

**Te Ritorito 2017 : Towards whanau, hapu and iwi wellbeing.**

**Whakapai te whenua, whakapai te whānau**

**Helen Leahy, Pouarahi, Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu**

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Tena kautau

It was both thrilling and terrifying to be invited to be your dinner time entertainment.

My children always tell me I'm not funny so I won't even go there; and when it comes to cabaret - I'm really more a '*sing-along-loudly-with-the-words-I-know-and-hum-the-rest*' type of girl, so my options were looking slim.

So I do what you always do in times of need – I enlisted the help of my big sister. I asked her, what do people look for in a dinner speaker? She thought for a bit and summed it up in three words: Waiting for Pudding.

In her humble opinion is the best dinner speakers are those that set out with three things to say; and stick to that – because with each new step, you know that pudding can't be too far away.

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We have had an amazing day of insights and intellects; frameworks fashioned out of data and statistics.

We have embraced the opportunity for an outcomes analysis juxtaposed within the context of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, Whānau Rangatiratanga, the Māori Living Standards Framework; Oranga Tamariki; Mana Mokopuna; Te Kupenga.

And we ended where we begin, in the context of whānau and whenua.

I want to follow on from the foundation Ben Dalton set for us today, in exploring the connection to identity and belonging through the lens of whānau and whenua; what Wellington likes to call a "place-based solution".

It is truly wonderful to be back here in this place - Te Wharewaka o Pōneke – a whānau-driven venue which has given birth to so many celebrations, hui, roundtable discussions, workshops, press conferences, Hui-a-Tau, to develop and design the Whānau Ora approach.

It is food for the soul to be here in the company of so many who have been the

architects, the dream-weavers, the kaihautū, the kaihoe of the project of transformation that Whānau Ora is.

We are so indebted to the bold thought leadership of Professor Sir Mason Durie; the unwavering courage and enduring belief of Whāea Tariana; and the teams of champions this dynamic duo has inspired around the motu.

Just over two years ago our whānau turned our waka to southern shores, landing at the home of Te Putahitanga o Te Waipounamu, the Whānau Ora Commissioning Agency for the South Island.

When Dame Tariana retired my whānau knew a transition plan was necessary.

How do you face the morning after, when on a daily basis, I had the greatest privilege in the world to be inspired by someone who asked us to do more, to be more, to dream bigger, to act.

Michelle Hippolite touched on this 'x-factor' earlier today, when she asked us to develop the courage, strength and hope to 'trust in whānau'.

If there was one question that Whaea Tariana persistently, and passionately asked Cabinet to respond to, when will you place faith in our whānau? The answer is in Whānau Ora – but it is also found in every marae, in every whānau home, in the ways that whānau live their lives.

Just that one question – or perhaps more an instruction – to place faith in our whānau is life-changing.

My whānau knew if we were truly to live up to legacy, then transformation needed to start at home.

And while te awa tupua runs through the veins and vision of our whānau, for this point in our lives we were Pounamu bound.

Home to the exotic wildness of the West Coast playground, to swim in the Pororari River, to camp at Punakaiki, reconnecting with the places Mum loved so well, remembering, reflecting, recreating new memories.

Home to the bountiful orchards of Lower Moutere, the paradise that Dad never tires of promoting, the sun-baked soils of Motueka, Riuwaka, Mohua.

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In many ways while we acquired a new post-code, coming home for me was to feel a greater sense of connection to the whenua which shaped my family's sense of place.

It is in that central relationship with whenua that Whānau Ora thrives and achieves success in realms previously uncharted. A relationship of whanaungatanga that Judge Joe described so clearly as the first and fundamental principle of Kupe's laws.

But let's start with **my first point**: the basis for Whānau Ora Commissioning and its relationship to whānau, hapū and iwi wellbeing.

And I want to mihi to our colleagues – Te Pou Matakana and Pasifika Futures – for the creativity and commitment they are demonstrating in their unique commissioning approaches. Together, the three of us, are doing whatever it takes, to create the foundation for an enduring focus on ORA in all its dimensions– I am grateful for the learning we gain through our collective vision.

In 2015, the Productivity Commission observed that the organisational culture within the commissioning agencies appears to be significantly different to the culture within government purchasers, particularly with regards to their attitudes on **what can be done, how soon it can be done, how it can be done and how measurable the outcomes would be.**

This is likely to make the Commissioning Agencies more responsive than the average government purchaser.

The language of the Productivity Commission is important – this is not through the lens of vulnerability, deficits, indicators of risk and deprivation.

The Commission concluded that the models of whānau change demonstrate progress along a pathway towards whānau wellbeing into something measurable and reportable. The report concluded that this kind of developmental work holds much promise.

For Te Pūtahitanga o Te Waipounamu, our framework was written by the nine iwi of Te Waipounamu – in itself an act of revolution to have all nine iwi joined together to secure a better future for whānau across and between boundaries; an investment in wellbeing for all who live within Te Waipounamu, Wharekauri, Rakiura.

They asked us to invest in **whānau as agents of change**.

Our model shifts its gaze therefore from services and providers to instead invest **directly in over one hundred whānau-based entities prescribing their own pathways of progress** – some of which will be presenting to you tomorrow.

The innovation pipeline of whānau transformation is accompanied with the whānau enhancement stream – over fifty navigators working directly with whānau to support them in creating whānau plans.

We focus on re-establishing the whānau as the greatest site of safety-Te Punanga Haumarū - through our work in eliminating family violence; in upholding mokopuna ora, in earthquake recovery and response.

We strive towards building whānau capability: succession planning, leadership wānanga, Whānau enterprise coaches.

And all streams are strengthened through a steady focus on results based accountability; evaluations, digital stories, and research.

We have heard a lot today about Whānau Ora Outcome frameworks - ensuring that we head in the right direction by investing in whānau to craft their own outcomes.

But my particular focus tonight is unpacking and understanding why it is that so many of our whānau, when asked what will make them well, come forward with strategies that are around the whenua.

So this is **my second point**: the relationship between whānau and whenua.

We have focused on a waiata gifted us by the kuia Terehia Kipa, following the 2011 earthquakes. The essence of that waiata is:

**Whakapai te whenua, whakapai te whānau.**

**Kua wehe te mauri, mahia te mahi, kua hoki te Māuri.**

There is of course a recent whakapapa to reflect upon.

What does it do to the wairua of the whānau to live through the psychological fatigue of enduring more than eleven thousand aftershocks since 2011, while dealing with damaged homes, disrupted communities?

In Ōtautahi, more than half of all buildings in the central city had to be demolished, 25,000 homes were seriously damaged.

Just up the road – well seven hours up the road now – Kaikōura rebuilds itself. Coming up to five months since the 7.8 earthquake shattered normality in Kaikōura, Hurunui, Ward, Seddon and beyond; our focus is firmly fixed on winter. State Highway One remains fragile and susceptible to further seismic and weather events; families are fearful for the impact of the cold.

Two months ago, over 1000 whānau in the Port Hills area were reminded once more that their environment is vulnerable to winds, to fires, to rockfall; as over 150 fire-fighters, 15 helicopters, and all our navigators, marae, social service agencies came together to protect homes and the whānau within them.

Little wonder that people in the South are tired of the word ‘resilience’.

In Mindy Thompson Fullilove’s 2014 work, *The Frayed Knot*, she writes:

“In the face of multiple traumas, deprivations and withering of trust, connection to place endures.”

On the one hand the capacity of the collective to carry out place-making is severely undermined by the depletion of resources, the truncation and dispersal of networks and the accumulation of sorrow.

On the other hand, the living, breathing organism [*whanau and whenua*] seeks to affirm itself by continuing to be expressive ... Place attachment becomes an important, ongoing act of self-affirmation, both of the individual and of the larger and enmeshing communities.

Recent Ngāi Tahu research by Golda Varona and John Reid takes this thinking a step further. The Whenua Project from the *He Kokonga Whare Research Programme on Historical and Intergenerational Trauma among Maori* identified an interesting hierarchy of wellbeing factors.

The main sources of wellbeing identified by the Ngai Tahu participants were the following:

- **whanau** - mentioned by 82.5% of all participants;
- **whenua**; continuing access to resources, and security of land ownership (76.3%);
- mātauranga Māori; reo and education (65%);
- values and ethics (50%); and,
- financial independence (28.7%).

I think it’s interesting that whānau and whenua are the answer when the question is “*what makes you well*”?

So often, the question is instead “*what are your biggest problems*” –and when you ask that question, the answer is inevitably dire - poverty, the statistical profile that drives Ministers and Ministries.

That’s not to say that economic security isn’t important – but more that it’s not the only issue we need to focus on.

And if you ask whānau, it’s not the income source that is the greatest source of comfort, of power, of influence, of mana, of rangatiratanga.

Whānau want more – they want a different conversation – and we are ever going to understand what constitutes wellbeing for them – we need to let them define the outcomes, be led by their direction.

What whānau across Te Waipounamu has told us is that

- Knowledge of whenua helps in the maintenance of family ties.
- access to whenua is important for social and family wellbeing, as is regaining and retaining land ownership.
- having a connection to whenua was important for healing. For example, one woman stated that,

*“The bush talks... If I’m not good now, I want to go to the bush – it gives me peace.”*

And for those who are waiting for the signs that pudding is near....I’ve finally got to point three :

I want to finish with four stories that place this kōrero in action.

The first is **Pa Ora, Pa Wānanga** in the heartland of Rangitane ki Wairau and Ngāti Apa ki te Rā To.

Omaka Marae is all about whānau transformation – their energy is effervescent; their optimism is energising.

They are doing everything they can to achieve whānau wellbeing: a marae based after-school programme; Whare Tū Taua; the design-thinking process for establishing a kura and a commercial arm, based on their Manaaki products.

Wellbeing is expressed through Toa Fit: regenerating a love of te reo rangatira; and establishing an income stream through condiments marketed as Manaaki in a Jar.

Their Māori inspired taste in kamokamo pickle; kawakawa jelly and Horopito and lemon, are all the expressions of a love of whenua inspiring a renewed energy for life for the whānau of Omaka.

**Maara Oranga** came out of the desire of Ngāti Rarua to bring whanau back to their flaxroots; encouraging the whole whanau – mokopuna, tamariki, rangatahi, pakeke and kaumatua to participate in producing and sharing healthy food.

The challenges were clear:

- 25% of Maori in the region said they sometimes run out of food and can't afford more;
- One in six people said that adults in the home had reduced their meal or skipped because there wasn't enough food

Maara Oranga is about providing fresh, healthy and low cost food to whanau; encourages physical activity for all ages; creating a social gathering place; sharing knowledge across the generations; and learning new skills and knowledge.

For those who were not mobile, the garden was raised. The emphasis was on the can-do attitude; bringing the garden to the whānau in whatever way it needed to.

The story from Ngāti Kuia is best left in their own words:

In Veronica Strang's work: *Close encounters of the Third World kind: Indigenous knowledge and relations to land*, she referred to social life and knowledge as being shaped and mediated by the land, land is therefore, simultaneously "**a cosmological map of ancestral forces and a map of people and their social relationships**". Kin and country are indivisible; it is literally impossible to talk about one without referring to the other.

The injuries of disconnection and alienation, multiple displacement created by acts of colonisation, industrialisation, the rural economic decline -cut deep, threatening the vibrancy of the umbilical cord that defines whānau as one.

Against the force of such unnatural hazards, for tangata whenua; literally peoples of the land; there is nothing that can be as healing, as restorative, as life-renewing, as returning to the waters of one's birth; the landscapes that define the essence of who they are.

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One last story:

A month ago, I was standing at the source of Te Waikoropūpū, the sacred home of the kaitiaki taniwha, Huriawa, a wāhi tapu for the manawhenua ki Mohua.

The bubbling springs of Waikoropupu connect us to Te Wai a Moe the sacred waters

located at the top of Koro Ruapehu.

It is said that Takaka was the place in which Maui-Tikitiki-ā-Taranga anchored his foot to balance himself when he fished up the great fish - the North Island of New Zealand. Maui's grandfather's fish hook snagged the fish at the location of Koro Ruapehu.

Te Waikoropūpū Springs is amongst the very clearest waters in the world. The sacred fresh waters are said to be healing waters, used by tohunga for cleansing and blessing; rejuvenating the damaged mauri.

It was these properties that meant, despite the 2014 Ngāti Tama Settlement Act which had granted the iwi cultural overlay over the springs, the Council came in over top, and granted Kahurangi Virgin Waters the right to take groundwater from the springs for commercial bottling.

Huriawa is the protective guardian who watches over Te Waikoropūpū Springs. She is well known for her bravery, her wisdom and her gentle nature as she guards and protects the myriad of waterways that produce Wai Ora: the water of life; purest form of freshwater.

She is, if you like, the epitome of the mihi maioha –the oriori that Moana and Leland referred to as protective factors for honouring our mokopuna.

For the people of Ngāti Tama, Te Atiawa and Ngāti Rarua, , Te Waikoropūpū Springs provide a direct spiritual and physical link to their tupuna. These springs – and the atua kaitiaki that watch over them – are at the centre of iwi relationships. If life cannot survive without water, then the health of these springs reflects the wellbeing of the people.

At this time, Ngāti Tama has been in the High Court in Nelson, seeking judicial review of the decision of Tasman District Council to allow a company consent to take over 4000 cubic metres of water every week for the next year. Legal action appears to be the only avenue left.

The kaitiakitanga – the guardianship – of Te Waikoropupu is a taonga tuku iho – a treasure from the ancestors – passed down from generation to generation to ensure that the sacred, clear fresh waters are protected for all our tamariki mokopuna to come.

There was no hesitation: Ngāti Tama knew they had to act.



This story touched my heart, it stirred my resolve.

Huriawa: the protective guardian who is the keeper and kaitiaki, uses her special powers to dive deep into the land and sea to send messages through the surge.

She disentangles tree roots and obstacles to prevent the underground waters from flowing freely. Her children rest at Waikoropūpū while she travels back and forth in her role as a caretaker of the myriad of whānau.

Today, whether we are Navigators; researchers and activists; policy makers or practitioners; that spirit of Huriawa can give us force and fire to guard and protect the precious taonga that all our whānau represent.

There has never been a greater call than now, Whakapai te whenua, whakapai te whānau.