

2019 Kaumātua Service Providers Conference
Empowering Kaumātua Mana Motuhake in Te Waipounamu
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Do you see me? I am 70.

My skin is earth born and wrinkled with deep chiselled valleys from a life of laughter, and of tears of intense flaming passion and knife piercing heartache.

Do you see me?

I struggle to survive on an inadequate pension, in a damp confining abode that gives me no sense of attachment that my whole being has not breathed life or emotions into, that circumstance and not love shelters me within.

Do you see me?

I sit here in the shadows of winters screaming grasp captured in its clenched fists, and greet you with a smile one stranger to another, that hides my story and that hides my pain, and that hides my existence. You have no words, your stride doesn't falter your eyes don't focus, your breath doesn't alter.

Did you see me?

This Life of Mine was the work of Joanne Te Tai, of Ngāti Manu.

She was one of thirty kuia and koroua, Taua and Pōua, who came together over the last twenty years at creative wānanga at Murihiku Marae, Takutai o Te Titi Marae and in various community settings.

In 2017, Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu supported their application to create a body of work spanning more than eighty years of memories; Ties That bind us.

The writings within are revelations of what it is to be Māori and the connections to whānau, whenua and values and practices. They are poems that have been weathered by time, capsule of days past – he taonga tuku iho.

When I think of the title of this talk, empowering kaumātua mana motuhake in Te Waipounamu – I believe it needs refining.

The words of our elders are intimately woven from the ties that bind them to the land where their heart beats.

Their mana motuhake becomes a shining beacon of love that empowers, enables and inspires all of us who bask in their glow.

And so in this brief time today I bring with me, the blessing of Ngāti Kuia, Ngāti Koata, Te Atiawa ki te Waipounamu, Ngāti Tama, Ngāti Toa Rangatira, Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Rarua, Rangitane

ki Wairau and Ngāti Apa ki te Rā To – the nine iwi shareholders who have given life and mandate to the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency for the South Island – Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu.

What I want to do is just share some of the gems of what kaumatua are doing in the Whānau Ora space; to live their best life; to create opportunities for wellbeing based on inter-generational aspirations; on locally derived solutions and on collective ambition.

We started in the far South with Ties that bind us.

Further up the line in Dunedin, Te Rōopu Tautoko Trust has a dazzling kaumātua roopu that go on day trips; have ukulele jamming sessions; or enjoy the luxury of the rongoā kaimiri in action.

Kaumatua roopu combats loneliness and social isolation.

Kaumatua many have joined Taurite Tu an exercise program which is hosted weekly

The Kaumatua roopu is also part of a national Research Program, working with Rauawaawa and University of Waikato.

Last day trip this year will be to the Albatross Colony and they will end with a Xmas breakup inviting representatives from the three Papatipu Marae.

I have to share with you some of their reflections from out of 90 responses to the kaumātua survey. When asked, what you learnt through the kaumatua hui the responses were as varied as you could imagine:

- Tikanga Māori
- Support people with their illnesses
- Singing waiata
- Wairua whanaungatanga whakapapa
- Friendships
- Respect
- Nice to have company

The next question asked, what has changed for you.

- Happier
- Mixing with others
- More confident
- Attitude
- Know more people; something to do
- I've come out of my shell
- I feel more secure in my old age.
- Meeting friends from long ago
- Although I am sick I still have a great time. It gives me the strength to get through the week. We are fed, checked up on and have a network of support.

From Dunedin we travel up to Christchurch.

There are two particular initiatives I want to share here.

The first is a feasibility report to establish a kaupapa Māori respite and day care facility for kaumātua in Ōtautahi, written by Irihapeti Bullmore, Karen Keelan and Te Pora E hau Kaiwai.

What these women recognised, is that while traditionally elderly Māori have tended to live with whānau, in today's time the options for care are more challenging, and too many kaumātua have limited choices when they don't have whānau living nearby. The ultimate vision for the initiative is for kaumātua and whānau to have the autonomy to take control of their hauora.

The recommendations are to enable a choice of provider for respite and community care so that

- Kaumātua can determine their own hauora, their own preferred provider; and whānau could access support
- That kaumātua would be more informed and better able to advocate for their own health and wellbeing;
- And that services will be put on notice to embrace and address in meaningful ways; Māori cultural responsiveness.

The report also recommends that mainstream understand and appreciate the diverse links that kaupapa Māori services have in reaching into the elderly Māori community:

- Rehua Marae has a day programme for kaumātua two days a week;
- Te Puawaitanga ki Ōtautahi has the Rapuora monthly home visit
- Healthy Day at the Pa is an initiative that Whānau Ora has been able to support through our relationship with Pharmac and health literacy
- Te Puna Oranga has a monthly kaumātua lunch in Woolston
- And Purapura Whetu has Ngā Reiputa Taua – a kaumātua support group that meets monthly.

While all these initiatives add value to the kaumātua calendar of events; the next initiative has a more comprehensive, lifecourse approach to kaumātua development.

The Whetu Ariki Charitable Trust has been funded by Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu to develop a single entry point complex that can cater for kaumātua in Waitaha. Their initial project identified a high need to support kaumātua who are living in isolation – to reduce loneliness – to find ways to support taua and pōua through rūnanga, Māori providers, marae, churches and whānau.

Whetu Ariki has been deliberate to accentuate the positive – to generate greater degrees of whakawhanaungatanga – rather than talking of disconnection. In a research exercise carried out in 2018, 37% of kaumātua interviewed spoke of lacking companionship, and a massive 88% indicated feelings of isolation and or aloneness.

Do you see me?

They have established a Kaumātua Specialist Navigator to broaden opportunities to connect; to consolidate a whānau plan; to provide a tangible tool of communication for the roughly

3000 65 plus kaumātua living in Waitaha. As part of the project moving forward they are seeking to provide an 0800 number 24.7; provide a platform for further dialogue on improving access to medical healthy meaningful living and housing options; to create capability through partnership and collaborative delivery; and to achieve the broad vision: hei manaaki ngā kaumātua ki Waitaha.

Finally, we finish at the top of the south with Te Hauora o Ngāti Rarua. Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu also invests in a Navigator Specialist role – working with over fifty whānau members.

Once a week there is low impact aqua aerobics.

There is a weekly walking group – with an afternoon tea to follow – whanaungatanga time.

There is the Picton Coffee Group; a men’s group under the umbrella of Māori values, and a craft group attended by a small group of kuia. There’s the monthly luncheon at the Springlands Tavern.

There is a kaumātua day at Waikawa Marae in Picton or Parerarua in Blenheim covering topics such as

- banking for seniors (covering financial abuse and scamming, card fraud, online banking)
- St Johns Medical alarms
- Work and Income Senior services - superannuation;
- Civil defence and emergency
- Basic karakia nd pepeha
- Publishing a regular newsletter that is sent out to 140+ kaumatua – the Kaumātua Kūmara vine – which is also uploaded onto facebook
- Establishing team leaders – kaumātua who self-manage and team lead

I want to finish with the example of Joan – a fictitious name but a true story of a 72 year old kui living alone in a council flat. She has no children, is diabetic and a heavy smoker. She doesn’t drive and is very isolated.

Since registering with the kaumātua specialist support she has:

- Joined the walking and swimming groups – assisting her fitness while also addressing social isolation
- Received the support from the mirimiri service to help with aching legs and feet
- Registered with Quit Smoking and diabetes management;
- Gained access to Marlborough Health Shuttles to get to medical appointments independently
- Made new friends at the kaumātua day
- And strengthening her relationship with her wider whānau.

What I wanted to do today was to share some of the differences and common themes across Te Waipounamu, as kaumātua show us what they want, what they need, and what they are about in terms of achieving their best lives.

There are some key themes that have emerged:

- wide-ranging health disparities experienced by kaumātua;
- the importance of language and culture to kaumātua wellbeing;
- the importance of kaupapa Māori in ageing research; and Māori conceptions of ageing in place.
- The concept of manaakitanga, as it applies to Māori and ageing highlights that approaches to support elderly Māori need to be holistic, and steeped in tikanga Māori.
- There is insufficient current research about kaumātua ageing and the resources that are available specifically for them
- Further research should consider the localised needs of kaumātua which could allow for a more detailed examination of the needs and experiences of urban Māori specifically.
- More research on localised needs would also be instrumental in furthering ageing research nationally and internationally.

Maybe our greatest lesson is actually just to listen and learn from the leadership our taua and our pōua; our kuia and our koroua; share with us in multiple, meaningful ways.

In closing, I return to the Ties that bind me, and the last word is dedicated to Tira Ririnui.

I am what I do
Just like my tipuna
And the wise old manu who lives in the ngahere

The more he saw the less he spoke
The less he spoke the more he heard.