

Utilising Te Tiriti o Waitangi to decolonise practices at New Zealand Tertiary Institutions

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Abstract:

Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi) is recognised as the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand. An agreement signed by William Hobson the representative of the Crown (Britain) and Aotearoa indigenous people, represented by many Māori chiefs. Over the past few decades the Treaty and its implications have been a major focus. It provided a framework for relationships between Māori and the British Crown (in 1840). The agreement made between the two nations (Aotearoa New Zealand Māori and non-Māori colonisers), have resulted in western institutions including Aotearoa New Zealand's Government departments and Crown agencies having obligations to implementing Te Tiriti o Waitangi to the satisfaction of all its people.

Under the Ministry of Education Act the University of Auckland has legal obligations to the Treaty Principles. Te Tumu Herenga originally was the Libraries and Learning Services of the University of Auckland. The title was gifted by the late Merimeri Penfold and literally, the proverb means 'the chief tethering post'.

Through adhering to the concept of "te tumu herenga" proverb, it has over the years enveloped other entities within the larger tertiary institution, moving from Libraries and Learning Services to an entity that is not fully able to be explained through its current English title.

The paper comments the new service delivery model of Te Tumu Herenga, its' aspirations, values and principles based upon the Māori language version of the Treaty. It is now leading the University of Auckland direction and strategy in implementing Te Tiriti o Waitangi through transformative practises ensuring indigenous peoples are at the centre of the practice. The paper discusses how contribution of Te Tumu Herenga staff leads the University of Auckland to meet its' Treaty obligations, and how implementation is decolonising its' members, reaching the hard to reach, while supporting, connecting, empowering, and once again consolidating indigenous paradigms for all library users.

Keywords: Māori, New Zealand, Indigenous, University of Auckland

E ōku iti, e ōku rahi, he mihi poto tēnei ki a koutou katoa o te ao.

Ko ahau tētahi uri o Te Whare Tapu o Ngāpuhi. E kī ana te kōrero, e rima ngā rōpū o te whare nei. Ko Ngāti Whātua i te tonga, ko Te Rarawa i te uru, ko Te Aupōuri i te raki, ko Ngāti Kahu i te whiti, ko Ngāpuhi te tāhuhu, nō reira, ko ngā pou e tū whakahīhī ana, tū tonu, tū tonu.

Ko te aha Te Tiriti o Waitangi? (What is Te Tiriti o Waitangi?)

Many in the world are aware that Aotearoa has a treaty with its indigenous peoples. What may not be known is that there are two versions. One in the indigenous language (Te Reo Māori) and one in English. For first consideration, people have indicated that Māori are not the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa, yet what they do not understand, as a descendant of Tumutumuwhenua of Ngāti Whātua, we are from this land. The hekenga (journey and arrival of the waka) to Aotearoa or Nukuroa as Ngāti Whātua have referred to New Zealand, informs that these manuhiri (visitors) married into the people whom were already in Aotearoa. As a descendant of the many hapū and iwi in the Hokianga, we also talk about the “fires burning” as Kupe came through the harbour entrance. Why is this important, because those who do not follow an oral tradition, cannot read about these in normal western literature which seem to take precedence at times over verbal histories.

Pre-arrival of colonialism to Aotearoa, the author would like people to consider the question; What was it like in Aotearoa? The author can only form an opinion of clean, green (in terms of environment) and warlike. Supposition that although people may have been living apart, but that there negotiations and strategies were active between communities. Upon the arrival of tauīwi, Petrie (2006) and James (2003) both indicate that there was industry, trade and economic factors in play. Why would our tūpuna (ancestors) therefore considered signing Te Tiriti o Waitangi? As indicated by tūpuna of the author, growth has been about learning from the past, making it easier for the future and ensuring sustainability in all matters. Mulholland and Tawhai inform “...provides a basis for moving forward as a nation; it is as relevant today as it was 170 years ago.” (p.1) Tūpuna who signed Te Tiriti o Waitangi could possibly have been wanting the same. Seeing expansion in the different aspects that they had witnessed for the betterment of their people. We can see the same taking place in the world today post Treaty Settlements. Treaty 2U informs “The reasons why chiefs signed the Treaty varied from region to region. They were influenced by the aims of the iwi (tribes) and hapū (sub-tribes) and the explanations given by negotiators.

What is the difference between Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Treaty of Waitangi? Two different languages from two different world views is one answer. Mutu (2010) informs “That Pākehā understood the Treaty very differently was something that did concern the rangatira at first, but they were persuaded by the assurances of the missionaries that the Treaty they signed meant what it said.” (p.13) There has been discussion and opinions made in regards to the knowledge of the scribe (Tauīwi), and the power to ensure interpretation of both meant the same thing. Orange, Calman, & Parkin, (2017) mention Māori and Colenso’s concerns about interpretation and future for Māori. Ongoing debate and discussion in the world today tells us differently. The Treaty 2U informs “they are not exact translations of each other.” Under contra proferentem, Te Tiriti o Waitangi has preferred status than the Treaty of Waitangi. An agreement made between two nations (Aotearoa Māori and non-Māori colonisers).

In the *He Tohu* exhibition, a video recording of Moana Jackson says “The treaty is fundamental because it establishes that inter-dependence which is such a fundamental corollary of our understanding of independence. It established the framework in which people who come here could have a relationship with us.”

He aha te mea nui ināianei? (What is the main thing in the present?)

Today western institutions have obligations to implementing Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The University of Auckland obligations are mentioned in position descriptions of employees (past, present and future), strategic and annual plan directions. The University of Auckland Strategic Plan 2013-2020 (p. 12) states “The University of Auckland has a strong history of developing partnership with Māori which acknowledge the principles of The Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi.” Please note the indication that Te Tiriti and The Treaty are interchangeable. The viewpoint and the principles are different in both. In one respect, although the scribe is non-Māori, the reo being used is from an indigenous world view, therefore, implication of this being interchangeable with a western world view is incorrect. Treaty 2U states “those who signed the Treaty brought different experiences and understandings of certain words to the signing.” There is also acknowledgement that as Te Tiriti o Waitangi travelled around Aotearoa to other iwi that it may have been explained differently in each location.

The University strategic plan (p. 5) indicates that the education we provide is “...cutting-edge knowledge, integrate teaching and learning with the research strengths of staff, make the best use of new teaching, learning and information technologies, challenge and excite students, and enable them to achieve...” There is an expectation for students to graduate and be independent and critical thinkers. They would be expected to use information discerningly to show understanding of diverse value systems and views, with a potential to contribute to society on a national and international scale. Therefore, the curriculum of the University of Auckland should reflect this to ensure students are citizens of the world (p. 8). Tuhiwai-Smith summarizes “Indigenous communities continue to view education in its Western, modern, sense as being critical to development and self-determination.” (p, 103) It is therefore expected that the University:

- a) Ensures graduate profiles which clearly informs of desired attributes and values of its’ graduates
- b) Ensures a curricula that delivers high quality programmes to meet national and international standards
- c) Promotes and supports research-informed innovative teaching and learning practices
- d) Draws upon international best practice in use of new technologies
- e) Ensures teaching quality and productivity of its employees (p. 9)

It is espoused that the university as a whole needs to ensure achievement as well as understanding of all its staff and students of The Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Within graduate profiles, it informs under Graduate Capabilities – Theme six (6) that “Graduates of the University are expected to acknowledge Māori worldviews and the historic place of the Treaty of Waitangi...” There should be a recognition that Te Tiriti o Waitangi is future focussed and not just historical. In this respect, how would Te Tumu Herenga provide this within the new structure of the organisation, ensuring that they utilise Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a foundation embedded within all that it achieves?

In relation to whare taonga (repositories eg. Archive, Gallery, Library etc), within article two (2) of the te reo Māori version Te Tiriti o Waitangi it informs “...te tino rangatiratanga o o ratou wenua o ratou kainga me o ratou taonga katoa...” The translation provided in the English version informs “...thereof the full exclusive and undisturbed possession of their Lands and Estates Forests Fisheries and other properties...” Mutu (2010) literal translation states “..their paramount and ultimate power and authority over their lands, their villages, and all their treasured possessions.” The literal translation from Mutu therefore indicates the use of taonga only being related to the land is not consistent. For repositories, taonga are recognised as tangible and intangible. It therefore plays a major role in relation to where current treaty settlements have been made by iwi, and letters of commitment are recognised by the government and therefore impact upon repositories within Aotearoa. Tuhiwai-Smith informs (2006) “It is important to remember, however, that colonialism was not just about collection. It was also about re-arrangement, re-presentation and re-distribution.” (p. 94)

Ko wai a Te Tumu Herenga? (Who is Te Tumu Herenga?)

The name was gifted by the late Merimeri Penfold, it was based on the Libraries and Learning Services. The definition to consider is based on the “chief tethering post”. When relating to people, it means a “high ranking leader”. The poetic license as referred to on the Te Tumu Herenga website “...refers to waka, or vessels, for which it is the main binding point, the unmovable mainstay to which they are tethered.” The vessel and in this case the library contains precious and mundane things. This is a reflection of the wide range of information held within repositories of the world. Over the years, the organisational structure has changed. Tethering other departments such as Student Learning Advisors and Career Development and Employment Services into its structure. The additional aspirations moved Libraries and Learning Services into another dimension. As yet, Te Tumu Herenga is still to find an English descriptor which describes its function under the new regime.

The purpose of Te Tumu Herenga looking into the future was to identify new areas, grow and be aspirational. As part of the larger organisation, Te Tumu Herenga (Libraries and Learning Services), *Vision and Strategy 2017-2021* states “Our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and our desire to embed this in our work is articulated within the strategy...” (p. 2). Please note, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and not the Treaty of Waitangi. There has been a distinction made. Some senior management underwent professional development to ensure understanding of what the intention is. To view the past, learn from its mistakes or misconceptions and move into the future with deliberation and understanding.

The vision and strategy is the foundation for a change in management proposal otherwise called a functional review. Yet Tuhiwai-Smith considers (2006, p. 97) “Attempts to indigenize colonial academic institutions and/or individual disciplines within them have been fraught with major struggles over what counts as knowledge, as language, as literature, as curriculum, and as the role of intellectuals, and over the critical function of the concept of academic freedom.” Can the new structure therefore help in decolonising the organisation?

He aha te ara whakamua? (What will the future look like?)

Discussion was held with staff regarding the future vision and its impact. Under Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the relationship factor was not only its impact on Māori, but also manuhiri who currently reside in Aotearoa. Specifically, the region of the University of Auckland, which

reaches from Tāmaki Makaurau through to Te Taitokerau. How would this contribute to institutional value, enable student success, and increase research performance? Maaka and Fleras state “Constructive engagement is predicated on the premise that a new constitutional order must reflect, reinforce, and advance the principles practice of indigeneity, indigenous rights, indigenous difference, and indigenous models to self-determining autonomy.” (p. 339) Small working groups investigated themes with their work being guided by a project brief and outcomes shared. Tuhiwai-Smith states (2006, p. 96) “The globalisation of knowledge and Western culture constantly reaffirms the West’s view of itself as the centre of legitimate knowledge, the arbiter of what counts as knowledge and the source of “civilized” knowledge.” Māori staff as a minority of employees, were asked to consider frameworks and supply their summaries. In this respect, it would have supported Te Tiriti if non-minority populations were part of the group as it would have provoked further thought and buy-in from both parties.

The impact upon Māori staff in particular is noted due to the need to understand, comprehend and apply these worldviews. Implementation is the key, but at the time of submission of the abstract the organisation was working through its phases. One of the responses from Māori staff was to “build upon new understanding, adopt a new language, and implement new sustainable practices for an overall change of culture.” The response from Māori staff challenged the relationship between Te Tumu Herenga departments. Suggestion of silos being created to meet the needs of embedding Te Tiriti o Waitangi without it being tokenistic could be a reality. Is this the way forward within the proposed new structure? Maaka and Fleras state “Indigenous peoples should not be considered a competitor to be jostled with or a junior partner to be consulted.” (p. 348) The move of Te Tumu Herenga to include staff in the implementation as part of its process and functional review was key in this respect.

Purenga ihomatua o te whakahaere (Decolonisation of an organisation)

A slogan arose from the debris “Māori success is success for all.” Māori are tāngata whenua (indigenous peoples), and therefore kaitiaki (caretakers) of all within its boundaries. A reference to the relationship building of Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a collective synergy of people, culture, knowledge, resources. A way to implement the meaning of Te Tumu Herenga will require a culture change and decolonising education of its staff and services to transform and meet future needs.

The discussion as to how Te Tiriti o Waitangi contributed towards decolonisation is at the core of the argument. In the author’s viewpoint, Te Tumu Herenga is making headway. The original proposed structure included a leadership role based on Te Tiriti o Waitangi implementation. The impetus is to ensure that all not only enact Te Tiriti o Waitangi, but live Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The leadership role was based on the Kaiārahi (Māori leadership role) in faculties. Their purpose is to lead development and execution of strategies for effective engagement with iwi and Māori communities. Working with the team of Senior Management and their staff to execute plans to achieve Māori student success. Staff are always a major player, and expectations of collaboration across areas is a necessity. A large part of this role is to create avenues or connections with relevant stakeholders to ensure the organisation meets its Te Tiriti o Waitangi goals. What is needed is the culture change and decolonisation of western methodologies as a bold move, but a move that must be taken.

Senior management began professional development on Te Tiriti and the Treaty which provided the impetus of cultural change. The major flaw, was that not all Management had attended. How do you ensure that everyone is on the same page? Could the organisation be moving in a direction that did not support the intent of Te Tiriti o Waitangi? At a discussion, it was highlighted that we (the organisation) may be making the same mistake as that of the signing of Te Tiriti and the Treaty. Why? Not everyone was on the same page. Each individual or employee are at different levels of understanding. Therefore, moving forward would mean there could be misconceptions, lack of understanding, different interpretations. Maaka and Fleras indicate “Breakdowns in communication are often caused when people use similar words with substantially different meanings that can vary from context to context.” (p. 342). The organisation was heading along the same path. The largest contribution to the misunderstanding was the confirmation document on the functional review. The submissions asked for the role, and the Senior Lead Team of the University was still to appoint the Pro VC Māori of the “mothership”. Due to similar roles already in play, it was considered by many via submissions to be the next relevant step, whether the tūranga (role) of Pro Vice Chancellor Māori was filled or not. The shock which reverberated across Te Tumu Herenga was apparent. What it portrayed was staff were ready for change and considered this an important step for the organisation.

In the current relationship as experienced by the author, the role of Māori staff members has been above duty. In this respect, the need to provide guidance whilst the functional review was still to be implemented, is currently taking place. The leadership role therefore was needed to help with the transition period, but is unable to be enacted due to the role being currently in stasis.

To support the implementation it was also necessary to ensure that there were roles across the layers within the new structure. Although informed within the confirmation document, there has been no such move regarding position descriptions. The possible negative in the future is the possibility of what is being known as “whitestreaming”. Something that was noted in a report from the Tertiary Education Union in 2016, which discusses Māori specific roles changing to generalised roles. The downside is in respect to expectations that although you are indigenous, you may be asked to take upon other roles specific to meet the needs of the organisation ie. Pasifika role to meet the student retention and success outcomes of the organisation. Would this be expected of all roles, and if others who are not of this culture who are unable to communicate effectively with their clientele (understanding of worldviews, language, etc) then how effective a service is the organisation providing? The flaw in this nature is in relation to pay scale. Although the latest economic climate is not favourable across many sectors. Not being recognised for the EXTRA skillsets that are being asked of you is not enhancing the organisation, individual or the role. Just because a person may be indigenous or from a culture that is needed to meet outcomes of the organisation, does not also mean that they can provide the relevance to the role.

Is it then their role also, to upskill the rest in their layer of the structure. Will they be recognised for this in their position description, or is it an add-on? This then becomes tokenistic in its gesture to living and implementing not only Te Tiriti o Waitangi but also indigenous worldviews.

Maaka and Fleras indicate “For indigenous peoples, then reconciliation is an exercise in co-operative existence, it includes a multi-textured process that addresses

- a) The righting of historical wrongs by way of reparations
- b) New partnerships as a basis for interaction;
- c) Full and equal participation in decisions that affect them;
- d) Working through differences rather than closing doors when things do not proceed smoothly; and
- e) Taking indigeneity seriously by taking it into account for recognition or rewards”

In this respect will the future generations of indigenous peoples into tertiary education truly meet its goals. Through recruitment, retention and career opportunities will the true exemplar be provided.

Conclusion

Te Tumu Herenga has been courageous in its functional review, asking for decolonisation of a western methodology within a western organisation. The structural component although still to be enacted upon, will be interesting for bystanders and those who will be asked to implement and enact the future components. The service being provided on collaboration for both Te Tiriti o Waitangi partners will help to decolonise western practices, but will not happen within the next six months.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi will become fruitful if Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview) is provided in the education practices of staff. Te Tiriti o Waitangi is a child of Te Ao Māori. To provide solid foundations is needed, as can be seen within the study of current practices within an organisation of change. Movement into the future will be fruitful when all are educated in changing the current practices and providing a relationship of true collaboration across its function. As stated in the Future Vision and Strategy, once enacted “Our commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi underpins all of the principles and our aim is to embed this throughout our work.” (p.4) The true process will be how it transforms to support the recruitment and retention of the digital born indigenous students into the university or tertiary education system.

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