

Ports North Welcomes *Hōkūleʻa* on her Worldwide Voyage

June 2015

The Port of Cairns is to welcome one of the world's most traditional and ancient vessels when the Hawaiian voyaging canoe *Hōkūleʻa* arrives in the harbour on June 18- 22.

The *Hōkūleʻa* – a traditional Polynesian double-hulled voyaging canoe – uses a system of ancient navigation by stars, winds, waves and birds, which was nearly lost to the modern world almost 600 years ago.

The canoe is visiting Cairns as part of the Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage, a journey covering 47,000 nautical miles, 85 ports and 26 nations to promote indigenous knowledge, ocean restoration and global sustainability, as well as sparking a revival of indigenous voyaging practices and culture throughout the Pacific.

“This will certainly be one of the more remarkable sights in our port,” Ports North Chairman Brett Moller said. “The history behind the *Hōkūleʻa* is fascinating and the message the tour is bringing resonates across the globe.”

At 19m in length *Hōkūleʻa* was launched in 1975 by the Polynesian Voyaging Society, and undertook a 1976 Hawaiʻi to Tahiti voyage. She has since completed voyages to Micronesia, Polynesia, Japan, Canada, and the United States, all using ancient wayfinding techniques of celestial navigation.

“Ports North is proud to be providing a complimentary berth and foreshore space for the *Hōkūleʻa* to engage with the public while they are moored here,” Mr Moller said.

“I encourage members of the community to get down to our beautiful foreshore and absorb the culture and history of this incredible vessel.”

Facts on Hōkūleʻa

Voyaging canoes were traditionally made from wood, whereas *Hōkūleʻa* incorporates plywood, fiberglass and resin. She can carry 12 to 16 crew. Fully laden, 50.2m² sail area, she averages a speed of 5-7 knots.

She has twin masts rigged either crab claw or Marconi style and a small jib. She is steered with a long paddle. She has no auxiliary motor so she is towed into harbor by her escort vessel when required. Her name means "star of gladness" in Hawaiian, which refers to Arcturus, a guiding zenith star for Hawaiian navigators.

The description of *Hōkūleʻa*, the voyaging canoe, is only part of her story, since she navigates without instruments. In 1975, no Hawaiian living knew these ancient techniques for open-ocean deep sea voyaging.

To enable the voyage, the Polynesian Voyaging Society recruited the Satawalese Master Navigator Mau Piailug from Micronesia to share his knowledge of non-instrument navigation. While as many as six Micronesian navigators had mastered these traditional methods as of the mid-1970s, Mau was the youngest and was able to share his knowledge with the Hawaiian people. This knowledge has led to a renaissance in voyaging canoe building and the perpetuation of non-instrument Polynesian navigation throughout the Pacific.

For more information contact:

Christine Matsuda Smith

Communications@pvshawaii.org

(808) 753-7124