

**Opening Address – Te Aho Mutunga Kore; Whānau Ora Symposium
Helen Leahy, Pouarahi / Chief Executive, Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu
Thursday 7 July 2016**

E ngā mana, e ngā reo, tēnā koutou katoa,

Kei te mana whenua, ngā tangata tiaki o Te Kete Ika a Rākaihautū, Ngāi Te Ruahikihiki, kei te mihi.

E mihi ana ki te Taumata e whakakanohi nei i ngā iwi e iwa o Te Waipounamu, tēnā koutou.

Kei ngā mokopu rongu, koutou ngā rangatira, ngā taua, ngā pōua, ngā kuia, ngā koroua, tēnā koutou i tā koutou tautoko i tēnei kaupapa.

Ki a tātou kua hui tahi nei ki te wānanga, ki te kōrero mō ngā mahi kua oti nei i a tātou, Tēnā tātou katoa.

I am deeply honoured on behalf of Te Taumata, and the General Partner Limited Board, to introduce this inaugural symposium for Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu.

My role is to share with you some of the context that has brought us to this day – before I call on Whaea Tariana to officially open Te Aho Mutunga Kore – the Eternal Thread.

I firstly acknowledge the welcome and the wisdom of mana whenua, the generosity of Ngāi Te Ruahikihiki in hosting us, the beautiful kōrero of the korowai to keep us warm, protected, inspired by the legacy passed down.

Te Putahitanga o Te Waipounamu was born out of that legacy; the leadership and the hope that the nine iwi of Te Waipounamu brought to the table in submitting their bid to establish the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency for the South Island.

We are here because in March 2014 the nine iwi formed a legal partnership to give voice to their vision. It was a brave bid; a bold decision that they would join hands, together, to be the guardians of this kaupapa.

Whānau Ora is as old as it is new. It is of this land, woven from an eternal thread created by the philosophies and practices of tangata whenua. A thread that links us through time immemorial, to solutions that are all around us.

And so I acknowledge you, Whaea Molly as Chair of Te Taumata, and the courage of the iwi leadership, the Taumata members, and all those here and at home, to give life to the vision of:

Ngāi Tahu;

Ngāti Apa ki te Rā To;

Ngāti Koata;

Ngāti Kuia;

Ngāti Rarua;

Rangitane o Wairau;

Ngāti Tama ki te Waipounamu;

Ngāti Toa Rangatira;

Te Atiawa o te Waka a Māui.

The Taumata then appointed a Board, to drive their vision forward. I pay tribute to the energy and commitment of Norm Dewes, our Chairperson, and his team of pioneers – Lisa Tumahai, Trevor Taylor, Donovan Clarke and Parekawhia Maclean,

I want to mihi also to all those former Board members, the establishment team, the transition team, all of the staff and kaimahi and the wonder of the whānau who supported them to mobilize the momentum, to create the blueprint from which Te Pūtahitanga evolved. It is absolutely wonderful that so many of you are here today, true champions for the cause.

Te Pūtahitanga – the name – was gifted to us in the spirit of the collective force behind Whānau Ora – literally the convergence of the rivers of Te Waipounamu.

We look, then, to our rivers that run through the land, connecting peoples from the mountains to the sea, a flow that brings sustenance and certainty.

The rivers flow from the source, always there, and yet the water flowing through is never the same water and never still. Always moving, evolving, widening and deepening. Sometimes surging with passion through the rapids, other times meandering, a mere trickle left from the force that was.

At times that flow bears the cruel impact of external interventions – dams and deviations, pollution that poisons, the erosion that spills over threatening the mauri within. So how do we ensure that this vital base – the sacred river of life - is protected from harm, and able to remain a legacy of beauty and resilience for future generations? That is where this concept of Pūtahitanga has so been so important in guiding our direction.

For while Whānau Ora must be driven by those ever flowing rivers, the life-force that is whānau, the concept of **Putahi** – the long strata of the clouds shimmering across the sky –also provides us with the rationale that defines our commissioning model.

Every river contains within in it rocks and snags, whirlpools and eddies that could distract us from our course.

It is in those times of challenge, where we listen to the call of the tui, we look up and seek ways to rebuild and restore, to return our homes to a sanctuary for our children, a haven for our families to be.

We have taken up a model of commissioning which is reliant on the wisdom of the people, drawing our strength and approach from them, like we might draw on the wisdom of kaupapa to lead us forward. I want to briefly touch on five of those **strata** –our five commissioning workstreams that define our work in Whānau Ora.

We have been excited by the endless spring of ideas that so many of you here have developed and devised as a pipeline of possibilities to strengthen and stabilize your whānau. Whānau Ora is your gift to your descendants; your thinking to create horizons of hope for tomorrow.

This Symposium – is built off that **Commissioning Pipeline**. Some of those ideas are found in the showcase stream tomorrow where some of our entities share their stories and strategies with us.

Some of those ideas will form the basis of keynote addresses; others are contained in print form in a handbook of initiatives available throughout the hui. In the exhibition space you might watch the magic of Māui Studios who are creating digital stories for each entity; a video memory that can be liked and shared, connecting families across the globe.

Or you might just strike up a conversation at the coffee cart about what is it that brings you here.

I want to particularly thank our Independent Assessment Panel who have read through every application, watched every video, made recommendations to our Board – our Chair, Dr Lorraine Eade – Dame Tariana Turia, and Malcolm Morrison.

The **second of our five workstreams** from the strata of Putahi – is that of **whānau enhancement – our 32 navigators** – who are the eyes and ears of Whānau Ora from Murihiku to Motueka, from Makaawhio and Ngāti Waewae through to Koukourārata, to Kaikōura, to Arowhenua. The role of the Navigator is to be a guide for whānau, to assist whānau in making their way through the maze that life can sometimes be. They do amazing mahi and we are stronger because of them.

The **third strata of Putahi is that of capability development**. Alongside of the creativity of commissioning, is the importance of building the **capacity** of whānau to be self-determining; to be confident in the solutions they develop for what can seem to be the most insurmountable obstacles.

Within this strata, we have our leadership programme – **Te Kākano o Te Totara** – a development model to help grow our emerging leaders through wānanga, networking, coaching, and professional mentors. As well as growing the people, **Te Pāpori Whakatere** – the Accelerator model - is about growing the ideas – supporting proposals to create far reaching social impact for whānau.

Our Whānau Enterprise Coaches are a key part of this workstream – and it is wonderful to see so many of you here with us today.

The fourth strata, we look to is that inherited from the inspiration of another idea initiated by Whāea Tariana in her ministerial role – **Te Punanga Haumarū** – literally a site of safety.

This workstream is distinctive in that it represents the first time that funding has come outside of the Whānau Ora vote – this was a pūtea available through the Ministry of Social Development which they have transferred across. It represents a vote of confidence in Whānau Ora – that the intention of Whānau Ora to be an approach that stretched right across government – is finally coming into fruition.

Te Punanga Haumarū is the place from which we have looked for new ideas to strengthen families from the tragic impact of suicide, of violence, of the harm done in the homes and hearts that we must address if we are ever to fully realise the impact of Whānau Ora for Aotearoa.

And finally, our fifth platform of Putahi, is that of **research and evaluation**, succession planning, rangatahi innovation, enterprise and entrepreneurship. This afternoon that space is entirely in your hands – we wanted to ensure there was priority on the agenda for your knowledge, your expertise and energy, to help us shape the next stages of the commissioning lifecycle.

I hope that over these symposium, each of you here has an opportunity to ask questions, to get wildly excited, to laugh, to exchange business cards, to download ideas and upload inspiration from within the shelter of this space. Our greatest challenge will be to learn from you; to listen up; and to be guided by your kōrero.

We are honoured by the people who have come to share this stage, to be our keynotes, to set the scene for Te Aho Mutunga Kore.

We are humbled to be joined here today by the Honourable Nanaia Mahuta; the Chief Executive of Pasifika Futures – Debbie Sorenson; the Chief Executive of Te Puni Kokiri – Michelle Hippolite; the Kaihautu of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, Arihia Bennett; departmental officials, researchers, activists, iwi members, whānau.

It gives me enormous pleasure to welcome to this inaugural symposium, the inaugural Minister for Whānau Ora – One of the two Pou for the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency of the North – Te Pou Matakana - the Dame of Hearts that fought for Whānau Ora to be a foundation for us all: Whaea Tariana Turia.