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Contemporary Research Topics

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WHAKAMANA TE TINO RAKATIRATAKA: RESEARCH AS AN ACT OF SELF-DETERMINATION

Scott Klenner and Nikita Rewha

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Moe mai rā koutou.

Hoki ora mai kia tatou.

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In 2024, it was decided it was time our journal begin a new phase to embody its wider scope, which had extended beyond the Kāi Tahu rohe to encompass the work of Māori researchers across the motu. Consultation was undertaken and a new name was gifted to the journal by the Office of the Kaitohutohu: *Scope: Contemporary Research Topics (Tīrou)*. The Kaitohutohu Office described the naming of the publication, *Tīrou*, as a figurative waka and the articles within the publication as moving the waka sideways or in different directions while aligning to the kaupapa and purpose of the journal. Each hoe is fashioned for its own purpose, each bearing its own strength. As the paddles strike and break the water's surface, it is through the unity of these motions that the waka is propelled, aligning to a shared or collective kaupapa. *Scope (Tīrou)* intends to continue to uplift the research world for Māori, providing a space for both established and emerging Māori researchers in our sector.

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WHAKAPAPA

Identity and tūrakawaewae

The theme for this issue of *Scope (Tīrou)*, tino rakatirataka, holds a central place in the national conversation, pointing toward self-determined futures and positive development for Māori hapori. It also remains an enduring site of contestation within the state apparatus. Within this issue, whakapapa, identity, and tūrakawaewae are regularly explored in relation to tino rakatirataka. Whakapapa, as an articulation of tino rakatirataka and Māori identity, operates beyond dialogical parameters, signalling a living order that actively structures relations, authority, and belonging.

In the first article, Dr Wahineata Smith discusses the critical role of data sovereignty in recording and emphasising how the intersection of dual identities shapes meaningful outcomes for descendants of Māori-Pacific heritage. This in turn asks us to consider how the collection and administration of such data, and the important goal of working to accurately attain it, will better reflect the lived experiences for Māori-Pacific whānau.

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TE TAIAO

Kāika and kaitiakitaka

Another sub-theme that emerged in the contributions was that of te taiao and the salience of reciprocal relationships between people and place, with authors acknowledging their role in shaping and realising the collective self-determination of iwi, hapū, and whānau. Nourishment rests on the health of lands, waters, and ecosystems. This relationship is foundational to the wellbeing of kāika.

In the article "Ka mua ka muri," James Berghan et al. build on earlier work in providing a considered and insightful offering on kāika. The authors argue for a holistic approach to Māori housing resilience integrating cultural values, environmental stewardship, and practical design strategies. Perspectives from whānau in planning for climate resilient pāpākaika are explored to answer the overarching question: "What could climate-resilient kāika look like for whānau looking to reinstate pā sites on their whenua?" The authors give voice to the aspirations and challenges whānau Māori face when planning and designing housing, which contributes to the growing body of national and international studies on climate–resilient planning and design.

In parallel with this exploration of resilience, the actualisation of tino rakatirataka is advanced through litigation to protect te taiao, a process that articulates Māori rights within, and against, prevailing environmental governance frameworks. Kelli Te Maihāroa and David Higgins' article "Tino Rakatirataka o te Wai Māori: Authority over Freshwater" reaffirms the longstanding relationship between Kāi Tahu whānui and the southern takiwā. Their work calls for urgency in addressing the degradation of ancestral waterways. The authors situate this call within broader discourses on tino rakatirataka, kaitiakitaka, and customary lore as expressed through how the environment is governed.

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Charlotte Chisnell's article examines the Bachelor of Social Work (Honours) programme at the Eastern Institute of Technology which adopts an inquiry-based pedagogy to foster self-directed learning and enhance academic achievement. Centring kaupapa Māori and culturally responsive education, Chisnell's contribution considers how the programme supports Māori ākonga to exercise tino rakatirataka in academic and professional contexts. The article considers enrolments between 2016 and 2024, when Māori comprised 48 percent of students and achieved First Class Honours at higher rates than their peers. Chisnell discusses how the combined impact of inquiry-led learning, culturally sustaining pedagogy, and pastoral care advances Māori success in higher education.

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and kaupapa Māori research that is grounded in te ao Māori and transformative for Māori communities. The editors acknowledge *Scope (Kaupapa Kāi Tahu)* as a platform for rakahau Māori and kairakahau to be presented throughout the vocational education sector in Aotearoa New Zealand and are privileged to introduce *Tīrou* as a continuation of this legacy.

Nau mai, haere mai e kā kairakahau ki te hautaka hou *Scope (Tīrou)*. He pae tēnei hei whakakotahi i ngā reo me kā whakaaro Māori, hei whakanui hoki i kā kaupapa rakahau hou. E manako ana mātou kia akitu, kia pakari, ā, kia whai hua ā koutou mahi rakahau mō te oraka tonutaka o te iwi Māori.

Ko Takitimu te mauka
Ko Aparima te awa
Ko Takitimutu te waka
Ko Kāi Tahu tōku iwi
Nō Waihopai ahau
Kei Taieri tōku kaika inaianei
Ko Scott Klenner tōku ikoa.

Kia ora I am the Director of Rangahau, Research and Postgraduate Studies at Otago Polytechnic. I have had a career as an educator across multiple sectors in teaching and leadership roles. My research interests are also primarily in education and include teacher agency, dialogical pedagogy, and critical literacy.

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Ko Ipipiri te moana
Ko Ngātokimatawhaorua te waka
Ko Ngāpuhi raua ko Ngātiwai oku Iwi
Ko Ngāti Kuta tōku hapū
Ko Te Rāwhiti te marae
Ko Rewha tōku whānau
Ko Nikita tōku ingoa
Kei te noho au ki Ōtepoti

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INTERSECTING WHAKAPAPA: RETHINKING DATA SOVEREIGNTY FOR MĀORI-PACIFIC WHĀNAU

Wahineata Smith and Jacinta Paranihi-Anae

INTRODUCTION

Aotearoa New Zealand is a country in the Pacific and is home to a rich tapestry of cultures and ethnicities, shaped by centuries of Indigenous presence and successive waves of migration. The Indigenous people of Aotearoa are Māori, whose deep cultural, historical, and genealogical roots are increasingly intersecting with those of diverse Pacific communities. As a result, a growing number of whānau Māori now identify with one or more Pacific Island ethnicities, such as Tongan or Samoan.

Despite increased recognition of dual and multi-ethnic identities, institutional data systems often fail to adequately capture the cultural complexities of these groups (Butler, 2022). Māori-Pacific dual-heritage individuals face challenges in terms of visibility and representation in administrative data, academic research, and policymaking. The concept of data sovereignty, both Māori and Pacific, has emerged as a vital framework for ensuring that Indigenous communities maintain guardianship, control, and autonomy over data that relates to them. As Kukutai and Taylor (2016) articulate, data sovereignty is grounded in the principle that Indigenous peoples should retain authority over the collection, access, and use of data about their lands and communities. Te Mana Raraunga, the Māori Data Sovereignty Network, defines this right as the ability of Māori to determine how Māori data is collected, owned, and applied. However, a significant gap remains in our understanding and governance of dual Māori-Pacific heritage, whose identities challenge conventional data structures (Kukutai et al., 2023).

This article explores the intersection of data sovereignty, representation, and the lived realities of Māori-Pacific whānau, specifically Māori-Tongan whānau based on findings from a small qualitative study. It highlights how existing data systems fail to reflect the nuanced identities of dual-heritage individuals, with implications for their social, cultural, and economic wellbeing. Central to this discussion is a call to shift from viewing governance of dual-heritage communities' data as an external task to enabling data for governance by these communities themselves. That is, the data must serve their self-determined futures rather than merely fulfilling institutional requirements (Hudson et al., 2019). If all Māori data is protected under Māori data sovereignty, to what extent should data relating to Māori-Pacific whānau also incorporate Pacific or pan-Indigenous data governance principles?

CONTEXTUALISING MĀORI-PACIFIC IDENTITIES IN AOTEAROA

Māori and Pacific peoples share deep genealogical, linguistic, and cultural links that stem from ancestral Polynesian migrations. These connections are expressed through shared cultural concepts, such as whakapapa (genealogy), whanaungatanga (relationships), and the prioritisation of collective hauora (wellbeing). Oral traditions and origin narratives often reference ancestral voyagers who connected Aotearoa with a broader Pacific world.

More recently, large-scale Pacific migration in the mid-20th century established strong urban communities of Samoan, Tongan, Niuean, Cook Island Māori, Tokelauan, and other Pacific peoples in Aotearoa. These communities have since formed extensive social and familial networks with Māori. Marriages, partnerships, and shared generations of history have given rise to whānau who whakapapa to both Māori iwi and Pacific nations. This dual heritage is increasingly common, particularly among younger generations. Between 2013 and 2018, the number of people identifying as both Māori and Pacific increased by 42% (Stats NZ, 2019). By 2023, 90,648 Pacific peoples also identified as Māori, representing 20.5% of the total Pacific population. Among Pacific children under 15, one in three (32.7% or 44,544) also identified as Māori (Stats NZ & Ministry of Health, 2023).

DUAL ETHNICITY AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Raising tamariki who carry both Māori and Pacific whakapapa offers rich opportunities for nurturing a strong sense of identity and belonging. However, these families often encounter distinct challenges. Tamariki may be expected to speak te reo Māori and also their Pacific language (e.g., lea faka-Tonga or gagana Samoa), and to uphold differing cultural protocols such as tikanga Māori alongside Tongan or Samoan customs. While this dual navigation can be deeply enriching, it is often complicated by geographic distance from extended whānau, limited resourcing for language revitalisation, and social stereotypes about what it means to be Māori or Pacific in Aotearoa (Te Huia, 2015; Butler, 2022).

Institutional frameworks compound these complexities. In official statistics, dual heritage identities are often reduced to a single ethnic label or fragmented across data sets in ways that obscure cultural nuance. This flattening of identity in data has real consequences. Policies developed on the basis of aggregated or incomplete data often fail to reflect the realities of Māori-Pacific whānau. As Cormack & Kukutai (2021) note, government surveys, censuses, and research protocols have rarely been designed to account for dual heritage, leading to systemic underrepresentation and misrecognition.

A pressing question arises: if you are not connected to iwi but identify more strongly with your Pacific heritage, how do you access data that speaks to your experience, and who makes decisions about data collection for your whānau? Te Kāhui Raraunga (Kukutai et al., 2023) report that many Māori-Pacific individuals feel marginalised by data systems that require them to prioritise one aspect of their identity or that collapse their experiences into generic categories. In such contexts, questions of trust, consent, and representation become increasingly complex. Who speaks for the data of dual-heritage individuals? Which cultural protocols take precedence? As Hudson (2010) argues, conventional consent models rarely accommodate overlapping spheres of authority, something especially relevant when individuals belong to both Māori and Pacific communities.

These data governance gaps undermine the effectiveness of policy. Without accurate data on Māori-Pacific whānau, interventions in education, health, and social services are built on partial or skewed understandings. The insights found not only deepen our theoretical approaches to Indigenous data sovereignty but also inform more equitable and culturally grounded policies that can adapt to Aotearoa's increasingly diverse future. The Ministry of Health's *Ngā Wānanga Pae Ora* (2023) summary report acknowledges current gaps in cultural responsiveness to Māori-Pacific whānau, calling for health strategies that are equitable, accessible, and culturally grounded.

Similarly, Webber and Macfarlane (2020) identify that education initiatives often overlook the distinct learning needs of Māori-Pacific students. A 2022 Ministry of Social Development review found that social programmes frequently do not reflect the unique structures and support systems of these communities. Addressing these challenges requires not only revising data collection methods but also embracing Indigenous principles of data governance that reflect the lived realities of dual-heritage whānau. Doing so is essential to building equitable, culturally grounded futures in Aotearoa.

DATA SOVEREIGNTY IN AOTEAROA

Data sovereignty refers to the rights and interests that communities have in governing the collection, ownership, and application of data about themselves. For Indigenous communities, this sovereignty ensures that they retain authority over how their data is stored, accessed, interpreted, and used. Such control is fundamental to self-determination: data shapes narratives, informs policy, and redistributes resources in ways that can either empower or marginalise. In Aotearoa, Māori data sovereignty is grounded in Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi), which guarantees Māori tino rangatiratanga (absolute chieftainship or self-determination) over their taonga (treasures). Increasingly, Māori communities and scholars argue that data, especially data that uniquely identifies Māori individuals, groups, or resources, constitutes a taonga that should be governed in accordance with tikanga Māori (Māori protocols and values) (Kukutai & Taylor, 2016; Smith, 2021).

MĀORI DATA SOVEREIGNTY

Māori data sovereignty initiatives have gained momentum through movements such as Te Mana Raraunga, the Māori Data Sovereignty Network. Their foundational principles include:

- Rangatiratanga (Authority): Māori maintain control and authority over Māori data.

- Whakapapa (Context): Data is understood through genealogical relationships, emphasising the interconnectedness of people, places, and resources.

- Whanaungatanga (Relationships): Data governance should prioritise collective benefit, enhance relationships, and empower whānau, hapū, and iwi.

- Kotahitanga (Unity): A collective vision for the care, ownership, and governance of Māori data.

These principles support the creation of data systems that are by Māori, for Māori, and with Māori, ensuring ethical data use grounded in cultural integrity. Yet, a critical question arises: if datasets include whānau who are not solely Māori but also identify as Tongan, Samoan, or another Pacific ethnicity, does Māori data sovereignty alone suffice?

PACIFIC AND BROADER INDIGENOUS DATA SOVEREIGNTY

Alongside Māori data sovereignty are parallel discussions of Pacific data sovereignty, shaped by the distinct cultural and political contexts of Pacific communities in Aotearoa. Pacific peoples represent diverse island nations, each with its own genealogies, languages, and governance systems. Although minority populations in Aotearoa, many Pacific communities advocate for data governance frameworks aligned with their own cultural values and aspirations (Walter et al., 2021). Internationally, Indigenous data sovereignty continues to gain traction. The CARE Principles (Collective benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility, and Ethics), offer a globally recognised framework for ensuring that Indigenous communities maintain control over data that pertains to them (Carroll et al., 2020). These principles complement local efforts by Indigenous peoples across regions including Australia, Canada, and the United States.

For dual-identity Māori-Pacific whānau, the convergence of Māori, Pacific, and broader Indigenous data sovereignty frameworks presents both opportunity and challenge. Effective governance cannot default to a single approach. Instead, it must acknowledge shared whakapapa and respect multiple cultural obligations that influence how these whānau experience and understand their identities.

EMERGING TRENDS AND FUTURE GROWTH

As the demographic landscape of Aotearoa continues to evolve, the number of children with Māori-Pacific whakapapa is projected to grow. This shift heightens the urgency for data systems that meaningfully represent dual affiliations. Inadequate data risks perpetuate misrecognition and under-resourcing. Conversely, culturally responsive data collection and governance can empower dual-heritage communities and support informed, holistic policy development. Meeting this need requires a fundamental shift, not simply adjusting existing systems but reorienting towards "data for governance" rather than data governance. As Carroll et al. (2020) articulate, the CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance emphasise that data should support Indigenous Peoples' self-determined development.

STRATEGIC PATHWAYS FORWARD

Several practical steps can advance this vision:

1. Ethnicity classifications: Develop classification frameworks that honour the integrity of dual Māori-Pacific identities rather than forcing artificial choices. Cormack and Kukutai (2021) advocate for innovations that move beyond simplistic multiple-ethnicity checkboxes. Statistics Canada's approach to First Nations and Métis classification (2022) offers a valuable precedent.

2. Community-led data protocols: Ensure Māori-Pacific whānau are actively involved in decisions about how their data is collected, stored, analysed, and used. This requires respectful engagement with both Māori and Pacific cultural authorities, and alignment with existing frameworks grounded in tikanga and Pacific protocols.

3. Dedicated research on dual-heritage experiences: Rather than subsuming these communities within separate Māori or Pacific studies, dedicated research should reflect the unique lived realities of dual-heritage whānau. Methodologies must be culturally appropriate and community-informed.

4. Cultural competency training: Equip researchers and policymakers with the tools to understand dual-heritage identities. The Health Research Council's updated guidelines (2023) emphasise the need for recognising intra and inter-group cultural distinctions and tailoring ethical practice accordingly.

CULTURAL AND POLICY IMPACT

The benefits of responsive data governance extend beyond improved statistics. By acknowledging and respecting Māori-Pacific identities, we validate lived experiences and contribute to cultural wellbeing. Looking forward, the experiences of Māori-Pacific whānau offer valuable insights for navigating increasing cultural complexity in Aotearoa. Upholding the principle articulated by Te Mana Raraunga, that data must serve communities, not extract from them, requires humility, innovation, and unwavering commitment to Indigenous self-determination in an interconnected world (Kukutai & Taylor, 2016).

WHĀNAU REALITIES: INSIGHTS FROM RAISING MĀORI-TONGAN TAMARIKI

To ground these discussions in lived experience, insights from a small qualitative research project that is yet to be published, highlight the cultural and systemic dynamics faced by whānau raising Māori-Tongan children. These families often engage in a careful balancing act of cultural revitalisation and identity formation across multiple spheres of influence.

Findings from that study show that Māori-Tongan tamariki are often, not always, raised with an intentional focus on maintaining strong ties to both cultural lineages. A child might participate in tangihanga processes as well as Tongan putu (funerals), learn both te reo Māori and lea faka Tonga, and navigate whānau gatherings alongside

church based activities and marae hui. The ambition of parents and grandparents is to draw on distinct knowledge systems from both cultures, seeking to transmit these in ways that avoid overshadowing or diminishing either heritage. These efforts support not only a strong sense of cultural identity but also sustained connections with extended whānau and broader kinship networks – and is the aspiration of those interviewed for the study, but not necessarily a reality for many.

GEOGRAPHIC REALITIES AND CULTURAL EXPRESSION

Geography plays a critical role in shaping how Māori and Tongan dual identities are expressed and sustained. In regions with smaller Pacific populations, whānau may have strong Māori networks and access to kaupapa Māori education or marae-based initiatives yet encounter limited opportunities to participate in Tongan cultural events, such as language classes, lotu (church services), or faikava gatherings. For example, some parents shared that they rely on digital platforms or travel long distances to access Tongan language resources or connect their tamariki with cultural mentors. In contrast, areas with larger and more diverse populations often provide greater opportunities for integrated engagement. Parents in these communities described taking their children to both kapa haka and traditional Tongan dance practices, or attending events where Māori cultural activities and Tongan cultural activities are shared in a single space, like birthdays and weddings, reinforcing a strong sense of dual belonging.

However, despite these enriching experiences, whānau consistently noted the challenge of not seeing their realities reflected in national data, research, or policy. For example, some parents expressed frustration that school enrolment or health forms often require them to select only one ethnicity for their children, effectively erasing part of their identity. This administrative invisibility continues to obscure the nuanced experiences of dual-heritage whānau, limiting targeted support and cultural recognition (Butler, 2022; Kukutai & Taylor, 2016).

SOCIETAL PERCEPTIONS AND THE INTERSECTION OF SOVEREIGNTY FRAMEWORKS

Raising dual-identity Māori-Pacific tamariki also involves navigating societal stereotypes and pressures. Misconceptions tied to both Māori and Pacific identities can overlap, resulting in experiences of racism or marginalisation. Some families interviewed in the study report pressure to prioritise one identity in certain contexts or to validate their authenticity through language proficiency or cultural visibility. These challenges reflect broader societal assumptions and underscore the urgent need for data systems that recognise, rather than erase, dual heritage.

The complexities of Māori-Pacific identity also highlight tensions within existing data sovereignty frameworks. Māori data is governed under rangatiratanga, as guaranteed by Te Tiriti o Waitangi. At the same time, Tongan communities have legitimate claims to govern data relevant to their people. However, for Māori-Pacific individuals these frameworks cannot be neatly separated, identity, experience, and cultural obligations are intertwined. Any attempt to default to a single governance model risks sidelining aspects of dual heritage. We argue that moving forward requires the design of integrative frameworks that honour the interconnected sovereignty interests of both Māori and Pacific communities.

By centering the lived realities of Māori-Pacific whānau, particularly those navigating multiple cultural inheritances, we gain a more nuanced understanding of the limitations and possibilities within current data governance. These insights not only deepen our theoretical approaches to Indigenous data sovereignty but also inform more equitable and culturally grounded policies that can adapt to the diverse future landscape of Aotearoa.

CONCLUSION

Data sovereignty in Aotearoa must move beyond siloed approaches if it is to meaningfully serve the communities it seeks to represent. For Māori-Pacific whānau, particularly those raising tamariki with dual whakapapa, identity is not a static category but a lived, relational practice that spans multiple cultural lineages. However, current data systems often reduce these complexities to singular ethnic markers, rendering rich genealogies invisible and limiting the transformative potential of data.

By grounding this discussion in both the conceptual foundations of Indigenous data sovereignty and the lived realities of whānau navigating Māori-Tongan identities as expressed in a qualitative study conducted at Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka, this article highlights the urgent need for governance frameworks that reflect the intertwined nature of identity, culture, and rights. Such frameworks must be co-designed, multi-layered, and rooted in the principles of rangatiratanga and collective wellbeing.

To advance this vision, four strategic insights have emerged:

1. Visibility matters: The increasing presence of Māori-Pacific communities must be met with systems that accurately reflect their identities.

2. Data sovereignty is essential: Māori-Pacific whānau must retain authority over how data about them is governed, interpreted, and used.

3. Collaboration and co-governance: Intersectional identities require governance approaches that honour multiple cultural frameworks.

4. Practical implementation: Systemic shifts must occur across policy, research, and practice to embed cultural responsiveness into everyday data use.

One promising pathway forward lies in governance models that refuse to split whakapapa into neatly bordered categories. Instead of forcing Māori-Pacific whānau to choose which part of themselves counts more, data systems must reflect the full, entangled realities of dual-heritage lives. This will not be easy, it will require resourcing, courage, and a willingness to unsettle the status quo. But the alternative is a continued erasure of complexity in favour of convenience. If data is power, then who gets to decide which identities matter? And as Aotearoa reckons with its past and looks to its whakapapa informed future, the challenge remains: can we build data systems that honour every strand of whakapapa, and in doing so, help shape a nation that truly sees all of its people?

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THE PLACES WE CARRY: TŪRANGAWAEWAE, AHI KĀ, AND THE POLITICS OF BELONGING

Hayley Walmsley

He manu hou ahau, he pī ka rere.
I am a fledgling bird, a chick learning to fly
  traditional Māori whakataukī of Ngāti Awa

"Do you even know who I am?" my father asked, leaning in across the table. I was back in Te Tai Tokerau for the first time in a couple of years. Officially, it was for research. But really, it was a pull from under the ribs. The art exhibition I was doing the research for was about second homes and migration – but if you're going to ask what makes a second home, you should probably start with a visit back to your original home.

"Well ... no," I said. He'd never wanted to talk about it before, and I'd never pushed – we had a deep relationship, but one marked by long absences.

My close friend and I had been on the road for days – Auckland, Kerikeri, Whatuwhiwhi – circling. Looking for something familiar, visiting whānau, and eating a lot of roast dinners. By the time we reached Matauri Bay, it was time to stop. So I sat at the same table I'd known since I was a kid, actively listening.

Kōrero with Nan had always folded into daily life. No one called it sacred; we didn't have to. No one else had ever taken her seat. Now Dad sat there. The shift landed hard: the guard had changed. He was raised whāngai by one of my birth grandmother's relatives, a woman I knew as Nan: full of love, sharp wit, and a critical tongue.

That afternoon, Dad talked about who we are and the landscapes that shape us: Matauri Bay, Pupuke, Whangaroa and Matangirau. For a stoic man, when these moods took him, you listened, absorbing what you could while they lasted. What began between father and daughter cracked something open – a quiet reckoning with home, a slow handover of generational knowledge.

Figure 1: Taratara, Whangaroa, 2024.
Photograph: Hayley Walmsley.

I write from the in-between – between memory and motion. From the whenua that raised me, to the ones I'm still learning to understand. It didn't land all at once – but it gave me a way to hold questions. What it means to be Māori. To be Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Tautahi and Ngāti Kawau. How tūrangawaewae and tino rangatiratanga aren't distant concepts, but ways of finding direction. Markers to move with. Ahi kā, even flickering, never dies. Ahi hīrangi.

Tino rangatiratanga is about holding your own life in your hands. Decision-making. Autonomy. The right to shape the future. It's been part of our struggle, our aspiration, since Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Awatere, 1984, p. 80; Durie, 1998; Simon & Smith, 2001). Tūrangawaewae, then, collects whakapapa, mana, and the relationships that hold you there (King, 1983; Royal, 2003).

I've navigated that ground, raised equally between te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā. The whāngai of my father, and the closed adoption of my mother, shaped a whakapapa of entangled lines and long absences (Metge, 1995; Mikaere, 2011). Returning north wasn't just going home. It was political. A reclaiming. A responsibility. Tino rangatiratanga as return. Some places hold memory in their bones.

At Nan's kitchen table, I'd watched Dad take her seat – the one no one else ever took. Simple moments that carried weight. That shift, the changing of the guard, felt like a quiet transfer: kōrero, whakapapa, silence. That's tūrangawaewae: geography with presence. The right to stand. To speak. To stay. When we leave again, the memory goes with us. That's its own kind of return.

For those of us with complicated relationships to whenua, "Are you from here?" is never a simple question. Is it where I was born? Where I grew up? Where my people are buried? (Hoskins & Jones, 2017; Webber, 2008). Sometimes it lands like curiosity. Other times, it feels like an accusation, like I've said the wrong place – or not given the full story. It echoes the way Asian New Zealanders are often asked, "But where are you really from?" As if the first answer can't be trusted. As if identity needs proof. And the whole time, the person they're questioning speaks with a Kiwi accent. They might be third generation, born here and raised here, yet still somehow made to feel like a visitor. That question is about permission. About who gets to claim a place, and who's still waiting to be allowed.

WHENUA AS MIRROR

Tūrangawaewae isn't fixed but is instead held between physical ground and memory; something kept alive through connection, even across distance. Identity, like culture, travels. It doesn't vanish when we move. It waits – in the body, in memory, in the whenua that still knows your name.

When I came home, the land felt like lived-in memory, layered, in motion. Whenua is ancestor, witness, and mirror. Pupuke, Matangirau, and Whangaroa embrace those who stood before me and those still making their way back.

Some memories arrive as knowing. I don't always know what to call the part of me that listens. Some say wairua. Some say intuition.

Figure 2. St Paul's (Taratara's lobbed-off head), view from Whangaroa Wharf, 2024. Photograph: Hayley Walmsley.

I think of it as an inner landscape – a compass that bears memory and responsibility (Henare, 2001). Not speaking in isolation, it aligns with the land, to specific ridgelines and inlets; to mānuka scrub, sharp stone, and those Northland clouds shaped like bacon and eggs, rolled into soft waves, floccus pushed into pattern.

These places mirror memory like whakapapa: layered, relational, alive. We shape the land with our hands, our absences and our stories. The land shapes us with its silences, its contours, its persistence. The separation was never real. What we call "return" is sometimes just remembering that we were never apart.

For many of us, that remembering comes in fragments, through identity that hasn't come down a straight line. It's been scattered – through whāngai, adoption, and relocation. Repair takes time. It doesn't always look like healing. I kept reminding myself I wasn't there to fix anything, just to tune in, to show up and listen (Metge, 1995; Mikaere, 2011).

Long before Dad took her seat, Nan's table was a knowledge transfer station, whether you noticed it or not. Wisdom folded into tangihanga, tea towels and silence. Slipping through jokes, glances, words you weren't sure were meant for you. Milky tea. Cheeky Gingernuts. A half-played game of Solitaire. Mātauranga moves like that – quietly, sideways (Stewart, 2020a; Stewart, 2020b). You catch it in the muttered gossip of the kitchen aunties, in the tone shift when you've crossed a line, in the space between sentences.

Whakapapa doesn't always sit tidily on a page. Sometimes it's a feeling – a pull in your chest when someone says your name like they've always known it. No matter how long it's been between tangihanga, my cousins I haven't seen in years always recognise me.

"Hayley, it's been a while," they say, followed by a familiar hug. Leaving doesn't undo the ties. It rewrites how you carry them.

Our people have lived in motion for generations, some leaving freely, others pushed. Still, tūrangawaewae keeps evolving, reminding us from places we have forgotten or never imagined. "Where are you from?" has always been a loaded question (Durie, 1998; Harris, 2004; Kukutai & Taylor, 2016). When my dad started naming people and places, something clicked. Threads I didn't even know I was holding began to join together. That return wasn't just mine – I was walking a path laid long before. Maybe what I thought I was holding had been holding me (Te Awekotuku, 1991).

This is where the questions began – and where many still lie in wait.

Whenua doesn't just receive. It takes things in, holds them, and gives something back. It alters our pace, nudges our voice, reminds us of who we are. It remembers. Answers unfurl quietly, whispered, sometimes roared beneath our feet.

TRANSITIONAL LANDSLIDES

Tūrangawaewae – the place that steadies us when change pulls at our roots – travels with us. But it's not something you can claim by affection alone. It's forged through ancestral ties, lived experience, and sustained presence. Belonging needs practice. Return. Repetition (Hoskins & Jones, 2017; Mead, 2003; Smith, 2021).

Distance sharpens the ache, and when home changes without you, it deepens again. Whenua evolves with identity. Belonging becomes rhythm – something to return to, something to remake. Sometimes we carve new space, and home becomes an echo. Culture lives in repetition. In memory. In resistance to systems that treat identity as capital (Bargh, 2018). Whakapapa becomes threads linking those before us and those yet to come.

We want to be seen. Known. That doesn't fade with movement – it intensifies. The search for a place to stand isn't nostalgia. It's survival. The land pulls us back – not just through longing, but through gravity. Through obligation. Through whakapapa.

My father once travelled across the country to find obsidian, something he thought rare in Aotearoa – only to learn from the locals, once he got there, that the other main source was in our backyard. Pungaere. Puketi. He went all that way to find something that was at home all along.

Tūrangawaewae reminds us of who we are. It grounds our voice. It speaks in unfamiliar spaces. That place to stand moves with us. It's not lost – it's carried. In memory, in commitment, in return. Tūrangawaewae doesn't always mean standing still. Sometimes it means standing up.

"Are you from here?" The question is never simple. But neither are we.

IT DOESN'T BELONG THERE

I grew up about twenty minutes north of Kerikeri, on State Highway 10 – proper feral Northland natives. Mum always sped us into town, swearing at cars, constantly late. I didn't grow up in Auckland or far from my people, just down the road. Not on my marae. I didn't even know where that was for a long time. I was raised at home with my mum and stepdad in a way that wasn't really Māori but also wasn't quite Pākehā either. I was somewhere in between – neither disconnected nor fully held. Caught between knowing where I come from and never quite being named as part of it. Some of us grow up in ahi hīrangi – fires not quite cold, not yet blazing, the kind you tend because no one else sees them trying to catch.

Mum was adopted and raised Pākehā. She didn't learn she was Māori until meeting her birth mother. But even before she knew, her Māoritanga showed – in how she made us take

Figure 3. Tōtara North Wharf, 2024.
Photograph: Hayley Walmsley.
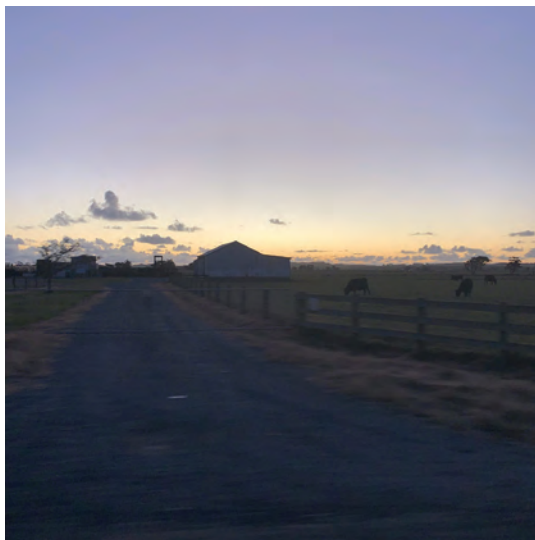
Figure 4. Somewhere between Whatuwhiwhi and Kaitāia, 2024.
Photograph: Hayley Walmsley.

our shoes off at the door. She was raising Māori kids, trying to parent us in a way that honoured that. She was an ally, before she knew it (Ahuriri-Driscoll et al., 2023).

I spent a lot of time at Te Tapui and Wainui, my Nan's marae – my whāngai grandmother. Those places have always felt closest to home. Some would say we're whānau regardless – and I believe them. But it's home and it isn't. I'm not from those lines, although a connection is there. Still, I grew up there – helping in the kitchen, listening, learning without being told. I've always known I don't fully belong. Still, if I belong anywhere, it might be there.

It's also why I don't date Māori from Northland. You can never be quite sure how closely you might be related. It makes belonging intimately uncertain. Connections too close to trust.

Nā wai koe? Who do you belong to? What waters do you belong to? This is a taxonomy that doesn't sort by type, but by connection. It's a question I've been asked more times than I can count, usually by someone vaguely familiar, in places far from home. And I always say: "My last name's Walmsley, but I whāngai Tuari-Stewart."

"Of course you are," they say, as if that makes all the sense in the world. They recognise something in my face – whakapapa as instinct. Sometimes, though, recognition doesn't come so easily.

In the lead-up to my return north, I'd hoped to give something back – to run workshops, take family photos, exchange stories and karakia, and learn more in return. I reached out, asking who to talk to about setting something up on the marae.

The reply was brisk: "We don't do any of that other stuff – just mattresses."

I clarified. I knew what they meant (about the mattresses). But I'd been asking about something else entirely – about connection, about whakapapa, about how to return meaningfully.

Figure 5. Inland Road, Te Hiku Ward, 2024.
Photograph: Hayley Walmsley.

They couldn't place me. They asked who I was. So, I told them: names, houses, the church by the beach.

"Oh," they said. "I know your dad."

Of course you do, I thought. With a name like Walmsley, who else could I belong to?

I've been treated like I'm from there – and not – in the same conversation. I've had to explain myself in rooms where everyone should've already known. It makes you question if memory counts, if closeness matters when you're not seen as central.

"You should talk to some of the old people – your Aunty June is 86, still alive, try her."

As if I had a clue who Aunty June was. But I had just claimed my belonging, hadn't I? So, I didn't question it. I paused, unsure what to say for a moment.

"Oh … okay."

That kōrero stayed with me – not because it was harsh, but because it was familiar. That quiet falter. That moment when your face isn't recognised and you're left stitching together your whakapapa, hoping it'll land. Hoping it's enough for someone to place you. It's a kind of test. A subtle challenge: prove you belong.

Lineage is carried like receipts: ready to show when asked (Mahuika, 2019). That's the politics of belonging: quiet negotiations inside our own communities, where amnesia rubs against the need to be placed correctly (Ahuriri-Driscoll, 2022).

That need to explain my existence has followed me for years. I've always been too brown to be white, too white to be brown. In winter, my skin glows with a ghostly, purplish tint – but my face mirrors my brown aunties more than my Pākehā cousins. People used to assume Mum was a friend of the whānau, not my mother. Even my belonging showed up confusingly.

I told my dad how hard it was growing up Māori and how I never fully belonged. How I was embarrassed or felt less-than. Like it was physically visible. At ten, I was called "half caste, dirty ass." I told him I'd grown up with that sense of being an intruder in my own skin, of constantly having to situate myself so people would understand where I came from.

"But you're white," he blinked, confused. I folded in on myself – small and separated once again.

"Yeah," I said. "But I'm yours."

And without missing a beat, he replied with a little chortle, "When I was a little boy, I was the whitest Māori at Matauri."

And that was it. The wound and the balm. That push-pull didn't start – or end – with me. These are the waters I come from.

I remember going to visit my dad in Nelson when I was about ten. We hadn't seen him in a while. Mum had to get the police involved because he had just … disappeared. Then he heard "missing person" on the radio – his own name – and got in touch. Years later he said he didn't realise he was missing – he knew where he was. I wasn't sure what to say to that. I'm of the view that Dad doesn't have object permanence – and that extends to people. Even people he cares about deeply.

That was my first time on a plane. He took us driving around lakes, hills, Farewell Spit. Red Hot Chili Peppers on loop. Near the end, he woke me early and asked questions. About school. About life. Jamming it in before I was gone again.

Somewhere on that trip we stopped at a tiny museum. What I remember is the whale vertebra used as a doorstop. Dad stared at it for a long time, his grumpy Māori face on full display – the one Pākehā always read as dangerous, but that just meant he was thinking. Then he picked it up and walked out with it.

"It doesn't belong there," he said. "Shouldn't be used like that."

No drama. Just certainty – the kind that needs no permission.

SACRED RESISTANCE

These places aren't just where I grew up. They're breath, inheritance, story. Matauri Bay, Whangaroa Harbour, Pupuke, Matangirau, and Kerikeri shaped me. They're not just coordinates on a map – they're bloodlines and bones. Places where resistance has always lived.

In 2023, hapū in Whangaroa stood against a proposed rare-earth mining operation near Puketi Forest (Forest & Bird, 2023). The plan threatened ancient kauri and sacred waters, including Manginangina Scenic Reserve. Alongside environmental groups, whānau resisted – and won. The permit was stopped. Not by luck, but by kaitiakitanga, ancestral duty made action (Dinsdale, 2025).

In Whangaroa and Matauri, development has disturbed kōiwi, privatised shared spaces, and turned sacred land into spectacle. These aren't new acts – but they continue. And they ignore the truth: whenua is not a resource. It's a relation.

Figure 6. Near Whatuwhiwhi, heading down the coast, 2024. Photograph: Hayley Walmsley.

The Matauri porcelain clay pits are quarried and exported – still under foreign ownership (Brathwaite et al., 2014; Pātete, 2016). Whenua taken remains locked in commercial deeds. The promised development never outweighed the damage. Resistance hasn't stopped. It lives in planting, teaching, and projects that return hands to soil and memory to place (Horsley, 2016; Pātete, 2016).

Further south, Ngāti Hau and other hapū continue to oppose the reopening of Puhipuhi's mercury mines. The poisoned waterways flow toward Whangaroa and the Bay of Islands. This opposition is ancestral. It says: not again (Wai 1040, 2013).

Māori resistance wears many faces. Sometimes it's protest. Sometimes a submission, a waiata, a quiet karakia before replanting a kauri. In Wainui and Pupuke, marae are being revitalised. In Kerikeri, native trees are being restored. These actions aren't separate from politics – they are politics. Ahi kā roa lives in each act.

This isn't just local but is part of a wider whakapapa of resistance: Dame Whina Cooper's march. The calls raised at Waitangi. The stands at Puhipuhi. The guardianship at Puketi and Waipoua. Each one says the same thing: we are still here. And so is our fire (Harmsworth & Awatere, 2013; Walker, 2004). When I stand at Whangaroa Harbour or feel the tide at Matauri Bay, I don't just see landscape. I see the faces of those who stood before me. I hear karakia in the trees.

Resistance isn't separate from life – it is life. A daily reaffirmation that the land remembers us, and we remember it.

I think about that every time I drive north. All those signs: "Keep out," "No mining," "Dotterels nesting here." Nailed to fences, painted on driftwood, sprayed on the cliff-face at the Whangaroa-Kaeo bridge. They're declarations. Ahi kā by roadside.

When the pandemic came, we didn't wait. We built our own checkpoints (de Graaf, 2021; Newstalk ZB, 2020). We already knew help wasn't coming. Up north, we're used to being isolated – abandoned, double-crossed, left to figure it out ourselves (RNZ, 2017). We don't wait for solutions. We make them. We know how it goes.

In Kaeo, where the river floods again and again, whānau just keep rebuilding (RNZ, 2008). At Matangirau, the flood barriers finally hold (Inside Government, 2023). At Taahawai, families still stay. The mud is familiar – and so is the resolve (de Graaf, 2025).

All of these practices of transition, resistance, of standing firm; they're not always loud. But they are ahi kā roa – held, repeated, endured. This is the kind of persistence I found myself stepping into, without even knowing it.

Figure 7. Taipa Beach, 2024.
Photograph: Hayley Walmsley.

Even from a distance, I was still trying to carry the fire – upholding ahi kā in forms that made sense where I was. That recent trip north – circling, listening, eating too many roast dinners – was part of something I didn't yet have the words for. Later, I called it research. It became *Migratory Patterns*, an exhibition that gathered artists tracing whakapapa, whenua, and memory across distance (Toi Moroki Centre of Contemporary Art, 2025). People whose ties weren't always visible but still tugged. Who knew what it was to carry place in fragments. The show wasn't just about movement – it moved like whakapapa. Sideways. Inherited. Reclaimed.

At the moment, I'm working on *Provocation Station*. It's a platform, a publishing project, and a testing ground for practices that don't always sit comfortably inside institutions (Provocation Station, 2025). It's Indigenous-led, kaupapa-driven, grounded in conceptual and decolonial thinking – but never too precious. Some days it's an exhibition. Other days it's a letter, a box in the post, a potluck with too much pudding.

It came from a simple truth: the spaces I needed didn't always exist. Not for me, or for so many others. So, I started building one. A place where artists can try things, rest things and speak what needs to be said without having to translate. Somewhere to be held without being explained (Provocation Station, 2025). These projects quietly carry the fire forward – acts of persistence that trace whakapapa beyond geography.

It's slow work, held together by instinct, spreadsheets, and hope. I want it to grow. A dedicated whare, a publishing stream. One day, an Indigenous Art Biennial – rooted here, connected across waters, shaped by artists themselves. But mostly, I want it to feel familiar. A place where you're allowed to bring your full self. Ahi kā, by other means.

TŪRANGAWAEWAE REIMAGINED

Mā te huruhuru, ka rere te manu.
Adorn the bird with feathers so it may fly.
Traditional Māori whakataukī.

My life is a statement of intent: to stand across fractured landscapes and redefine home. I was born in Auckland, raised in Kerikeri, and spiritually anchored in Matauri Bay. My whakapapa runs through Pupuke, Matangirau, and the tides of Whangaroa. Nan taught me that belonging lives in the body as much as the land. Identity is shaped through motion – it breathes through ritual, story, and survival.

Reclaiming tūrangawaewae enacts tino rangatiratanga – the right to define our standing. Ahi kā isn't just a fire left burning – it's one we carry, tend, and sometimes reignite. We might begin with ahi hīrangi – fires barely visible, not yet caught. But through return and repetition, those flickers move through ahi kā to become ahi kā roa – steady, enduring, ours.

Figure 8. View from Whatuwhiwhi looking out past Parakerake Bay, 2024. Photograph: Hayley Walmsley.

In tracing these threads of land, identity, memory and movement, I return to this: belonging is not fixed. It's remade in action and relationship. Tūrangawaewae, in all its forms, draws us back – to ourselves, to what holds us. It survives through showing up, staying close, and keeping warm what remains.

I grew up just down the road from Waitangi. The Treaty (Te Tiriti o Waitangi, or the Treaty of Waitangi) has always been ambient – in schoolbooks, on pānui boards; everywhere. And perhaps because of that, I don't feel the need to rehearse it here. Tino rangatiratanga doesn't begin or end with the Treaty. It runs through whakapapa. Through whenua. Through quiet acts.

Do I have to explain? In a climate where Māori are constantly asked to explain, to educate, to justify – I reserve the right not to.

I think too of my father. Staunch. Proud. Unmoved by doubt. He told me once, "If I wanted land at Pupuke, I'd just go down there and get it." Not as provocation – but as fact. Because in his mind, it's already his.

Who are you to tell me who I am? My whakapapa has already spoken. That's the kind of certainty I carry now. Tūrangawaewae doesn't always need to be declared. Sometimes it can simply be known. I might not always belong in ways others recognise. But I know where I come from. And I stand anyway.

KOINEI TAKU TŪRANGA

So when the questions come – Nā wai au? Ko wai au? – my answer is not uncertain. It is steady. It is proud. It is a bird with its feathers on. Ready.

Tēnā tātou katoa, Ko Emiemi tōku maunga,
Ko Whangaroa tōku awa,
Nō Kerikeri ahau,
Ko Walmsley tōku whānau,
Ko Hayley tōku ingoa.
He uri tēnei nō Ngāti Kawau, Ngāti Tautahi, Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Porou me Ngāti Pākehā hoki.

E ai ki te kōrero tuku iho, i takoto kē ētahi o aku tūpuna i konei mai i te tīmatanga mai o Whangaroa.
Kāore he waka e herea ai – ko te whenua tonu te pūtake. Engari anō hoki, e hono ana ētahi atu rārangi ki a Ngātokimatawhaorua me Te Māmaru.

Ki aku nei whakairo: ko te whānau te mea nunui.
Ehara i te kupu anake, engari mā ngā mahi hoki.
Ko Giles rāua ko Tuari-Stewart ētahi o ngā whānau i āwhina mai ki ahau i te wā tupua.
Ka tū au ki konei, mai rā anō – he mea whakau anō i te ahi kā.
E rau ake ngā ingoa kei ahau, kāore anō kia maumaharatia katoatia.
Ko ētahi i kōrerotia kotahi anake te wā, ā, kua ngaro.
Ko ētahi kei te tatari tonu kia ako anōhia.
Nō reira, ko wai au?
Ko au tēnei. Koinei taku e tū nei.
Koinei taku tūranga.

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CREATIVE PRACTICE, WHENUA, AND THE SHAPE OF HOME

Nikita Rewha

INTRODUCTION

This article outlines a creative research project that culminated in two works: *Huri* (2025), a whatū kākahu woven from sisal and jute, and *Take Off Your Shoes*, a site-based installation. Developed over a year, the project, my contribution to the kaupapa, was undertaken in response to the Migratory Patterns curatorial proposal, in which I was fortunate to have participated as one of eleven artists, ringatoi or hautUtū.

The reflections that follow give form to a creative practice attempting to re-centre mātauranga Māori, where materials, traditional techniques, and decisions carry layered significance. Meanings emerge through ongoing negotiation within the works and their cultural and historical contexts. In this way, the process is not subordinate to the outcome, but rather it is the space where kaupapa and creative works are enacted in a cyclical, spiralled, and non-linear temporal practice. As such, the cadence and form of the writing itself reflects and synthesizes this mode of inquiry informing the woven logic that underpins the writing that follows.

The first section locates this approach within kaupapa Māori, outlining challenges and tensions as affirmations within creative practice. The second section focuses on *Huri* (2025) and *Take Off Your Shoes* (2025), outlining their construction and exploring how the kākahu reflects the ongoing influence of whakapapa, ecological impact, kaitiakitanga, and the role of weaving in examining relationships between people and place. The third introduces the concepts re-search and weaving with-in-tention, intersecting conceptualisations that guide the creative direction in an attempt to re-centre mātauranga Māori. The final sections discuss material experimentation, drawing on studies into muka (prepared fibre from harakeke, NZ flax) and sisal, and considers how a whakapapa lens offers a framework for understanding material substitution and the entwined histories of fibre economies in Aotearoa New Zealand. Reflections on whānau, whenua, and place are woven throughout.

CENTRING MĀTAURANGA MĀORI IN CREATIVE PRACTICE

> He kōkonga whare ka kitea, he kōkonga ngākau e kore e kitea.
> The corners of a house can be seen, but the corners of the heart cannot.

The project was guided by kaupapa Māori, in addition to employing a multi-modal, site-based approach. As Smith and Dean (2009) note, practice-led research emerges from within the act of making, where the materials, processes, and contexts of practice shape questions and insights. This multi-modal approach integrates site-specific inquiries and material engagement to weave knowledge through place and memory (p. 5). My creative practice engages place, people and whakapapa, having guided the creation of *Huri* (2025), a woven whatū kākahu, and *Take Off Your Shoes*, a site-based installation.

The interplay between mātauranga Māori and contemporary creative practice is dynamic and evolving, inviting continued exploration within a cyclical creative research framework. However, as Smith (2012) argues, research is never neutral; it is shaped by and entangled in relations of power. Creative work, even when framed as critical or decolonial, can remain susceptible to institutional structures, thus obscuring or diluting intent. Tuck and Yang (2012) note that academic institutions frequently absorb Indigenous knowledge without undergoing substantive transformation. In doing so, it is therefore possible to reinforce dominant Eurocentric epistemologies that fragment, contain, and ultimately diminish the status of marginalised knowledges.

Tension, as both material condition and conceptual metaphor, found form in the act of weaving tāniko, where coloured aho (horizontal threads) twist around the whenu (vertical warps). Holding the whenu in one hand and manipulating the aho with the other felt awkward at first. The initial pattern lacked cohesion because of uneven tension. The whenu became visible in places, interrupting the overall design. Over time, I came to understand that tension is not something to overcome but something essential. It holds the weave together, giving it form and strength. Too much tension can make the work rigid and unyielding. Too little causes the structure to collapse. The right balance, not easily measured then must be observed, sensed and intuited through practice.

Weaving reasoned a sameness in this regard – and remained true throughout the project – where tension carried its own logic. The presence of it, be it literal, figurative or otherwise, one might argue, did not compromise the integrity of the overall kaupapa.

I recall an older whānau member relaying the confusion she encountered the day after the exhibition opening, when we gathered for the artists' talks, waiata, and kai. A young girl, no older than ten, had apparently and earnestly insisted on observing the tīkanga of the gallery: "She told me, Aunty, you're meant to take off your shoes!"

This was in reference to the shoe installation, *Please take off your shoes* (2025), which my friend and I placed at the gallery entrance upon entering. A nod, you could say, to tīkanga and observation, drawn with regard to the function of visual cues that can signal boundary setting in the environment, such as the pou. There are variations of Pou and its function in te ao Māori, including its visual depictions and its ability to demarcate boundaries between territories or significant areas (Te Ara, n.d.). It is also not unlike the tīkanga and kawa one might observe upon entering another's home or marae, depending, of course, on whose marae you are standing on and whose home you are entering. A small gesture that would respond subtly to the exhibition's themes on 'home' – albeit to our minds, a slightly humorous installation.

After graduating from Art School, I stopped making art – not because I stopped creating altogether, but because the domain of art, as I experienced it, had become increasingly preoccupied with transcendental claims rather than engaged with why these claims might be so important. Though if a modicum of perspective is ever called for in that belief, then one might ask whether the same cannot therefore be untrue of other disciplines, even if it might appear less declaratively so in some instances. Such absences, though, history might have argued, are not unproductively contrived. After all, even phantoms, as Didi-Huberman (2017) says, are put to work. Still, my decision was simple: I stepped away. Over time, the pursuit and curiosity once derived from artmaking had been eroded by life, reluctance, and disconnection.

My creative practice spans painting, drawing, and now weaving, amongst other things. Painting was my initial medium of choice, but titles like "painter" or "artist" have never sat comfortably. Through participating in this project, however, I've begun to feel more at ease with for names like ringatoi (artist), or even haututū. These names suggest experimentation and mischief (hau meaning wind, tutu meaning to stir, restless) and feel more aligned with a fluid and exploratory practice, closer to what being an artist once afforded. Cooper's (2012) metaphor for navigating the epistemic wilderness laconically captures the phenomenon of navigating research in the arms of the academy, where marginal knowledges that do not conform to dominant expository forms or serve utilitarian imperatives are present but routinely challenged. I have also interpreted this as a double entendre that gestures toward the dissonance surrounding professional identity within contemporary art contexts.

Kaupapa Māori research, as Cooper (2012) argues, navigates a paradoxical "epistemic wilderness," where Mātauranga Māori is often cast aside within Western academic traditions. Traditions that frequently position Māori as producers of culture rather than of knowledge. He articulates this paradox: "Part of the task of Kaupapa Māori research, then, is to draw and theorise from ancestral legacies, to critically engage with scientific epistemologies, and at the same time use the wilderness to critically disengage from science" (p. 71). In a similar vein, Smith (1999) observes that Western disciplines, grounded in particular cultural worldviews, are often antagonistic toward other knowledge systems and lack meaningful ways to engage with them.

These insights drawn from these texts have helped to reaffirm a mode of creative inquiry in sustained engagement with tension – as method, as material, and as cultural terrain. This was apparent in the awkwardness of learning new art forms, the uncertainty of applying kaupapa Māori in creative practice, the unfolding trajectory of the project, and the discursive frictions encountered in art spaces and acts of naming.

Figure 1. Recent watercolour and pencil on watercolour paper.

HURI (2025)

Hine-te-iwaiwa is widely recognised in many texts as the principal atua wāhine associated with Te Whare Pora. Understandings of atua wāhine connected with the oversight of these practices may vary across iwi and hapū. *Huri* was woven from natural fibres. Jute was used for the kaupapa (body), and cotton crochet for the aho (vertical wefts). It was created, in part, with the intention to cloak the exhibition space in a layer of protection, and to offer reflection on the idea of home as both textile and tangible reminder of the artform of weaving. It was also a tribute to one of my tūpuna.

The fibres for the hukahuka (tassels), made from sisal, became an experiential inquiry into material memory. Each ara (row), though slow, an act of protection and remembering. Red, brown and black coloured aho were tactile reminders of the banks surrounding my Tūrangawaewae. The feathers, both a mixture of brown, iridescent blue and green, would sometimes shimmer a teal or deep-sea green when the light caught them at an angle.

Within the tāniko, motifs such as niho taniwha (dragon's teeth) symbolise repetition, resilience, and the steadfast nature of Kaitiakitanga collectively exercised by whānau and hapū over whenua and moana in our rohe. The triangular forms of niho taniwha, meeting at a central apex, reflect watchfulness and guardianship – evoking the idea of the taniwha said to protect the bays at home and in many cases across several narratives, to protect people and place. The pātiki (flounder) motif speaks to a time when there was once an abundance of kaimoana, gradually lessening over generations due to ecological and commercial demands. Motūkokako (Piercey Island) is one of the places that was brought to memory during its initial construction.

I use karakia before commencing weaving; it is true of any art that has personal significance in my practice, whether spoken aloud or quietly conducted. By the end of the casting on in the initial construction of the whatū kākahu, it had amounted to around 530 whenu, which measured about 1.2 meters in diameter. There were 26 lines for the tāniko patterning, which represented 13,782 "twists". Initially, the tāniko was designed using mathematical paper to visualise the pattern, then transferred and adjusted entirely using a pixel programme.

The afternoon before the gallery opened, the kaikaranga who would later open the space for visitors moved through the gallery, slowly, taking time with each piece. When she reached the cloak, I felt nervous – not unsure of the work, just aware of every detail and flaw. She leaned in slightly to examine it, then ran her fingers gently over the feathered parts. She didn't say anything, just moved on. Suffice to say, I was relieved she didn't linger too long, fearful of the errors she might have noticed in the weave.

What lingered from that experience was the disproportionate fear of being judged quickly. Though when a piece can be perceived to have failed, little actually changes. The consequences we imagine often do not materialise, turning then to a situated truth that's easy to lose sight of amid creative pressure.

RE-SEARCH AND WEAVING WITH-IN-TENTION: EXPLORING CONCEPTS FOR CREATIVE PRACTICE

The prefix re- appears frequently across Indigenous and decolonial literature, which speaks to ideas of repetition, relation, and continuity. In this exploration, the terms re-search and weaving with-in-tention are conceptual ideas that surfaced throughout the project, the reflective writing, and the process of making. I have taken the view of Ellis (2016), who, whilst acknowledging a slippage into an essentialist view in reaffirming a māori ontological position in art, simultaneously highlights the necessity in doing so. She further observes the dynamics upon which generations of young Māori researchers may begin to return home in search of korerorero to celebrate and record such histories.

The conceptualisations of these terms within my creative practice reflect a process of working through material, memory and place. 'Re-search' within this context indicates a returning to methods, materials, and whenua over time – persistently, above all else.

In *How We Come to Know: Indigenous Re-search Methodologies*, Absolon (2022) speaks from within Anishinaabe traditional knowledge, reframing Indigenous research as non-linear and recursive, characterised by returning and being continually reshaped through relational engagement with land, people and story. Engaging with 're-search' in this way meant revisiting traditional weaving techniques such as whatū, working with fibres, and allowing material to guide understanding. Alongside this returning to whenua and to sites connected through whakapapa, where place informed both the form and the intention of the work. The terms capture a distinctive metaphorical weight in this way, and their rhythm echoed the process of weaving, turning back, rethreading, and looping through time, people, and place. As structural tools, they helped organise reflection and shaped how ideas unfolded over time. Metaphor and method worked together: one supported understanding, the other guided decisions.

One begins to notice that there is a distinct visual resonance with the aho thread, particularly in instructional diagrams that detail the practice of whatū. The space created by the hyphen allowed for a pause, where insight surfaced through repetition and engagement with material. Foucault (1972) writes that language shapes what can be known. Thus, the hyphen, between words, acts as both a conceptual stitch in the interpretation and construction of these terms, like whatū.

In my practice, I use the hyphen as a space of relation, allowing meaning to shift and unfold over time. This approach follows the rhythm of the work itself, where forms emerge through ongoing attention to material, memory, people and place.

> Hoki atu ki tō maunga kia horoia koe e ngā hau a Tāwhirimātea.
> Return to your mountain so that you may be cleansed by the winds of Tāwhirimātea.

This whakataukī speaks to one of the foundations of this work by grounding the project in relation to whenua. Returning to Te Tai Tokerau was a purposeful reconnection with tūrangawaewae, beyond creative practice, place-based research, or practice-led reflection. It was a reflection on movement, belonging, and on home.

Figure 2. Te Araaka – Walkway to Raukaumangamanga (Cape Brett).

WEAVING WITH-IN-TENTION

The thematic proposal for *Migratory Patterns* prompted an exploration of what "home" means, which led to an examination of how this concept was communicated in the language used within our immediate whānau.

Tūrangawaewae is a site of significance for Māori identity and a cornerstone of collective wellbeing. Relationships to places such as Tūrangawaewae are contingent on both individual and collective experiences. Overlooking their spiritual, physical, social, and emotional dimensions, along with the ongoing disruptions of coloniality, risks defaulting to Western individualistic rationalism. Reifying these relationships as uncomplicated becomes necessarily remit of not just the how but the why these places are important.

We did not use the kupu tūrangawaewae in earlier years. Nevertheless, the warmth and familiarity lived in how it was recalled among us. It made sense, even if only partially at the time, to return to what had been remembered as another home. A place oft spoken of but seldom returned to.

Moko Mead further echoes the importance of tūrangawaewae, "The phrase 'taku tūranga waewae' means the place where my feet are grounded and it is loaded with emotion: with love for the land and our long historical connection with it, and because it is where our ancestors are buried and the place, we call home." (2025, pp. 156-157). The significance of this description provides a pivotal cue that highlights the intrinsic relationship between te taiao in te ao Māori, identity and belonging.

Words like "home," "up north," and "Te Tai Tokerau" (Metge, 2010; Williams, 2015) carried dual meanings growing up. They described our locations in Dunedin, Christchurch, and Southland. At the same time, they also stood in for Te Rāwhiti. Their meanings sat somewhere between idiom, colloquialism, and assertion, thus forming a familial vernacular shaped by collective memory.

Reflections of home and belonging were woven into the work. This meant returning to resting places of tūpuna, familiar māunga, and the moana, stories that were not spoken of all too often. They weren't hidden, but neither were they foregrounded. For my parents' generation, time, distance, the cost and the routine of daily life offered minuscule opportunity for these stories to be encountered regularly. So, they were not lost to time or memory but rather lay in wait to be reencountered.

RE-SEARCHING

A return to our Tūrangawaewae in 2019, prompted by whānau illness, brought new weight to the experience of returning in 2024. These are places that epitomise connections and serve as repositories as well as living embodiments of taonga. A close friend and I, whom I had met at art school some years earlier, had grown up in a bay not far from whānau I stayed with during sporadic visits. Like me, she also returned intermittently. Travelling home together made sense both practically and meaningfully, due to our shared proximity, which later revealed a familial association. We did get lost sometimes while navigating our way around Whangaroa and the surrounding areas of Ipipiri. Eventually, we parted ways during our stay.

Travelling to or returning to places of significance, such as tūrangawaewae, is explored by artists such as Raukura Turei, as seen in *Te poho o Hineahuone* (2021). This art piece uses uku from her ancestral land, allowing the material to guide the work. Her surfaces reveal layers of uku application, often implicating atua wāhine. She notes that whenua in her black onepū (black iron sand) series is an active presence, one that continues to speak beyond the artist's intention.

Mead (2025) refers to a case study undertaken by researchers Leonie Pihama and Jenny-Lee Morgan in 2022, which uncovered insights through ancestral knowledge that were applied to the weaving of wahakura with

relevance for weaving practices today. He writes, "There is value in the forgotten parts of Mātauranga. I suggest that there is a lot more of that kind of knowledge to recover, knowledge that contains information about the 'why' and the knowledge we need to know" (p. 318). Mead highlights the significance of mātauranga as an interrelated knowledge system that can be evidenced in a range of ways.

These experiences of returning reflect a wider orientation in contemporary Māori art and creative research, where whenua is approached as a site of relational insight, though not an unexplored one. Contemporary artists such as Natalie Robertson, in *Tātara e maru ana: Renewing ancestral connections with the sacred rain cape of Waiapu* (2023), offer a creative research approach through photography. Her work reflects a sustained engagement with whenua, adopting a whakapapa lens that is cyclical, attentive, and grounded in return. The images trace the shifting movements of land over time and document the slow but urgent degradation of sites.

A well-known Ngāpuhi whakataukī references Rākaumangamanga as one of several pou supporting the figurative wharenui that defines territorial boundaries. Maunga are regarded as tūpuna, one of the anchoring relationships between the primordial parents Papatūānuku and Ranginui. Ngāti Kuta kaumātua describe the significance of Rākaumangamanga in the following whakataukī:

> Rākaumangamanga titiro ki Rapanui – Rākaumangamanga looks to Rapanui
> Rapanui titiro ki Hawai'i – Rapanui looks to Hawai'i
> Hawai'i titiro ki Taputapuātea – Hawai'i looks to Taputapuātea
> Taputapuātea titiro ki Rākaumangamanga – Taputapuātea looks to Rākaumangamanga

A navigational whakataukī which maintains genealogical connections across Te Moana-nui-a-Kiwa, positioning Rākaumangamanga as both a geographic and metaphysical anchor. It demarcates a pattern of movement, drawing links, not lines, in a tradition of navigational movement, and then again in an even longer link in our cultural cartography.

The loss of kaimoana was evident during this time, expressed as a form of intergenerational grief. Commercial overfishing has progressively depleted coastal waters. This is compounded by fast-track legislation that transfers marina decision-making to private interests, further eroding local expressions of kaitiakitanga. The recent spread of Caulerpa, an invasive seaweed affecting the bays around Te Rāwhiti and local areas, has intensified these pressures – not, I suspect, unlike those faced by other coastal communities and communities more widely.

Returning to our tūrangawaewae reminded me that home is not a structure, but a connection, shaped by kinship.

> How might we cloak the mauri of te taiao, whānau, and whakapapa?
> How can we protect relationships with people and place?

Working with materials then became a way to reflect on these relationships through fibre, form, and experimentation. Weaving became an interlocutor, drawing memory to the surface through the traditional practice of whatū Raranga.

SISAL

The following section outlines how sisal was introduced into the project and why its use required further consideration. Although it was not selected for its historical significance, its use brought forward associations with fibre substitution, resistance, and regulation in Aotearoa. The reflections that follow consider how whakapapa offers a way to understand these material relationships.

Although not selected with historical significance in mind, the use of sisal revealed layered associations of substitution, resistance, and material memory. Its emergence within the project shifted to a convergence that

invited further critical engagement. Fibre articulated a set of implicit questions to which whakapapa provided a framework for response. These are basic questions:

Ko wai koe? No hea koe?

The process involved technical engagement but also created space to reflect on the material's history, story, and relationships, and to notice how it responded in ways akin to memory. Bishop (2012) argues that much of the so-called socially engaged art evades politics by prioritising feel-good interaction over structural critique. In contrast, kaupapa Māori creative practice demands accountability to place and history – a political position enacted through material labour as much as narrative framing.

The decision not to work with harakeke in this project was deliberate because while it carries deep whakapapa, I did not feel it was appropriate to employ it for the purpose for which it was intended.

Research indicates that sisal and harakeke share similar structural and tensile properties (Feeney & Langston, 2014; Newman et al., 2007), making sisal a considered material choice for this project. Initially dry and wiry, it appeared suited to commercial-grade use. When cut, it frayed into coarse but distinctive fibres – rougher than muka, yet both resistant and responsive.

Insights drawn from the literature suggested soaking would soften the fibre to a pliability like muka, which proved partially true in my small experiment. The fibre was trimmed to arm-length segments (palm to elbow) for testing, but processing it like muka proved inconsistent, as internal cohesion often broke down due to uneven lengths of fibres after soaking and separation.

Figure 3. Work in progress on *Huri*.

Once softened slightly through komiri and partially dried, the overly saturated fibres regained some structure. The yellow tinge faded, revealing a pale, bone-white hue. These tactile interactions reoriented an analysis toward a framework for navigating the small observations.

Though it might be difficult to prove in every case, resistance signals meaning, a relation or force with weight that leaves its mark. It is not the opposite of flow, but the moment form can emerge through tension, revealing that something matters enough to push back, so it is probably a good idea to ask why?

WHAKAPAPA ANALYSIS

This question prompted a need to reconsider my position within the project and how whakapapa shaped that process. Beyond a genealogical account, whakapapa has been used as an analytical approach. In my practice, it has helped to make sense of how to position self within the project. I returned to this way of thinking through this inquiry. Rather than prioritising objectivity or detachment, whakapapa engages the physical, metaphysical realms and spiritual realms (Durie, 2021; Graham, 2009). Whakapapa maintains these interdependent connections, protecting their integrity (Marsden, 2003; Hikuroa, 2017; Salmond, 2012), then encoding a set of responsibilities to be enacted in practice (Barlow, 1991; Mahuika, 2019).

Whakapapa offers a distinctive way of knowing in te ao Māori. As an organising principle, it informs how knowledge is held and passed on, especially in relation to ecology and community (Stewart, 2021).

This way of thinking informed how I approached material, allowing the fibre to be understood as relational, to mean influenced by the histories it carries and the experimental ways it is handled. Recognising fibre as carrying its own whakapapa and story meant tracing not only its lineage but also its entanglement within Aotearoa.

Carter (2004) offers a valuable account of material thinking as a dialogical and spatial process, where meaning emerges through gesture and engagement with place. While aspects of this resonate with the approach, it differs in that the work is situated within a framework in which material and related elements are understood to carry relational, cultural, and intergenerational significance that extends in multiple directions. This departs, to some extent, from Carter's primarily phenomenological and symbolic orientation.

Understanding the material required attention to the historical and regulatory contexts in which fibre has circulated. Literature on fibre industries in Aotearoa presents a history in which muka intersects with other natural fibres such as manila and jute within agricultural and export economies influenced by global supply and demand. In the early twentieth century, sisal became a cheaper alternative to muka due to limited sisal availability during the Spanish-American War, subsequently increasing demand for muka. Muka production had already declined as a result of yellow-leaf disease.

Sisal and muka differ significantly in origin but were brought into proximity through their functional properties and roles in fibre processing and trade. On 1 May 1901, the Department of Agriculture, supported by millers and merchants at the Port of Wellington, introduced a flax grading system for exported muka. A compulsory grading scheme using onsite graders came into effect in November that same year. These changes were recorded in the 1902 despatches included in the Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives (AJHR), as part of the Governor's official correspondence to the British Colonial Office. While not a primary focus, these legislative developments offer context for how fibre was regulated and valued within New Zealand's agricultural economy.

If histories, relationships and memory shape people, then natural materials can be understood in similar terms through this lens. Fibre, then, is responsive, affected through handling, distance and shared functional properties like muka, but it need not be understood only in that way. The use of sisal and manila in New Zealand's fibre economy during the early twentieth century reflects a layered history of substitution, industrial production and economic export.

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

The following section reflects on where the project currently sits and what remains. While the project has concluded, the kaupapa remains open-ended. I have come to understand that kaupapa Māori is a process rather than an endpoint and one that must remain responsive to the changes that arise (Smith, 2012). Re-search and weaving with-in-tention reflects an ongoing return to mātauranga Māori within my work, articulated through repetition, reconnection, and practice. *Huri* drew multiple threads into form through material and site-based inquiry and much more than that it became a vehicle for connection between movement and home.

I'd like to think that what had been perceived as warmth in our kōrero on home was from the ahi kā, a living connection to place kept alive by the haukāinga who remain on and around the whenua, breathing life into the fires that keep the hearth ablaze. Belonging rests not only in memory, but in continuity and community. Making offers a way to return to the warmth of those fires and to help stoke them in ways that are not always the same but can be creative and uniquely our own. I carry fewer doubts now about the role of creative spaces, and I choose names that better reflect how I work.

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KA MUA, KA MURI: DESIGNING WHENUA-BASED KĀINGA FOR A CLIMATE-RESILIENT FUTURE

James Berghan, Fiona Cram, Violet Pou and Kathleen Morrison

INTRODUCTION

> Kia whakatōmuri te haere whakamua
> I walk backwards into the future with my eyes fixed on my past

Housing and home ownership continue to be some of the most pressing issues for Māori. Māori home ownership rates are consistently lower than non-Māori (Stats NZ, 2020), with flow-on effects such as increased mobility, reduced stability and limited potential for intergenerational wealth transfer (Statistics New Zealand, 2016; Goodyear, 2017). However, concepts of 'home' for Māori extend beyond physical dwellings to encompass broader connections with whānau, whenua and whakapapa (Cram, 2020; Boulton et al., 2022). These understandings remind us that strategies to address Māori housing must go beyond physical structures to consider what Māori need to be genuinely 'at home'.

A range of toolkits now support culturally appropriate housing for Māori, including Te Puni Kōkiri's *A Guide to Papakāinga Housing* (2017), regional resources such as the Waikato, Heretaunga and Te Tai Tokerau papakāinga toolkits and specialised guides like *He Keteparaha Tēnei Mō Te Whare Kaumātua: A Toolkit for Kaumātua Housing* (Reddy et al., 2019). Increasingly, these resources are contributing to more culturally grounded housing solutions. However, despite advances in Māori housing guidance, a significant gap remains in understanding how to develop climate-resilient housing for Māori that honours te ao Māori and strengthens connections to the whenua and te taiao.

The whakataukī above describes Māori as drawing on the taonga (treasures that include the whenua, mātauranga and tikanga) handed down to us from our ancestors, to help ensure the resilience, viability and sustainability of generations to come. For many Māori communities, these taonga inform responses to the challenge of building warm, safe and affordable homes in the midst of climate risks that threaten land, infrastructure and wellbeing (Johnson et al., 2021). Climate change stands as one of today's most urgent global concerns and "is a threat to human well-being and planetary health" (IPCC, 2023: p. 33). Although climate change affects all New Zealanders, hapori Māori face disproportionate impacts. As noted by Te Puni Kōkiri (2023):

> Despite Māori households having similar exposure to climate hazards as the overall population, they are projected to face greater risks due to a higher proportion of Māori households at risk related to poverty, health disparities, justice and protection concerns.

At the heart of this research is the principle of tino rangatiratanga: the right of Māori to exercise authority over their lands, resources and ways of living. This right is affirmed in Te Tiriti o Waitangi and reinforced through contemporary frameworks such as the Waitangi Tribunal's WAI262 report. Housing, when framed as an expression of self-determination, becomes more than a physical structure: it is a platform for sustaining whakapapa, reconnecting with whenua and enacting Māori aspirations for the future. In the context of climate change, realising tino rangatiratanga means enabling whānau to design, build and govern kāinga in ways that

reflect their own tikanga, values and relationships with te taiao. This framing informs not only the kaupapa of the research, but its methods and approach to engagement.

This paper draws on findings from "Ka mua, ka muri", a research project focused on initiating meaningful conversations with whānau about the dual challenges of housing provision and the climate crisis (see below). We ask: *how do you start conversations with whānau about these intersecting issues?* While resilience is often framed in biophysical terms such as siting homes away from hazards and designing climate-responsive whare, we argue for a more holistic approach that incorporates whanaungatanga and social cohesion. Housing that fosters strong connectivity among whānau can enhance collective resilience in the face of climate-related and socio-economic challenges. These insights resonate with a growing body of international Indigenous scholarship that emphasises self-determination and ancestral knowledge as vital components of planning for climate change futures (e.g. Whyte, 2017; Osborne et al., 2024). By exploring both the practical and relational dimensions of Māori housing resilience, this research contributes to ongoing discussions about sustainable and culturally responsive housing solutions for Māori communities and Indigenous communities globally.

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Next, we introduce the approach taken for this research. Then, we explore three key themes that emerged: (1) how whānau defined and expressed resilience through both physical and non-physical design features; (2) how resilience could be embedded in design practice; and (3) the barriers that whānau face in realising those aspirations. We conclude with reflections on future directions for research, design and practice in this critical intersection of housing and climate adaptation.

RESEARCH APPROACH

This paper presents a subset of results from a larger research project called "Ka mua, ka muri: Connecting tāngata to whenua through housing". The project was carried out from 2023-2024 and was funded from the Building Research Levy administered by BRANZ. Ethical approval for this study was granted on 24 January 2023 from the University of Otago (Category B – Departmental Approval).

This study employed an innovative kaupapa Māori design research approach to respond to an over-arching question: *What could climate-resilient kāinga look like for whānau looking to reinstate pā sites on their whenua?* We held two wānanga over three days with whānau at Pahaoa Marae in the Bay of Plenty. The first, a two-day wānanga, was held on 28-29 January 2023 and involved 18 participants (15 wahine, 3 tane). The second wānanga, lasting one day, was held on 9 September 2023 and included 10 participants (8 wahine, 2 tane), with nine returning from the earlier wānanga. Participants were primarily residents of the local rohe and were recruited using a snowball sampling method, led by two community researchers on the research team and in consultation with the Pahaoa Marae committee. Potential participants were identified and invited, with an open invitation for them to bring along others who may be interested in the kaupapa.

Both wānanga incorporated activities, presentations, kōrero and breaks for kai. The first wānanga focused on notions of home, Masterplanning and innovative housing solutions, whereas the second wānanga explored whānau ideas of a 'dream whare' and 'dream kāinga' to explore more detailed and nuanced aspects of what it means to live well and to live together. Group kōrero from both wānanga were audio recorded and manually transcribed by the lead researcher. A second member of the research team also kept written field notes during both wānanga which were added to supplement transcriptions. The combined set of field notes were thematically analysed using Braun and Clarke's (2013) six-step approach for thematic analysis beginning with reviewing transcripts, iteratively coding and evolving those codes into defined themes and writing up the analysis by weaving those themes into a cohesive narrative. This paper includes relevant quotes to ensure participant voices are present throughout. Given the collective nature of the wānanga and data collection, quotes are not ascribed to certain individuals. Rather, they represent the collective nature of wānanga discussions.

The lead researcher engaged in ongoing hui with the Pahaoa Marae committee (two members of the research team are also part of the marae committee) before, during and after the wānanga to centre local perspectives and priorities in the work. This included presentations to a wider hapū hui with draft findings from the project for feedback.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents three interconnected themes that emerged from the wānanga. These themes reflect not only what climate-resilient kāinga might look like, but also how whānau defined resilience, their aspirations in design and the challenges they face in realising those aspirations.

Theme 1: Defining resilience through a whānau lens

Throughout both wānanga, whānau views of resilience were broad. For many participants, resilience began with secure access to ancestral whenua and was sustained through relationships – with whānau, whenua and with one another:

> …for anything to happen, to get those results, to get the safety and the aroha [i.e. outcomes of a good home], you need a solid foundation. The first thing we talked about was securing the land.

From this foundation, kāinga was described not simply as a set of houses but a lived expression of relationality and shared responsibility:

> It's about the collective…instead of having individual risks and individual bills, it's about coming together. Everybody wants safe, clean water, power…we all want access to that, so why not do it collectively?

In this way, resilience (and climate-resilient kāinga) was understood as being deeply relational and interdependent as much as it is technical. This supports other research which has highlighted the importance of social connectivity for Māori resilience (Lambert, 2013; Awatere et al., 2019). That said, participants acknowledged very real material threats such as flooding, drought, wind, sea-level rise, slips and power cuts. In one example, a participant described how a recent landslide nearly cut off road access:

> There was a slip. Luckily it went over the road, but it came down through a creek and all the slash…if it had taken that road out, we would've been buggered…it would be a nine-hour trip back to Ōpōtiki (instead of 45 minutes).

Importantly, the capacity to be resilient was framed as something collective, not individual. Participants repeatedly returned to the importance of whanaungatanga, communal decision-making, intergenerational thinking and the ability to lean on one another in times of need. Resilience was about living well together and designing environments that support whānau "from the cradle to the coffin". This meant accommodating the needs of rangatahi and tamariki (the 'future generations') but equally, our kaumatua and kuia and everyone in between.

In the first wānanga, groups of participants used wooden blocks to identify and prioritise ideas of what it means to be well-homed on your whenua. Each idea is written onto a wooden block and groups arrange their blocks to reflect the relative importance of those ideas or principles (see Berghan et al., 2025).

Groups identified various concepts including the need to work together, to have good communication, of having a long-term plan, having access to kai gardens and a shared water supply, homes for all ages, sharing ideas and resources, room for play and spaces for building memories.

Figure 1 shows a circular arrangement where participants saw all ideas as equally important. Each block symbolised a 'stay' line, that was seen as necessary to support their overall aspirations. Importantly, the desk represented the whenua as being foundational for what it means to be 'at home'.

Figure 1: Wooden blocks labelled and arranged by one of the groups in our first wānanga. Photograph: by authors.

Theme 2: Designing for resilience in practice

While part of being resilient meant having the ability to withstand increasingly frequent and severe weather events, conversations about resilience also raised deeper questions about how we live and how we might live differently to avoid worsening those impacts:

> *I'm very concerned that…one day a big storm will hit us and we will go, why didn't we [do something]? We're still stuck in a way of living that we've been used to and we think that that's going to be sustainable…*

When we turned our attention to the practicalities of designing whare and kāinga through a resilience lens, a diverse range of aspirations emerged. Whānau envisioned homes that could adapt to local environmental conditions, with passive design strategies playing a central role. Many spoke of designing with the whenua rather than against it, siting homes into the landscape to provide shelter from prevailing winds and orienting them to maximise solar gain in winter and shade in summer:

> *How do we approach building within the land? Like our old kāinga? Because [if] you actually lower your home, it's not sitting above the land, it's within the land and becomes quite protected from things like wind…the wind is sort of…just coming over the land, it's not catching on the house.*

There was also a strong interest in energy resilience. Participants expressed interest in using local, sustainable materials and designing systems that could operate independently from centralised infrastructure. When designing their dream kāinga in one of our wānanga activities, participants saw off-grid solutions including solar panels, water wheels and multiple power sources as essential in the event of infrastructure failure:

> *[In my dream kāinga design] I wanted to have multiple power sources…gas, electricity, water wheel…*

> *I'd love to see a community off the grid…[our design has] got solar, wind and rain. Because you're guaranteed to get one type of weather here.*

Design aspirations also extended beyond individual whare to consider the benefits of shared infrastructure and communal living. Many participants saw collective facilities such as shared laundries, māra kai (food gardens) and even shared transport systems not only as practical and environmentally responsible, but as ways to strengthen social ties and interdependence:

> *Why do we all need individual cars, when we all end up going to the same place, like the supermarket? I'm a firm believer in [the idea] that you should share your cars, but people just don't like doing it…you've got individual cars, you've got individual driveways, individual roading costs…if we're wanting to be clever, that's what you start eliminating, what we really don't need.*

This raises the question of whether lessons can be learnt from other collective-focused housing models such as cohousing, where shared infrastructure is built into design and community function (e.g. James & Saville-Smith, 2017; Berghan, 2020). At the same time, participants acknowledged challenges of sharing. Trust, communication and clear tikanga would be critical to sustain collective systems, especially for shared spaces that require upkeep:

> *I don't mind shared facilities, but I'd like to know there's some sort of arrangement for who cleans and when…*

> *Working out how we can work together, as a collective. Like a code of behaviour as well. How do you talk to your family about no Holdens being tied up to the fence for 100 years? That sort of thing.*

Taking time to educate prospective kāinga residents on what it means to live collectively is an important consideration that should be built into any potential development (Dupuis & Dixon, 2006; Berghan, 2020). These kōrero showed that designing for climate resilience is inseparable from designing for the way we want to live together. It is not just about buildings, but about relationships – with the whenua, with each other and with future generations.

Box 2: Designing a dream whare.

In the second wānanga, participants spent time designing and presenting their dream whare. These aspirational images captured several ideas expressing sustainability and energy resilience, including buildings embedded in the whenua, long roof lines which transformed into greenhouses with rainwater directly watering the māra kai, solar panels and more.

Figure 2 shows one dream whare. The modular design begins with a core living unit and expands as finances allow to include greenhouse modules, a carport and a multi-purpose room for mirimiri, crafts and for guests to stay in. The modules are arranged in a horseshoe layout, allowing for a covered courtyard to be constructed between the modules as a sheltered, collective space at the heart of the home.
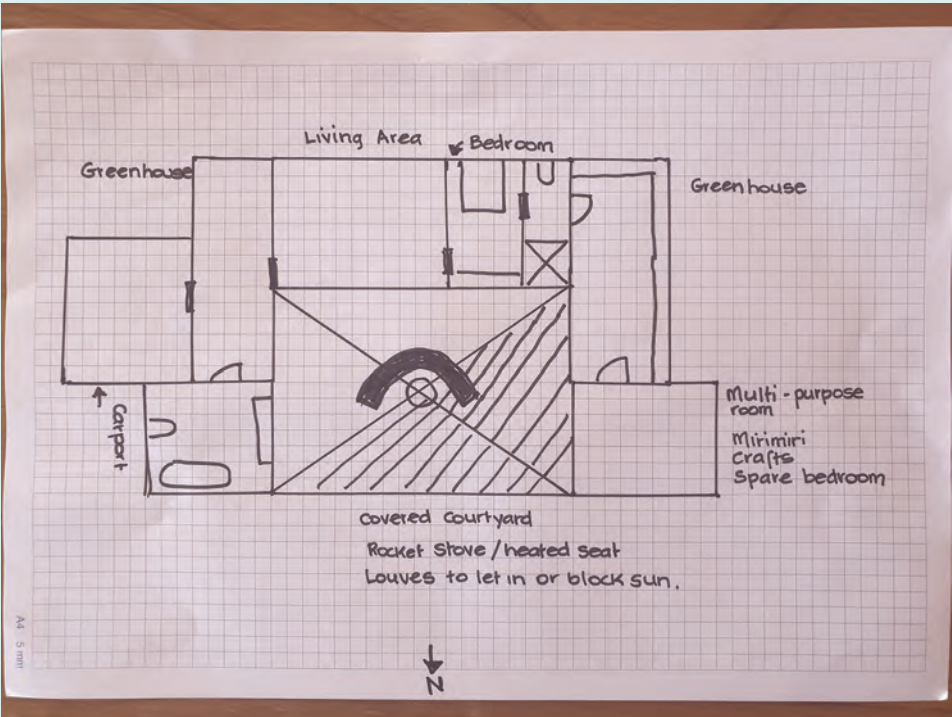
Figure 2: A sketched design for a dream whare by a wānanga participant. Photograph: by authors.

Theme 3: Barriers and tensions

Despite the strength and clarity of participants' visions, they also spoke candidly about the significant barriers to realising climate-resilient kāinga. These challenges were both structural and emotional and often deeply intertwined with broader systemic issues.

Box 3: Māori land block Masterplanning.

During a Masterplanning session, groups of participants used large maps of a case study block of Māori freehold land to interpret site maps and identify key areas of the site that could be utilised (or avoided) for different activities when it came to designing a kāinga. A key principle of the activity was place-based, context-specific responses and working with, rather than against, the whenua.

Contour lines were used to locate flatter areas of land that might be more suitable for building whare, whereas low-lying areas were carefully avoiding for their potential flooding risks. Groups considered various site factors such as the direction of prevailing winds, neighbouring properties, existing roads and accessways, existing wāhi tapu and viewshafts to Whakaari.

Figure 3: High-level Masterplan with post-it notes marking key features and use areas of the block for potential development Photograph: by authors.

Financial constraints were the most consistently cited obstacle. Whānau described a tension between their aspirations for bespoke, sustainable homes and the financial realities. High costs of land development, infrastructure, building materials and compliance processes meant that affordability often overrode other priorities including environmental sustainability. These issues are well-documented: Māori housing developments often face high costs due to infrastructure shortfalls and challenges accessing finance, especially when development is on multiply-owned Māori land or involves non-traditional tenure options (Controller and Auditor-General, 2011). Until recently, there has been very little government or financial support for such aspirations (Arbury and Cram, 2023). In our study, participants noted that innovative designs, such as off-grid systems or collective living arrangements, could fall outside the norms recognised by banks and insurers, making it harder to secure funding or cover:

> The biggest barriers are the funding, the money. Bespoke, climate-resilient homes are probably going to cost more than others, you might not be able to get insurance for them, it's that sort of stuff…

Regulatory processes also emerged as a major source of frustration and inertia, consistent with previous work on systemic inertia in planning policy frameworks in Aotearoa (e.g. Manning et al., 2015). Many participants spoke about the complexity, cost and slow pace of gaining council consents, especially when working with Māori freehold land. While some acknowledged positive experiences with individual council staff, the overall planning system was seen as poorly equipped to support whānau-led, collective, or non-standard developments. The emotional toll of dealing with these bureaucratic processes was tough, with participants describing feelings of being overwhelmed or worn down by repeated obstacles.

Another key tension lay in the mental and emotional challenge of planning for long-term resilience while grappling with immediate needs. For whānau experiencing housing precarity, financial pressure, or other urgent stresses, conversations about climate adaptation could feel distant or abstract. Participants recognised the importance of future-proofing their kāinga, but also spoke of the difficulty of holding onto visionary thinking when immediate needs dominate:

> I found it hard to think about a dream home because I don't have the finances to kind of, think green…to extend beyond what I have and can alter. So, it's a bit limiting…

Despite these challenges, the overall tone across the wānanga remained hopeful. Participants saw these barriers not as reasons to abandon their visions, but as realities to be navigated with creativity, persistence and collective strength. In the words of one participant, "the obstacles need not be total obstructions." Consistent with literature, this hopeful pragmatism was grounded in a recognition of the diversity and innovation across whānau and whenua (Johnson et al., 2022), along with an openness to adapt ideas to different contexts, drawing from ancestral knowledge and modern tools:

> Because we all come with a different whenua, we're all going to be innovative in different ways. And there will be some things that we can cross-pollinate and maybe adapt for different contexts and, by that perspective, innovation is not bound…

> Not being limited by our past, or how homes have been in the past. Not being stuck with those limitations, but really letting our imaginations run free so that we can have the best of what our tīpuna used to have but also have the best that modern technology has to offer.

In this way, whānau demonstrated a powerful capacity to imagine through constraint, to keep advancing toward climate-resilient futures.

CONCLUSION

This research underscores that resilience is built through connection, not just construction. It must be grounded in relational values of whanaungatanga, whakapapa and connection to whenua. Climate-resilient kāinga, in turn, are not only those that can withstand storms and rising seas; they are expressions of collective identity and care. Participants shared that true resilience would require us to think differently about how we live together – sharing infrastructure, valuing communal spaces and building social cohesion through design.

At the same time, not everyone is starting from the same place. Supporting climate-resilient futures means walking alongside whānau wherever they are in their housing journeys and ensuring solutions do not leave anyone behind. The challenges whānau face to achieving this are both physical and non-physical: while climatic impacts like high winds and flooding pose obvious risks, so too do less visible forces like regulatory red tape, housing precarity and social isolation.

While this rangahau was limited to one area and one point in time, the insights gathered here point to clear implications for policy, planning and design. First, they highlight the need for regulatory frameworks and funding models that are flexible enough to accommodate collective ownership, intergenerational design and non-standard infrastructure. Second, they reinforce the value of supporting kaupapa Māori-led design processes that centre whānau aspirations from the outset. Third, they call for housing initiatives that go beyond compliance and consultation to co-creation, making space for the richness of Māori ways of living and being.

To move from kōrero to action, further research is needed to test these ideas in practice. This could include piloting small-scale kāinga developments that incorporate whānau-led Masterplanning, off-grid systems and shared infrastructure, with built-in support for tikanga-based governance and collective living arrangements. Comparative case studies could also explore how different whenua contexts, iwi-led initiatives, or design typologies support or constrain climate resilience.

Overall, this project points to the need for a shift in how we think about housing, not just as infrastructure and shelter, but as a vehicle for collective wellbeing. Climate-resilient development is anchoring our responses to environmental change in the taonga handed down to us by our tūpuna. As a participant reminded us, it is not just about bricks and timber:

> Look at your Masterplan. And it's not just a plan for housing. It's a whānau plan. It's not just 'how are we gonna do housing'. What's our Masterplan for our whānau?

In doing so, we take a step toward restoring tino rangatiratanga by designing futures where whānau can thrive, on their own whenua, in their own way.

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TINO RAKATIRATAKA O TE WAI MĀORI: AUTHORITY OVER FRESHWATER

Kelli Te Maihāroa and David Higgins

INTRODUCTION

This article explores the enduring concept of tino rakatirataka (sovereignty, authority) expressed by Kāi Tahu whānui over wai māori (freshwater) within the most southern takiwā. The whakapapa of Te Pō ki Te Ao Mārama, from eternity to the human realm, provides the whakapapa framework for Kāi Tahu whānui rights, entitlements and responsibility of rakatirataka over wai māori. Kā Tiritiri o te Moana (the Southern Alps), including Aoraki, is the source of wai māori which provides the authority for Kāi Tahu whānui to establish and express rakatirataka and mana over waterbodies and waterways. This ancient connection between Kā Tiritiri o te Moana and Kāi Tahu whānui, establishes pūtake mauka (ancestral source), the responsibility of healthy Te Waipounamu waterbodies. The prevalence and relevance of rakatirataka for Kāi Tahu whānui is then considered within Māori Lore and European Law, enshrined in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Treaty of Waitangi (1840). The article then draws on the founding concepts of rakatirataka and pūtake mauka, and how the current accumulating water crises led to the lodgement of the Ngāi Tahu High Court Wai Māori Freshwater (2020) claim. The Declarations sought by the Plaintiffs and Ngāi Tahu seek to provide legal recognition of are assertions of Kāi Tahu rakatirataka and pūtake mauka - tikaka obligations to actively protect wai māori as a taoka within the Kāi Tahu takiwā, and to co-design future regimes over freshwater management rights and responsibilities for the sustainable benefit of all. The Ngāi Tahu case is explored alongside Crown Law arguments, drawing on the media coverage of this Māori-Crown legal case. Whilst the case is still under judicial consideration, this article does not undertake legal analysis or suggest a particular outcome, rather it encourages the Crown and Kāi Tahu whānui, irrespective of the judicial decision to uphold their Te Tiriti partnership to collectively and effectively address the current water crises.

AORAKI TIPUNA: ANCESTOR AORAKI

In ancient times, southern tribal histories recall how Aoraki led his younger brothers on a fishing expedition through the dark and desolate Southern oceans. As Aoraki began his karakia to launch their waka Huruhurumanu back into the heavens, his incantation faltered, and their waka was overturned. As the brothers climbed onto Aoraki's back, they were all turned to stone, thus creating Kā Tiritiri o te Moana, the Southern Alps, and forming the South Island, also known as Te Waka o Aoraki (D. Higgins, personal communication, May 17, 2025).

Aoraki is the connecting link between Rakinui, his Sky Father, and Papatūānuku, his Earth Mother, and the eternal tears of Rakinui for their separation:

> Waitaki literally means "the waterway of tears" and the name is often said to represent the tears of Aoraki... The wai māori of the valleys and basins of the takiwā of Ngā Rūnaka descend from Aoraki and the mauka of Te Waipounamu to the sea. The awa are the lifeblood of the surrounding land and its peoples. The catchments and streams are the veins of the whenua; a source of nourishment, and a living system connecting the peoples of Ngāi Tahu with their ancestor, with mahika kai, with countless taonga, and with each other
> (Waitaki Rūnaka Letters of Support, 2023).

TIMATAKA – BEGINNING

Nā Te Pō, ko Te Ao	From eternity came the Universe
Nā Te Ao, ko Te Ao Mārama	From the Universe, the bright clear light
Nā Te Ao Mārama, ko Te Ao Tūroa	From the bright clear light, the enduring light
Nā Te Ao Tūroa, ko Te Kore Te Whiwhia	From the enduring light, the void unattainable
Nā Te Kore Te Whiwhia, ko Te Kore Te Rawea	From the void unattainable, the void intangible
Nā Te Kore Te Rawea, ko Te Kore Te Tāmaua	From the void intangible, the void unstable
Nā Te Kore Matua, ko Te Mākū	From the void of paternity, came moisture
Nā Te Mākū, ka noho ia Mahoranui ātea	From moisture, came limitless thought
Ka puta ki waho ko Raki	Then came the visible heavens
Nā Raki, ka nohio i a Poko harua te Pō	The visible heavens combined with the great abyss to produce the numberless sorceries and the ultimate calamity!!!
Ko Aoraki me Rakamaomao, tana a Tawhirimatea	Thence to Aoraki and the winds and weather
Ko Tū Te Takiwhanoa	To the creator of the land
Ui ra ki Te Maha-a-nui a Maui	And the canoe of Maui
Ko Te Ao Takata!	And finally to people!
Tihei mauri ora!	I cough the breath of life!
Ko te kākahu o te Mauka Ariki o Aoraki	To the cloak that covers the mountain, Aoraki
Me tōna whānau o Rakirua, Rakiroa, Rarakiroa	To the family and brothers
Nā te Mauka o Kaikiroa me Horokoau	Over to Mt Sefton and Mt Tasman
Ko te whānau o Kā Tiritiri o Te Moana	And to the rest of the family of the Southern Alps
Nā te tane a Haupapa	To the male side of the Tasman Glacier
Raua ko te wahine a Aroaro kaehe	And to the female side and the Hooker Valley
Huri noa ki te awa tapu ki Kā Roimata o Aoraki	Then over to the source of the "Tears of Aoraki"
Nā te roto o Pukaki, ko te roto tapu o Takapo	And on the the sacred lakes of Pukaki and Takapo
Nā te roto o Ohou, ko te whenua o Te Manahuna	And to the Lake Ohau and the valley of Te Manahuna
Ki kā huarahi ki te tihi on te Mauka o Te Rua Tanihwha	And travelling the ancient path to the mountain, Te Ruataniwha
Huri noa ki Te Ao Mārama!	And then to the world of light, Te Ao Mārama!
Nā te wharenui o Te Whakaahua-a-raki nō Te Maihāroa	And on to the place of the whare of the chief, Te Maihāroa
Ko Te Poho o Rakitamau	And the burial mound on Māori Hummock
Nā Te Kai Hikihiki, ki Otamatakou	And on to Otematata
Nā Te Wharekuri, ki Te Awakino	And Te Wharekuri and Te Awakino
Nā Te Kohurau, ki Oteake	And the mountain Te Kohurau and the place, Oteake
Nā Otekaieke, ki Te Maerewhenua	And Otekaieke and Duntroon
Nā Te Awamoko, ki Te Puna o Maru	On to Te Awamoko and the settlement of Te Puna a Maru
Nā Te Korotuaheka te kaika tuturu, ko te whare Tapu o Matiti	And finally arriving at the Waitaki river mouth and the house of Matiti
Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, kia ora tātou katoa!	Greetings to you all, greetings to us all!

(Higgins, n.d., p. 2-5).

Figure 1. Aoraki. Photograph: Kelli Te Maihāroa, 28 April, 2025.

RĀKAIHAUTŪ: FOUNDING RAKATIRA

Rākaihautū was the first person of the Waitaha tribe to lay claim to the whenua at Tahuna, Te Ihu, the top of Te Waipouamu. "Me timata mai tenei korero i te Kāhui-rongo me te Kāhui tipua i haere mai i runga i te waka, ko Uruao te ingoa – We should start this tradition with the Kāhui-rongo and Kāhui-tipua who came here on the canoe – its name was Uruao" (Paipeta, c. 1920, as cited in Prendergast-Tarena, 2008, p. 60). Rākaihautū is the founding ancestor who established and claimed ahi kā roa, the uninterrupted burning fires of occupation in Te Wai Pounamu. Tribal records recall the three groupings who arrived on the Uruao waka captained by Rākaihautū. They were: Kāhui Waitaha, Kāhui Roko, Kāhui Tipua or Kāhui Mauka; the Waitaha; a group of peaceful beings, and a group of spiritual beings. It was Rākaihautū who established ahi kā (occupational rights), the first person to consecrate, name and carve the southern whenua, creating the interior lakes of Te Waipounamu with his ko (spade) Tūwhakaroria:

> Ko Rakaihautu te takata nana i timata te ahi te ruka ki tenei motu. Ka noho tenei motu i Waitaha. Katahi a Rakaihautu ka haere ra waekanui o te motu nei haere ai me ka takata. Ka riro tonu ko te roto a uta, te roto a tai: Takapo, Pukaki, Ohau, Hawea, Wanaka, Whakatipu-wai-maori, Wakatipu-wai-tai. Haere tonu Te Anau wai tai tae noa atu ki te matuka mai o te moutere. Ka waioha kao kaitiaki i reira, ko Noti raua ko Nota. Ka hoki mai Rakaihautu te roto nui a whatu; Kai Maruanuku, Waihora, Wairewa, Kai Taieri, Kai-Karae, Wainono-a-Kahu, Te Aetarakihi, Waihora, Wairewa i konei. (Kahu, 1880, as cited in Beattie, n.d.)

As the highest peak of Kā Tiritiri o te Moana, Aoraki is the source from whom wai māori (freshwater) flows down the valleys and into the great southern lakes that were carved out by Rākaihautū, into the rivers and sea. The journey of 'ki uta ki tai: from the hinterland to the sea', was and remains the traditional waterways and trails that sustain life through the mahika kai food sources by utilising the southern tribal māramataka (Māori calendar). In his personal manuscripts, Rāwiri Mamaru (1808-1887: Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe, Waitaha) described Kā Tiritiri o te Moana as 'pūtake mauka', the source of wai māori. His direct descendant, David Higgins, (2025, p. 2) identifies pūtake mauka as a tradition or cultural practice that dates back to the beginning of time, even before our ancestors came to Aotearoa me Te Waipounamu. Professor Te Maire Tau (2025, p. 73) points out that pūtake mauka is a specific term used by Teone Mamaru, an elder of the Moeraki Kāi Tahu who was grounded in the Waitaha traditions. He notes that "Pūtake mauka is used to represent our underlying entitlements to water because our ancestors understood that our water bodies and mahinga kai were sourced from our ancestral sources." He states that the more common term used by Ngāi Tahu and other iwi is 'kahui-tipua' and other iwi may use 'kāhui-maunga' (Tau, 2025, p. 1). Therefore, pūtake mauka can be defined as the foundational wellspring of wai māori and the ensuing mahika kai cultural practices that flow from the ancestral sources of Kā Tiritiri o te Moana.

As descendants of Aoraki, the whakapapa layers of Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe and Kāi Tahu are interwoven within these tribal bloodlines. The three primary iwi are recognised statutorily as 'Ngāi Tahu Whānui' in the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act (1998). Waitaha established ahi kā roa, the uninterrupted occupational rights, latterly joined by the southern migrations of Kāti Māmoe and Kāi Tahu. Through the Settlement Act (1998), Ngāi Tahu whānui hold the authority and responsibility of mana whenua within the most southern tribal takiwā.

RAKATIRATAKA: CHIEFTAINSHIP AND SOVEREIGNTY

Rangatiratanga is identified by Hirini Mead (2003, pp. 366–368) as political sovereignty, chieftainship, leadership, self-determination and self-management. It also includes individual qualities of leadership and chieftainship over a social group such as a hapū or iwi, and defines tino rangatiratanga as the right to self-determination. Tribal leadership includes political aspects such as chieftainship, self-determination and sovereignty which could also be applied to individuals (Mead, 2003). Rakatira qualities or characteristics are said to be inherited through senior arikitaka and/or acquired status through the demonstration of great mana to authoritatively lead and implement social and political decisions. Mead (2003, p. 37) acknowledges the vision and legacy of Te Rangikaheke:

> ... a child born of te moenga rangatira (the chiefly marriage bed) would include the essential abilities to lead and conduct meetings of the tribe, know all about agriculture, be brave in battle, be very familiar with military strategies, know the arts, build up the resources of the tribe and be hospitable to visitors.

A rakatira is a chiefly person who has the authority and rights to express and exercise tino rakatirataka, self-determination over their tribal takiwā. The word 'tino' placed before rakatirataka intensifies the term, therefore making tino rakatirataka the highest level of chieftainship, the ultimate expression of self determination, authority and sovereignty. To uphold rakatirataka across a tribal boundary, the chief and his tribe also hold the authority and responsibility to advance their chiefly reign over the security and prosperity of their whānau, hapū, iwi and resources across their takiwā, and sometimes extending beyond such boundaries.

> Rakatirataka ... is about self-determination ... It means being able to maintain management and control ... to restore, or maintain mana, over our natural resources (Higgins, 2025, p. 2)

Tino rakatirataka was traditionally demonstrated through the strategic tribal leadership of ariki (chiefly whakapapa lines), kaumātua (elders), rakatira, tohuka (expert specialist), and experienced warriors to advance the mana (prestige) of the tribe.

Whilst all Māori are born with mana, Mead (2003) states that the inheritance of mana (power, prestige) to a child rests on their parental achievements, social positioning and tribal assistance. 'Mana is always a social quality that requires other people to recognise one's achievements and accord respect' (Mead, 2003, p. 51). Tau (2025, p. 1) states that 'rangatira cannot be separated from mana, it is the functional arm of mana'. Tino rakatirataka is the exercise of mana, authoritative power and influence. The mana of a chief is acknowledged by their hapū and iwi through respect, recognition of his achievements, and his authority and influence over the people, land, water and available resources.

In te ao Māori, all gifts are derived from the atua, handed down as i tuku iho, gifts for the generations to come. Therefore, not only does rakatirataka reflect the mana of self-determination, it also encompases wider considerations for the ongoing success and flourishment of the tribe (Higgins, 2025). Service to the tribe relies upon a broader understanding on how decisions made for today could impact on generations to come; it involves strategic, multi-generational planning and execution to ensure the future wellbeing of the tribe; iwi-led and mokopuna-driven. Intergenerational thinking for Kāi Tahu whānui is encapsulated in the whakataukī: Mo tatou, ā, mo ka uri a muri ake nei – For us, and our children after us (Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu (2025).

For Ngāi Māori to endure and flourish, a balance of kaitiakitaka (stewardship) over customary domains such as land, water, flora, fauna, must be sustained for future generations (Mead, 2003). Kaitiakitaka is the protection of Māori customary interests, it is the overarching environmental sustainability framework to sustain natural and physical resources to ensure resources for future generations. "It denotes the burden incumbent on tangata whenua to be guardians of a resource or taonga for future generations. The act of guardianship, kaitikaitanga, requires clear lines of accountability to whānau, hapū or iwi, and is more frequently associated with obligation than authority" (Durie, 1998, p. 23). Both obligation and authority is now expressed through tiakitaka (Higgins, 2025).

The sentiment of accountability is recalled by Tau (2025) who reminds us that the modern constructs of 'ownership' often forget the ongoing obligations and responsibilities owed to past, present, and future generations. That is, the actions undertaken by tribal leaders today will have far-reaching impacts for the grandchildren of tomorrow.

Mason Durie (1998, p. 5) states that "Māori self-determination is the protection of the environment for future generations ... clean air, fresh water, access to traditional lands, forests, rivers, the sea, are all on the Māori agenda for tomorrow." Access to traditional waterways and landscapes are relied upon to uphold the cultural, spiritual and economic practices of mana whenua. Ko ō mātou kāika nohoaka, ko ā mātou mahika kai, me waiho mārie mō ā mātou tamariki, mō muri iho i a mātou – Our places of residence, cultivations and food-gathering places must still be left to us, for ourselves and our children after us (Ngāi Tahu Pepeha Resources, 2025). The aim of environmental protection for future generations encompasses land and forests, rivers and lakes, harbours and sea, air and environmental links with humankind (Durie, 1998, p. 6).

TINO RAKATIRATAKA: LORE AND LAWS OF SURVIVAL

As First Nations people arriving in Te Waipounamu around 840 AD, Māori lore and tikaka was the overarching framework to provide order, authority and guidance. The arrival of European traders to Te Waipounamu near the turn of the 19th century resulted in the expansion of southern trading posts for seals and whales, flax and timber resources. Kāi Tahu whānui at this time were already trading with Australia. The trade expansion attracted European traders and settlers seeking more permanent settlements and the introduction of European law. British interests were declared with the appointment of James Busby in May 1833 who arrived in the Bay of Islands with the King's letter offering "the protection of Māori and the better control of British subjects" (Orange, 2021, p. 19). A paternalistic approach was adopted by the British Government who seemed keen to recognise Indigenous sovereignty, in the spirit of protection and good faith, prior to other competing nations. The optimistic promise of protection and independence was further enshrined in He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tirene: A Declaration of the Independence of New Zealand, signed by 52 hereditary chiefs and heads of tribes between 1835-1839. In the original te reo Māori Declaration of Independence (1835) text, the word 'rangatira' is translated in English as 'independence' (Orange, 2021).

He Whakaputanga and the United Tribes flag were both visual signs of tino rakatirataka, a national and international assertion of Māori sovereignty and authority to trade internationally.

The constitutional relationship between the Crown and Māori was established 6 February 1840, when Te Tiriti o Waitangi, The Treaty of Waitangi, was signed at Waitangi by Captain Hobson on behalf of the British Crown, and over 40 rakatira signed the document with their moko or a signature. Several different 'copies' travelled around New Zealand to collect signatures from almost 500 rakatira. In Te Waipounamu, Te Tiriti was signed by Ngāi Tahu rakatira at Akaroa on 30 May 1840, and Ruapuke on 9 and 10 June 1840 (Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act, 1998). Te Tiriti was also signed at Ōtākou peninsula by two rakatira – Kōrako and Hone Karetai on 13 June 1840 (Evison, 1993). Te Tiriti (1840) Article 2 enshrines the concept of rakatirataka: the Māori text of Article 2 uses the word 'rangatiratanga' in promising to uphold the authority that tribes have always had over their lands and taoka.

It was inevitable that the two versions of Te Tiriti would cause ensuing problems with the definition of rangatiratanga and kāwanatanga. Claudia Orange (2021, p. 35) interprets the English draft of the Treaty as reflecting Hobson's intention to establish a government (kāwanatanga) for Europeans only, while Māori authority would remain intact. Claudia Orange (2021, p. 35) confirms the intention of the English draft treaty: "Scholarly research suggests that Hobson sought specifically the authority to set up a government (*kāwanatanga*) which would be only for Europeans, leaving Māori authority guaranteed in the Treaty." The mana of chiefs who exercised their tino rakatirataka, was promptly undermined by government rules and regulations that continually challenged rakatira over the running of their own affairs (Orange, 2021). Kāwanataka was a totally foreign English concept to Māori, who had the understanding that the term referred to governance over Europeans only. The Treaty of Waitangi (1840) used the phrase "all the rights and powers of Sovereignty," which is translated in the Treaty as "te Kāwanatanga katoa" ... there are serious shortcomings since kāwanatanga (governance) has a lesser meaning (Durie, 1998, p. 2).

Rakatirataka was exercised for hundreds of years through tribal management and use of water long before Te Tiriti was signed, along with the accompanying responsibility of protection and preservation for future generations (Tumahai, 2020). For Kāi Tahu whānui, rakatirataka is also explicitly embedded within the Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Deed of Settlement (1997): "... the settlement does not diminish or in any way affect the Treaty of Waitangi or any of its articles or the ongoing relationship between the Crown and Ngāi Tahu in terms of the Treaty of Waitangi or undermine any rights under the Treaty of Waitangi, including rangatiratanga rights" (Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu Deed of Settlement, Section 2, 1997, cl 2.2.2).

The challenge to share power and resources, and to protect what Kāi Tahu whānui hold and cherish as valued taoka is a continuing conversation with the Crown, whereas it is clear to Kāi Tahu whānui what that looks like.

Figure 2. Image from Freshwater Strategy, Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, Te Kura Taka Pini.
The river runs between Greymouth and Castle Hill.
Photograph: Dean Mackenzie, 14 October 2021.
https://ngaitahu.iwi.nz/te-runanga-o-ngai-tahu/our-work-pou/ngai-tahu-rangatiratanga-over-freshwater/.

TINO RAKATIRATAKA: NGĀI TAHU WAI MĀORI WATER CLAIM

While rakatirataka is clearly a founding concept within Te Tiriti, how this is applied within Aotearoa me Te Waipounamu today is less explicit. Although rakatirataka was specifically and explicitly recognised in the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act (1998), decision-making power over freshwater has been controlled by Councils through the resource consent process (Corbet, 2023). Ngāi Tahu whānui hold grave concerns over the continual degradation of wai māori (freshwater), and the Crown's seemingly ineffective policies and procedures to restore and revitalise the waterways in Te Waipounamu. "Ngāi Tahu has lodged a statement of claim in the High Court seeking recognition of rangatiratanga over its awa and moana, to address the ongoing degradation caused by the environmental mismanagement" (Tumahai, 2020).

The heart of the Ngāi Tahu Wai Māori Water claim is Kāi Tahu rakatirataka. "Rangatiratanga as a concept and a practice encompassing rights, responsibilities and obligations. And that includes the obligation to do what we can to stop the continued degradation of our freshwater systems" (Tumahai, 2020). The view Tumahai holds supports Mason Durie's (1998) recognition of protecting taonga for future generations, and Tau's (2025) identification of future obligations and responsibilities owed to past, present and future generations. The water quantity and quality throughout Te Waipounamu is declining at such a rapid rate that the health and wellbeing of the southern waterways is now critically unsustainable. Within one generation, the water systems have been so greatly diminished that not only are most of the rivers and lakes highly polluted, people can no longer swim in, let alone drink, the water. The waterways have become so highly toxic that there are now signs warning people not to walk dogs along river banks, and people can literally smell from a distance the pungent water pollution which continues to contaminate ecosystems in Te Waipounamu (Higgins, 2025).

Kāi Tahu whānui have been increasingly concerned at the lack of proactive and meaningful Crown engagement with Kāi Tahu on shared programmes, policies and courses of action. Following a tribal mandate Te Kura Taka Pini, the Ngāi Tahu freshwater group, was established to advance Kāi Tahu rakatirataka over freshwater strategy (Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, 2019).

Wetlands in Ngāi Tahu Takiwā are on the front lines of the freshwater crisis. Around 90% of New Zealand's wetlands have been lost since settlement. Between 1996 and 2018, around half of the country's wetlands lost during this period was in Murihiku (Huria, G., 14 March 2025, Freshwater Law Pānui).

To address the freshwater crises, Ngāi Tahu applied to the High Court in 2020 seeking declarations to provide legal recognition of Kai Tahu rakatirataka over freshwater resources and allocations. The Ngāi Tahu 2020 statement of claim addresses the ongoing degradation of awa (rivers) and moana (lakes) caused by environmental mismanagement (Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, 2025). "We believe the current system of water allocation is unsustainable, and we've been ignored for decades. This is about putting a stake in the ground and working with the government to create a better system for the future of freshwater in the South" (Tipa, 2025).

Court declarations are an available legal mechanism that clarifies the legal rights, obligations or status of parties involved in a dispute, in this case between Kāi Tahu and the Crown. Kāi Tahu reminded the Crown that they have been good Treaty partners, and held high hopes that the Crown and their agencies would reciprocate in good faith and work meaningfully towards re-setting the Crown and Ngāi Tahu partnership over wai māori, water governance. Kāi Tahu whānui rights are derived through whakapapa, which are legally required to be upheld by the Crown through statutory rights and obligations to mana whenua through Te Tiriti (1840) and the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act (1998).

The fifteen First Plaintiffs, and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, the Second Plaintiff sought several declarations under the first cause of action:

1. Ngāi Tahu has rangatiratanga over wai māori.
2. The present freshwater regime constrains Ngāi Tahu rangatiratanga.
3. The Crown ought to design and implement in co-operation and partnership with Ngāi Tahu a better regulation regime for wai māori that recognises, safeguards and accommodates Ngāi Tahu rangatiratanga over wai māori within its takiwā.

On 10 February 2025, the High Court proceedings between the 15 First Plaintiffs and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu as Second Plaintiff began against The Attorney General, representing the Crown, The Crown's legal case relied upon a) disagreement with Ngāi Tahu's definition of rakatirataka; b) the Crown holds the mandated 'kāwanatanga'; c) Ngāi Tahu historical claims have already been settled in the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act (1998), and d) Ngāi Tahu have multiple input opportunities to address water concerns. From the Crown's perspective, they claim that the Crown 'has kāwanatanga' as recorded in The Treaty of Waitangi.

The Crown argued that Ngāi Tahu have already settled their historical grievances in relation to waterways through the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act (1998), and that the Ngāi Tahu Wai Māori Water claim was an attempt to gain further resources. This point was unequivocally disputed by King's Counsel Chris Finlayson on behalf of the Plaintiffs, who reminded the Crown that during settlement negotiations water rights were 'parked for a later date' so that the proposed settlement could progress. Ngāi Tahu also subpoenaed the then Crown's Chief Negotiator during the Ngāi Tahu negotiations, Dr Maria-Ana Teariki, who confirmed water rights were removed from the negotiations, and water rights are not specified within the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act (1998).

The Crown also challenged judicial processes as to whether the Judge had jurisdiction to make such rulings or Declarations, as the Crown claimed Parliament sits over and above the High Court. And whilst the debate on governorship, ownership, management, interests and rights continues to remain highly contested, Corbett (2023) reminds us that in the meantime, New Zealand Parliament is taking a leading hand in shaping the future role of Māori and freshwater through their Water Services Reform (Department of Internal Affairs, 2021) and resource management reform.

Figure 3. Mataura River, 19 May 2023. Reproduced in *Te Karaka*, February 12, 2025.
Photograph from the Unutai e! Unutai e! exhibition by Kāi Tahu and Anne Noble.
Photograph: Anne Noble, ONZM, Āhua o Te Wai Photographic Project for Te Kura Taka Pini.

Another tenet to the Crown's case was their rejection of the legal status of rakatirataka. The Crown claimed that the concept of rakatirataka and pūtake mauka are vague concepts which are unclear and that Ngāi Tahu rakatirataka rights, interests and entitlements are uncertain, and therefore not enforceable. Despite the Crown claiming that rakatirataka was too ambigious, Mr Finlayson pointed out in his closing arguments that each of the Crown witnesses were able to share their understandings of the term rakatirataka. The Crown further claimed that pūtake mauka or rakatirataka entitlements have no legal basis and that laws such as the Resource Management Act (1991) state that the "sole rights" to water are vested in the Crown (Williams, 2025). The Waitangi Tribunal has several reports and recommendations that contribute to views on rakatirataka, including the management and control of people and resources, such as the Ngāi Tahu Deed of Settlement (1997, cl 2.1(7); The Waitangi Tribunal on the Motunui-Waitara Claim (Wai 6, 1983, p. 51); and the Ngāi Tahu Sea Fisheries Report (Wai 27, 1992, p. 111).

The Crown further claimed that Māori concerns should be heard through public petitioning, Resource Management Act (1991) processes or Waitangi Tribunal claims, not the High Court. The Waitangi Tribunal hold recommendation only powers to the Government, which are neither binding nor enforceable. Corbett (2023, p. 1) states: "For the judiciary ... the best way the courts can elevate the status of tino rangatiratanga in decision-making is through the explicit recognition of tikanga as another legitimate legal system alongside common law." Barrister Matanuku Mahuika (2025) asserted on behalf of intervenors Tātau Tātau o te Wairoa that the Ngāi Tahu case does not challenge Crown sovereignty or the ability of Parliament to make laws, but more accurately seeks declarations of legal rights specific to Ngāi Tahu. Mahuika stated "tikanga rights...have not been extinguished as a matter of law ... When considered through the lens of rights based on tikanga, this proceeding is neither a radical extension of the rights of Māori nor, we say, an unprecedented application of the common law" (Williams, 2025).

In 2018, Minister for the Environment, David Parker, and Minister for Māori-Crown Relations, Kelvin Davis, were privy to a "Shared Interests in Freshwater" Cabinet paper, which acknowledged Māori had rights and interests in freshwater, but also raised the question: "What more may be required to meet the obligation to provide for rangatiratanga in relation to freshwater?" (Williams, 2025). In his evidence for the Crown, Mr Bryan Smith, Chief Freshwater Adviser for Ministry for the Environment, agreed that this Ministry is increasingly faced with challenges to improve the health of waterways, with increasing contaminants entering waterbodies since 2014. Smith outlined two significant areas within the Ngāi Tahu takiwā; parts of the Canterbury Plains and Southland lowlands ".. those areas where the reduction in loads of one contaminant or another are so great that current and emerging mitigations cannot achieve the desired environmental outcome, short of widespread de-intensification of land use" (Williams, 2025). Mr Finlayson posed: "Might the declarations sought by Ngāi Tahu, essentially, help the Crown make better freshwater policy?" (Williams, 2025).

In his evidence for the Crown, Chief of Staff at the Ministry for the Environment, Mr Martin Workman, quoted excerpts from the "Fresh Start" Cabinet paper (2011) which aimed to set water quantity and quality limits. Workman noted "effective limits are required to deliver on New Zealanders' values and expectations for water and to provide investment certainty" (Williams, 2025).

King's Counsel Mr Finlayson pointed out to Mr Workman that he failed to include the following sentence: "If action on freshwater management is not taken now, existing problems will become increasingly difficult and expensive to address, and new problems will emerge" (Williams, 2025). Further to this point, Workman confirmed that under the National Policy Statement for Freshwater Management (2011), water was not allowed to degrade further.

A Principal Planner for the Crown, Mr Tim Ensor, suggested that meaningful influence can be gained through the resource consent process and that Ngāi Tahu has substantial policy and decision influence over freshwater issues. Crown witness Gerard Willis also suggested "... Ngāi Tahu's involvement in, and influence on, regional plan-making has been substantive and sets it apart from other parties" (Williams, 2025). Whilst Mr Ensor situated iwi in a different position to other stakeholders, he noted that it is mandatory to consult with tangata whenua prior to plan notifications.

In closing arguments, the Crown stated that Ngāi Tahu claims are historic, that Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu are trying to relitigate the water issue when it has already been dealt with in the Ngāi Tahu Deed of Settlement (1997). King's Counsel Finlayson argued that was not the case, and that the issue of water was specifically and categorically left out of the Ngāi Tahu Deed of Settlement. Mr Finlayson pointed out that "no witness for the Crown offered a constructive path forward with Ngāi Tahu. No minister provided an affidavit [to] confirm that his or her ministry would engage with Ngāi Tahu in good faith', and that tribal members could no longer partake in traditional mahika kai practices, with a potential loss of tikanga for generations to come" (Williams, 2025).

He further claimed that recognition and affirmation of Ngāi Tahu rakatirataka within the context of wai māori must be a partnership approach, requiring more effort from the Crown than just consultation. "It may require Ngāi Tahu being involved from the problem definition stage according to its needs and inclination, actively participating in the development and interpretation of freshwater policies, framing laws for their water bodies, and exercising authority in the development and control of wai māori" (Williams, 2025).

After the proceedings closed, Moeraki Ūpoko, David Higgins, when thanking the Court for hearing this landmark claim, reminded those in attendance of the vital importance of wai māori, as he recounted the daily struggle for 92-year-old Sissie Te Maihāroa Dodds, who has lived on the banks of the Waitaki River for most of her life yet has been unable to use her tap water for the last two and a half years, and is forced to rely on a Council water truck. As a senior elder, Mrs Te Maihāroa Dodds has a right to clean, fresh, healthy water. As a rakatira, her rights have been handed down from her direct tīpuna Rākaihautū; her legal rights to fresh water exist as a right and matter of tikanga. Ngāi Tahu argued that the Crown has breached its obligation to actively protect wai māori, a sacred taoka handed down from the atua Aoraki for all to enjoy. Regardless, the Crown continues to treat Kāi Tahu whānui as another community stakeholder, which is a clear breach of the spirit in which Ngāi Tahu rakatira signed Te Tiriti (1840) and the Ngāi Tahu Deed of Settlement (1997). The High Court Declarations currently being sought will provide further clarity on the legal recognition of Kāi Tahu tino rakatirataka and the authority of Kāi Tahu to participate meaningfully in freshwater co-design and co-management for future generations. The Kāi Tahu Whānui legal rights sought from the four Declarations are declarations of rakatirataka, derived from pūtake-mauka, and the tikaka that flows from these ancestral sources established and exercised for over a millenia.

Mō tātou, ā, mō kā uri ā muri ake nei – for us and our children after us.

Te reo Māori: Where possible, the authors use the southern te reo Māori dialect, which privileges the use of the 'k' over 'ng'. When referring to official documents and/or quotes, if 'ng' is used, then the authors maintain the integrity of the original text and use 'ng' as written.

Figure 4. Ngāi Tahu leaders, tribal members and supporters, gathered outside the Christchurch High Court.
5 April 2025.

From left:

Front row: Elizabeth Macpherson, (woman - unknown), Jessica Riddell, (woman - unknown), Oha Manuel (with the bright pink blazer), Gabrielle Huria, (unknown), Evelyn Cook and Ranui Ngarimu.

Middle row: Elizabeth Brown, Michael Skerrett, Kelli Te Maihāroa, Edward Ellison, Te Maire Tau, Mel Henry, John Henry, James Russell, Anake Goodall and Ben Bateman.

Back Row: Seb Linscott, (man - unknown), Richard Thomas, David Higgins, Wayne Alexander, Justin Tipa and Tania Wati.

Photograph supplied. *Newsroom*.

https://newsroom.co.nz/2025/04/05/judge-says-theres-merit-in-crown-argument-on-water-declaration/

Professor Kelli Te Maihāroa (Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe, Kāi Tahu, Ngāti Rārua Ātiawa, Taranaki; Tainui Waikato) (ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9586-0657) holds the role of Kaihautū: Te Kāhui Whetū at Te Kura Matatini o Otago, Otago Polytechnic. She attended the Kāi Tahu Whānui (2025) court case as whānau tautoko.

David Higgins ONZM (Rapuwai, Waitaha, Kāti Māmoe, Kāi Tahu, Te Arawa, Ngāi Tuhoe and Ngāti Manawā) is the Ūpoko Rūnaka o Moeraki. He is the Fourth named First Plaintiff, along with Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu against The Attorney-General, the Crown.

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FROM PLANNING TO PRACTICE: NOHO MARAE AS A LIVING EXPRESSION OF TOI OHOMAI VALUES

Chrissie Keepa, Rachael S. Burke, Kelly Warren, Mallory Tomsett, Chedly Fernando, Danielle Carter, Anna Sharpe, Catherine Vaughan and Lindsay Wharekura

Mā mua ka kite a muri, mā muri ka ora a mua
Those who lead give sight to those who follow, those who follow give life to those who lead

INTRODUCTION

The Early Childhood Curriculum *Te Whāriki* emphasises the importance of kaiako (teachers) weaving te reo Māori me ōna tikanga (Māori language and Māori ways of knowing and doing) into their everyday curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2017). Policy documents such as *Our Code Our Standards* ensure kaiako make a commitment to upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnerships within their teaching (Education Council, 2017). Te Tiriti o Waitangi is, in essence, honouring equitable partnerships and agreeing to retain language, culture and identity (Riki-Waaka, 2023). Tino rangatiratanga is a foundational concept referring to the authority and power for Māori to uphold their own tikanga (customs), language and worldviews (Heretaka, 2024). Walker (1990) and Orange (2015) emphasise the importance of understanding narratives such as whakapapa (genealogy), pepeha (personal introduction), pūrākau (traditional stories), tikanga, te ao Māori (Māori worldview) and mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge), to ensure education practice honours mana whenua (authority over the land) and equitable futures. Toi Ohomai kaimahi (staff) teaching in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) programmes are committed to ensuring tauira (students) are equipped with the knowledge required to meet the first standard outlined in *Our Code Our Standards* – Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership (Education Council, 2017). Upon application into the ECE programme, tauira agree to attend a noho marae (overnight stay at a marae) once per year during their studies. Green et al. (2023) recognises that in te ao Māori the marae is a place that records whakapapa and identity. The noho experience exemplifies tino rangatiratanga (leadership) by privileging Māori-led knowledge and practices within a Māori space (Paemanu, 2023). For tauira, Williams et al. (2023) contend a noho marae experience allows experiential learning in a contextual and authentic environment with a result of tauira learning te ao Māori knowledge, social norms and cultural practices (Green et al, 2023).

Noho marae provides tauira with Māori values such as manaakitanga (care) and whanaungatanga (relationship building), enabling tino rangatiratanga with mātauranga Māori leading the pedagogical process (Paenamu, 2023). In this cohort, there were no Māori tauira participating in the noho marae experience. The noho was therefore designed to support non-Māori tauira in developing their understanding of te ao Māori and their responsibilities as future ECE kaiako in upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi and implementing core Māori values from Te Whāriki. Tauira were intentionally placed in different rōpū (groups) and participated in different activities related to Māori ways of being and doing. The learning centralises tikanga and kawa (protocols) on the marae through pōwhiri (welcome ceremony of a marae), whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, aroha (love), tuakana-teina (reciprocal peer learning), karakia (incantation), waiata (song), kapa haka (performing arts), rongoā Māori (traditional healing), poroporoaki

(farewell) and mana (dignity) enhancing practices. Such values and practices centralise tino rangatiratanga reflecting a deliberate shift toward privileging mātauranga Māori. Opportunities to engage with te ao Māori offer a deeper connection to the diverse cultural heritage of Aotearoa (Ford, 2020). Tauira learn to be as one, eat as one and sleep as one, in the context and power of a noho marae.

Kaimahi teaching in the ECE programme make a commitment to uphold Toi Ohomai's purpose of delivering innovative learning, guided by the vision of empowering people and communities. Within everyday practice kaimahi authentically weave Toi Ohomai values into their teaching and learning environments. These values are:

- Manaakitanga – showing care and respect for tauira through mana enhancing practices. Ensuring inclusive, generous and supportive relationships.

- Toitūtanga - upholding long-term wellbeing – of people, knowledge, environments and practices ensuring sustenance for future generation.

- Whanaungatanga – building strong and meaningful connections with tauira through shared experiences and working together emphasising collective strength and unity.

- Kotahitanga – working collaboratively with a shared purpose. Valuing collective effort, harmony and inclusivity in decision making and action.

The Toi Ohomai core values serve as a framework for this article, providing a lens through which the integration of Māori culture and language in educational practices can be understood. Stewart et al. (2024) claim, noho marae experiences create culturally responsive learning environments enacting tino rangatiratanga, fostering manaakitanga, toitūtanga, whanaungatanga and kotahitanga through upholding tikanga and respecting the mana of the marae. Through noho marae, tauira *and* kaimahi develop leadership skills and build strong relationships, essential in fostering a supportive learning environment for tamariki of Aotearoa.

HE AHA AI? – *WHY?*

Ko Tangatarua te marae
Ko Ngāti Tūhourangi ko Ngāti Wāhiao ngā iwi
Ko Ihenga te whare tūpuna
Ko Ihenga te tāne rongonui o taua rohe
Ko Hinetekakara te tūpuna wahine
Ko Lynel Grant te tohunga whakairo
Ko Tina Wirihana te tohunga raranga
I whakatūwheratia a Tangatarua i te tau 1996
Ko Tangatarua te taonga puiake o Toi Ohomai
Ko tēnei tā tātou mihi ki a Tangatarua

As a component of the Master of Teaching Early Childhood Education (MTECE) and Bachelor of Teaching Early Childhood Education (BTECE) programmes at Toi Ohomai, 67 tauria embarked on a noho at Tangatarua Marae located on the Mokoia campus of Toi Ohomai in Rotorua. Both MTECE and BTECE programmes at Toi Ohomai include three hours of te reo Māori lessons each week incorporating kawa and tikanga practices, reflecting their commitment to tino rangatiratanga. Recent research conducted by kaimahi teaching in the MTECE and BTECE programmes highlighted a strong desire from our international tauira to interact with tikanga Māori in culturally authentic spaces. The research findings affirm the importance of incorporating noho marae into our programme, not only as a stated requirement within our programme documentation, but also as a lived expression of our ongoing commitment to Tiriti o Waitangi.

The noho at Tangatarua was planned and facilitated by kaimahi in the ECE faculty to embed tino rangatiratanga, recognising that marae are culturally significant spaces structured by Māori traditions that embrace the core values of tikanga and whakapapa (Tapsell, 2002). As Green et al. (2023) explain, educational institutions are frequently dominated by Western cultural norms, thus deliberate efforts are required to embed alternative ways of knowing and being into learning environments. For the majority of our international MTECE tauira, this noho was their first experience staying on a marae. Kaimahi at Toi Ohomai teaching on the MTECE and BTECE programmes view such engagement as a vital obligation, providing a meaningful foundation for understanding te ao Māori, tikanga Māori and te reo Māori. Noho marae as lived experiences offer a bridge between theoretical learning and cultural immersion, helping to shape future ECE educators who are culturally grounded and responsive (Williams et al., 2023).

Tangatarua marae, meaning "two peoples together in one place on one land," was a fitting location for this kaupapa. Tangatarua stands as a symbol of inclusivity and connections and is a space recognised for nurturing cross-cultural relationships, welcoming both Māori and tauiwi (non-Māori, foreigners, people from afar). Among the many aspects to the marae, the pou (pillars) within the wharenui (meeting house) reflect the diversity of whakapapa, acknowledging Māori, Polynesian and Pākehā tīpuna. The whāriki (mats) are the weavings within the wharenui that link everything together and the Tāhūhūroa o te Tupuna Whare (the backbone at the apex of the tupuna whare) represents Te Waka o Te Mātauranga (the canoe of education) (Toi Ohomai, 2023). This symbolism reinforces the kaupapa of unity and shared learning taking on all the knowledge for our tamariki and mokopuna (children and grandchildren) of future generations.

After the pōhiri, Matua Erueti Biddle, our Toi Ohomai Kaitiaki Māori, shared his mātauranga of the whakapapa of Tangatarua. His kōrero (speech) enriched the experience for our tauira and kaimahi, offering both a historical context and opportunities for thought, questions and dialogue. We extend our heartfelt thanks: *tēnei te mihi nui ki a koe e te rangatira, Matua Erueti.* As kaimahi, we are immensely grateful to have access to Tangatarua as a taonga within our institution. It is through spaces and experiences of noho marae that we can walk alongside our tauira in the ongoing journey toward meaningful bicultural competency.

NGĀ UAUATANGA – CHALLENGES

While numerous studies have outlined the benefits of noho for tauira (e.g., Passells & Ackroyd, 2006), there appears to be limited research that critically analyses the challenges associated with these experiences. Attending a noho marae requires tauira to be vulnerable and step outside of their comfort zones (Legge, 2015). This can be especially significant for tauira from diverse cultural backgrounds who are relatively new to Aotearoa New Zealand and may have limited understanding of te ao Māori. For some, the noho may represent the first time they have spent a night away from their families or young children, because of this kaimahi fielded questions about whether students could miss the experience or leave early.

The wider socio-political context also impacted planning. The noho marae took place during a period of significant social and economic change in the vocational education sector (Waiwiri-Smith, 2025). Following the government's decision to disestablish Te Pūkenga, budget cuts were implemented at Toi Ohomai as these changes took effect. Consequently, kaimahi responsible for organising the noho marae had very limited financial resources. Kaimahi were fortunate to secure Tangatarua, which helped reduce costs associated with booking fees. Nevertheless, finding a suitable date proved challenging, as the marae is also used for institutional events. Wherever possible, existing or free resources were utilised. These included gathering natural materials, poi materials from the homes of kaimahi and feathers from the environment for workshops, furthermore, drawing on kaimahi knowledge.

One of the most important aspects of a successful noho is kai (food) and the plentiful provision of kai is an authentic expression of manaakitanga (Mead, 2003). With a restricted budget, staff needed to plan a menu that would keep everyone sustained throughout the stay without exceeding financial constraints for both the

institution and tauira. Kaimahi organised parakuihi (breakfast), paramanawa (morning and afternoon tea) hapa (dinner), while tauira were asked to bring a plate for tina (lunch). The meals had to be suitable for a large group and adaptable to a variety of dietary requirements.

Due to budget limitations, our stay was limited to two days and one night. This shortened timeframe has been criticised by Williams et al. (2023), who argue that such brief stays fail to meet Te Tiriti obligations. The Springboard Trust (2023) agree in such instances, arguing that systemic barriers undermine genuine tino rangatiratanga in shaping educational content. Williams et al. (2023) contend that non-Māori need to be immersed in the noho marae experience for several days to meaningfully engage with te reo and tikanga Māori and to develop genuine cultural competence and understanding of te ao Māori. As our noho unfolded, it became clear that one of the biggest challenges was allowing sufficient time in our condensed stay, both to complete activities and to foster whanaungatanga (relationships) in a relaxed, unhurried way. Tauira in their different rōpū (groups) rotated through workshops and shared responsibilities. However, our schedule proved overly ambitious. Workshops were reduced from 30 minutes to 20 and some activities had to be omitted.

Time pressures also extended beyond the noho itself. Planning required many hours of hui (meetings) for staff to ensure smooth delivery, including coordinating around regular teaching commitments, collecting koha, shopping for kai, gathering resources, arranging transport and preparing students in terms of tikanga, waiata and what to bring. Since the noho took place during the week and kaimahi teach across multiple programmes, timetables had to be adjusted, with some classes moved online to allow staff to participate.

MANAAKITANGA – HOSPITALITY

Noho marae enables Māori communities and educators to lead learning in their own terms exemplifying tino rangatiratanga cultivating manaakitanga practices (Paemanu, 2023). As part of the noho, tauira and kaimahi facilitated a range of various purposeful activities extending beyond simple entertainment to those offering meaningful vehicles for connection, care and reciprocal learning. These included kitchen duties, raranga (weaving with harakeke/New Zealand flax), poi making, tītī tōrea (traditional Māori stick game), waiata, ukulele, rongoā Māori (Māori medicine) and mask making (connection to the chosen pūrākau of Hatupatu rāua ko Kurungaituku – specific to the rohe (place) of Te Arawa). Through shared experiences tauira were encouraged to recognise and respect each other's knowledge and skills (K.I.N Author Collective, 2021), demonstrate kindness and care and contribute to a safe and supportive learning environment ensuing mana enhancing practices (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). By placing tauira into specific rōpū, they mixed with different cohorts, fostering opportunities for cross-group collaboration and whanaungatanga.

Manaakitanga was also facilitated and expressed through tauira bringing a plate of food to share with the wider group. The sharing of kai was thoughtfully considered to ensure it did not place financial burden on tauira. By inviting each tauira to contribute a small dish, the experience enhanced tino rangatiratanga which cannot be separated from manaakitanga as this experience becomes both a relational and political act rooted in the care for others (Macfarlane et al., 2022). An oven hāngī was chosen to maintain cultural connectedness to te ao Māori, as options for a traditional in-ground hāngī were limited. Having lunch together gave opportunities for tauira to sit and interact with each other enhancing manaaki and whanaungatanga practices through the feelings of being welcomed, valued and included in conversations (K.I.N Author Collective, 2021). The overall atmosphere of noho offered tauira to engage together from their cultural perspectives, with open and non-judgemental minds showing kindness, respect, care, generosity and shared learning for all (Passells & Ackroyd, 2006).

TOITŪTANGA – BEING COURAGEOUS AND HUMBLE
IN OUR PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE AND BEING SUSTAINABLE

Tino rangatiratanga and toitūtanga are deeply inter-woven as self-determination ensures sustainability of connections, language and tikanga for future generations (Brown et al., 2023). Success within any event or programme requires collaboration, whanaungatanga, intentionality and adaptability. Through a culture of purposeful planning and active engagement with other experts and stakeholders, a noho can be impactful, successful and sustainable. Initial planning was a key aspect to ensure success, through meetings, gathering ideas and collective knowledge and expertise. Responsibilities were shared among kaimahi such as wātaka (agenda), pānui (newsletters), activities, rōpū, administration, dietary requirements, kai (food), teaching waiata tautoko (song to support speeches) and gathering resources. Follow-up meetings ensured all kaimahi were supported and had opportunities to highlight any issues. In addition, a Microsoft Teams chat group established an easy flow of communication for planning enabling idea sharing and collaboration (Ganmote, 2019).

Upholding tino rangatiratanga means ensuring a continuation of tikanga practices within education spaces, therefore institutions must resource and ensure noho marae continue to ensure cultural knowledge is passed on to future generations (Paenamu, 2023). Inviting and seeking knowledge from kaumātua (elders) of Te Kura Māori was important to gain the cultural wisdom they hold (Durie, 1999). Furthermore, practical problems, such as needing more ovens, were solved with support from the Hospitality faculty offering access to cooking facilities. Key elements pivotal to ensuring successful collaboration were, being courageous to reach out, being humble to accept support from others and calling upon old and new connections with others exemplifying Toitūtanga. Kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) interactions enabled kaimahi to build strong communication, forming and sustaining relationships (Tilley & Love, 2005) that foreground tino rangatiratanga in our practices (O'Carroll, 2013).

WHANAUNGATANGA – RELATIONSHIPS

An overnight noho powerfully supports ako (reciprocal teaching and learning) in a culturally rich environment. Green et al. (2023) emphasise that tikanga Māori and collective participation during noho builds reciprocity through core values such as whanautangata, tuakana (more experienced person) teina (less experienced person), belonging and manaakitanga. Tuakana-teina relationships emerged through programme experience and leadership confidence, rather than assumptions of cultural expertise. Whanaungatanga builds nurturing relationships which contributes to actualising tino rangatiratanga in education (Macfarlane et al., 2022). Tino rangatiratanga therefore resonate with the principles of *Te Whāriki* (MOE, 2017), encouraging kaiako to centre Māori knowledge and practices within everyday curriculum. Noho marae provides the space for tino rangatiratanga to move from abstract theory to a lived, embodied experience.

A key benefit to noho marae is the opportunity for tauira to connect with others, thereby building a wider network of co-learners to draw experience and perspectives from. The diversity within the rōpū allowed enriched interactions and supported deeper understandings of te ao Māori allowing tauira greater insights into a uniquely Aotearoa New Zealand context. These relationships were deepened through equitable and culturally sustaining everyday tasks such as preparing kai, sleeping together in the wharenui, engaging in pōwhiri and contributing to the running of the marae (Hamley et al., 2022).

Tuakana tauira supported their teina by teaching ukulele chords, preparing kai, guiding them in waiata (songs) and tikanga and sharing cultural experiences that resonated with their peers. The roles were fluid and at times reversed – a living example of ako in action. Through active participation in shared tasks, tauira develop a sense of ownership, purpose, accountability and pride. This reinforces tino rangatiratanga by supporting their agency and self-determination. In doing so, tauira experience education within learning environments that flourish – spaces where trust, respect and shared purpose bind people together and create conditions for cultural, social

and educational growth (Macfarlane, 2022). These flourishing spaces allow tauira to engage in truly immersive experiences (Passells & Ackroyd, 2006). The shared responsibilities, collective purpose and time spent together in acts of service fostered a strong sense of belonging between kaimahi and tauira. This whanaungatanga practice transcended individual roles and backgrounds, laying the foundation for deeper engagement and ongoing support within the learning journey once back in the classroom.

KOTAHITANGA – UNITY AND COLLECTIVE ACTION

Kotahitanga is a core organisational value where kaimahi celebrate unity toward a shared purpose. Noho marae provides a useful backdrop for the MTECE and BTECE programmes where tauira and kaiako experience a sense of kotahitanga through leadership practices. There is an expectation for kaiako, regardless of their role or setting, to develop their leadership capability (Education Council, 2018). Similarly, *Our Code, Our Standards* (Education Council, 2017) outlines the importance that every kaiako is "showing leadership, particularly in areas of responsibility" (p. 18). As tauira are working towards meeting the expectations of the teaching profession, it is essential they are immersed in a supportive environment to develop and practice leadership.

Mahuika (2022) explains kotahitanga as harmony and collective mobilisation toward tino rangatiratanga outcomes. Within each rōpū, a positional leader was assigned to each rōpū based on a hierarchical system (tauira closest to graduation) who supported the management of the rōpū further extending tuakana, teina. The positional leader kept the group organised and on time for each workstation. Conversely, the arrangement was useful in highlighting the distributed and relational leadership practices and participation of students who were not tasked as a positional leader (Klevering & McNae, 2018). Cooper (2018) articulated the concept of teacher leadership, working collectively toward a greater purpose as "everyday collective leadership." Macfarlane et al. (2022) emphasises when Māori-led initiatives foster inclusive, whanau-based participation and decision making, they reinforce tino rangatiratanga through culturally safe spaces upholding unity and leadership. This practice was visible during noho in students' encouragement of their peers when facing challenging tasks, interactions while preparing kai and working together to ensure the marae was clean and tidy.

Kotahitanga also celebrates diversity. Purdue et al., (2020) discuss intentional teaching and "ensuring difference is viewed positively (as being) an important aspect of intentional teaching in early childhood settings." Leaders know that "by being true to one's core beliefs and values and exhibiting authentic behaviour, the leader positively fosters the development of associates until they become leaders themselves" (Gardner, 2005, p. 345). Tauira realised that they could be 'seen' and recognised for their own gifts as tino rangatiratanga was expressed through their emergent leadership. Potaka (2011) defines moral leadership as "using one's attributes to change people's lives. Leadership rooted in moral values starts with how people are treated, how they are shown respect and how they are interacted with" (p.7).

> Poipoia te kākano kia puāwai
> Nurture the seed and it will bloom

Exercising tino rangatiratanga was clear throughout the noho marae experience as tauira and kaimahi were provided with profound opportunities to deepen their te ao Māori knowledge. The noho experience powerfully illustrated Toi Ohomai values, providing tauira with a meaningful space to develop and demonstrate culturally responsive practices. Through intentional selective rōpū, tauira were able to both practice and witness diverse forms of manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, kotahitanga and toitūtanga. The positive impact of the noho marae experience on tauira understanding of core Māori values from Te Whāriki was evident through rich verbal feedback during whanaungatanga sessions following the noho. Through these reflective discussions, tauira articulated how the experience deepened their understanding of values such as whanaungatanga and manaakitanga and how they intended to integrate these into their professional practice.

Jenkins (2018) has reported on a specific marae-based initiative designed for migrants to Aotearoa New Zealand. The participants, who were mostly of Chinese ethnicity and thus shared some similarities with our international tauira, provided overwhelmingly positive feedback, with Jenkins noting that cultural awareness was fostered among all participants. It is important to note that this feedback relates to Jenkins' study rather than our own noho marae initiative. However, Jenkins' findings offer useful insights and parallels, highlighting the potential value and challenges of marae-based learning opportunities. The report does not elaborate on these circumstances, but it can be inferred that one of the ongoing challenges for institutions is securing adequate funding for experiences such as noho marae. Without deliberate institutional commitment to creating time and space for these kinds of immersive experiences, they risk discontinuation. As we move forward, the noho continues to serve as a vital bridge between theory and practice, equipping future kaiako with the relational, cultural and leadership skills needed to honour the diverse communities they will serve. It is essential that tertiary institutions recognise the value of noho marae, particularly for international tauira who may have had little prior exposure to te ao Māori.

Despite challenges, the noho marae demonstrated the transformative power of tino rangatiratanga reinforcing the importance of kaumātua wisdom and community expertise, intentional planning and collaboration. Our intention moving forward is to evaluate the effectiveness of noho through quantitative and qualitative data in the hopes to continue upholding tino rangatiratanga through noho marae.

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EXAMINING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE BSW HONOURS PROGRAMME AT EASTERN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY: A FOCUS ON TANGATA WHENUA ĀKONGA SUCCESS AND TINO RANGATIRATANGA

Charlotte Chisnell, Nicole Sattler and Rehia Whaanga

The primary aim of this research is to critically examine the effectiveness of the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Honours programme at Eastern Institute of Technology (EIT), with a specific focus on tangata whenua success and the promotion of tino rangatiratanga.

Our objectives are to:

- assess the impact of the Honours Programme on encouraging research, critical inquiry and tino rangatiratanga among students
- evaluate the inquiry-based pedagogy of the Honours programme and how it contributes to a culture of research and critical inquiry among students
- identify factors contributing to ākonga (students/learner) progression and success within the Honours Programme
- identify any challenges or barriers which could impact on ākonga progression

INTRODUCTION

The Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) Honours programme at EIT, developed in 2016, has adopted an inquiry-based pedagogy designed to encourage self-directed learning and improve academic achievement. This article aims to critically examine the theoretical foundations and empirical evidence supporting inquiry-based pedagogy, culturally responsive education and factors contributing to the success of Māori ākonga in higher education. How does the programme support Tāngata Whenua ākonga to exercise tino rangatiratanga within academic and professional spaces? Between

Figure 1. illustrates *Honours degree outcomes by ethnicity, 2016–2024*. Internal data, Eastern Institute of Technology.

2016 and 2024 Māori ākonga represented 48% of the total students in the BSW program and had a greater proportion achieving 1st Class Honours in comparison to their peers.
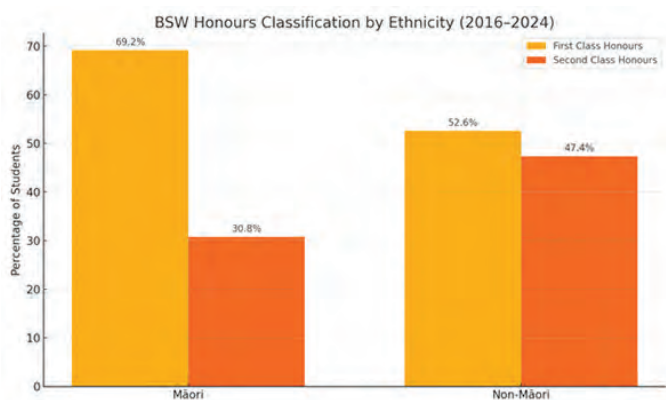
Research demonstrates that inquiry-based learning can significantly enhance students' critical thinking, problem-solving abilities and overall engagement (Prince & Felder, 2006). In the context of social work education, inquiry-based pedagogy empowers students to address complex social issues, fostering practical skills relevant to their future professional practice (Beddoe & Duke, 2013).

Research by Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai and Richardson (2010) highlights that kaupapa Māori education, which is underpinned by Māori perspectives and practices, significantly improves Māori students' educational outcomes. These findings are further supported by Sleeter (2011), who found that culturally responsive education positively impacts student outcomes, particularly for minority and indigenous populations.

Pastoral care, which addresses students' emotional and well-being needs, is another crucial component of support in higher education. Jacklin and Le Riche (2009) found that effective pastoral support contributes to students' academic success by helping them navigate personal challenges and maintain motivation.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
Inquiry-Based Learning

Inquiry-based pedagogy encourages students to formulate questions, investigate solutions and build new understandings, fostering a deeper engagement with the material and promoting lifelong learning skills (Savery, 2015).

A study by Hmelo-Silver, Duncan and Chinn (2007) highlights that students engaged in inquiry-based learning report higher motivation and satisfaction compared to those in traditional lecture-based courses. Additionally, Prince and Felder (2006) found that inquiry-based learning significantly improves students' ability to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world scenarios, a crucial aspect of social work education.

Ambrosino and Rivera (2022) focus on an inquiry-based laboratory module that incorporates ethological techniques to develop science literacy in Hawaii's high school students, which emphasises the connection between the local environment and cultural landscape. Busch, Cooper and Dyball (2021) discuss the integration of Indigenous knowledge systems into science education through inquiry-based learning, providing a platform for increased engagement and achievement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Probine et al. (2024) explore how inquiry-based project learning in early childhood education helps to develop well-being and better focus, through emphasising the importance of relationships and culture.

Brown (2017) provides a comprehensive review of the complementarity between culturally responsive and inquiry-based science education practices, highlighting implications for advancing equitable science teaching and learning.

Support systems, pastoral care and environment

Support systems in higher education, including academic support, pastoral care and community-based learning environments, are essential for student success. Tinto's (2012) theory of student retention emphasises the importance of academic and social integration in promoting student persistence and success.

Academic support structures, such as pastoral support, tutorials and small student cohorts, provide students with opportunities for developing meaningful interactions with peers and tutors (Gibbs, 2010). Research suggests that such factors are important for developing a supportive learning environment and enhancing student outcomes (Tinto, 2012).

Pastoral care, which addresses students' emotional and well-being needs, is another crucial component of support in higher education. Jacklin and Le Riche (2009) found that effective pastoral support contributes to students' academic success by helping them navigate personal challenges and maintain motivation. Tinto's (2012) theory of student retention emphasises the importance of academic and social integration in promoting student persistence and success.

Presented within the work of Mayeda et al. (2014) is the idea that indigenous students benefit from the support of indigenous role models, thus contributing to an environment which can ease the isolation many experience. Relationships within institutional settings appear fundamental when exploring the success of Māori (Airini et al., 2011; Bishop, 2003; Curtis et al., 2012; Hawk et al., 2002; Macfarlane et al., 2007; Mayeda et al., 2014). Strong and reciprocal relationships between student and teacher contribute to engagement and participation in learning, ongoing motivation and effective final success (Hawk et al., 2002).

Community and whānau-based collective learning environments are particularly important for Māori students, as they align with the communal and relational aspects of their culture (Durie, 1998). Studies have shown that these environments contribute to a sense of belonging and support, which are vital for Māori students' academic success (Macfarlane, 2015).

Culturally Responsive Education

Culturally responsive pedagogy affirms students' identities and promotes equity and inclusion (Gay, 2018; Sleeter & Zavala, 2020). Creating culturally safe learning environments is emphasised within the work of Macfarlane et al. (2007), who highlight that such spaces are not beneficial to Māori alone. These authors support the work of Airini et al. (2011) and Dither et al. (2011) in identifying that for Māori to thrive within tertiary settings, they need to be their authentic selves. Durie (2005) draws links between educational achievement and ethnicity; however also identifies that income and socioeconomic status do require attention. Macfarlane et al. (2007) suggest that the inclusion of the Māori student's culture and experiences is necessary to create environments conducive to Māori success.

Culturally responsive education recognises that students' cultural backgrounds significantly influence their learning experiences and outcomes. Studies have shown that culturally responsive teaching practices can enhance the academic achievement and engagement of Indigenous students (Bishop & Berryman, 2006). This is consistent with Ogodo (2024), who highlights the need for teachers to be culturally knowledgeable to respond to student diversity by using an integrative, holistic knowledge framework.

Ambrosino and Rivera (2022) focus on an inquiry-based laboratory module that incorporates ethological techniques to develop science literacy in Hawaii's high school students, which emphasises the connection between the local environment and cultural landscape. These findings are supported by research from New Zealand, where kaupapa Māori approaches have been shown to significantly improve Māori students' educational experiences and achievements (Smith, 2012). For Māori students, educational approaches that incorporate matauranga Māori, te reo Māori and tikanga Māori have been particularly effective in fostering a sense of belonging and academic success (Macfarlane, 2015).

Research by Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai and Richardson (2010) demonstrates that kaupapa Māori education, which centres Māori perspectives and practices, significantly improves Māori students' educational outcomes. These findings are further supported by Sleeter (2011), who found that culturally responsive education positively impacts student outcomes, particularly for minority and indigenous populations.

Napan, Connor and Toki (2020) explore inquiry-based learning and a Māori cultural pedagogy which focuses on transformative learning through the development of personalised inquiries within course content and process.

Tino rangatiratanga is a fundamental principle within Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Hollis-English, 2015) and central to Māori aspirations in education. In academic contexts, tino rangatiratanga reflects the right of Māori learners to assert their cultural identity, exercise autonomy over their educational journeys and have their knowledge systems valued and embedded within curricula (Smith, 2012; Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Educational approaches that foster tino rangatiratanga move beyond deficit systems instead creating spaces where Māori students can thrive, contributing to transformative change within institutions and wider society (Bishop et al. 2009; Macfarlane et al. 2007). Supporting tino rangatiratanga requires not only culturally responsive pedagogies but also structural commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

This literature review highlights the importance of inquiry-based and culturally responsive pedagogies in enhancing the educational outcomes of Māori students in higher education. By integrating these approaches into the BSW Honours Programme at EIT, the programme can develop a supportive and inclusive learning environment that promotes academic success and personal growth among Māori students. Future research should continue to explore the specific factors that contribute to the success of Māori students in higher education and develop targeted interventions to address any identified barriers.

METHODOLOGY, MĀORI-FOCUSED RESEARCH METHODS

The study adopted a qualitative design informed by a constructivist paradigm and underpinned by kaupapa Māori principles and tikanga as outlined by Smith (1997) and later Tuhiwai-Smith and Pihama (2023). Recognising that knowledge is socially and culturally constructed through human interactions and experiences. Focus groups were conducted with Honours graduates using purposive sampling.

The methodology for this research is qualitative, emphasising in-depth understanding and interpretation of participants' experiences. This approach is particularly suited to exploring complex social phenomena and is aligned with the constructivist paradigm, which values the subjective meanings individuals attach to their experiences.

In the context of Māori-focused research, the ontology recognises the importance of mātauranga Māori and the interconnectedness of individuals, whānau, hapū and iwi. This perspective acknowledges that knowledge is not only derived from empirical observation but also cultural practices, traditions and the lived experiences of Māori people (Mead, 2003).

Māori research methods and ethics must be guided by principles and tikanga that ensure the research is conducted in a manner that is respectful, culturally appropriate and beneficial to Māori communities (Tuhiwai-Smith & Pihama, 2023). Furthermore, *cultural considerations* as outlined in the work of Smith (1999, as cited in Waretini-Karena, 2023) have underpinned this research in all its phases and through respectful relationships with research participants.

Collecting and analysing personal stories and narratives from participants to understand their experiences and perspectives values the lived experiences of individuals and acknowledges the importance of storytelling in te ao Māori (Lee, 2009).

Research Methods

Focus groups are a valuable method in social science research, particularly for exploring complex social phenomena, gathering rich qualitative data and capturing the diversity of participants' perspectives. One of the key strengths of focus groups is their ability to generate interactive discussions, allowing participants to build upon each other's experiences and co-construct meaning (Barbour, 2018). This dynamic is especially useful when researching topics that are deeply personal, culturally embedded, or context-specific, as it provides insight into not only individual views but also social norms and group interactions (Krueger & Casey, 2014).

Focus groups enable researchers to observe how language, shared experiences and cultural understandings shape responses, offering depth that may not be captured through individual interviews (Barbour, 2018). In addition, they are particularly effective in empowering underrepresented or marginalised groups, as the group setting can foster a sense of safety, solidarity and shared voice (Liamputtong, 2011). This aligns well with kaupapa Māori and participatory approaches, where relationality and collective dialogue are central to knowledge creation.

Purposive sampling was used. Purposive sampling allows the researchers to select participants with experience and knowledge of the Honours Programme at EIT (Bryman, 2016).

Ethical and Cultural Considerations

Ethical approval was obtained from EIT's Research Ethics Approvals Committee. The research was conducted in ways that honoured tikanga and protected te ao Māori worldviews, promoting equity, tino rangatiratanga and cultural safety. Participants were fully informed of the voluntary nature of their involvement and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Clear information was provided regarding confidentiality and informed consent and appropriate support mechanisms, including access to counselling, were made available should any distress arise. All data was stored securely and was destroyed following the completion of the research, following ethical guidelines.

Commitment was made to uphold the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi throughout all stages of this research. In doing so active effort was made to support rangatiratanga of all research participants and honour te ao Māori by embedding tikanga-based practices in participant engagement, data collection and analysis (Tuhiwai-Smith & Pihama, 2023). Research environments were designed to be culturally safe, inclusive and respectful of tikanga and matauranga Māori (Mead, 2003). The study also aimed to ensure that Māori perspectives were accurately represented in the findings, with a clear focus on promoting equity, social justice and tino rangatiratanga.

Thirteen graduates from the Honours programme were contacted and agreed to participate in the focus groups.

> **Qualitative data Analysis:** Qualitative data was analysed using an inductive approach to data analysis that concentrates on condensing data to establish auditable links between the evaluation objectives and findings. Data was interpreted using comparative and thematic analysis. Thematic analysis aims to uncover themes in textual data at varying levels of complexity (Padgett, 2016).
>
> **Model of Data Analysis:** Data was analysed thematically using an inductive approach (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Collecting and analysing personal stories and narratives from participants to understand their experiences and perspectives. This method values the lived experiences of individuals and acknowledges the importance of pūrakau in te ao Māori (Lee, 2009).
>
> **Findings:** Following the process of thematic analysis, six sub-themes emerged from participant focus group kōrero; these are presented and then discussed under two broad themes: (1) Tino Rangatiratanga, Personal & Professional Growth and (2) Whanaungatanga, Relationships, Environment & Cultural Identity.

TINO RANGATIRATANGA - PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL GROWTH
Empowerment, confidence and personal growth

The Honours programme was a transformative experience, pushing participants beyond their perceived abilities:

> *"The Honours year challenged me, but in the best way. It stretched my thinking and showed me I could achieve more than I thought possible." (3)*

Many initially doubted their capabilities at an honours level, but emerged with stronger confidence and self-belief, hence the programme supported their empowerment:

> *"Success for me was achieving the standard I set for myself. I struggled earlier in my degree with full-time study and being a mum, so I challenged myself that if I committed to Honours, I would do it to the best of my ability." (8)*

The challenge that came with this level of study was motivating and contributed to stronger confidence:

> *"There was just that extra level that I could reach and aim for and… it just boosts confidence in yourself and your ability to reach those high levels." (6)*

The journey was not about academic success alone, it was about proving to both themselves and their whānau that they were capable of excelling at this level:

> "I ummed and ahhed for a very long time about whether or not I would do it… but I did it and I'm so glad I did. The sense of achievement was huge." (4)

Growth was evident from the same participant who went from a space of uncertainty to highlighting the significance of their achievement and its meaning for her:

> "Graduating with Honours might not seem like a big deal to others… but to me, it meant the world." (4)

Many participants juggled their role and journey as parents and for others, this programme was an opportunity to be the first in their whānau to earn a degree, reinforcing their role and influence within their whānau:

> "It was the wildest experience of my life. But I did it and I can stand so proud for all my babies and say, if I can do it, you can do anything." (7)

Thus, although honours study was challenging, it resulted in participants successfully achieving their high standards, overcoming doubt in their abilities and growth in confidence, accomplishing more than they were aware they could through dedication, effort and growing self-determination.

Academic and professional development

The academic rigour of the Honours programme provided valuable skills that students carried into their professional careers. Writing, critical thinking and working under pressure were frequently highlighted as skills that the participants use in their careers and that they attributed to the Honours programme in particular. Participants acknowledged that the ability to articulate ideas clearly, particularly in written form, was a crucial skill for social work practice that the Honours programme had prepared them well for:

> "The level of academic writing is really transferable… We all have to write court reports and I think that's a level of social work that some struggle with." (4)

The ability to construct well-reasoned arguments and justify funding requests for clients was directly linked to the training they received in the programme:

> "I can articulate myself really well now, especially when justifying why I need funding to support someone." (6)

The academic opportunities afforded to students of the Honours programme was noted as significant by the participants, leading to a greater sense of their own capabilities as social workers:

> "That enabled me to submit a journal article and never in my life would I have ever dreamed that I could do something like that." (12)

Honours programme as a pathway to further opportunities

For many students, completing the Honours programme was a pivotal moment that shaped their future careers, instilling a sense of accomplishment and creating opportunities they had never imagined:

> "I underestimate myself and I actually can achieve that kind of stuff. If I want to do something I can do it" (13).

> "Being part of this programme has opened doors I never thought I'd walk through." (6).

Students emphasised that whilst the Honours programme might not lead to higher pay, the skills they gained, such as critical thinking, questioning and research, gave them a strong foundation for their careers:

> "The ability to question and challenge things – it gave me such a good foundation to go explore the social work world." (13)

WHANAUNGATANGA: RELATIONSHIPS, ENVIRONMENT & CULTURAL IDENTITY

Cultural Identity and Inclusion

The programme fostered a space where Māori students felt seen, valued and empowered to bring their whakapapa into their studies. It recognised the importance of te ao Māori and kaupapa Māori principles, supporting tangata whenua students to be themselves and bring their identity and experiences that shaped them into research and practice:

> "I didn't have to leave my culture at the door." (8)

Participants expressed appreciation in conducting research that reflected their realities and communities, reinforcing their passion for social justice:

> "This programme helped me find my voice, not just academically but as a Māori student committed to social justice."(8)

Interestingly, a non-Māori participant offered her perspective in terms of the success of tangata whenua peers, concluding that it is due to their lived experiences as tangata whenua:

> "They are so successful because they have that added layer of perspective and knowledge. Their ability to critique and analyse is on another level because of their lived experience." (11)

Supportive learning environment

The strong support from research mentors, faculty and personal networks played a crucial role in students' success. Having a research mentor who provided guidance, prompt feedback and encouragement made the challenges of the programme more manageable:

> "I felt hugely supported… My research mentor always had my back. Whatever questions I had, whatever feedback I needed – it was prompt. I never felt alone." (6)

> "I had such a fantastic relationship with my research mentor. I felt so supported to explore all my questions." (13)

> "I would ring up every week saying I was quitting and Charlotte would just say, 'No, you're not.' That support system was invaluable." (11)

Students also emphasised the importance of personal support networks, including whānau, friends and classmates. This holistic support system helped them navigate the intense demands of the programme:

> "The support from my whānau was everything - my husband, my kids, my friends and even the people who brought me food when I couldn't leave my desk." (13)

Challenges and resilience

The programme was demanding, with significant academic and personal hurdles. Many students described moments of deep struggle, yet these experiences ultimately built resilience and determination:

> *"I had multiple breakdowns, crying my eyes out, not knowing if I was going to get through." (7)*

> *"It was the tutors and the other students that got me through." (4)*

Ethics approval was particularly stressful for students researching sensitive topics. Some had to revise their applications multiple times, which tested their confidence and perseverance:

> *"Ethics approval was massive… I had five goes at it. Every time it came back, it was another deflation." (11)*

> *"I was on placement, in an intense role and I wasn't sure if I wanted to be a social worker anymore. But I reflected on my research and realised – I still did." (10)*

DISCUSSION

This study provides a critical overview of Honours-level education in the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) programme at EIT between 2016 and 2024. The findings contribute to the growing body of literature on academic equity, culturally responsive pedagogy and the structural supports required to sustain success among Māori ākonga in tertiary education. The discussion is focused on the themes of (1) Tino Rangatiratanga: Personal and Professional Growth and (2) Whanaungatanga: Relationships, Environment and Cultural Identity.

Tino Rangatiratanga: Personal and Professional Growth

Tuhiwai-Smith and Pihama (2023) highlight the significance of tino rangatiratanga not only as a fundamental principle of Te Tiriti o Waitangi but essential to supporting Māori aspirations centred in Māori systems. Despite strong support systems, participants faced substantial challenges. These ranged from personal hardships, grief, parenting pressures and financial stress, to academic hurdles such as ethics approval delays and the overwhelming intensity of concurrent field placements and research demands.

These experiences, though distressing, helped build ākonga resilience and contributed to their sense of achievement. Penehira et al. (2014) explore the concepts of resistance and resilience of iwi Māori, presenting the idea that resilience could potentially be a factor related to Māori identity captured within traditional ways and knowledge. Participants reported an enhanced self-belief and more confidence in their social work practice by overcoming these barriers.

Durie (2005) notes the need for alignment between institutional culture and student background, noting that cultural incongruence can intensify academic stress for Māori learners. Research by Bishop and Berryman (2006) and Macfarlane et al. (2007) further affirms that institutions must be attuned to the realities and systemic inequities Māori ākonga face to enable resilience to flourish.

Probine et al. (2024) and Hmelo-Silver et al. (2007) argue that inquiry-based learning helps to develop deeper engagement and richer educational outcomes. However, it can also impose substantial cognitive and emotional demands, which may disproportionately affect learners who may be experiencing systemic inequities. Yet, as Prince & Felder (2006) suggest, these conditions can also encourage critical thinking, identity development and professional readiness when scaffolded by responsive teaching practices and peer support, all of which were the reality for participants in this research.

Aligning also with the work of Beddoe (2013), participants' kōrero highlight growth in confidence in their abilities and a sense of empowerment following their journey as inquiry-based honours students. Furthermore, the skills that the participants developed during their time as students transferred into their roles later as social workers. Prince and Felder (2006) support the contribution of inquiry-based learning to the development of critical thinking and problem solving, as do research findings. This aligns with literature concerning the impact of inquiry-based pedagogies, the challenges associated and the final satisfaction that students experience within themselves (Hmelo-Silver, Duncan & Chinn, 2007). Consistently, literature highlights the potential of inquiry-based learning, relationships and culture for indigenous students and the significance of culturally responsive and inquiry-based teaching and learning practices (Brown, 2017; Probine et al., 2024), as did findings from this research.

Together, these findings reflect what Macfarlane (2015) calls raising possibilities, where learning environments should be culturally affirming to enable growth, equipping students to thrive as learners and social workers. Within the context of social work and social work education, self-determination is shown to be a powerful basis for all people, in particular indigenous populations (Busch, Cooper and Dyball 2021).

Whanaungatanga: Relationships, Environment and Cultural Identity
Supportive and Culturally Safe Learning Environment

Findings from the focus groups highlight the crucial role of whanaungatanga in promoting relational and cultural connectedness within the BSW Honours programme. Participants consistently emphasised that strong relationships with mentors, peers and whānau contributed to their success. These networks provided not only academic support but also emotional reassurance during times of stress, uncertainty and competing demands. Timely feedback, reassurance and the feeling of being genuinely supported were described as crucial. Such experiences highlight the importance of personalised and consistent academic relationships. These findings align with Tinto (2012), who suggests that academic and social integration are vital for student resilience and success. Jacklin and Le Riche (2009) similarly argue that support should be reconceptualised as relational rather than transactional, building on trust, reciprocity and authenticity. The literature consistently highlights that smaller cohorts, reciprocal relationships and culturally responsive mentoring are key to developing a sense of belonging (Macfarlane et al., 2007; Mayeda et al., 2014; Bishop et al., 2010).

Durie (2005) and Bishop et al. (2010) identify cultural disconnection as a significant barrier to Māori success in tertiary education. They highlight the importance of embedding te ao Māori and kaupapa Māori into the curriculum, pedagogy to challenge dominant academic discourses that can marginalise Indigenous worldviews (Bishop, 1998; Macfarlane, 2015).

Participants highlighted that culturally safe and supportive environments were essential for developing academic engagement and progress. They emphasised the value of being able to bring their whakapapa into the academic space, allowing the opportunity to conduct research informed by lived experiences. This reflects the principles of kaupapa Māori, which position cultural identity and lived experience as central to the research process and the production of knowledge (Bishop, 1998; Smith, 2012).

Participants noted that culturally responsive environments also encouraged a collectivist study support system. This reflects Māori pedagogical principles, which emphasise relationality, reciprocity and collective responsibility as central to meaningful education (Macfarlane et al., 2007; Bishop, 1998).

Whānau, peer and community support were central to participants' ability to navigate the demands of the Honours year. This aligns with Durie's (1998) emphasis on whānau-centred development and stands in contrast to deficit-based models that individualise student success and disengagement.

The presence of Māori and culturally responsive staff further reinforced this environment of belonging. Participants frequently named individuals who supported their academic and personal journeys, suggesting that relational pedagogy and role-modelling were instrumental. These findings are consistent with Mayeda et al. (2014) and Curtis et al. (2012), who stress the importance of Indigenous educators in supporting identity, safety and confidence.

Despite these strengths, there were systemic and personal challenges. Students faced stressors, such as managing the ethics approval process, placements, parenting and grief, whilst completing the Honours programme. As Hmelo-Silver et al. (2007) argue, while inquiry-based learning encourages critical engagement, it can also create additional cognitive strain and academic overload.

RECOMMENDATIONS/CONCLUSION

The findings illustrate that the BSW Honours programme at EIT supports the exercise of tino rangatiratanga, whanaungatanga and the development of supportive academic relationships among Tāngata Whenua ākonga by:

- creating relational and culturally supportive environments;
- equipping students with the skills to advocate for their communities and challenge inequitable systems; and
- inquiry-based pedagogy requires scaffolding that is responsive and adaptable, as well as being supportive of ākonga and their lives

However, the persistence of systemic barriers highlights the need for continued critical reflection and structural change. Institutional commitment to kaupapa Māori approaches, increased Māori leadership and further embedding of matauranga Māori in programme design are essential for strengthening tino rangatiratanga.

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NOT WITHOUT CONSEQUENCE. MIXED PRACTICE: FINDING THE WORDS IN METHODOLOGY

Rachel Dibble

INTRODUCTION

Not without consequence: tangata whenua Tiriti educators in tertiary learning spaces

Tiriti o Waitangi education is not without consequence. The ākonga | learner experience is layered, with, at least, ethnicity, gender and age contributing to the positionality of understanding the content. It is important to recognise that contemporary facilitation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi education in tertiary learning spaces has happened in a variety of ways. Facilitation in a two-day workshop has been a common experience, while in an Otago Polytechnic academic programme, this has been layered across several weeks focusing on how the programme facilitates content as explicit, integrated and applied. The focus of my Master of Professional Practice (MPP) thesis came from an educator's experience of teaching the content as the sole facilitator in the room. It also arose from observing and participating in education with two facilitators in the room.

A Kaupapa Māori approach underpins the research, which focuses on good practice for Tiriti facilitators in tertiary learning spaces. Whakawhiti kōrero | sparkling discussions align with a semi-structured style of participatory interviews. Kanohi ki te kanohi | face to face interviews and online interviews were held, with a small group of experienced tertiary educators within Aotearoa New Zealand. Arts-based research intertwines a response to both method and methodology approaches and pūrākau weaves with autoethnography and poetic inquiry as both analysis and response. For the participants and the researcher, praxis and practices weave together words and wairua, with an invitation to the reader to engage in an Indigenous analysis process, that evolves in reaction to the writing and the findings. The findings are a result of the series of interviews focusing on gender and ethnicity, which emphasise that for many tangata whenua Tiriti educators, facilitation of Tiriti o Waitangi content with two facilitators in the room, is good practice and is not without consequence.

> Mahia te Mahi: Hard Head Heard Heart
>
> Narratives of HeaRT[d] mahi
> the hard mahi of challenge and conflict
> the heart mahi of remembering and decolonising
> the head mahi recognising those who have gone before
>   and raised up the profile for tangata whenua to work in this space.
> the heart mahi of my tūpuna, the ancestors
> the head mahi of skilled educators
> the hard mahi of resilience in survival
> the heard mahi of education, of liberation, of conscientisation: mahia te mahi
>   it is
>   *not without consequence.*

Mahia te Mahi: Hard Head Heard Heart was written mid-thesis late night early morning. It is symbolic of the mixed mind, multitasking, marking and mahi of emotions in the time it was written, in early 2024. The title captures the essence of my experience as a Tiriti educator in this time, space and place, specifically with a newly elected (2023) coalition partnered government, in Aotearoa and specifically in Ōtepoti Dunedin. Recognition in the poem is given to tūpuna and the value of Ka mua, Ka muri – Look to the past, to inform the future (there are many variations of this).

The focus of this article is the methodology of Poetic Inquiry in my Master of Professional Practice (MPP). It is also a response to my presentation at OPSITARA Ōtautahi, in 2024. The response (by me) to that experience is simple. It was, do not present a 162-page thesis in a mere 15 minutes. Even if it is ALL important. To do so, is *not without consequence*. There were more than the expected nerves. There were too many PowerPoint slides (with excellent transitions). There was nervousness in the form of a dry mouth, of having someone in the activism world *watching me*. It was not my best presentation; however, I learned very fast in those 15 minutes – that ONE aspect of this writing process was enough to focus on. The mixed practice of presenting what is needed and what is possible became an exercise of finding words, of finding method and mixing the academic and the poetic practice into this article.

The process of presenting a thesis required many hours looking at a word document on (at least) one screen. This may have started an unravelling of time and space for me personally. How to capture all that was said, by participants in a small cohort study, about their Tiriti educator experiences? Many hours were spent reading words instead of writing them, to see and to find what could be written.

When I became tangled in the web of "which words where" and "who wants what" and "why we work" the blank white screen did not assist. It was at this point that my supervisors again, came to my rescue, along with the encouragement of a former assessor for my Graduate Diploma in Tertiary Education (GDTE), Doctor Robin Day. In the GDTE process I started to write poems to capture difficult moments of conversations, feelings of what being a Tiriti educator, alone in a room, was like. The supervisors for my MPP journey had read this and had encouraging feedback when I finally realised that poems were going to 'break the blank' for this writing process.

My notes for this mahi included 'political inquiry' which was indeed relevant; however, much later I realised that my supervisor had suggested 'poetic inquiry' and I had not 'autocorrected.' Following is a poem that captures the "blank doc" words of this writer, edits indicated with italics, which differ slightly from the original, as poetic licence allows.

I want to. I do not.

I want to write a poem.
I want to finish this mahi. I want to do the post research discussion. I want to follow up with the new strategic direction.
Mover and shaker.

But I am stuck. *Blank.*
I can't write. Drowning in the lived experience of a colonised reality.
The words on paper. The read/red dead/dread recalling the experiences of the interviewees.
because I am doing what I know is
Good practice.
I am doing what is the good outcome experience.

In the room, kanohi ki te kanohi
Their heads and hearts hear the duality of reality
Collaborative, coordinated, cooperation…
Outside the teaching space, it's a different grace.
Because the EFT does not fit the FTE.
And the fear of the unspoken-ism
Pulls more than hearts, lips
Pursed. Tense. Curved, down.

In the room
We share his. her. their. story. *words.*
Are we? Or are they *always?*
In the room.

Once encouraged and with some words on the page, it was a journey then of thinking about the way my thesis might do justice to the narratives of the participants and would hold the confidence and the kōrero of knowledge they shared. It drew me to recall a kōrero from a kaumatua mai rā nō | some time ago, that the origins of te reo Māori, comes from bird calls to each other – the bird song.[1] Tame Iti (Ngāi Tuhoe, Waikato, Te Arawa) in the TEDx Auckland talk "Mana: the Power in knowing who you are" (2015), described speaking "the same language as the tui…"[2] With the language of the birds in mind, the participants, this 'flock of educators' were identified by bird names. This connection to te reo was vital to me, as a limited speaker of te reo Māori, to connect to a kōrero of song and poetry.

The overview of the kaupapa | purpose of the thesis was fundamental to the mixed practices of method and methodology. It is the relevance of ka mua, ka muri. To talk of the methodology makes sense of the question; to what purpose? For this mahi of being a Tiriti educator, Tiriti o Waitangi mahi is mahi of the past, present and future. It is remembering, grieving and healing. It is recognising that grieving takes a multiplicity of forms. It is weaving together the experiences of those who have left stories of grief *and* resilience, of the enduring memory of the pain from raupatu. In tertiary institutions, remembering and grief might be recognising where Indigenous voices have or *have not* been seen or heard. The following poem speaks to that direction finding.

Navigating [Researched] A B Cees.

When
confrontation of confiscation
is
conversation and collaboration
not
competition or compensation
it can
absolutely
become
community
communicatively
caring

Weaving the communication into kōrero, I interviewed participants with a whakawhiti kōrero style. This is not the focus of this article and I refer to the work of Paul Whitinui, (2014) as a foundation for this mixed practice. Whitinui (2014) refers to Tuhiwai Smith's decolonial kōrero as a path to support tangata whenua to "(re)claim, (re)connect and (re)align their own existence" … *as being Māori?* [emphasis added]. It is this whakawhiti kōrero, this sparkling conversation that is the structure of an end product; a korowai | cloak for shelter, or a kete to carry tools 'of the trade' in, or the weaving of a new reality.

Word weaving is an autoethnographic approach to my MPP, noting that autoethnography brings the 'self' into the research and juxtaposes quantitative research methods. When I began researching the 'story of the Tiriti educator in the room,' I knew that it would include my experiences. For me, that was the authenticity thread woven into the research, however, centring my own experience did not seem quite the scientific approach my very early (and failed) experience of Psychology 101 suggested was 'proper research.' Happily, I was able to complete Feminist, then Gender papers in the early 2000's at the University of Canterbury and gravitated to recognising positionality. So, when introduced to the concept of autoethnography it became a key thread to be woven into the words of this research.

Throughout my thesis I left 'breadcrumbs' of poetry, reflexive and narrative lines of words that involve my experiences in the room as a Tiriti educator. It is purposeful and integral to my overall teaching practice. Further to this, Nisa-Waller and Piercy (2024) hold a kōrero of relational praxis with students (teaching in Health Sciences at Otago University). They note the integrated autoethnographic approach connects to performance autoethnography (Denzin, 2018 as cited in Nisa-Waller & Piercy, 2024), to reflect or be reflexive to analysis of 'being' oneself and the "academic discourse…on structure and power relations" (p. 4). What draws my attention to Nisa-Waller and Piercy's capturing of the importance of autoethnographic work as decolonising, is that similar to Katrina Le Cong (2022) there is an awareness of "the impossibility of removing oneself from the research…" Le Cong writes that engaging in "deep and critical reflective processes" contributed to the researchers own "personal growth and development of understanding and acknowledging wairua" (Le Cong, 2022, p. 99).

Tiriti o Waitangi education and learning as a woven metaphor allows for the woven end piece to have frayed edges and imperfections, but it is the endpiece. However, teaching Tiriti o Waitangi alone can be a very heavy kaupapa (and then I need to mark it!). After four years of teaching exclusively alone 'in the front of the room,' I found myself feeling *alone*. While there was support for my aspiration to educate *with*, the funding was problematic and became a point of curiousness. How did other people in other tertiary institutions teach Tiriti and what was the consequence for them? This desire for collaboration, to teach with, to co-deliver became the focus for the question of "what is good Tiriti teaching practice"' As I wrote my thesis, it started as a history of Tiriti education and became a narrative of experiences, I knew that if I were to define what mixed practice, mixed methodologies would be, I could only start to do things poetically. The next poem is the indication of this response to definition.

Words woven | A whakapiri approach

Indigenous autoethnography
whakawhiti kōrero
Poetic Inquiry.
a collaboration, a conscientisation, a community.
kahu kupu
lines on skin.

<div align="right">

words are the feathers of the poet
words are the feathers of the researcher
this KAHU KUPU.
word woven, handed across, over, beside generations
sometimes. lost. [LEGISLATED] fighting [WRITING] for survival
word wov[e]inQuiry.
Autoeth[n]i/c/ommunity.
Whakawhiti korero/boration.
Poeticscientisation.

</div>

Wear the words
  [L]inked.skin.

Growing up in a literature appreciating household was not just seeing books in all the corners. It was sensory. There were first editions and loved editions and I best not forget the surreptitiously *borrowed* editions. Both my mother and grandmother-in-the-stars would complete cryptic crosswords faster than I can spell cryptic and Scrabble has long been a game of Double.Dibble.Triple.Trouble when playing against/with Uncles and Aunts (I am looking at you Uncle Vic). Poetry readings were not uncommon as we are 'word people'. It is with this in mind that Poetic Inquiry became integral in the woven words of mixed practice in my work.

Poetic Inquiry, a means of engagement with participants through research has a demonstrated Arts-Based Research foundation. Champions of the approach referred to as Poetic Inquiry include Prendergast and Leggo (Sameshima et al. 2017) and Faulkner and Cloud (2019). My inspiration outside of Aotearoa me Te Waipounamu New Zealand, however, came initially from discovering the work of Dr Camea Davis, "a poet, educator and educational researcher with a heart for urban youth and communities." (Davis, 2020, np). Davis is a champion of "collaborative ethnography and poetic inquiry" (Davis, 2020, np). In "Writing the Self: Poetry, Youth Identity and Critical Poetic Inquiry" (2018), Davis speaks to supporting young middle school[3] American students to use slam poetry in a way that "provided a place to negotiate prescribed identities…and…create ideal self-narratives" (2018, p. 114).

Using poetry, often spoken word poetry, has been one of the varied ways I have used to connect relevant content to ākonga in the room specifically about Te Tiriti. Spoken word poetry is a method that has been used by a range of young people to convey deep and difficult kōrero and experiences. The work of spoken word artists from the Action Education community organisation in Auckland such as Ngā Hine Pūkōrero, a collective of four rangatahi | Māori youth poets, confronts colonisation through clear yet metaphorical poetry. They competed in Las Vegas in 2019 at the Brave New Voices International Youth Poetry Slam, the first Australasian team to do so. Their hour-long performance at the Auckland Art Gallery, Toi o Tamaki is online and it is powerful.[4] Stevie Davis-Tana, a member of the collective, has also produced a spoken word poetry visual album titled "Kō." The poem "Portrait Profit" (Davis-Tana, 2020) comments on cultural appropriation, while "Daughters of the Land" contains the line: "If you want to know how a people treat the earth, watch how they treat their women" (Davis-Tana, 2020). The analysis of colonisation impacts within these poems and Ngā Hine Pūkōrero poetry such as Te Reo Māori, performed in 2020 at the Black Lives Matter rally in Auckland is what the potential of poetry, spoken word poetry leans into. It is inquiry into where tangata whenua have come from and incisive commentary on where rangatahi see disconnection and conscientisation.

As I started to explore spoken word poetry, I began to work with it as a format for journal and symposium presentations, to appreciate spoken word as a way to understand or connect with an audience. It is in this place that I conclude this article, knowing that there so much more to say, more patai | questions. How to weave poems into the academy? How to give voice to the unspoken-isms? How to give feathers to participants' kōrero so that they might fly to warm ears of other Tiriti educators? The poem *Two in the room* reflects the woven words of a mixed practice of informed, applied knowledge and education. Political Inquiry.

Two in the room

Sometimes
I am so uncomfortable.
Hā ki roto
Hā ki waho.
Wairua.
Kōrero kōrero kōrero. Sometimes.
It's easy to talk and talk.
                              Whakarongo – whakarongo mai. Listen here.

This is a poem that does not dare to say the writer knows what best practice is.
All the writer wants to really do is say:
I listened. Listened to wāhine, tāne, kaumatua, tuākana, tēina.
     I listened to the grief of teaching about my confiscated, legislated, raped, jailed,
drugged people.
We are wards of the state. We are everyone's children.
     I listened with my eyes.
Listening to how tangata whenua feel again and again, when everyone is vulnerable and
Everybody hurts.   Sometimes.

I listened and then someone else listened to me.
And increased the FTE.
                              And another couple of women, not only heard me
But stepped into the room.
                              We share the grief and make space for the place
Listening to each other
Listening to
the hard talk, the fragile talk, the grief talk
the kōrero of mai rā nō and the wairua of revitalisation,
     the strengths-based approach of conscientisation.
               That's where the magic happens. With two in the room.

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Editorial Endnote: The use of the "upwards dash" or "|" as the separator in the text is a punctuation device to uphold the mana of each language. Further, as in feminist theory the upwards dash serves to symbolically represent a disruption in conventional narratives.

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1   I was told te reo Māori was the language of the birds by a kaumātua many years ago. Hēmi Kelly, teacher of te reo, recently wrote in *The Post* online, an article about manu | birds titled *Te reo Māori teacher Hēmi Kelly finds meaning in the language of birds.* https://www.thepost.co.nz/wellbeing/350068540

2   Iti is narrating his story of punishment for speaking te reo Māori in the school grounds, with options of punishment being either picking up horse manure or write "I will not speak Māori" a hundred times on a blackboard. This has been a focus of the toimahi, art of Tame Iti in recent years according to Brebner's article '"I Will Not Speak Māori": Tame Iti's provocative new artwork creates a splash' (2022).

3   This is equivalent to years seven to nine depending on age, in Aotearoa

4   See link in references (Davis C., 2018, p.119).

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