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Learning from the past to guide the future: partnership in practice

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Poipoia te kākano, kia puāwai

Nurture the seed, and it will blossom

Introduction

In 2017 in a Vision & Strategy document, our new Library Director put a line in the sand and committed our service to honouring a long ago treaty, Te Tiriti o Waitangi | Treaty of Waitangi, by making the intention of that document the foundation of our work.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi was signed in 1840 between the Queen of England and the British Government, and Māori – the indigenous people of New Zealand. Te Tiriti o Waitangi is regarded as the founding document of New Zealand.

It was essentially a treaty of partnership between the two peoples to found a nation, but like all such documents in the history of colonisation, it came with misunderstanding and variations in interpretation. For a start there were two versions of the treaty – one in English and one in Māori and it is recognised today that the English version does not represent an exact translation of the Māori version.

While intentions of the treaty were worthy, but it did not protect Māori from the ravages of colonisation which involved war, disease, loss of language and land alienation.

It wasn't until the 1970's and 1980's that genuine conversations about the meaning of the Treaty and decolonisation began to surface.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi underpins all our work

It is against that backdrop that we move to 2017 where the Vision & Strategy of our library made that extraordinary claim - a claim that committed us to embedding Te Tiriti in all our work.

At the time we had no real understanding of what that meant. However, the challenge had been issued and we could not retract the statement; we had to try and reflect the intention of a 180-year-old Treaty. What has followed has been years of work to try and understand that intention and to bring it to life.

Educate, decolonise, transform

Three important words have guided us along the way – educate, decolonise and transform. Our Kaiārahi (Māori leader), Abigail McClutchie and our Māori staff, initially developed a framework to support the work which would need to be done to bring forward the vision of embedding Te Tiriti. These three words have proved successful in keeping us focused on what needs to be done and how to do it.

Educate

Over the years we have developed numerous ways to educate the staff, and they have included a mixture of internal self-education, alongside more formal opportunities often provided by external organisations. The examples below represent just a few of the activities we have engaged in to support our education.

Early on, we created the Te Tiriti o Waitangi Action Rōpū, with the emphasis being on action. That group, in partnership with our Māori staff, planned and delivered pepeha (a way of introducing yourself in Māori which is important in fostering new relationships) workshops enabling our staff to introduce themselves in Māori. They developed Māori pronunciation challenges and worked with the University's Māori students who were our teachers. These challenges are a lot of fun and have engaged large numbers of staff over the years. An even bigger advantage was the connection we formed with our indigenous students who have continued to play a big role in many of the activities.

One key programme that we have developed for our Māori and Pacific students is a leadership programme. This has been highly successful, but one of the major benefits for our staff has been that they have been able to attend the final presentations of those students, to hear their stories, to understand the barriers and to hear their aspirations. They are powerful and emotionally charged stories most of the time, and all our staff who have attended have been reminded of what we are trying to achieve and who is at the centre of that. The need to hear the Māori student voice has been a recurring part of our education over the past five years and will continue to shape our decisions around collections, spaces, and services as we move forward.

These examples fail to represent the time, energy, and commitment that such activities, and others like them, have taken.

Our education in respect of Te Tiriti has helped us understand the meaning of the phrase "Te Tiriti o Waitangi underpins all we do." We know that partnership is key, but what does that look like in our everyday work? How does partnership with Māori and a respect for a long-ago

Treaty manifest itself in a modern tertiary library? We know that before anything can be achieved in terms of partnership, we need to develop relationships – “relationships formed over a thousand cups of tea” is how one Māori academic described it. A thousand cups of tea represent many, many hours spread over years so the essence of the relationship cannot be superficial. It is no accident that one of our key values is “whanaungatanga” (which is a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging). To be able to move to transformation, that sense of partnership underpinned by whanaungatanga must already be established and be visible.

Decolonise or indigenise

But before we can move to transformation, we need to talk decolonisation.

Decolonisation carries different connotations both for colonised and coloniser, and the space it represents is often not a comfortable one. Māori academic Atakohu Middleton (2021), wrote that “Decolonising our minds means sitting with the uncomfortable sensations, memories and emotions that might arise. Anger may well be one of them.”

Many of our staff had no understanding of what decolonisation meant or why we might want to start a conversation about it, but the process is an important step in building partnership between Māori and non-Māori. Although about 11% percent of our staff are Māori, far more of them are immigrants from all over the world and it was vital for us to be able to reach a level of common understanding about the truths of our history and the negative consequences of colonisation for Māori. Decolonisation is about unlearning and re-learning, and according to one of our great Māori scholars, Moana Jackson, it is about an “ethic of restoration” (2020).

Our Pro Vice Chancellor Māori, Te Kawehau Hoskins, chooses to talk about indigenisation, rather than de-colonisation, something she acknowledges as being hard to define, but obvious when it is missing. From my point of view, I see decolonisation as an agenda inherently controlled by colonisers, whereas indigenisation gives agency to indigenous people to drive their own narrative – but these are tricky terms and certainly not settled. Te Kawehau (quoting Charlie Tawhiao, the chair of Ngāi Te Rangi), goes on to describe the kind of partnership that the University should be aspiring to in this way - “There are only two questions which need to be answered for productive relations between people: Who are we? And why do we matter to each other?” (Hoskins, 2021). In many ways our own journey to educate, decolonise and transform has sought to answer those two questions.

Decolonise

How did we decolonise?

We began with a nationhood building programme called Te Pumaomao which took place on the University's marae (meeting ground). The presenters were a husband and wife team who had run the two day workshop nearly a thousand times all over New Zealand. Chris is Pākehā (non-Māori) and Takawai is Māori and these two provided a culturally safe space for us all. The first participants were the leadership team and managers. Since then, we have extended the experience to team leaders and beyond, with the intention that in time all our staff will have the opportunity to attend. This initial immersion is essential in rethinking the process of decolonisation.

While many researchers talk about the importance of changing mindsets, Takawai's approach was different. His view is that "decolonising minds...is not enough...in order to effect real change we must also decolonise hearts" (Murphy, 2016, p.84). So, an emotional response is required before any real engagement can happen. Chris and Takawai achieved this through humour and role-play, before presenting the facts of New Zealand colonisation – and the facts were damning as is the case for all colonised peoples. We passed through stages of sadness, and anger – and there were tears, but the main thing was that we were challenged to act. That challenge is still resonating and still guides much of the work we are seeking to embed in our organisation.

Transform

Transformation is a big word and it does not happen overnight. Transformation needs to happen not just for Pākehā (non-Māori) but also for Māori – and it looks different for both of those groups. For Pākehā, transformation has focused on decolonisation and developing capability in the language and customs of te ao Māori, the Māori world. For Māori, it has meant providing the opportunity and the support for Māori to be Māori within our organisation. It has meant listening to what Māori want and need and changing our practices, our structure, and our thinking to accommodate those needs. E.g. a big desire that was expressed by Māori staff was the opportunity to have an intensive time to develop and improve their own Māori language skills. To that end the Te Tumu Herenga leadership team funded multi day full-immersion workshops over the course of 2021 and have continued that commitment into 2022.

One of the most significant structural changes we have made has been to appoint a Kaiārahi, a Maori leader, into the senior leadership team. It took us two years before we could realise this. This appointment has been a milestone in terms of having the Māori voice at the strategic level and has

both influenced many of our decisions and driven new strategies. Since a key part of Te Tiriti o Waitangi covers issues of sovereignty and self-determination, we consider this move imperative to honouring that document. Since that appointment we have appointed and seconded additional staff to support the role of Kaiārahi.

From the non-Māori side our biggest achievement has been to build a capability framework which supports our staff to learn, understand and engage with the Māori world view. This framework (see Appendix 1) was co-created between Māori and Pakeha staff. For our own staff, we have integrated that framework into the University's performance and development framework which means our staff are required to select several capabilities each year to work on. This has been one of the most effective ways of getting wide engagement across our organisation.

There have been many more initiatives since and some of the more important have included:

- the widespread use of our Māori name – Te Tumu Herenga which means the "[chief tethering post.](#)" Given that our services are wide ranging, and include careers and employability, managing and running the University's student hubs, providing learning advice to students, managing the University's art collection as well as managing our libraries, we feel this name represents what we do far more accurately than Libraries & Learning Services alone does.
- the development of our own values which are aligned to Māori values. This exercise alone involved half of our staff and took nearly a year to bring to fruition.
- the inclusion of Māori customs in our recruitment and induction processes – E.g. when a new staff member starts we have a whakatau – a welcome ceremony which includes a formal speech, prayers, singing and may also involve the staff members' family or former work mates. As is common practice, the ceremony is always finished by the sharing of kai/food.
- how we rethink our spaces to reflect Māori and Pacific culture. Our new student hubs have been fully imbued with Māori culture and values and we are now thinking how we can do the same with the rest of our spaces. Our next big project is to develop a reospace, a place where staff and students alike can come and speak Māori, in a safe and welcoming environment.

Successes

If it had not been for the challenge announced by our library director, Sue Roberts, we might not have begun this journey when we did. Leadership

from the top is essential, but you also need leadership from below and that is where our Māori staff have stepped in to challenge and to guide us. We use a tuakana-teina model, a traditional Māori buddy system where an older or more expert tuakana (brother, sister or cousin) helps and guides a younger or less expert teina (originally a younger sibling or cousin of the same gender). Using this model has allowed us to develop a train the trainer approach which means that the responsibility for supporting the work falls not just on our Māori staff but has enabled a wider group of staff to develop their language, knowledge of customs and their understanding of the Māori world in such a way that they are able to support the education of our 220 staff.

Another significant success has been the reorientation of our workplace towards a relational working environment based on our values. Five years ago, after a significant restructure, we knew that organisational culture was going to play a key part in the success (or otherwise) of our new service delivery model. The adoption of a set of values based on the Māori values of:

- whanaungatanga and manaakitanga (connectedness, belonging, kindness and support)
- rangatiratanga and kotahitanga (self-determination, unity)
- ako and teina-tuakana (learning, reciprocal learning)

provided an opportunity for us to think about the kind of organization we wanted to be and has supported us through many changes since that time.

Challenges

Core to the concepts of partnership are the ideas of self-determination and autonomy (tino rangatiratanga) over things Māori – “by Māori and for Māori” is a saying often expressed. This is a very difficult concept for non-Māori to understand and is currently forming part of a national debate about how health services in NZ should be structured to ensure greater accessibility and better health outcomes for Māori. Essentially, the debate comes down to issues of co-governance. As yet our library does not have a co-governance model, but the further down the track of partnership we go, we understand that this is an issue which will need to be resolved, not just for us, but for the University and the government of Aotearoa|New Zealand.

The nature of the work required to bring about organisational awareness of how to embed Te Tiriti means that there is often a disproportionate amount of work which falls on our indigenous staff. They carry a workload that is over and above their everyday job and are frequently asked to translate, to lead ceremonies, to “educate” non-Māori and while there is a

willingness to impart their knowledge, there is then the question of how we develop our Māori staff as Māori. Our tuakana-teina model helps to ameliorate this, but indigenous staff continue to carry a heavy load.

As in all libraries, there are many part-time staff, and staff who work in the evenings or weekends. This makes reaching those staff difficult and it is fair to say that not all of our staff are able to engage in the education and activities that are available. Recording as much as possible and providing online activities helps in this respect, but it does not replace those interactions which in Māori culture are often conducted *kanohi ki te kanohi* (face to face).

Lastly, we all understand that the destination for our journey is a long way into the future – the more we do the more there is to do. The ongoing commitment should not be underestimated, and in a sense we have stepped into a pool which has very deep water. Having said that, the richness, excitement and engagement we have experienced so far leads us to think that this is a place where will learn to survive and thrive.

The future

The future looks exciting; the university has developed a new strategy and a new curriculum framework which gives emphasis to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We are already a few years ahead of the wider University in this work and we can contribute in a practical way to bringing that vision to life.

For Te Tumu Herenga, we are co-creating with Māori staff a kaupapa (a new purpose). This work is only just beginning, but in many ways it is the most transformational and difficult thing we have done, relying as it does on an equal partnership between Māori and non-Māori. It must deliver self-determination for Māori staff and, if we can pull it off, it will truly represent “Te Tiriti o Waitangi underpins all we do.”

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Appendix 1 – Whakamana Kaimahi Capability Framework

Whakamana Kaimahi Capability Framework

 Valuing Te Tiriti o Waitangi – Can understand and embed Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and action consulting and partnering with Tangata Whenua <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Partnering with Tangata Whenua · Championing Te Tiriti o Waitangi · Responding to He Whakaputunga and Rangatiratanga. 		
Mohio – know/ Understand Beginner level	Marama – Deeper Awareness Intermediate level	Mātauranga – Proficient
To have a basic understanding of He Whakaputunga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni (Declaration of Independence).	To have an expanded knowledge and understanding of He Whakaputunga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni (Declaration of Independence).	To have an expert knowledge of He Whakaputunga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni (Declaration of Independence).
To have a basic understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Māori version) through consulting and partnering with Tangata Whenua.	To have an expanded knowledge and understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Māori version) by consulting and partnering with Tangata Whenua.	To have an expert knowledge of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and be capable of embedding Te Tiriti o Waitangi into your work, by consulting and partnering with Tangata Whenua.
To have a basic understanding of The Treaty of Waitangi (Crown version).	To have an expanded knowledge and understanding of the Treaty of Waitangi (Crown version).	To have an expert knowledge of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and The Treaty of Waitangi to provide expert advice.
To have a basic knowledge and understanding of the two versions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and the Articles. · The Treaty of Waitangi, and the Articles. 	To have an expanded knowledge and understanding of the difference between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and the Articles, including Article 4. · The Treaty of Waitangi, the Articles and the Principles. 	To have expert knowledge of the implications of the Treaty of Waitangi, the three 'P' Principles, and to enhance the mana of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
To have a basic understanding of the intentions of Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti within the context of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.	To have an expanded knowledge and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti within the context of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.	To have expert knowledge and understanding of the roles and responsibilities of Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti within the context of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
To have a basic understanding of the implications of the Treaty of Waitangi Principles (The Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975), as the government's construct.	To have an expanded knowledge and understanding of the implications of the Treaty Principles and how they have impacted upon partnerships between Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti.	To have an expert knowledge and explanation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the Treaty of Waitangi, the Principles and partnerships between Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti. With this knowledge you live Te Tiriti o Waitangi partnership and transform Te Tumu Herenga practices.

 Proficiency in Te Reo and Tikanga Māori <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Confident with te reo and tikanga · Capable to do mihi, pepeha, and whakatau · Self-aware of personal tapu and mana 		
Mohio-know/Understand –Beginner level	Marama – Deeper Awareness –Intermediate level	Mātauranga – Proficient
Know, say and understand your own pepeha (as Tangata tiriti/ Tangata whenua). Pronounce your pepeha correctly.	Know, say and understand your own expanded pepeha. Fluency in pronunciation and expanded vocabulary.	Know, say and be proficient in your own pepeha. Can attend a full immersion wānanga.
To have a basic understanding of mihi and the whakatau process.	Deliver a mihi and a whakatau	Can deliver and organise hui, mihi, and whakatau.
To know say and understand an opening and closing karakia, and a kai karakia.	Know a few karakia by heart.	Have advanced knowledge of appropriate karakia for various events.
To know and understand basic tikanga Māori (understand mana and what is tapu).	Increase tikanga knowledge (understand utu, mauri, and whakapapa).	Be proficient in advanced tikanga (Decolonised/ contemporary).

 Revitalising Te Ao Māori – Know and understand Māori history, Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview), Mātauranga Māori, and Kaupapa Māori. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Engaging with Mātauranga Māori · Supporting Kaupapa Māori · Unpacking colonisation 		
Mohio – know/ Understand Beginner level	Marama – Deeper Awareness Intermediate level	Mātauranga – Proficient
To have a basic understanding of Māori history and colonisation.	To have an expanded understanding of Māori history and colonisation.	To have an expert understanding and explanation of Māori history and colonisation, intergenerational trauma and Māori re-indigenisation
To have a basic understanding of Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview).	To have an expanded understanding of Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview).	To have an expert understanding and explanation of Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview).
To have a basic understanding of Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge systems).	To have an expanded understanding of Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge systems).	To have an expert understanding and explanation of Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge systems).
To have a basic understanding of Kaupapa Māori (Māori practice), Kaupapa Māori theory and methodology.	To have an expanded understanding of Kaupapa Māori (Māori practice), Kaupapa Māori theory and methodology.	To have an expert understanding and explanation of Kaupapa Māori (Māori practice), Kaupapa Māori theory and methodology. With this expertise you understand the critical needs of Māori staff and whakamana Māori leadership.

 Student Focus – Know, understand and practice Whakamana Tangata Strategy and deliver on our vision of a ‘transformative inspirational student services experience’ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Delivering a student-centred experience · Transforming student engagement · Accountable to Māori students 		
Mohio – know/ Understand Beginner level	Marama – Deeper Awareness Intermediate level	Mātauranga – Proficient
To know and understand the Whakamana Tangata Strategy, particularly ‘Our strengths’ section Strategy 2019–2022.	To have expanded knowledge of: Eight key challenges for student services.	Enact the Whakamana Tangata Strategy in our work, all new projects, and role model good practices.
To know and understand the concept of mana.	To have expanded knowledge of: Outcomes.	
To know and understand how to enhance the mana of Māori students.	To have expanded knowledge of: Our measures of success.	
To attend ceremonies that acknowledges the mana of Māori students and staff.	To have expanded knowledge of: Graduate profile.	
To know and understand the concept of manaakitanga – the wellbeing of all.	Champion Whakamana Tangata Strategy.	

 Wider University focus - Know, understand and practice University of Auckland values and what we (Te Tumu Herenga) value <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Aligning work and relationships with values · Developing a Te Tumu Herenga identity · Cultivating a sense of belonging 		
Mohio – know/ Understand Beginner level	Marama – Deeper Awareness Intermediate level	Mātauranga – Proficient
To know and understand what we in Te Tumu Herenga value.	To have expanded knowledge of what we in Te Tumu Herenga value.	Enact our values in the University of Auckland, in our work, all new projects, and role model good practices.
To know and understand the University of Auckland values.	To have expanded knowledge of the University of Auckland values.	
To know and understand the narrative of the name ‘Te Tumu Herenga’, how we got the name, and, the name ‘Te Tumu Mātauranga Whānui.’	To have expanded knowledge of the whakatauki: Ko au ko Te Tumu Herenga, ko te tumu herenga ko au: I am Te Tumu Herenga, and the chief tethering post is me (I am it, and it is me).	
	Champion Te Tumu Herenga values and identity.	

The Whakamana Kaimahi Capability Framework was completed by Abigail McClutchie, Hine Busby and Megan Clark. He mihi to all previous committee members.