



PACIFIC IMMIGRATION DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

PIDC Regular Annual Meeting 4-6 June, 2019

Information Paper

Venue & Dates

Venue: Edgewater Resort - Rarotonga
Dates: 4 – 6 June, 2019.
Time: 9.00am - 5.00pm

Arrival

On arrival at Rarotonga International Airport, all conference delegates will be required to go through normal immigration, customs and quarantine checks. PIDC conference delegates are required to identify themselves to Cook Islands immigration officials and PIDC Secretariat staff who will be waiting at the arrivals concourse to direct you to your airport transfers.

Ground Transportation

Cook Islands Immigration and the Secretariat will be providing transfers for all conference delegates. PIDC staff will be on standby to help with transportation should the need arise. To assist the Secretariat in organising transfers, all self-funded meeting delegates are requested to provide their travel itineraries to the Secretariat for planning purposes.

Visa Requirements

As a Visitor to the Cook Islands, you do not require entry visas for stays of up to 31 days, however you must have a return ticket and valid passport. Delegates need to show:
(a) a valid passport for at least 6 months from the date of intended travel; (b) an airline ticket as evidence of return travel arrangements.

Accommodation

All funded participants will be staying at the Edgewater Resort & Spa. Edgewater Resort & Spa is only 5 minutes' drive from the Rarotonga International Airport and 5km from Avarua township.

Event Information

Venue

The PIDC Annual Meeting will be held at the Edgewater Resort Conference Room from 4 – 6 June, 2019.

Attire

Participants may wear Pacific Island equivalent working attire during the meeting days. All Members and Observers are required to wear their Elei Shirts that will be provided by the Secretariat on the first day of the meeting.

Allowance

PIDC Funded Participants will receive their allowances at the Edgewater Resort lobby on Sunday (02 June) evening and Monday (03 June) morning.

Summary of Conference Functions

▪ Monday	3rd June
9am – 5pm	PIDC Board Meeting (Closed) (Venue: Edgewater Resort Conference Room)
	Free Evening
▪ Tuesday:	4th June
9am– 5pm:	Meeting – Day 1 (Venue: Edgewater Resort Conference Room)
6:30pm:	Transport for dinner
7pm:	Opening Dinner hosted by Cook Islands Immigration (Venue: The Islander Hotel)
▪ Wednesday:	5th June
9am– 5pm:	Meeting – Day 2 (Edgewater Resort Conference Room)
6pm:	Transport for dinner
6:30pm:	Australia/New Zealand Hosted Dinner (Venue: The Ale House)
▪ Thursday:	6th June
9am– 5pm:	Meeting – Day 3 (Edgewater Resort Conference Room)
6:30pm:	Transport for dinner
7:00pm	Conference Closing Dinner hosted by Cook Islands Immigration (Venue: Vaiana's)
▪ Friday:	7th June
9am- 1pm:	Workshop for National Administrators of PIDC NCP Network (Closed) (Venue: Muri Beach Resort Conference room)

***Morning tea, Lunch and Afternoon tea will be provided during the Meeting days.**

Cook Islands: Some Facts at a Glance

Geography

The Cook Islands are situated 3,500km (2,200 miles) northeast of New Zealand and 1,000km (600 miles) southwest of Tahiti in the South Pacific, forming part of Polynesia. The 15 islands fall into two groups: the scattered Northern Group are all coral atolls while the Southern Group is of volcanic origin. Most of the larger islands include lagoons surrounded by small areas of fertile land above which rise volcanic hills.

Rarotonga is the largest and highest island with a rugged volcanic interior, its highest peak being TE Manga, at 652m (2,140ft). Coral reef surrounds the island and the population lives between reef and hills where rich soil supports both tropical and subtropical vegetation. Most of the island is covered by thick evergreen bush. Most of the larger islands include lagoon surrounded by small areas of fertile land, above which rise volcanic hills. The best beaches in the Cook Islands are found on Aitutaki, which is part of the eight-island Southern Group.

Climate & Time Zone

The Cook Islands enjoy a pleasant warm and sunny climate all year round. June to August are slightly cooler months, November to March marks the warmer season with occasional tropical showers. The drier months, from April to November, average 26°C. The warmer, more humid season runs from December to March, when the temperature ranges between 22°C (min) and 30°C (max). Cook Islands Standard Time is GMT/UTC +10h and No daylight-saving time.

Culture & Customs

Cook Islanders are mainly Polynesians. Although fun-loving and friendly, Cook Islanders, like Tahitians and other Polynesians, are a conservative and generally religious people who hold on to their customary way of life and culture. You will be enchanted by tiny 4-5-year-old children performing in the traditional dances with pride and amazing skill. The art of dance is taken very seriously in the Cooks. Each island has its own special dances and these are practiced assiduously from early childhood. There are numerous competitions throughout the year on each island.

The outer islands produce traditional weaving of mats, basket ware and hats. Particularly fine examples of rito-hats are worn by women to church on Sundays. These are made from the uncurled fiber of the coconut palm and are of very high quality.

Food

The more you explore the Cook Islands, the more local authentic cuisine you'll discover, ranging from simple fresh fish enjoyed with your feet in the sand to high-class restaurants and everything in between. You could eat in a different place every meal. Superb game fish like tuna, mahi-mahi or broadbill is typical – you'll get no fresher in the most expensive restaurants in the world. Island night entertainment is a must: beautiful dancing, traditional costumes and mesmerizing drums.

Whatever you feel like, the choice of eating options is vast and varied in Cook Islands. Visitors can easily dine in a different location for every meal of their stay. Buffet meals feature favorite local dishes like ika mata (marinated raw fish) and umu kai cooked in a

traditional earth oven. As well as gourmet burgers pizza and fish sandwiches by the water's edge, there are many colorful cafes serving light meals and your fix of great coffee.

Getting Around

Cook Islands transport is primarily provided by the Cook's Island Bus which circles both clock- and anti-clockwise around the island of Rarotonga throughout the day. Although later evening services are provided throughout the week, these do not run on Sundays.

Taxis are available on Rarotonga and Aitutaki and are great for airport transfers, as well as full day touring around the islands. It is recommended to book taxis in advance as there are a limited number of operators throughout the Island.

If you prefer to adventure more independently, there are motorbike and car rental companies who offer vehicles for hire. Well known hire companies on the island include Budget & Avis, as well as local service providers such as Island Car and Bike Hire. Most hotels will offer drop off transfer services for their guests wishing to hire a vehicle and sometimes they will even return the vehicle after have finished using it.

If you do wish to rent a vehicle and drive yourself around the Cook Islands, exploring at your own pace, you will need to obtain a Cook Islands driver's license as international licenses are not accepted there. But don't worry, obtaining a Cook Islands driver's license is very easy – all visitors need to do is find the Avarua Police Station and present their current international driver's license.

Languages

The language is similar to that found on many of the Pacific Islands. There is a total of five living languages spoken in the Cook Islands however it may surprise you to learn that aside from Cook Islands Maori, English is the other official Cook Islands language. The following is a selection of common words and phrases translated into the most common form of Cook Islands language, Cook Islands Maori.

English	Cook Islands
Hello	Kia orana
Goodbye	Aere ra
Thank you	Meitaki
To dance	ura
Food	kai
Yes	Ae
No	Kare

Currency

The official Cook Islands currency is the New Zealand. The New Zealand dollar is one of the world's 10 most-traded currencies and is the currency used in the Cook Islands. Bank of the South Pacific (BSP) and ANZ on Rarotonga, are open Monday-Friday 9am-3pm with BSP being open on Saturday mornings between 9am and noon. Western Union for currency exchange and money transfers is available in Avarua. There are ATM machines

on both Rarotonga and Aitutaki. Both BSP and ANZ bank have agencies in Aitutaki. EFTPOS is available at a number of the larger trading outlets around Rarotonga, for account holders who bank within the Cook Islands only.

Master Card and Visa credit cards are widely accepted at most large shops and restaurants for a minimum purchase of \$20. Remember to check with your card company to find out how much their conversion rate will be for credit card purchases or withdrawals. It would also pay to check what service fees your card company charges. AMEX cards are not currently accepted.

Contact Details

Prior to the Regular Annual Meeting all enquiries should be directed to Sachin Singh at the PIDC Secretariat:

Tel: +685 29107
E-mail: sachin.singh@pidcsec.org

****During the meeting any enquiries can be directed to the Secretariat Team.***

