main two, so what message does that send to the rest of the world? We need to ensure that we include them and make processes like we have today transparent and ensure that they have access to events and processes like we have today so that they have equal say and access.</p> <p>2. There is a lack of transparency in government processes. Where politics is involved, and people are on the receiving end of things they might not understand why they are there or hold others accountable. We need to ensure that our processes are transparent so that people have an equal experience and can access services.</p> <p>3. We need a financial literacy program. A group member shared info re superannuation with the table and we all learnt a lot. We also need better early education program; the first three years is the most crucial. There’s no policy or regulation about this and no regulated access to this. This means that it’s an open platform which is opportunity but also a risk. Our people are being educated to leave not stay. It is a deficit in our economy.</p> <p>4. Land is a touchy subject. There’s so much we can do with land and so much opportunity, we need to make the process of using our land more transparent.</p>
Group six	<p>1. Economic reality, making goals realistic.</p> <p>2. Small community syndrome, overcoming this, mindset change, actually progress economic development (central government vs mayor vs island council).</p> <p>3. Health care, improve the system, free health care, no longer looking about just Cook Islanders, about all residents due to different reasons.</p>
Group seven	<p>1. Quality of water and sanitation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We need more water tanks and storage, sanitation for household, use of environmental toilets (that has already been trialled on some toilets). • Quality health care is important. <p>2. Quality education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal as well as home education. • Life skills to train young ones, youth groups who will be future parents and contribute skills. • Scarce options for education due to depopulation of Pa Enea. <p>3. Disadvantage of distance for Pa Enea:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boats/access for Pa Enea should be provided by government. • Being scattered around the islands is hard, in relation to transport.

Group eight	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Economic activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food security is critical. • Big demand for gluten free flour, plant trees, export variety, on each island, export, mill into flour. Gluten free is a big industry. We could work together with Samoa, Tonga, Fiji and other islands. • Balance of trade. • Cost of borrowing (credit = country risk). • Need good data. 2. Diversification: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around tourist investment, e.g. Airbnb. • Risks involved with diversifications. 3. Sharing benefits of growth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foreign unskilled workers replacing school leavers. • Mortgage sales/foreign investment purchase. • Business planning e.g. BTIB courses, we need more to support this. 4. Cost of borrowing/risk in investment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Credit risk. • Availability. • Competition. • Good data/lack of data is an issue for business. • Having access to good data will help lots. 5. Equal access to basic necessities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax free threshold and minimum wage to be reviewed. • Tax credits (business and personal). • Access to health services, education and social services, only goes to certain levels, especially in the Pa Enea. • Shipping regularity is a gap.
Group nine	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improving education pathways particularly for the Pa Enea - Retaining people with education, not pushing them away. 2. Housing access for non-Rarotongans. 3. Health services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Rarotonga there is more access. • A lot of reactive issues. • Need more awareness, preventative issues, proactive messages. • Inequality for Pa Enea. • Issues include dialysis, mobility, special care. 4. If Pa Enea had more benefits it might make them want to stay and continue their culture. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying exactly what the problem is means it can be fixed earlier. • Educating people earlier as well. • Getting to the root cause rather than fixing the problem. • Consideration of inequality between Rarotonga and Pa Enea but also Rarotonga and New Zealand.

Group ten	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in our people. • Change language from ‘cost’ to ‘investment’. • You need to get a return on things that you invest in. • Acknowledge and support the disadvantaged in Rarotonga. • Ageing households. 2. Tuakana (elders, older sibling): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So much experience, know the island, within the family. • They have it here, look within, working alongside, Rather than fly in fly out concept. 3. Climate Change: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bombarded by climate change news in other parts of the world. • Buried news here. • Need to start planning, thinking about communities and infrastructure. • What does it mean for the other islands? • Need to get serious on thinking about this.
Group eleven	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue: Lack of in-country vocational training. E.g. Plumbing skills in high demand, but limited professionals. • Solution: CITTI to incorporate trade skills to “close the gap.” The private sector could provide on the job training and cover the costs. Important to ensure that the courses provide recognisable skills in the end (i.e. accreditation recognition). 2. Agriculture: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue: Hospitality issues in particular growing produce, and the costs of transportation to/from the Pa Enea. • Solution: Incentivize and prioritise agricultural practices, and government assistance to reduce the cost of transportation to the Pa Enea. 3. Equity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue: Access to capital equity e.g. mortgage interest rates are too high. • Solution: Utilising superannuation funds to recognise investments and bring down costs. Introduce a regulator to regulate the banking world.
Group twelve	<p>Note: Main focus for this group is on the Pa Enea.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employment opportunities: Biggest employer is the government and there needs to be a shift to private sector (Want more investment in the people and greater access to financial support) 2. Cost of living: Disparity of costs between the Pa Enea and Rarotonga. Ease of access to fundamental services will lower these costs for example through lowering costs of shipping, and through upgrades to transport. 3. Access to essential services: The Pa Enea do not have the same access to essential services (education, transport, health, communication, infrastructure, ports, airport, roads, shipping, emergency services) as Rarotonga has. They should have equal access. <p>Overall, government needs to set finance aside (in the budget) to support the Pa Enea - “don’t just talk the talk – walk the walk”</p>

Group thirteen	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on youth: What skills do we need to build the capacity of the country and invest in the younger generation to develop and maintain these skills within the people of the islands. 2. Inequality of services for the Pa Enuā. Focus on health, education, water, infrastructure, loans. 3. Strong focus on education: People are more likely to have a higher economic status if we get the education right and provide access to everyone. 4. Focus on non-formal education options, sharing indigenous knowledge, post-secondary education both formal and informal. There needs to be awareness of financial challenges for tertiary education. No student loans, look at loan options that can be repaid through service.
Group fourteen	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing and land: Particularly on Rarotonga. 2. Transportation and communication, including freight and focus on northern group. 3. Education: Especially for the Pa Enuā. 4. Cost of living: For the Pa Enuā, consider removing VAT. 5. Need to balance business and cultural dynamic. 6. Environmental impacts and how environmental disasters impact the Pa Enuā far greater than Rarotonga. 7. Change management is essential: Create certain inequities if not managed appropriately.
Group fifteen	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use the ocean. It has the ability to take things away and bring things to us. 2. Rights based access, not just about human rights, about basic rights and access to other islands. 3. Reliable information and data to ensure decisions are made appropriately. 4. Thinking about the disabled community and the LGBTQTI – people think differently and accepting that. Ensuring they have the right information to make decisions.
Group sixteen	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Need to define minimum standards for health, education and housing across the Cook Islands. Need to develop minimum standards. We should be regularly reviewed and costs for the whole country. 2. Environment: Minimum standard we want for quality of life. 3. Need urgent review of equity in vulnerable groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing population • Disabled • Incarcerated • Children • Mental health (alcoholism, addictions, conditions such as Alzheimer’s and autism).
Group seventeen	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Access to financial security: Difficult in economic development e.g. Land, loans, hindrance to Cook Islands creating inequity. 2. Human Resource development: Investment in HR and education. 3. Data information/management: Connection between islands, government service delivery IT accessibility key.
Group eighteen	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cost of living: High costs foods in Pa Enuā and reliance on imported goods. 2. Environment: Inequity of usage. Over-fishing in Pa Enuā but wealth going to Rarotonga and overseas.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Infrastructure: Lots of inputs, little output, costly development like airport and maintenance cost. 4. Access 5. Healthcare: There are no doctors on Pa Enuu. 6. Clean water: We have poor access. 7. Land access: There is limited land for agriculture and homes. 8. Access to foreign workers competing for jobs.
Group nineteen	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We want equity of Opportunity. 2. Investment benefits and outcomes. 3. Education and support to enable it. 4. Labour. 5. Support for skills-building. 6. Lack of employment. 7. Local versus expats income. 8. New technology is here but low ability for maintenance and use. 9. Land and agriculture issues, being the “food basket of the world”, clearing, equipment for the wrong job.
Group twenty	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Education output not aligned with today’s employment. 2. Need improved access to tertiary and vocational study. 3. Referring 2016 census 80 per cent working do not have any vocational training. 4. 2-3-year gap educational and working knowledge. 5. Social welfare benefits need to be updated. 6. Marginalised groups need access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • justice • childcare facilities • health. 7. Concerns around “loss of personality” – not wanting to lose culture at cost of access etc.



Appendix D: Efficiency, productivity and transformation

Efficiency, productivity and transformation

During the efficiency, productivity and transformation discussion participants were led through the World Cafe tool. Each group was given four topics to discuss:

1. Productivity
2. government efficiency
3. building on our comparative advantage
4. information technology revolution.

In round one groups discussed one of the four topics. Two people from each group then moved to the next table, to gather new ideas about the topic, while delegates who did not move had a new topic arrive for discussion. Two different participants from each group then moved the topic to a third group to prioritise the ideas gathered across three groups.

The following ideas are all the ideas groups identified during the discussion, grouped into themes.

PRODUCTIVITY

Technology	Improve processes through technology: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Within organisations improve manual processes by increasing the use of technology. This will require support for implementation and training/education.
	Increase innovation in labour intense sectors such as agriculture or copper production: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigate how technology and automation could replace labour shortages in some industries.
People	Increase people performance management: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is a lack of understanding of expectations about performance.• There are currently no systems in place to lift performance of those who are falling behind.• There is no positive reinforcement or rewards system.• Creating a ‘twinning’ system to allow people across government to share experience and improve expertise.
	Provide educational opportunities – pathways and knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We need to provide opportunities to grow career paths and ongoing development of skills.• We need to have training that is applicable in our context (e.g. trades, chefs, electrical, hospitality). There needs to be a balance of what we can learn from external experts and local application.• We need to have more upskilling of Cook Islanders.• We need to be able to identify what skills we have now and what we will need in 10 years’ time.• We need to find ways to create benefits for collective economy.• Private sector has a minimum of training hours, introduce that to the government. Will lead to accreditation and upskilling our people.

Recognition and rewards – we don't need to be HR people:

- We need to use our culture to recognise our people. We need to create a culture of being valued. This is something we did 30-40 years ago – we used to acknowledge each other more, it was something we did naturally.
- We need to acknowledge that together we are better than as one.
- We need to be able to share our knowledge – people go off to learn but don't come back and share. Upskill the people here and then reward them for staying.

Build skills:

- Access to skill pools especially when we consider the ageing population. There's a huge population of young people in New Zealand for example that we can access. We can access their skills remotely.
- We need to be able to remotely access skills.
- Investigate secondments for Cook Islanders to industries in other countries where they are more progressed.
- Import foreigners to the Cook Islands to upskill locals. Don't just substitute locals for foreigners, it needs to be about capability building.
- We need to focus on improving our local economy by upskilling and education, this will lead to innovation.

Improve overall health and wellbeing:

- Productivity should not be thought of in simple economic terms – need to think about how we measure if our people are 'flourishing' or not – we need to think about mental, spiritual emotional and social health as well as economic health.
- We need government policy to ensure that we are buying local goods that are good for us, i.e. ensuring that the catering for today's event is healthy.
- We need better mental health support services.
- We need to incentivise wellness of our population for example taking a half hour walk every day, a policy on health catering at government events and ways to reduce absenteeism.

Culture and community

Create pride in essence of culture and community – bringing it back:

- We are not collectively working together this is leading to labour force inefficiency.
- Want people to move forward, and understand the economy, we need to share information.

Government/ Governance

We need good governance – with good checks and balances. We spend lots of money on governance, but if it doesn't have good checks then it's not money well spent.

Need to bring the 'Island Government' (Vaka) back into Rarotonga – it was removed for a reason, but now Rarotongan people can't access it.

We need better decision making and a clear vision and policy to get us there. It needs to cascade down from government agencies to local government, private sector and Non-governmental organisations.

We need better government policy and regulations to encourage hours of productivity (longer working hours).

Finance

Use innovative mediums to connect consumers to services i.e. Facebook.

We need better private equity and access to financing.

We need to finance more solid infrastructure, but we need to first understand what this looks like.

GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY

Consider review of government agencies

There has been some consolidation but now responsibilities are not clear.

Simplify our vision, what it is we are trying to achieve. E.g. The budget process – island, department, agency etc. simplify and have a shared vision. Should inform the budget.

There has been an increase in silos.

There needs to be more co-ordination across agencies and better planning.

Agencies should be optimising the use of information technology to be more efficient and improve processes.

Consider if the government is using online capabilities effectively.

Leadership from top to bottom needs to be reviewed.

Leadership is a key issue and it stems from the top.

We need to streamline government services and resources. It is currently very inefficient.

We need to prioritise resource allocation and reduce waste.

Structure – cross government relationships need to be simplified.

We need government to invest in information systems and collaboration amongst all government agencies e.g. online company registration.

Government needs to be applying the principles of quality management:

- Agreed outputs for all projects.
- Clear measurement of outcomes that are standardised across ministries.
- Working backwards in the design process – what do the people want? (User centred design).

Make changes to political system	We need to maintain the island governments.
	We need political reform – we need to reduce the number of Members of Parliament.
	There needs to be a regular sitting schedule for parliament.
	The Rarotonga Vaka should be brought back.
	Members of Parliament need to have clear job descriptions and expectations about performance.
	Select Committees should be focused on what improvements could be made. They should not just be MPs, there should be private sector expertise on the committees. For example, currently the Environment board has no experts on it.
	We should have referendums more regularly to make decisions about things that affect all Cook Islanders – similar to the Swiss method.
Increase public communications	There needs to be less political interference in management and administration of government services.
	Currently the processes are not transparent – there needs to be better communications to general public.
	Need to ensure processes are transparent.
	Communications skills need to be improved – staff are rude to public.
	Needs to be better cross-government communications – Ministries are not collaborating or communicating with each other.
	We need to increase information and data sharing.
	We need more innovative mediums to connect consumers to government services i.e. Facebook.
Make better use of public/private partnerships	We need to reduce the size of government considering where we can shift services to the private sector.
	Investigate more private and public sector partnerships – this is an ongoing challenge.
	There needs to be collaboration with the private sector.
	We need to protect expertise on the island – there needs to be better consultation between public and private organisations.
	We should consider the privatisation of some government services.

Better data collaboration and maintenance between the private and public sector.

Collaboration – oversight across the board, identify duplication and bring areas together to collaborate and achieve greater efficiencies. Bring in the private sector for greater efficiencies.

Enhance partnership between private sector and gov through government utilising local experts and skills to execute certain government projects and increase trust in government.

Outsourcing of gov services – need to consider this as an option to improve government efficiency. Look at other countries to see this trend.

There needs to be better online options and accessibility for private and public sector to work together.

Can more government services be outsourced? The government should play a facilitation role, but the private sector implements. Local governments can act as a private sector enabler.

Government agencies should be more focused on supporting private sector projects.

We need to consider outsourcing government sector jobs to the private sector.

Improve education services

We need to improve the level of community training and school education.

There should be more options for students from the Pa Enua to go to boarding school on Rarotonga. Often there is a lack of housing for them.

There needs to be better solutions for students who want further education.

The Cook Islands needs an apprenticeship scheme. We should investigate this as a matter of priority. We need to have opportunities for students that don't want to undertake further education so that they don't leave.

Our current education is not be focused in the right areas. We need better training in technology.

Review taxation system

We should look at creating a tax-free zone in the Pa Enua to encourage investment, businesses and residents to stay.

We need a review of Airbnb and similar short stay rentals to ensure they are being taxed correctly.

Decrease VAT and increase PAYE threshold.

Overseas accounts.

Online payment of revenue should be introduced.

Better tax incentives for locals versus expats.

A friendly tax regime – need to improve tax for the private sector to enhance the economy. The thinking needs to change. Stop penalising businesses that reduce revenue for government – change the mindset for the next 10 years.

Better access to soft loans or technical assistance for small businesses.

Tax friendly regime to assist small business owners.

Comment re: Remove the VAT – it costs more to collect it in the outer islands than what we collect.

**Government
staff**

There needs to be better performance management.

Local expertise – how to retain local skills, pay, training on the job or what they are actually interested in.

We need to balance local versus expat experience. We need to retain local skills.

We need to have more incentives for graduates who have skills the government needs.

There needs to be better pay and perks and equality across all government services.

There needs to be a focus on training staff in skills that are relevant.

We need to have better professional development opportunities for public servants.

There needs to be more incentives for performances.

Do we have the right succession planning in place and retention strategies for Cook Islanders?

We need competitive pay scales for police, health and education staff.

Needs to be a stronger focus on ethics and integrity. Need anti-corruption measures in place.

Create a learning management skills program to increase accountability and communications skills.

Education for government – we need to improve our services for government staff. We need to provide training for government workers to improve our services. Education at all levels is needed. With improving internet, some of the education can be online.

Government staff need to be more customer centric in everything they do.

BUILDING ON OUR COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES

Our unique culture is our biggest advantage

Promote our culture-based industries.

One of our main selling points should be our culture and lifestyle but we need to be living it.

The Cook Islands culture is alive and being practiced but it is modified/changing. Performing arts are still an active part of our lifestyle but our language is dying. Our culture is being diluted. We need to look at how we can revert back to our traditional culture, values and skills.

Concerned about the loss of language. Most children are only spoken to in English at home. While English is an advantage for tourism it is affecting our Te Reo Maori.

We have New Zealand style standards for infrastructure, size and attitude – this is an advantage for tourism.

An advantage is our political stability and government, and our free association with New Zealand.

Strong cultural identity, not just for tourism but for the people. They live it.

Warming culture – helps to maintain the tourism. But benefits of tourism go to Rarotonga and not the Pa Enea.

Creativity and crafts are part of our culture.

We should be making use of all of our natural resources including our culture and intellectual property.

We have strong cultural values – we are welcoming “Kia Orana”, vibrant “e tangata” and friendly.

We should capitalise on the technology revolution

We should use technology to make processes more efficient. For example, reducing paper processes and going digital.

Technology should create a closer connection between different islands.

It should allow us to be innovative in how we deliver health and education services.

Improvements in technology should encourage people to return home.

We should be looking to harmonise our modern technology with our traditional practices.

Increase online selling on local products:

- Government to inject resources, support and financing (soft loans) to increase online businesses.
- For the Pa Enua they could produce goods that are then sold in shops in Rarotonga or through online Rarotonga businesses.

Tourism is our main source of revenue

Focus on eco-based tourism - Grow local, buy local, eat local.

We need to maintain our lifestyle, culture and environment while encouraging tourism.

Personal security – compared to other pacific islands, this one is safe. You can walk safely at night.

We have improving technology and ICT services.

We are a very tolerant society.

Tourism diversification:

- Need to focus on Pa Enua not just Rarotonga – Pa Enua is a niche product, community-based approach.
- Need to consider sustainability of society, environment and infrastructure with increased tourism. We need to instil green practices now.

Need to stabilise our economy – need to have a plan B if tourism doesn't take off. 9/11 affected the island for 5 years. We need a plan to stabilise our economy. Government need to invest in other things and not just tourism.

“Symbolism – 3-legged dog. If third leg (tourism) gets taken it falls. Need a 4th leg”.

For our tourism industry there are two clear areas to consider:

- Rarotonga has well established tourist industries, need to consider the sustainability of those industries. What is our social and cultural capacity to cater to tourists? Our culture is what makes us who we are, so we need to consider that as something to market.
- The Outer Islands – we need to consider niche marketing for individual islands. For example, Mitiaro – wants to be the home stay destination. How do we market the other islands as a tourist product?

We need to focus on our environment

We are seen as being an untouched paradise.

Our lifestyle is changing, and this is impacting on the environment. On the other islands there is not a big shift unlike here in Rarotonga - maybe because of tourism and money minded culture here.

There is now rubbish all around.

We have clean air and environment we should capitalise on it – medical tourism?

Land. Land is used for security. Three islands don't recognise the land system. Not just used for building, should be used for food and agricultural needs (more planting, food security etc).

Land security is an issue, is controversial but needs to be dealt with.

Land security – the current system impacts everything in the economy.

Capitalise on environmental comparative advantages – we have some of the best crops but don't have access to international markets because of unreliable transport and poor digital services.

Harness our seabed minerals:

- The opportunity is there but needs to be a clear understanding of the environmental impact that would lead to economic opportunities.
- This would diversify out income from tourism.
- It is a renewable ocean resource.
- We also need to consider harnessing our seabed – minerals and fish etc. We aren't sure what's there re minerals, but we should find out. We could all be millionaires!

Our people are our greatest asset

We have aspiring young people.

We have experienced professionals and academics.

We need to support our people, so they don't leave.

We need to create incentives for Cook Islanders to come back.

Without our people our culture and environment mean nothing.

We have better education, especially in the Pa Enea but this is encouraging them to leave for overseas.

We are small enough that we should be able to pool our resources to create better quality education. This should lead to cost reductions but with the same level of output.

We should never forget Pa Enea disparity.

In the Pa Enea, how do we keep our children on the islands. How do we make them stay in the islands? Rarotonga is getting less land so it's becoming more important.

We need to remove barriers so people can move back and forth between the islands. What barriers can be removed to support people returning with the knowledge?

We need to consider our creative industries – we are not an industry we are a country. But a lot of what we have is geared towards the tourist industry.

Build a new creative industry

Education and training – for example, the crafts – we are losing some of our creative skills because its dying out.

Funding of “cottage industries” in the Pa Enea – weaving and jewellery.

Education and training – tour guides, entrepreneurial training.

Creative industries – arts and events.

Target the New Zealand and Australian markets.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY REVOLUTION

We need to ask what technology can be doing to benefit us into the future.

Government intervention

We need a government strategy to help us to adapt to technologies as a means of improving efficiency (time, effort, cost).

Government needs to focus on regulation in this area.

The public sector should focus on deliver of online services and products.

Government online:

- Create new online services by government to increase access to services. For example, the freight form.
- Better access to information.
- Utilise citizen science.

Review the banking system – laws and operations:

- Interest rates are too high to encourage economic growth.
- We need to investigate the use of crypto currency.
- Make internet banking available.

Introduction of new technology in the Pa Enea

Ensure the Pa Enea is able to benefit from the Manatua cable.

However, with access needs to come increased competition to reduce data costs.

The cable could provide opportunities for the Pa Enea to be self-sustaining without relying on Rarotonga.

Make sure Pa Enea are not left behind in terms of access to quality, low cost technology.

Servicing the outer island – need to make digital more accessible, servicing them with healthcare and education and gov services. Need proper teleconferencing facilitation etc.

Delivery of primary services to Pa Enuā.

Pa Enuā will be able to access services at the same time as Rarotonga.

Proper teleconferencing facilities are needed in the Pa Enuā.

Technology should lead to better services for the Pa Enuā:

- Online and tele health
- Online education
- Online government administration

Technology has the opportunity to open new doors

Smart technology to increase efficiency.

Reduce depopulation by providing more opportunities.

Enable better resource sharing, such as enabling human resources to share knowledge, skills or experience online in real time.

Technology is a serious business proposition not just for private but for public sector.

We need to consider how we enable and promote innovation and creativity to develop and program technology to make it better suited to our country's needs.

Commercialisation

Facilitate commercial uptake of goods:

- Solar stand-alone systems.
- Fishing koura.
- Aquaculture.
- Deadliest catch collection.

Develop a creative industry with increased access to ICT:

- looking at creative industry such as branding, marketing online, app development.

Promote local products especially between the Pa Enuā and Rarotonga to increase economic opportunities. For example, import substitute EC kurulkumma flour chutney.

Access to services and opportunities online over next 10 years e.g. International platforms for promoting local produce, skills e.g. Gluten free development

Create international platforms and visibility of our products:

- Improve export strategies.
- Reduce costs.
- Provide government subsidies on transport of people and goods.

Education

We are a tech savvy population – we have no fear and we tend to be early adopters of technology.

We are a tech savvy population – we have no fear and we tend to be early adopters of technology.

Harnessing this generation’s skills in technology and enable them to master technology. This will be the generation that will be finding the solutions for us, so need to harness that information.

Priority is on education – be seen as a tool and not a threat. No fear of it be early adopters. Improvement of the labour force - can’t do the business if no access to technology so may incentivise people returning to the island. Allows you to be remote.

We need to have more education about technology:

- how technology integrates into our society
- help to overcome technology phobias
- upgrade our technology skills
- have a top down approach
- increase technology acceptance
- need to be able to use technology to offset labour shortages.

We need more education about how we can utilise technology.

Risks

Need to understand the risks as well as benefits. Educating people is very important.

Monitoring the generation that uses tech. e.g. cyber bullying.

How do we control the “fake” reality that is created for the young and innocent?

We need to strengthen our intellectual property rights to keep pace with technology change.

Risks to be managed: online bullying, scams, privacy risks, using platforms properly.

Safeguard information – vulnerable to cyber-attacks so need to invest in protecting information.

Cyber security risks – need to keep this mind when we get better connectivity etc, so need to ensure that we are protecting our businesses from that emerging threat.

We need to consider cyber security and data protection.

There is a risk that traditional websites will go, and we will move to a more social media way of interacting and getting information.

There is a lack of quality connectivity for all we need to reduce inclusiveness.

There is a lack of cost and investment in technology.

Data Collection

We need to consider how our data will be used for example seabed mining research info.

Collection of information – more importantly, the analysis of that info. Need to collect the right data and analyse it so that we can use it better. That should become easier with improved IT so we can collect it better.

Improve information collection and analysis.

Issue of ownership of data – who owns it? Make sure that we have ownership of the data.

Lack of access to data – e.g. Australia and New Zealand have easier access to information from the Cook Islands, than the Cook Islanders do. Even worse access for the Pa Enea.



Appendix E: Investing in quality growth

Investing in quality growth

In the final breakout session participant used the “Keep, Start, Stop, Change” tool to discuss the topic of investing in quality growth.

Individuals did silent brainstorming around what they thought the Cook Islands people and government should keep, start, stop and change regarding investment in quality growth.

Delegates then moved into small group discussions to identify priorities. Those priorities have been categorised below into themes.

Keep

Culture

- Our natural hospitality and culture are our comparative advantage.
- We need to recognise the importance of our language, land and traditions.
- We need to enhance and ensure authenticity.
- We should include in education.
- We need to keep our Cook Island values as our foundation - the island we live in, our people, the way we do things.
- Keep and protect our stories, landmarks.
- Our cultural identity and creative cultures.
- Our hospitality, kindness – basically our values.

Keep New Zealand citizenship – without it we lose our place on the global stage.

Growing tourism

- Align with carrying capacity of infrastructure/environment/social.
- Develop other islands.
- Create investors guidelines.
- Developing new opportunities.
- improving the industry.
- Consider what needs to support tourism.

Education

- Scholarships to support for education.
- More study opportunities in country, give back to economy, and live in culture.
- Tertiary development investment.
- Investing in hospitality services (Consider introducing trade schools).

People

- Strong leadership.
- Skilled labour.
- Investing in our people.

Event marketing for the low season.

Community involvement in decision making.

The environment healthy.

Land lease system.

Foreign support.

Focus on agriculture but it needs to be improved.

Start

Culture

- Investing in cultural literacy.
 - National dialogue on values/customs.
 - Valuing our indigenous knowledge.
 - Unifying our people, building a community will help incentivising people to stay.
-

People

- Give our people incentives to stay and come back to the island.
 - Addressing social issues (e.g. domestic violence) that are coming up.
 - Upskilling and empowering people esp. women.
 - Support group for men with men by men- relating to health and wellbeing and domestic violence. Bring men up to a standard that we're happy with. It's an issue that is not touched.
 - Looking at our physical environment for health and wellbeing – look at food, no physical footpaths, safe pets. We don't have screenings etc.
 - Improving our health:
 - Non-communicable disease eradication.
 - A healthy workforce will improve our economy.
 - Stop the "obesity" fear etc. Give ideas and encourage what can be done instead.
-

Economy

- Encourage diversification of our industries.
 - Labour – need to look at our labour needs (shortages) and change our perspective.
 - Diversifying our economy away from tourism.
 - Developing new tourism products.
 - Small business innovation.
 - Setting a cap on the number of tourists.
 - Explore knowledge economy – diversify economy forward thinking investment – exporting skills overseas with people returning to raise families. E.g. Java skills being exported.
 - Screening of skills of migrants. Skilled migrant work-based visa – whereby if the country needs these skills, people can come in and get their own job. If they don't have a job by the time the visa expires, then they have to leave.
 - Mentoring and training with business skills.
-

Environment

- More green programs – our tourism relies on our environment, so we need to care about it more.
 - Innovative disposal and reuse of waste utilise in the country.
-

Tax

- Modernising our legal and tax system.
 - Tax free zones in the outer islands.
-

Education

- Investing in education in the environment and tourism.
- Strengthening human capital, opening training /university program.
- Engage regionally and sharing skills, start applying for finding and accessing remote and short-term contracts across the pacific islands.

Government

- Budget process to change – match tourism to environment etc.
- Develop national population policy – we believe is the biggest problem. Do you think we are growing with current rate? Face up! What skills do we need? What does our population make up need to be?
- Volunteer program – through government exchanging jobs and ministries to learn different skills.
- Make decisions on evidence – not anecdotal but not ignoring people's experience. Don't assume we know what the outer islands want.

Stop

Government

- Appropriate strategies without proper consultations e.g. Vaka governance.
- Subsidising property.
- Large investment without meaningful consultation of our people.
- Stop attitude of relying on government to do everything. Stop giving handouts – there is no long-term return.
- Importing foods.
- Talking and act.
- Ad hoc planning – need to hold more people accountable in government.
- Fear of extended territories - transnational relations is not necessarily a bad thing.

Economy

- Contracting with China – we need to learn our lessons there.
- Bringing importing harmful products i.e. all the plastic.
- Increasing tourism – we need to look at the economy without tourism.
- Depending on migrant labour force.
- Economic activities that have links to criminal activity.

Environment

- Harming our environment (Inc. ocean), including pollution, hazardous waste and plastic bags.

Health

- Entry of drugs to islands.
- Non-communicable disease it has a negative impact and compares us to other countries.
- Family planning (to increase the population).
- Bringing in products that are harmful to our health + e-waste.
- Providing inferior- quality water.
- Fear of depopulation – we can survive with less people.

Environment

- Educational goals and how we deliver education. We're not preparing children for the world they are inheriting.

Change

Education

- Change educational pathways - need to look beyond one size fits all. It needs to be aligned with how we want to see ourselves in 10 years' time. Identify what is the gap in the market/country e.g. trade level education and then focus on that.
- Our education system – it no longer meets our needs:
 - We need to look at what we need to survive and then focus children's education on that (i.e. agriculture).
 - More learning in Cook Islands about non-communicable disease rates.
 - Widen the scope of scholarships.

Government

- Enhance public consultation – need to look at more participatory forums like these.
- Need to start looking at “user pays” – make sure everyone pays their fair share. For example, water use.
- Air New Zealand flights – subsidies to US and Australia, stop/change this. End cost goes to the Airline (paid for by the gov/risk).
- Fragmented approach with outer islands we need a more holistic approach.
- Tax structure – encourage investment through changes.
- Change the way local government is used – move to a more council approach where they come up with their own sub-plan and manage squabbles. Responsibility needs to be put back into the local village and then monitored.
- Less focus on Rarotonga.
- More focus on overall infrastructure.

Environment

- Our approach to environmental management and social responsibility.
- Environmental responsibilities, solar, tax breaks.
- Make businesses want to take up greener technologies. Transportation supported by renewable energy.

Economy

- Tourism:
 - Strengthening our standards tourism accreditation.
 - Focus on economic tourism – change to knowledge industry.
 - We need to stop relying on tourism as the primary contribution. We have other capabilities.
 - The types of tourists we want – define and then attract them to spend money here.
 - Identify value proposition for each of the 15 islands – why should tourists visit there? They should come up with their own. E.g. Their birds etc. Check – do they want that industry? Make it an overseas destination.
- Marketing of the Cook Islands – promote the supporting industries.
- Engagement of foreign Labours – should we be giving them any cultural training?
- Business focused growth only – pay more attention society needs and the environment – future thinking.

Health

- Our eating and lifestyle habits.

All group ideas and outputs

The information below presents all outputs from small group discussion on investing in quality growth in entirety, with no consolidation into themes. When there is a number in brackets, this represents the same idea being presented multiple times.

Delegates were also invited to do an individual brainstorm to capture all their ideas as well as small group discussion. These are provided in a separate excel spreadsheet.

Keep	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture – language, land, arts and crafts, traditions, indigenous knowledge (13) • Human capital especially those with needed skills (5) • Tourism development (5) • New Zealand citizenship (4) • Infrastructure investment (4) • Education (4) – keep strengthening efforts to offer tertiary education • Our natural hospitality (3) • Fiscal policy of the government (3) • Environmental priorities (3) • Consultation with local people (3) • Environment (3) • Our historical landmarks (2) • Building our local workforce • Renewable energy projects • Health • Law and Order • Technology • Participatory forums • Air New Zealand underwrite • Encouraging SME development programs • Leader/leading regional conversations • Attracting fit for purpose partnerships • Engaging with public, private and community through forums like today. • CINAT • Education for lease custodians • Cook Island values as our fundamental foundation • The accessibility, openness, free space with no red tape • Korero o te orau and expand • Nursing education program – investment in our health • Working on solutions for wastewater reticulation • Investing in our hospitality school and support services • Investing in grass root projects (i.e. GCF, agricultural projects, fisheries) to protect our way of life • Pa Enea local government • Preserve industry jobs for local people only • Strong leadership • Skilled labour • Event marketing for the off season • Our people
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investing in our creative industries including our Kia Orana values • Keep the land lease system for local Cook Islanders only • Foreign labour – we need them • Agriculture but needs improving
Start	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax free zone in the Pa Enea (3) • Prioritise culture and cultural literacy (2) • Provide incentives for Cook Islanders to return (2) • Beef up tertiary education (2) • Stricter impositions on development • Raise awareness of our constitution • Diversify our economy • Vocational training for technology • A population policy • Increasing wages • Incentives for sustainable and planned infrastructure development • Support new direction without losing traditions • Regulate early/childhood education • More fitness and health • Build police capacity • Find new markets • Tax benefits for local products • Tax benefits for long term rental • Thinking about innovative growth • Supporting diversity • Easy entry for investors who want to start a non-tourist related business • Action orientated economic development • Engagement not just talk fests • Green programs • Values driven education system • Agricultural food security initiatives • Crop identification and labour focus • New tourist activities • Assessing the cost of maintaining assets • Using smart technology • Small and Medium Enterprises start-up incubator • Policies to support moral booking • Vocational training • Population policy • Seabed mining • Investing in our education • Improving infrastructure, roads, drainage and water • Investment in the private sector • Consulting with the community regarding the budget – what do we think the money should be spent on • Incentive packages for the Pa Enea residents (i.e. tax relief) and start-up capital for businesses • Investor guidelines • Labour market gap analysis

- Value/payment for cultural and sustainable living
- Education in life skills and financial literacy for after secondary school
- Trade promotion initiatives to diversify our economy
- Strengthen our IP laws
- Strengthen our resilience to climate change threats
- Address societal consequences to economic development (national drug policy, domestic violence, juvenile delinquency)
- Creating a healthy workforce (mentally and physically)
- Establish environmental health limits with stronger monitoring and data collection linked to decision makers
- Prioritise our people (i.e. not the tourists)
- Better public transport options – ride sharing, lime scooters, e-bikes
- Innovative use of waste so it is repurposed e.g. creative industries (bags), infrastructure (plastic in roads) retail (plastic to make clothes)
- Fix education by strengthening human capital by opening training programme in country for Cook Island Teachers
- Develop a HR strategy in order to fulfil labour shortages – a 5 -10-year plan
- Stronger environmental controls for development
- Enforcement of the laws that are already in place
- Detailed assessment of seabed minerals
- Undertaking due diligence and increasing transparency
- Education – we need upskilling. Need more quality teachers. We need more access to teachers (may need to bring these in from offshore).
- Investing in our locals upskill through private/government partnerships and through an apprenticeship scheme
- National dialogue on what are our values and customs, virtues
- Prioritise what we need to invest in – education and health
- Upskill and empower more women to enable decision making
- Diversify our economy – invest into other industries i.e. financial, technological or cultural
- Create an education industry - Turn our hospitality school into a faculty that delivers New Zealand standard qualifications for the whole of the pacific (or even Australasia).
- Develop a cultural industry – CINAT paid profession
- Create a business round table to provide input into policies
- Increase pool of small businesses by providing soft loans and business investment to encourage innovation
- Set limits for tourists coming into the country
- Teach our future Cook Islanders real sustainable living
- Improve our agricultural sector to provide sustainability
- Diaspora return
- Keeping people here
- Increase schemes for renewable energy
- Asking the question – who are we developing our nation for? We need a clear vision for tourism
- Fund outer islands tourism development through the private sector
- Increase private sector work and investment
- More IT investment
- Modernise the legal and taxation systems

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Valuing indigenous knowledge • Screening migrant workers for skills and qualifications • Have evidence-based discussions • Consider how we will change the physical environment to make healthier choices easier • Engage more regionally in terms of sharing skills, start a platform to access skills from overseas including other pacific islands (not just New Zealand and Australia) • Capitalise on skilled Cook Islanders who are overseas – can we engage them remotely • Explore initiatives to build the knowledge economy – how can Cook Islanders be skilled to love locally but work with overseas companies remotely. • Focus on inclusive growth, taking into account the more vulnerable in our community • Population policy – increase over 30s, consider composition and make up • Build awareness of agriculture through education for our children • Health support groups • Volunteer programs to learn different skills including people from government, non-governmental organisations and private sector • Innovation and business hub – with joint private and public funding • Create a clear vision for the future • User pays for commodities i.e. pay for disposal of waste • Invest in training teachers to overcome current shortage • Reform labour laws – include things like benefits, long service leave, OHS, labour standards, workers compensation
Stop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracting with China (2) • Importing foreign products when there is local produced (2) • Expecting handouts all of the time (2) • Importing foreign workers that stay permanently (2) • Filing jobs with foreign workers without a strategy to attract Cook Islanders back • Stop outer island government • Cutting budgets • Under-funding • Treating police as low paid profession • Cut back on subsidies • Restricting innovative thinking • Thinking that land access stops or inhibits economic growth in all sectors • Using harmful chemicals for agriculture • Legislation/regulations on development – insist on proper drainage • Mindset for progressing sustainable growth • Resourcing approach to implement regulations hindering development • Approach to information sharing to educate our society on civic duties/responsibilities e.g. public meetings have low turnout or instead of teaching our children that education is to get a good job, education allows you to be your own boss. • Bringing in rubbish • Money going offshore • Rubbish/waste • Building design that impacts on the environment (sand/wetlands)

- Immigration policy – stop the ease of unskilled labour entering the Cook Islands, encourage local employment
- Exploitation of migrant labour
- Importing harmful products that affect our environment
- Tax on vegetables
- Spending money unnecessarily – travel, parliament building which is not used
- Exploiting natural resources
- Changing strategies without appropriate consultation
- Consider framework for recruitment and employment of key positions
- Making large investments without meaningful consultation
- Subsidising fossil fuels
- Trying to increase tourism – we need to diversify
- Non-Communicable Disease system
- Comparing ourselves to other countries
- Changing plans when current plans have not been brought out properly
- Depopulation
- Talking, take action
- Giving handouts
- Picking winners – develop across the island economy not just one specific think i.e. support ten agricultural products not one. Not all of our eggs in one basket.
- Monopoly markets – telecom, airline, shipping
- Activities that compromise our environment and ocean
- Importing fossil fuel vehicle. Provide subsidies for hybrid/electric vehicles.
- Importing junk food, subsidise healthy food
- Importing non-recyclable items
- Polluting the ocean e.g. two stroke boat engines
- Family planning, increase the population
- Pollution/hazardous waste/plastic bags
- Non-Communicable Disease
- Funding marketing activities that have low-yield delivery and tourism accommodation (i.e. Airbnb)
- Harming our environment
- Drugs entering Cook Islands
- Bringing in unskilled labour with no development plan
- Subsidising fossil fuels
- Fearing depopulation
- Creating fear about obesity instead focus on creating positive lifestyle choices
- Pay disparity for teachers
- Bringing in products harmful to our environment and health
- Economic activity that has links or might encourage criminal activity
- Importing food
- Contributing to Non-Communicable Disease
- Relying on tourism as the primary contributor to the economy
- Business focused growth only no focus on social or environmental
- Stop “mickey mouse partner schemes” – only allow genuine investors only
- Stop producing inferior quality water
- Inferior internet services
- Adhoc planning by government agencies

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The increasing cost of basic services
Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus of education e.g. trades, digital development (2) • Improvements to – transportation, telecommunications, water, sanitation, roads • Reduce interest rates • Change mindset for people to come back – we often see depopulation as a problem • Central government needs to lead in the Pa Enuā • Eliminate Non-Communicable Disease system • Prioritise education • Give more opportunities to young people to explore new directions • The community should take more responsibility • Limit foreign investment – grow local investment • Create educational career pathways • Taxation policy (e.g. tax-free threshold) • Educational approach towards enterprise, environmental and contextualised to our island resources. • Attitudes and perceptions through reward and recognition • Always have local expertise leading consultations • Hotels/resorts waste management systems • Strengthen immigration laws • Revise the standard education curriculum to align with who we are as Cook Islanders • Pay and benefit structures that benefit expats • Encourage more private investment to make more income • Invest in better roads not just fixing holes • Scholarships for remote studies • Increase private sector engagement in environmental management and social responsibility • Introduce transport fuelled by renewable energy • Incentives for environmental responsibility e.g. subsidies on solar or electric vehicles • Approach to Pa Enuā • Fragmented approach to a holistic vision and action plan • Land laws • How to conduct public consultation on legislation • Regulatory settings for telecommunications • Why are children not choosing agricultural science? This should be a social economic strategy, not just an economic strategy. • Investment – biggest constraint is money. Expensive – access to offshore funds. Need to encourage investment in locals. • Change education current it is based on academics, rather than values/respect • Government needs to find the money to invest in new education • Bridging the knowledge from what people know to what is coming by improving our education system • People management – do we have the right skill sets to do the jobs we need • We need to focus on efficiency and consistency • Budgeting process where and when we budget so much for tourism, but we don't match it with a corresponding budget for infrastructure

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the Cook Islands is currently marketed – instead of focusing on what other Pacific islands are going to focus on our unique strengths such as services, accommodation and good rental cars. • Focus scholarships on STEM programs, have a wider focus so our students can get to NASA • Tax structure of the investment regime • Policy settings – this country needs to start thinking like a business. • Rural drift • Our education curriculum to allow for more learning about our Cook Islands language, history and arts. • The approach to sustainable development in our country • Non-Communicable Disease rates • Teach literacy to our children – increase literacy rates • Eating habits/lifestyle habits • Tourism – needs to be more closely monitored • Focus on economic diversification – social media and knowledge industry • The way we look at local produce – we import too much • Remove February from the calendar • Our political system to one that is fit for purpose • Improve the education system • Land tenure system • Focus on people first • Less focus on Rarotonga • Invest in infrastructure that support the environment • Encourage local vakas to develop their own community plans on what they want to develop in their area or utilise the Aronga mana and start moving towards the lagoon (e.g. ridge to reef scenario) • Identify the type of tourists we want to attract • Identify the value proposition of the different islands – why they are each unique • Develop specific reasons to visit in shoulder/low season e.g. events, sports, film festival • Make it a conference destination for overseas companies in low season • Make bold investment choices on education targeting agriculture, information technology and entrepreneurship • Our educational goals • Improve healthy living • Law reforms regarding red tape, immigration, labour laws • Diversify government revenue so we aren't so reliant on inwards tourism • Government thinking on how to set budgets – needs more private sector thinking and policy making • Invest in improved education opportunities including in the Pa Enua • Business Trade and Investment Board to set up better investment packages and guidance
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