



Loan: L2026-35-4_001, Tāmaki Paenga Hira Auckland Museum

The bakoa (shark) is honoured in Kiribati culture for its power and strength! Bakoa teeth were prized for their sharp, serrated edge and shaped into weapons as well as tools for healing. This bakoa-tooth knife is on display as part of *Our Ocean of Islands* exhibition.

Did you know?

Kiribati is home to one of the world's biggest bakoa sanctuaries – about 12 times the size of Aotearoa! No bakoa fishing is allowed there, so they can swim safe and free.

School Holiday Programme: Island Explorer: Kiribati

28 Sept-2 Oct, 5-9 Oct 2026

10am-2:30pm | \$5 per child | Bookings advised

These school holidays, uncover the legend as part of *Our Ocean of Islands* — our new exhibition celebrating 24 island nations across Moana Oceania.

Learn about the mighty bakoa (shark), fierce guardian of the people of Kiribati! Spot the shark's-tooth pattern woven into Kiribati mats and clothing, then create your own woven artwork with colourful fibres, fabric and paper.

Grab an activity booklet and become an Island Explorer — hunt through the exhibition for Kiribati stories, language, dance, voyaging tales, and real shark-tooth swords on display!

Spring
School
Holidays



THE mini Māui CLUB

Sept/Oct 2026

#24: Our Ocean of Islands

Mauri! Si'oto'ofa, Talofa lava, Aloha, Bula, Kia ora! We are celebrating our newest exhibition *Our Ocean of Islands*.



Become an Island Explorer...

...and learn to weave your story



Meleseini

Playing the fangufangu

Do you know what a fangufangu is? It's an ancient Tongan nose flute. That's right! A flute that's played with your nose!

At just 18 years old, Meleseini Haitelenisia Fifita 'O Lakepa Lolohea Fetu'u Tuai is one of the youngest contributors to *Our Ocean of Islands*, alongside her 14-year-old sister, Akesiumeimoana Tu'ulaikempilisi Tupou Māhina Tuai.

Meleseini performs alongside her sister and her grandfather, Professor Hūfanga-He-Ako-Moe-Lotu Dr 'Ōkusitino Māhina in 'Alo Mai, 'Alo Mai (Row Your Canoe Here), a work made together with Dr Sione Faletau, one of the exhibition's special Tongan contributions. She plays the fangufangu, an ancient Tongan nose flute that she first learned to play at just eight years old.

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"I've always been the one pulled in to perform," Meleseini says. "For graduations, weddings, everyone wants to hear it. Even for conferences!"

For Meleseini, the fangufangu is more than an instrument. It is a way to connect with her Tongan culture and heritage while growing up in Aotearoa.

"Through this exhibition, and through playing the fangufangu, I've realised how much of a want and need there is for that connection, especially for young people who grow up away from the homeland."

Meleseini is part of an initiative to revive the fangufangu and encourage Tongan youth to learn

this special instrument. She loves seeing how cultural practices can be carried forward and adapted by new generations.

She says working on *Our Ocean of Islands* has shown her that culture is "living and breathing". For young Tongans growing up in Aotearoa, learning Tongan music and sharing it with others is a special way to stay connected to where they come from and help keep these traditions going for the next generation.

Did you know?

The **fangufangu** has a beautiful, distinctive sound and has an important place in Tongan culture. It has a gentle, melancholic sound in the minor tune, known in Tongan as ongo fakafa'ahikehe, the sound that connects to the underworld. Come and find Meleseini's performance in *Our Ocean of Islands* and listen to the sound of the fangufangu.

Kupu huna

Ready for an island adventure?
Can you spot all 24 island nations?

- | | | | |
|------------------------|---|---------------------|---------------|
| 1 Aotearoa | 7 Lamoireg (Federated States of Micronesia) | 13 Papua New Guinea | 19 Tokelau |
| 2 Indigenous Australia | 8 Marshall Islands | 12 Rotuma | 20 Tonga |
| 3 Palau | 9 Naoero | 15 Samoa | 21 Kiribati |
| 4 Cook Islands | 10 New Caledonia | 16 Solomon Islands | 22 Tuvalu |
| 5 Fiji | 11 Niue | 17 Tahiti | 23 Vanuatu |
| 6 Hawai'i | 12 Pitcairn | 18 Taiwan | 24 West Papua |

P A P U A N E W G U I N E A G Q H S A M O A N
T O N G A V U U H C I A I N O D E L A C W E N
D O R E O A N L K N V S A U P A P T S E W X D
I N R I A C T I P V P A L A U V A N U A T U Z
W Y Q V I C O O K I S L A N D S H Q G Z D L T
Y Q C D D S D N A L S I L L A H S R A M I A O
T A I W A N Y U N I M Z E C Z M I N U Q T V K
L A M O I R E G X J X Z X U N I U E Z O I U E
D B Q S P X H T V I X F U W D M B W I G H T L
R H T V W W J A W F Q K I R I B A T I H A W A
O F Y D W I R X I U U A O R A E T O A F T B U
T O Q Y D F H J O P M J U B D E T Q T W B J W
U I N D I G E N O U S A U S T R A L I A O U C
M A C J F X T I I A W A H K Q O Z I W P C S N
A H U F O Z T M V I C G Y N J D V O Q T N G V
J S D N A L S I N O M O L O S Z T X N L S F A



Fishy fun

Did you weave a fish?
We want to see it!

Take a photo of your fishy friend and send it our way. You could even win a shark plushie!

Entries close end of November 2026

Enter

by emailing us at
info@maritimemuseum.co.nz

or tag us on Insta
or Facebook;

@nzmaritimemuseum

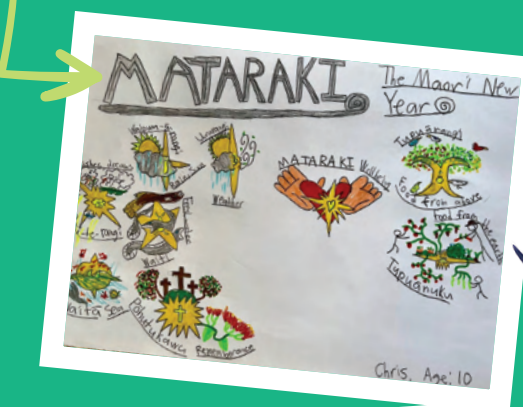
Take a breath

We had so many great entries to our *Take a Breath* competition — tino pai rawa atu!



Winner: Ollie, age 5

Shout outs to: Sanaya, age 9,
Chris, age 10 and Edward!



Shark facts

Sharks need our help

Believe it or not, sharks are in trouble! Many kinds are Vulnerable, Endangered, or even Critically Endangered. That's often because of fishing — sometimes sharks get caught by accident, and sometimes they're hunted on purpose.

Sharks keep the ocean healthy

Sharks are ocean bosses! As top predators, they help keep everything else in balance — which means more kinds of sea creatures can thrive where sharks live.

Shark "attacks" are super rare

Most of the time, a shark bite is just a case of mistaken identity — one nibble and the shark swims off! Only about four people a year are affected worldwide. Sharks have a lot more to fear from us — around 100 million are killed by humans every year.