

Taking Charge of Change: Transformation through Innovation

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Tēnā kautau

Nōku te hōnore kua tae mai au ki te korero ki a koutou katoa.

He tikana te mihi atu ki ngā mana whenua o tenei takiwā, Ngai Tuahuriri, tēnā koutou katoa.

It is indeed an honour to greet you, bright and early, on this very important day, the 28th October.

It was on this very day, 181 years ago, that thirty-four northern chiefs signed the Declaration of Independence at a hui called in Waitangi. Calling themselves the United Tribes of New Zealand, the signatories pledged to meet at Waitangi each year to *'frame laws for the promotion of peace, justice and trade'*.

It was the very first footprint of the modern nationhood, a step that led towards Te Tiriti o Waitangi some five years later.

It was on this very day, 28 October 1890, that the first Labour Day celebrated the struggle for an eight hour working day. Up until that point it was a custom, not a legal entitlement, and only applied to some groups of workers.

And it is today, this very day, that thousands will gather in Wellington to mark the passing and mourn the loss of a woman who did so much to transform the nature of our employment circumstances, our rights and responsibilities, indeed the way in which we treat each other as citizens. I was particularly taken with a comment by Laila Harre which spoke for us all: *"Helen Kelly's legacy will be longer lives for others and a memory of how to make the most of the one you have"*.

Those three events – The Declaration of Independence; Labour Day; the memorial of Helen Kelly – provide a fitting backdrop for this very significant conference – **Taking Charge of Change: Transformation through Innovation.**

I come to you this morning, on behalf of Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu – the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency for the South Island.

In its very nature Whānau Ora is an exemplar of transformation in action.

It represents the aspirations of whānau – the drive towards ORA – and their desire to take charge; to design the change they want to see.

In this, it already demonstrates two distinctive variances with business as we might have known it:

- Firstly it is collective, intergenerational – the needs of a whānau as a whole rather than an individual in isolation of the greater whole
- Secondly it is about the ability of whānau to be the architects and artists of their own transformation, rather than being led by the service specifications of providers or government agencies. They epitomise the adage of Mahatma Gandhi – whānau must be the change we want to see in the world.

For us in Te Waipounamu, the currents of change for whānau are underpinned by the faith and belief of the nine iwi who gave us life.

Our name – Te Pūtahitanga – is literally the convergence of the nine rivers of Te Waipounamu – those rivers in themselves symbolising the dynamic rhythms and distinctive integrity of the nine iwi shareholders.

The notion of the river is compelling. It reminds us that the transformational journey of whānau is inherently natural, of this land, it is fluid and flourishing, can meander and weave across our universe, at times it brings the crashing force of powerful rapids, at others it creates havens of deep tranquillity.

So what is it that Te Pūtahitanga can contribute to the conference agenda?

The theme for these two days is inspired by the framework of pae tawhiti; a concept derived from a whakatauki by a tupuna of Whānganui, Dr Rangitakuku Metekingi of

Ko te pae tawhiti whaia kia tata; Ko te pae tata whakamāua kia tīna

Seek the distant horizons and cherish those (horizons) you attain

At a time when the very tapestry of New Zealand's social service sector is being rewoven it is an apt time to be thinking about transformation and what that means, how that enables us to move closer to our goals, while also being inspired by the vision of a nation where whānau are strong and secure; children thrive in a

community of belonging; identity is paramount; quality outcomes in health and wellbeing are non-negotiable.

I was saddened by the recent results of the Canterbury Wellbeing Survey which revealed a statistically significant decline in the sense of community. The proportion of respondents feeling a sense of community has trended downwards from 55% in September 2012, to 49% in April 2016. The satisfaction levels were stratified further by suburb: only 32% of those living in the East reported a sense of community.

Yesterday I was at a Family Violence summit where Ta Mark Solomon told us: that in 2014 – there were 102,000 police call-outs for family violence, affecting 274,000 women and children. If statistically, only one in five cases is said to be reported, and if you extrapolate that out, we could be looking at 1.4 million people affected by family violence each year.

We know too, that while tamariki Maori make up 23% of the 0-14 year age group, they represent half the children receiving statutory services.

And just last week, the Chief Coroner released statistics which showed the Māori suicide rate of 22 per 100,000 people was nearly double that of any other ethnic group. Suicide prevention researcher Nicole Coupe in commenting on the statistics, said those who were disconnected from their identity were at higher risk of suicide.

There is a lot to address – and of course we all know, there are many more statistics which provoke us to make change and make it soon.

Uppermost in current discourses around reform is the concept of social investment. The updated Community Investment Strategy defines social investment in persistent and specific terms, focused around the classification of vulnerable New Zealanders.

I do have to wonder – how helpful is it if we continue to define certain New Zealanders as vulnerable; diagnose certain adults as requiring parenting skills, some rangatahi as 'at risk', some children as 'high needs'; what does it do for the sense of confidence, and self-belief of those who are defined in these ways?

The Community Investment Strategy concludes, optimistically, that “*whānau need help to be safe, strong, healthy and resilient*’.

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Achievement of this goal is presumably where transformation is most required.

Contrary to policy speak, transformation is not a 21st century phenomenon; it is in fact everywhere around us.

Some of you might remember the salutary tale of the very hungry caterpillar.

In the light of the moon a little egg lay on a leaf

One Sunday morning the warm sun came up and pop – out of the egg came a very hungry caterpillar. He started to look for some food.

On Monday he ate through one apple – but he was still hungry

On Saturday he ate through one piece of chocolate cake, one icecream cone, one pickle, one slice of Swizz cheese, one slice of salami, one lollypop, one piece of cherry cake, one cupcake and one watermelon

The caterpillar ate through one nice green leaf and after that he felt much better. But he wasn’t a small caterpillar anymore.

He was a big fat caterpillar.

Then he nibbled a hole in the cocoon, pushed himself out, and then, he was a beautiful butterfly.

Transformation can come just by the sheer force of time, institutional inertia can be overcome by a constant growth, a force of demand that causes change to be inevitable. We get bigger and bigger until we have evolved into something entirely different.

But the philosophy beyond the transformation the revitalised social sector is facing, is more purposeful than accidental; the process of change is all consuming; the intention is for all of us to own it – to slip down ladders and climb up snakes; to collaborate, integrate, navigate; to co-design, to transition; and then to evidence the results.

Yesterday was a ripe environment to ask questions of ourselves: is it working for our mokopuna? Is it really all about the kids? How are we telling our stories? What does innovation, intervention and investment mean for the lives of those we touch?

In case the process of transformation may be seen as unfamiliar territory, *Investing in New Zealand's children and families* has much to say to guide us in how to achieve transformation. On page 62:

Greater attention is required to the importance of transformational leadership, workforce capability and innovation when designing and implementing the new operating model. In this area, and the wider social sector, all staff must be able to work effectively with and for vulnerable Māori children and their whānau.

The following page, that transformational leadership is reinforced:

*New Zealand has yet to fully realise the potential for iwi strategic transformation in the social sector. The future operating model will take a **strategic partnering approach** with iwi and Māori organisations to provide services and support Māori children, young people and their whānau, making better use of the **natural attributes** of these organisations and communities to serve the needs of vulnerable Māori children, young people and their whānau.*

And then later on page 143

*To achieve the level of transformation sought, it will be essential that **leaders across the system** set the direction of change by **championing the vision** for vulnerable children and **aligning their own behaviour to the values**. There is also a key role for leaders in **holding people to account** when behaviour does not fit with the organisational values.*

There are some clear directions for what we need to do, should we accept the mission to be transformational, to be in charge of change.

It is about transformational leadership, workforce capability and innovation. Are we up for the challenge?

Or more pertinently, when did we lose the ability to believe in the power of transformation?

These are my two daughters – who have spent a lifetime in play; creating new landscapes for exploration, envisaging more liberating opportunities to be recognised as the princesses they were born to be.

Over a decade and more later, the ability to stand tall in who they are; to willingly suspend disbelief and stretch the boundaries owes much to the courage they can harness from being free to play in new spaces.

They embrace the act of innovation not just in the most obvious and immediate grasp of new technologies – the joy of instagram, selfies, snapchat and Uncle Google– but also in their determination to think differently, to apply new thinking around issues that may have been posed as problems.

One of their greatest enablers has been the loving, all inclusive embrace of a whānau that cares; who has helped to shape and nurture them – and their cousins and mokopuna after them, into a way of being that will serve them for life.

I am reminded on a daily basis, that in order to achieve aspirations for all of our children to thrive, we need to ensure they are firmly placed in the centre of our whānau lives.

It is, indeed, axiomatic – the best context to enable all our children to be safe, to be strong, to be secure in their identity, connection and belonging is to ensure that all of our whānau are onboard.

I commend Minister Tolley’s challenge to encourage all New Zealanders to have a role in providing love, care and support to vulnerable children, young people and their families.

To do so, we must actively encourage an inclusive approach which inspires and encourages all our whānau and families to place children at the centre : it cannot be an either / or.

Our children are the heart of our whānau; and our whānau provide the best opportunity and the strongest lever to make sure every child counts.

The two are not mutually exclusive.

One of the youth advisors to the expert panel made this explicit in her postcard to the Minister: *This identity is not just where the child comes from and what culture they are; it’s everything that makes them who they are”.*

The moment we lose sight of the fundamental role of families in giving every child the best chance, we run the risk of alienating and isolating our children from the essence of who they are – a risk which can lead to lifelong trauma if we fail to invest in the value of identity, of connection and belonging.

So I remind us of the challenge:

*To achieve the level of transformation sought, it will be essential that **leaders across the system** set the direction of change by **championing the vision***

How do we walk the talk, be kaupapa-driven, be accountable and yet innovative to enable the shift of thinking?

Fundamentally, this is what Whānau Ora is all about.

Having the courage, the confidence and the creativity for whānau to

- Define their ultimate aspirations
- Operate in a paradigm which is collective, intergenerational, locally owned
- Starting from strengths as a platform for change
- Believing in the necessity of being self-managing, self-determining,
- And most of all living by an approach which supports whānau to articulate for themselves what their needs are and to achieve a pathway towards achieving their own goals.

Those goals have been driven by a relentless drive on outcomes. It is about taking up responsibilities and obligations to take charge of change as in the message of hope of Dame Tariana.

Whānau are doing it in multiple ways.

The woven universe they are establishing is based on an interpretation of that three letter word: ORA: which has given them the scope to be the best versions of themselves. If you are to search for a definition of ORA in the Ngata Dictionary, 273 results will come to the surface.

In Te Waipounamu, our commissioning model has at this point invested in 81 diverse whānau solutions – and we know we have just begun.

We have the initiative in post-earthquake Christchurch of **He Toki ki te Mahi** : a Maori trade training approach which supports our trainees into a career pathway, through strengthening and consolidating the connections and capacities they have as members of whānau.

The partnership between Hawkins Construction, Ngai Tahu, ARA and the education consortium Te Tapuae o Rehua has seen several hundred young Maori graduation in the construction workforce. The role of kaupapa Maori mentoring; the support of

whakawhānaungatanga, the active links through to employers has helped to reduce the impacts of cultural isolation when they transition into workplaces that are predominantly non-Maori.

The Poipoia concept came from whānau associated with **Te Kura Kaupapa Maori o Te Whānau Tahī** in Christchurch. Whānau had expressed the desire to support learners with a Maori immersion homework centre, while at the same time providing wider language support for whānau who have Maori speaking children at home. There were immediate challenges to find high quality teaching staff with te reo; and so the original proposal was adjusted to encourage Year 13 students to be tutors.

Poipoia was always ambitious: to provide a supportive entry-point into language immersion; to change whānau perceptions about homework; to create a change in the views of learners and whānau about learning – inspiring conversations that knowledge is not just built between 9 and 3; a ground-breaking project to engage whānau in their child's learning. At this point, after just over a year in action, whether or not Poipoia has contributed to academic results remains to be seen; but it has certainly achieved a monumental change in the way learning is viewed.

Tiramarama Mai in Blenheim, focused on rangatahi between 14 and 16 years of age who had been excluded, suspended, disengaged from school. The initiative wraps a whānau centred approach about the rangatahi and their whānau, working together – co-designing an intensive plan which identifies their strengths and builds a strong whole.

The host entity – Nga Maata Waka o te Tau Ihu – has worked actively with Marlborough Boys and Girls College and Queen Charlotte College to build relationships, to ensure conversations are whānau centred rather than teacher or school focused. The initiatives see whānau as crucial to student reintegration back into school. There is access to a public health nurse, alcohol and drug counselling, a social worker, a kaiāwhina to better support students in a culturally grounded approach.

While the focus was driven by improving opportunities for the rangatahi, along the way local colleges are thinking differently about how best to reengage rangatahi; whānau have received wraparound support that strengthens their wider engagement with learning.

And in the Far South, in Invercargill we have **1000 Days Trust**; which essentially wraps a multi-disciplinary approach around supporting whānau in their first 1000 days with a new baby.

The Southland community had particularly complex issues in maternal mental health, grief, young mothers traumatised through sexual abuse, isolation, a lack of whānau connections for young families and a view that existing models were not meeting the needs of whānau.

Practitioners, community members and whānau came together to promote resilience not reliance, through a focus on the first 1000 days of a pēpi's life. The foundation of the intervention is whānau first with their pēpi in the middle. They are passionate about walking alongside whānau rather than doing to them.

Essentially whānau come into a house which has grown out of the community – the ladies across the road have crocheted baby blankets, an elderly neighbour pops over to mow the lawns, others make soup, plant gardens, drop off baby clothes. Farmers arrive with meat; nappies are donated – the reciprocity of giving and receiving both gives voice to the communities desire to support their most vulnerable and enables whānau to feel a greater sense of belonging.

The house is a place of nurturing, a place of being present, a place of love and non-judgement, a place to recharge, reflect and re-examine their journey as a whānau. Into that space have come solo mothers, blended whānau, whānau under stress and in crisis. It is about connecting with their whakapapa; learning about latching on – the challenge of breastfeeding – where to go for support.

And it is about encouraging and growing whānau capability to be self-determining. One whānau entered the house with heads down, highly suspicious. The challenges facing them were complex and long-standing; multiple agencies had them on their books but little was changing.

Both parents were young and had endured difficult lives, but wanted the best for their pēpi, to be the best mama and papa they could be. They worked out in the house they had a lot of work to do on their own relationship as a couple; and their relationships with their wider whānau. The father commented that he had been so involved in his own stuff he had forgotten about his daughter. When he left the house, he was very emotional, thanking them for believing in him.

We have found that rangatiratanga – self-determination – is inherently linked to capability building. To achieve the transformation the reform is seeking, we need to actively resource the process of capability building – to enable new learning across the whānau, to build on existing cultural knowledge and experience; to be practical;

and locally situated. And importantly we have learned that collaboration with other partners, that whānau identify as relevant, can be highly motivating.

What we have also found is that an emancipatory approach succeeds best when you work with those who define the issues for themselves, who are driven by self-belief and a solutions focus, which are about commissioning change driven by the whānau; and outcome focused.

But wait, there's more.

Enter my son, proudly displaying another form of whom or what a transformer might look like.

We have talked about the natural phenomenon of transformation; the capacity to be creative and consider our own strategies for change through a whānau centred approach, but I want to also focus on the notion of innovation as a mechanism for change.

With the transformer toy, you can start with one thing and end with a completely different – from a person to a car – through the application of innovation.

With Whānau Ora in Te Pūtahitanga what we are also finding is that the initiative a whānau might take in their original proposal might instead evolve into relationships and partnerships that are powerful beyond belief.

A recent evaluation of 23 of our Wave Initiatives¹ demonstrated that alongside the intended outcomes there have been a range of unintended gains through investing in whānau success.

What we have learned is that transformation is a process people must do for themselves. Our investments have mobilised a mind-set which engages collective action.

My last three examples represent diverse approaches to achieving transformation for the whānau they represent.

Hale Compound Conditioning

Hale Compound Conditioning (HCC) began with a young couple, Koren and Corey on the Gold Coast, Battling their own demons they entered a twelve week fitness

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The evaluation of Wave One Initiatives: Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu (Catherine Savage | John Leonard | Chelsea Grootveld | Shane Edwards | Wendy Dallas-Katoa)

challenge – a challenge they won: they transformed themselves, mentally and physically, and within themselves sparked a passion to share this journey with others.

In 2011, Koren and Corey returned home to Ōtautahi to visit whānau and friends. They were moved by the full extent of the devastating effects of the 22nd of February Earthquake. Koren and Corey noticed the knock on effects the earthquake was having on whānau throughout the Eastern suburbs; facilities had closed down, schools, supermarkets, shops, and whānau no longer had that glow. Whānau who had attempted suicide, were in the grasp of torrid alcohol and drug addiction, their potential limited by obesity, depression, low self-esteem – the issues seemed without end.

Four weeks later, HCC had returned to Ōtautahi and set up shop. Three days later HCC was on the ground taking their first steps with whānau.

The first roadblock that HCC set to work removing, was the drinking culture that pervaded the community. To do this, they gave people the choice – early morning weekend bootcamp sessions, guaranteed to push to the limits and instill a sense of pride and satisfaction; or continue on as they were. The people came, and started to believe in Te Huarahi Oranga – the pathway to health.

Koukourarata

Te Runanga o Koukourarata (Port Levy) want to bring their people home with the proviso that they are able to provide educational, employment and business opportunities so that whānau who choose to return to their whenua are not marginalised by that decision. They are clear the projects they undertake need to provide opportunities in these four areas and give their people a hand up, not a hand out.

The runanga have used the funding accessed through Te Putahitanga to employ a project coordinator. Over the last ten months the project coordinator has developed mutually beneficial relationships with a number of partner organisations. A strong partnership has been established with Lincoln University and in particular the Bio Husbandry Unit Trust (BHU) and the Organic Training College. The ability to grow blight free organic taewa is unique, provides access to a niche market and has given rise to the Koukou brand.

An initial cohort of eleven whānau enrolled in a Level 3 Organic Horticulture Course that was offered by the Organic Training College. The course gives an introduction to organics and teaches the principles and practices of an organic and sustainable approach. Students will graduate this programme with the Lincoln University Certificate in Organics.

The runanga were passionate about supporting whānau who had offended and needed support to get their lives back on track. The coordinator developed a collaborative partnership between the rūnanga, the BHU and The Department of Corrections that aimed to give whānau with community based sentences the opportunity to learn new skills, gain a qualification and enhance their employment opportunities. Several whānau enrolled in the Lincoln University Telford Certificate in Farming Practices which is a Level 3 practical skills qualification covering general workplace health and safety, fencing, tractors and chainsaws.

The new learning has changed the conversations that occur at the marae and increased the commitment of the whānau to sustainable farming practices. The relationship with Koukourarata has been beneficial for the College as the partnership has given them access to a cohort of students that they would not otherwise had access to. Similarly the personal relationships between the rūnanga and the BHU have been transformational for the staff of the BHU and The Organic Training College. The relationship with Corrections has been valued by both parties. A vacancy has recently occurred in the Department of Corrections team and Corrections has invited a member of the rūnanga to be part of the appointments committee. Increasing Maori influence in appointments made at Corrections is an important but unintended consequence of the partnership.

The whānau completing education programmes under the auspices of the Department of Corrections have learnt new skills and now see themselves as capable of achieving University qualifications.

Kakano Café and Cookery school

Kakano Café brought together a love and passion for food, with a desire to help whānau struggling to feed their families good food and pay their food bill.. The innovation takes the idea of seed to plate encouraging decolonisation of the diet by propagating seed, growing plants and converting into foods for human wellbeing and health.

Kakano Café is has supported a new generation of growers amongst whānau and has brought Maori kai to the fore in the community. Situating the café on a vacant space in Christchurch opposite the library brought life to the central city. Local residents including the homeless regularly help out in the gardens by providing night time security and sharing childhood knowledge of gardening and life experiences that adds value to their own lives. The Kakano Café provides social cohesion in an area that has suffered the trauma of earthquakes and destruction that is evident on a daily basis.

The original intention was to improve whānau wellbeing through māra kai and there is evidence that this has occurred. There are many examples of how whānau have

experienced improved health through growing and cooking their own kai. In particular, one account was of a woman who attended the fermentation session and brought her sister to the next course. They were caring for a family member who had cerebral palsy, and began cooking and feeding fermented foods through the feeding tube. As a result they had seen a significant improvement in their whānau member's health and wellbeing. They both attributed this to the quality of the food and the new knowledge they had learnt through the fermentation course.

The biggest challenge for this whānau is the complacency they see regarding poor Maori health outcomes. The whānau is passionate about bringing about change and can feel frustrated as their urgency to restore health for whānau is met with complacency from others. The passion for healthy sustainable kai that honours ancestral knowledge is immediately evident as whānau who come to the café walk through the 20 metre raised garden beds. The aroha for the kai, the process of growing and cooking is at the heart of the project, but the whānau can feel as though they have to convince others of the benefits and urgency to bring about change.

What these three examples demonstrate is the positive impact of informal and formal networking, collaboration and partnership to bring about change.

There is evidence of substantial partnerships developing between mainstream organisations (such as Universities, Community Organisations, DHB's and other health providers) and several of the Te Pūtahitanga initiatives. This level of collaboration supports sustainable change as they create robust management and governance structures, influence the practice of the organisations, and leverage on each other's knowledge, expertise and resources.

Finally, in the foyer I have left some of our seed packets – the thinking behind these is three fold.

Firstly, we wanted to grow the idea that whānau transformation is a natural process that any of us can take up; it follows the legacy of those ancestors beyond us who have left us the seeds of change. It should be simple enough, therefore, to be defined in one sentence that you can write on the front of our envelope.

Secondly, we wanted to promote the thinking that change is not to be feared; that planting a Seed of Transformation within our whānau has the potential to flourish – that innovation is to be welcomed with open arms – that creativity is the gift of revitalising ourselves from within.

And thirdly, that in order for transformation to bed in, it must grow. We must speak out about what we see, that's why our stories are uploaded in video form so whānau can easily like and share their own success. We must forge new partnerships,

create and consolidate collaborations, and keep learning, transforming, to keep nibbling a hole in the cocoon, push ourselves out, and then be free to fly.