

Love, respect and acceptance for everyone



Why now: there's an urgent need to change the country's Crimes Act, which bans same-sex activity. In November the select committee reviewing the outdated legislation said it would recommend reinstating the criminal penalties for same-sex activity - despite earlier indications the law would be repealed. Its recommendation is now expected to go to Parliament in September 2020.

We say
criminalising same-sex activities is unconstitutional and discriminatory.

PRIDE
COOK ISLANDS

InfoSheet
#001

Real people are affected.

Akavaine, Akatututane and LGBT+ people are loved and valued members of our families and communities. But we still have people living in fear of being themselves and feeling they won't be accepted. That's why we need to act now and spread a powerful message of love, respect and acceptance for everyone.

Equal rights not special rights. Everyone should be treated with dignity and respect regardless of who they are – and that means ensuring no one faces unfair treatment because of their LGBT+ identity. We are fighting for the same rights as everyone else, for equality under the law.



Our focus is decriminalising same-sex activity. Don't make us criminals for being true to ourselves. We're not asking for same-sex marriage - let's be absolutely clear about that.

LGBT+ stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and along with heterosexual they are terms used to describe people's sexual orientation or gender identity. The "plus" in LGBT+ means we're inclusive of other rainbow groups in our community. Akavaine and Akatututane are Cook Islands Maori terms for trans women and trans men - long-established and well-recognised in our culture.



Pride Cook Islands is the public campaign led by Te Tiare Association and the LGBT+ communities of the Cook Islands. Established in 2007, Te Tiare is the official body that represents the Cook Islands rainbow community.

Constitutional & Human Rights legislation - The legal case for change

Discrimination on the basis of sex is unconstitutional. The Cook Islands Constitution enshrines fundamental human rights and freedoms - and explicitly states they exist without discrimination on the basis of sex. Applied in a legal context, the word sex necessarily includes sexual orientation and gender identity.

Human rights are universal. UN Secretary General António Guterres recently urged for the repeal of laws criminalising homosexuality - labelling them a human rights violation: "So long as people face criminalisation, bias and violence based on their sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics, we must redouble our efforts to end these violations... the United Nations will never give up the fight until everyone can live free and equal in dignity and rights."

"I am representing all the mothers who do not agree for any legislation to decide who our children should love and how to love."

Lady Tuaine Marsters
PATRON OF TE TIARE ASSOCIATION

What you can do: three ways you can stand with us!

- 1.** Email your Member of Parliament directly. Let them know you support decriminalisation and encourage them to vote for change. We have resources to make the process easy at www.tetiareassociation.com
- 2.** Have a conversation with your family, colleagues and members of your community. Talk with those closest to you about this important issue.
- 3.** Connect with us online. Receive updates and our latest news - like @PrideCookIslands on Facebook and join the conversation. Download the Pride Cook Islands graphic from our Facebook page and use it as your profile picture on social media with the hashtags #TeTiare and #PrideCookIslands.

