



3 March 2020

2020 ASB Polyfest gets underway in a fortnight

The Manukau Sports Bowl will burst into life in a fortnight's time with the 45th anniversary of the ASB Polyfest. From Wednesday, March 18 to Saturday, March 21 the Sports Bowl will reverberate with traditional song and dance from Auckland's youth.

With regard to the Coronavirus, the organisers of the ASB Polyfest are monitoring the advice and recommendations of the Ministry of Health on a regular basis, and at this stage are going ahead with the festival.

On Monday morning, the Minister of Health, David Clark said - "we don't have an outbreak in New Zealand, it's perfectly safe." when asked by media if events like the ASB Polyfest should go ahead.

Clark said, "we're confident at this stage the chance of any spread into the community is very low, as long as people take the sensible precautions". He added "if anyone is feeling unwell they shouldn't go to a big public event" and they should self-isolate.

The 2020 ASB Polyfest was officially launched last week by the Minister of Pacific People's – Hon Aupito William Sio at a special function at ASB's North Wharf.

This year's festival will see more than 12,000 secondary school students from across the Auckland region perform on stage, with a record 286 performing groups entered (including 3 international groups) from 75 schools, with 8 schools coming from outside of the Auckland region.

Students will compete in speech, song and dance on six stages - Cook Islands, Maori, Niue, Samoan, Tongan, and a Diversity stage which features cultures such as Chinese, Fijian, Tokelau, Indian, Korean and Sri Lankan.

Another key component of the ASB Polyfest is food and craft. Each stage has a surrounding village with food & craft stalls from the respective Maori or Pacific culture.

At the helm of the iconic Auckland festival is Event Director - Seiuli Terri Leo-Mauu. Leo-Mauu sees the festival as "more than 4 days of competition, speech and performances. It's a place our children can express themselves, it's an avenue that creates time with our Mamas and Papas and learning the old ways of how to weave and make your costumes, how to sing or chant the way they do back home, how to articulate and pronounce words properly, how to be respectful and be disciplined, how to be a leader. All these attributes, characteristics, skills, our children take back to school and we hope that they apply these to their studies and future career aspirations."



Seiuli Terri Leo-Mauu is also excited about the speech competitions at this year's ASB Polyfest saying – “each Pacific stage will again host a speech competition this year, with an exciting addition in 2020 being a Tokelau speech competition.” Leo-Mauu added “entries into our Pacific speech competitions close this Friday, so we encourage students and teachers to enter, with details available on the ASB Polyfest website.”

In a fortnight, thousands of young leaders will grace the stage in the youth festival that has become the largest Maori and Pacific Island festival in the world.

ASB head of community, sponsorship and events Mark Graham said ASB is proud to be involved in ASB Polyfest, this year celebrating 35 years of support. Graham said - “ASB Polyfest brings many cultures together, creating one community. It's been amazing to be part of this event over so many years and to see it progress into the festival it is today. We look forward to supporting the students as they proudly perform for their families and their schools in a fortnight's time.”

This year's festival gets underway on Wednesday, 18 March with a special flag-raising ceremony at 7am, followed by a powhiri at 8am which includes a mass haka from Kura Matua Schools – Kia Aroha College and James Cook High School.

The theme for the 2020 ASB Polyfest is –

*“Ma roto mai I te Ahurea whieikoka, ko te whakaora tinana, hinengaro, wairua me te ira tangata”
“Healing the body, mind and soul with the strength of culture”*

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Key Details:

Dates: 18-21 March 2020
Place: Manukau Sports Bowl, Te Irirangi Drive, Manukau
Entry: \$7.50 at gate
\$5 earlybird special - book online now at www.iticket.co.nz
Preschool children are free
Website: www.asbpolyfest.co.nz