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Mana Tohu Mātauranga o Aotearoa
New Zealand Qualifications Authority

Level 1 Geography RAS 2023

91935 Demonstrate understanding of decision-making in response to a geographic challenge in the wider Pacific region

EXEMPLAR

Excellence

TOTAL 07

Page 1

Make sure you have the paper Resource Booklet 91935R. This contains **new** material, as well as the resources you have viewed in class. Use these new resources as supporting evidence in your answers.

The following definitions may assist your answers:

Viewpoints: What people think about geographic issues.

Perspectives: Ways in which people view and interpret environments. Including, but not limited to: economic, social, political, indigenous, and spiritual.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the Cook Islands economy.

Because of this, the Cook Islands Government now faces an important challenge when looking towards the future, especially in terms of its economy.

- (a) Explain the challenge COVID-19 has created for the Cook Islands Government in terms of meeting the country's future needs.

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COVID-19 has highlighted the need for the Cook Islands economy to diversify, with two thirds of the country's overall GDP made up from tourism, the economy decreased by 32% in absence of tourism. The overall challenge also involves future ability to pay off debt. In order to meet the countries future needs, Deep-sea mining could play an integral part in the diversification and transition away from the heavy reliance upon the tourism industry.

Three possible options the Cook Islands Government could take to meet the future needs of the country are:

- Option A – maintain an emphasis on the tourism industry
- Option B – transition away from tourism and carry out deep-sea mining
- Option C – focus on a combination involving both tourism and deep-sea mining.

When making a decision on meeting the future needs of the Cook Islands, the government needs to consider the viewpoints of a range of people or groups.

- (b) For each group or individual below, explain the key perspective(s) that shapes their viewpoint on the future direction the country should take. Include their viewpoint in your discussion, and the concept of *mana tiaki*, the Cook Islands' tradition of guardianship and protection of resources for future generations.

Group

Their perspective / viewpoint on the Cook Islands' future direction





The indigenous Cook Islands
Māori population:

The indigenous Cook Islands Māori population have a largely indigenous perspective on this issue. Their perspective aligns best with Option A, maintaining an emphasis on the tourism industry. Their viewpoint on Option B is extremely negative with 90% of the surveyed population wanting to protect the ocean from large-scale commercial activity, such as deep-sea mining, and keeping the concept of *mana tiaki* alive in the Cook Islands. This largely also contributes to their negative viewpoint of Option C as this still includes deep-sea mining being undertaken in the Cook Islands, and could lead to some locals concerns becoming a reality of 'why they're [the world] fighting- it's the minerals, the resources.'. Overall the option that aligns well with indigenous Cook Islands Māori population is Option A, which enables the concept of *Mana Tiaki* to still be practised, while continuing a status-quo approach which the population has enjoyed.





Tourism operators:

Tourism Operators hold an economic, and environmental perspective on this issue. Their perspective also aligns best with Option A, maintaining an emphasis on the tourism industry. This is to allow their businesses to still profit from the large tourism industry within the Cook Islands. This is also why tourism operators hold a negative viewpoint on Option B, as this means a loss of income for them as the Cook Islands transitions it's focus from tourism to deep-sea mining. There is potential for many of the 2,386 jobs that the tourism industry provides in the Cook Islands to be lost. This is also largely why the operators hold a negative viewpoint on option C, this option would be preferable over option B, as the tourism industry still maintains it's key role in the Cook Islands economy. However, option C is still bound to have an impact on the tourism industry, as the environmental impacts of deep-sea mining are not fully understood for the Cook Islands, there is potential for one of the biggest activities that tourists take part in, snorkelling, with 87% of tourists taking part, to become a less desirable activity. This would have a subsequent economic impact on operators, because of the potential enviromental impact of deep-sea mining.

Prime Minister Mark Brown:

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<p>The Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Mark Brown, holds a largely economic perspective on this issue stating that the Cook Islands have to 'make changes.' and have a 'Plan B'. Mark Brown holds a negative viewpoint of Option A, as he believes the Cook Islands need to become less reliant on tourism, and look at other ways to make money. However Mark Brown also holds a negative viewpoint on Option B, as this does not solve the Cook Islands challenge of diversifying the economy as the economy would still be largely reliant upon a single industry, mining. Therefore, the preferred option for Brown would be option C, for which he holds a positive viewpoint, this solves the Cook Islands challenges of economic diversity, whilst maintaing the jobs created by the tourism sector.</p>

Pacific Deep Mining Company:

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<p>Pacific Deep Mining Company hold an economic perspective on this issue, as the company is looking to extract minerals from the seabed for profit. Therefore, they hold a negative viewpoint on Option A, as this does not make any effort to achieve their goal of being able to mine, and keeps the Cook Islands reliant upon tourism. Their most preferred option would be Option B, as this transitions a large part of the Cook Islands economic focus onto deep-sea mining, it also benefits a transition to a green economy of the world, with many of the materials being mined used in EVs. Pacific Deep Mining Company hold an positive viewpoint on Option C, although it is second preference to Option B, this option allows for tourism to maintain its major role in the economy, while allowing the company to mine. The company also shared its plans to mine away from tourist hot spots such as Rarotonga, Aitutaki, and Mangaia.</p>

(c) (i) Choose ONE option that you think the Cook Islands Government should focus on to best meet the future needs of the country.

- ☐ Option A – maintain an emphasis on the tourism industry
- ☐ Option B – transition away from tourism and carry out deep-sea mining
- ☒ Option C – focus on a combination involving both tourism and deep-sea mining.

Explain why you chose this option. To do so you should:

- consider the viewpoints of the different groups of people who are involved
- consider why this option is better than the others
- integrate specific evidence from all the resources supplied.

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Option C is the option which best balances the future needs of the Cook Islands and the viewpoints of different groups. This option allows the country to move away from its tourism heavy economy (66% of GDP), while maintaining the large amount of jobs that this industry provides. This option also allows new economic opportunity in the form of deep-sea mining, which will create jobs in the Cook Islands.

Tourism operators hold a negative viewpoint on this option, however it still allows them to operate status-quo, just without the economy of the Cook Islands begin overly-reliant on tourism. This also reduces the potential impact of another world-wide pandemic or similar event, where these tourism operators still have another industry to turn to when their source of revenue is potentially dessimated, as it was during COVID. Additional revenue can be spent on reducing the Islands \$228 million dollar debt that was used to keep the tourism operators from shutting down. These are the positive outcomes Option C has over the other two options.

The indigenous Cook Islands Māori population would hold a very negative view point on Option C being selected as they hold the view that they can be self-sustained on the islands with the resources available while practising mana tiaki. However Option C may also play an integral role in reducing the tourism numbers to the islands, easing the pressure on locals, infrastructure and on the environment. In diversifying the economy it allows locals to have more choice around setting an optimal level of visitors to the Cook Islands.

Prime Minister Mark Brown would hold a positive viewpoint on this option as it helps solve the challenge of reliance on tourism, while creating more economic opportunities. In addition to this increased taxation by the government on this sector and increased revenue would allow the government to reduce national debt, lessening the impact of 16% of the countries earnings going towards paying off debt. This could be done by surpassing the tourism industry's income that the Cook Island currently earns. This allows the Cook Islands to possibly make further investment into environmental safeguards such as additional top-ups to the \$3 million septic tank improvement fund, and improving infrastructure to help cope with tourism.

Pacific Deep Mining Company are in favour of this option as it allows them to operate, and ultimately profit from business in the Cook Islands. The option is far preferable to Option A for the company as this means they'll still be able to operate. Whilst tourism is set to still be operating at large capacity on the island, the impact of deep-sea mining should be reduced as they are looking to stay away from tourist hotspots in the Southern islands. and stav mining in the Northern islands of Manihiki and Suvarrow.

(ii) Which group's viewpoint was most important when choosing your option in part (i)?

- ☐ The indigenous Cook Islands Māori population
- ☐ Tourism operators
- ☒ Prime Minister Mark Brown
- ☐ Pacific Deep Mining Company.

Explain why that viewpoint was more important than the others.

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<p>Mark Browns viewpoint is most important and valid as it takes into account all perspectives to best meet the future needs of the Cook Islands, and solve challenges such as the economic reliance of the islands on tourism. Whereas the other groups viewpoints largely take into account personal interest, such as the Pacific Deep Mining Company's economic interest in the area, and the indigenous Cook Islands Māori population's status-quo viewpoint with their interests overriding overall best logical path for the future needs of the Cook Islands. Tourism operators also have their own economic interests, which means their view point is not as objective in solving the challenges that the Cook Islands is presented with, than Mark Browns. Ultimately Mark Brown's viewpoint holds the most balanced view of all perspectives and best takes into account the future needs of the Cook Islands.</p>

Excellence

Subject: Geography

Standard: 91935

Total score: 07

Grade score	Marker commentary
E7	<p>The candidate discusses the fact that tourism is the main contributor to the Cook Islands economy and that Covid had a major, negative impact on this. Reference is made to making the economy more diversified in the future by finding other means of income.</p> <p>The perspective(s) of each group are explained and linked to how it shapes their viewpoints on the challenge.</p> <p>The candidate has made a decision in relation to the challenge and refers to the how each group/individual would view the decision. The viewpoint that was most important when making the decision is chosen and justified.</p> <p>The candidate has referred to the concept of Mana Tiaki in the response and has included integrated relevant evidence to support the discussion.</p>