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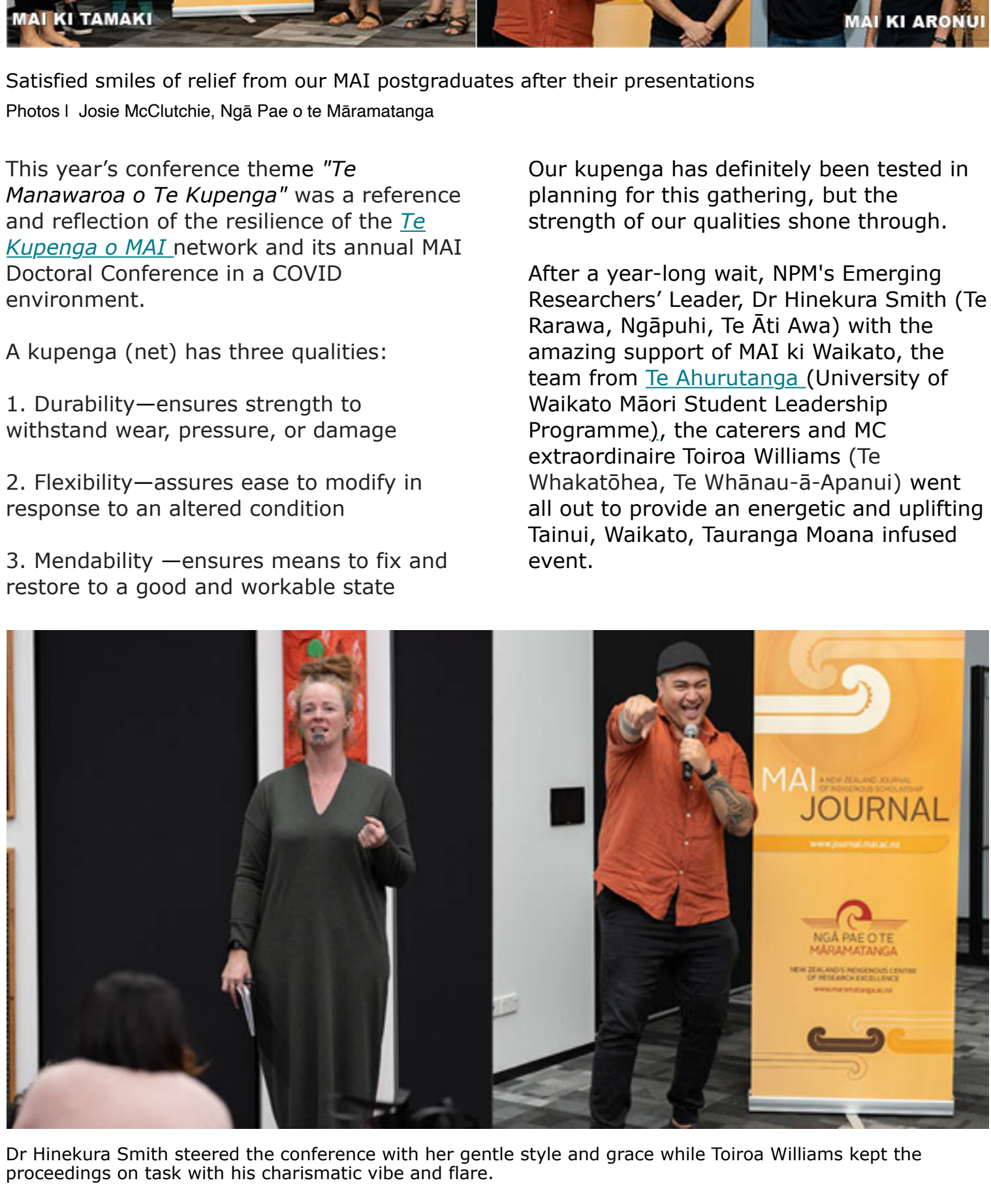
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Māori PhDs haerenga to Tauranga for Doctoral Conference

This issue is dedicated to our Māori Postgraduates and the Te Kupenga o MAI (MAI) network. After the many disruptions of 2020, we finally came together, kanohi ki te kanohi, in late April for our much loved annual MAI Doctoral Conference.

Hosted superbly by MAI ki Waikato at the beautiful University of Waikato Tauranga campus, it was a special and empowering gathering.

- Over 70 Māori doctoral candidates from MAI networks around the country travelled to share their research including:
- MAI ki Aronui
- MAI ki Tamaki
- MAI ki Waikato
- MAI ki Massey
- MAI ki Pōneke
- MAI ki Otago
- MAI ki Canterbury



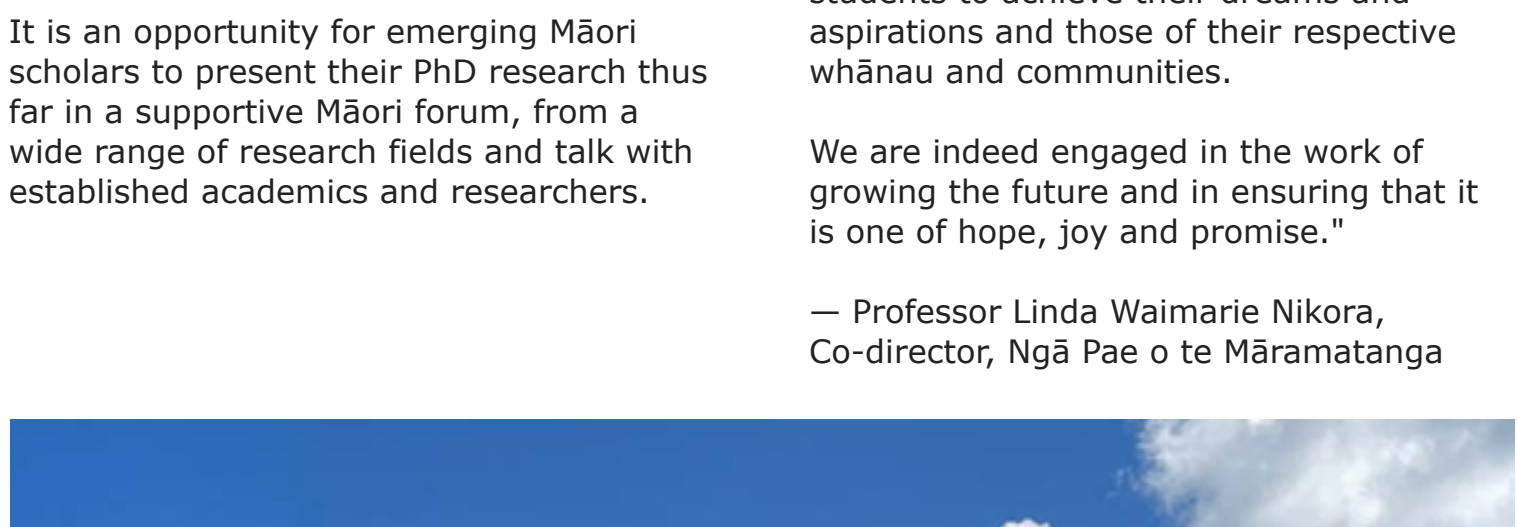
Satisfied smiles of relief from our MAI postgraduates after their presentations

This year's conference theme 'Te Mānawara o Te Kupenga' was a reference and reflection of the resilience of the Te Kupenga o MAI network and its annual MAI Doctoral Conference in a COVID environment.

A kupenga (net) has three qualities:
1. Durability—ensures strength to withstand wear, pressure, or damage
2. Flexibility—assures ease to modify in response to an altered condition
3. Mendability—ensures means to fix and restore to a good and workable state

Our kupenga has definitely been tested in planning for this gathering, but the strength of our qualities shone through.

After a year-long wait, NPM's Emerging Researchers' Leader, Dr Hinekura Smith (Te Rarawa, Ngāpūhi, Te Āti Āwa) with the amazing support of MAI ki Waikato, the team from Te Ahuririanga University of Waikato Māori Student Leadership Programme), the caterers and MC, extraordinary Toroa Williams (Te Whakatōhea, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui) went all out to provide an energetic and uplifting tūhau, Waikato, Tauranga Moana infused event.



Dr Hinekura Smith steered the conference with her gentle style and grace while Toroa Williams kept the proceedings on task with his charismatic 'Dee and Fare.



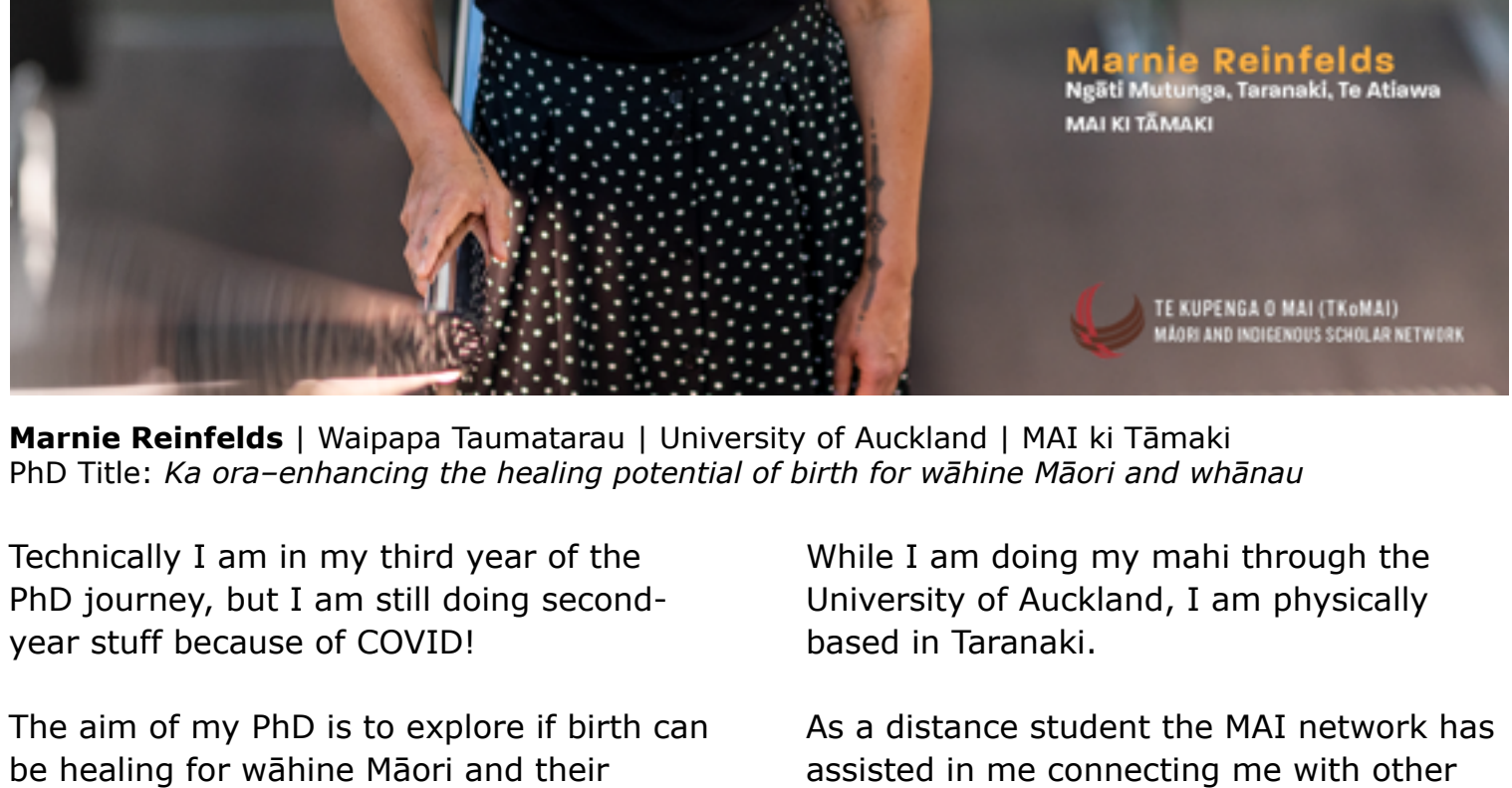
Te Ahuririanga provided amazing conference support and entertainment throughout the 3-day event.

Photos | Josie McClutchie, Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga

Every year NPM organises a conference that is hosted by one of the MAI networks. It is an opportunity for emerging Māori scholars to present their PhD research thus far in a supportive Māori forum, from a wide range of research fields and talk with established academics and researchers.

"MAI conferences are a vital aspect of all we do around Aotearoa, supporting students to achieve their dreams and aspirations and those of their respective whānau and communities. We are indeed engaged in the work of growing the future and in ensuring that it is one of hope, joy and promise."

— Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora, Co-director, Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga



MAI postgraduates at Maauo during the Ngāhi Tamaraohu Cultural Trail, Tauranga Moana.

Photo | Petera Hudson

A snapshot on some of our MAI doctoral students

We spoke to some of the MAI postgraduates at the conference about their PhD journey.

Maiole Reinfelds | Ngāhi Māhūhihi, Taranaki, Te Āhuru Māori. Quote: "As a distance student the MAI network has assisted in me connecting me with other students, across multiple disciplines. One of the lasting impacts it will have is the connections I am making will not only become professional support in my post-doc life but also, I'm making friends for life."

Maiole Reinfelds | Waiapa Tūmanarau | University of Auckland | MAI ki Tamaki. PhD Title: Ka ora-enhancing the healing potential of birth for wahine Māori and whānau.

Technically I am in my third year of the PhD journey, but I am still doing second-year stuff because of COVID!

While I am doing my mahi through the University of Auckland, I am physically based in Taranaki.

The aim of my PhD is to explore if birth can be healing for wahine Māori and their whānau. In doing this I am seeking to understand what Indigenous/Māori birth looks like for whānau and what constitutes positive birth for wahine Māori and their whānau.

As a distance student the MAI network has assisted in me connecting me with other students, across multiple disciplines. I have taken opportunities to participate in writing retreats. Being able to remove myself for a few days from my whānau responsibilities and having the space (both thinking and physical) to dedicate to the mahi has been important.

I am also interested in the intersection of birth trauma and historical trauma and the impacts this has on whānau.

The network has assisted me in getting through some major milestones in the PhD journey. The moral and practical support from other students has also been important. I have participated in HONQ MAI and recently attended my first MAI conference in Tauranga.

I want to understand how trauma can be prevented in the birthing space and how Zealanders mitigate around and minimise its impact on whānau. I seek these understandings for transformation in the health sector and so that we can create birthing spaces that can heal us intergenerationally. There are a range of factors that negatively impact on the birth outcomes for Māori, and it is my hope that my mahi will impact on these at a systemic level.

It is hard to describe these forums because they have impact on many levels. Being able to connect with other PhD students, hear their stories, learn about the all the spaces our people are doing their rangahau, share your own journey... are just some of the ways the network has been of value.

The MAI network has been a valuable part of my PhD journey.

Ryan Meachen | Te Herenga Waka | Victoria University of Wellington | MAI ki Pōneke. Quote: "I never imagined that I'd be a PhD student. The MAI network welcomed me in to this space—it gave me a place to stand while I learn to walk in the academic world. I can hold myself here. It's like it's my academic Turangawaewae."

Ryan Meachen | Te Herenga Waka | Victoria University of Wellington | MAI ki Pōneke. PhD Title: Towards an Integrated Theory of Self-Actualization: Bridging Mātauranga Māori & Western Knowledge

I'm two months into my doctorate, part-time. A long journey up a big maunga ahead!

Long-term I hope my learnings can help rangatahi become all they can possibly be and envision. For themselves. For their tūpuna. And for the generations to come.

I'm an Organisational Behaviour PhD student at Te Herenga Waka — Victoria University of Wellington. My ambition is to develop a new theory of self-actualisation grounded in Mātauranga Māori. Bridging Maslow with Te Ao Māori. It's about becoming all you can uniquely and possibly be. Experiencing the whole of your individual humanity. Standing in your own mana.

There's plenty of reasons to recommend the MAI conference. The people you meet. The stories you hear. The MAI network is a glimpse in to the future of Māori Scholarship.

I'm taking a bit of a 'research is me-search' approach. The question I'm trying to answer is 'how do I become myself? — where do I situate myself in the world, and how do I navigate what I can be?

But the reason that really resonates deeply in my puku... the kai! Felt like a Christmas feed every day!

Deborah Heke | Te Wānanga Aronui o Tamaki Makau Rau | Auckland University of Technology | MAI ki Aronui. Quote: "Indigenous spaces are not easily found or fostered within academia. The MAI network creates those spaces where our ideas, ways of knowing and doing are shared and valued."

Deborah Heke | Te Wānanga Aronui o Tamaki Makau Rau | Auckland University of Technology | MAI ki Aronui. PhD Title: Aotā Wahine — Mana Wahine. Tracing the whakapapa of physical activity among Māori women in contemporary Aotearoa.

I'm in my 3rd year and will submit by the end of the year.

MAI ki Aronui in particular have been a wider whānau that I've developed important relationships with and that wouldn't be possible without MAI.

The aim of my PhD is creating a space for wahine voices that can inspire positive change and enhanced mana.

It's a space where it is 'normal' to find yourself in a room full of Māori and Indigenous scholars specialising in areas ranging from advanced medical technology, to aerial firefighting, to graphic design, leadership, language revitalisation and beyond.

The MAI network (through the revival and thriving of MAI ki Aronui) has been one of the most important aspects of my doctoral journey.

The support and camaraderie that I've had through the network of Indigenous doctoral students and events has been amazing.

Petera Hudson | Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato | Waikato University | MAI ki Waikato. Quote: "Whakawhānauingitanga for me as a distant student is really important. Catching up with other Māori PhD candidates provides the connection I enjoy. The MAI network is an essential element of my research support whānau!"

Petera Hudson | Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato | Waikato University | MAI ki Waikato. PhD Research Question: How can technologies that use AI techniques provide for cultural well-being for whānau and their futures?

I have just begun my PhD as a distance student based in Whanganui. It was confirmed 31 March 2021.

The MAI programme provides an environment for Māori scholars to meet and engage - whakawhānauingitanga.

One of the aims of my research is to find ways that technology that use AI techniques can connect my whānau that live away from our tribal homelands of te Whakatōhea with those that live on our turangawaewae.

Catching up with other Māori PhD candidates via zoom or kanohi ki te kanohi provides the connection I enjoy.

Whakawhānauingitanga for me as a distant student is really important.

MAI is an essential element of my research support whānau where you'll meet like minds researching things with Māori, by Māori and for Māori.

Moana Rarere | Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato | Waikato University | MAI ki Waikato. Quote: "Being postgraduate students can be lonely and isolating journey. The MAI network provides opportunities to reconnect, strengthen relationships with other postgraduate peers in a safe Māori and Indigenous context space."

Moana Rarere | Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato | Waikato University | MAI ki Waikato. PhD Title: Understanding Māori demographic birth trends

I'm in my 5th year, part-time.

Every time I reconnect with the network, I am constantly reminded to "listen to the waiā... and trust it" as I continue along the PhD and academic journey.

The aim of my research is to disrupt Western interpretations of Māori fertility by incorporating mana wahine cultural perspectives about the timing of births and family size. So that wahine Māori voices are recognised as experts about their own fertility.

MAI is a great opportunity to connect and strengthen relationships with other postgraduate and doctoral peers in a safe Māori and Indigenous centred space...a space that nurtures you to be Māori and Indigenous and that reminds you of who you are.

MAI has been invaluable to my PhD journey. It has helped me to continually reflect on my practices as a Māori researcher.

The doctoral conferences, writing retreats and other whānau and hui also opens opportunities to share and test your whakāroo—in terms of research, methodology, approach, frameworks—and to also learn from others.

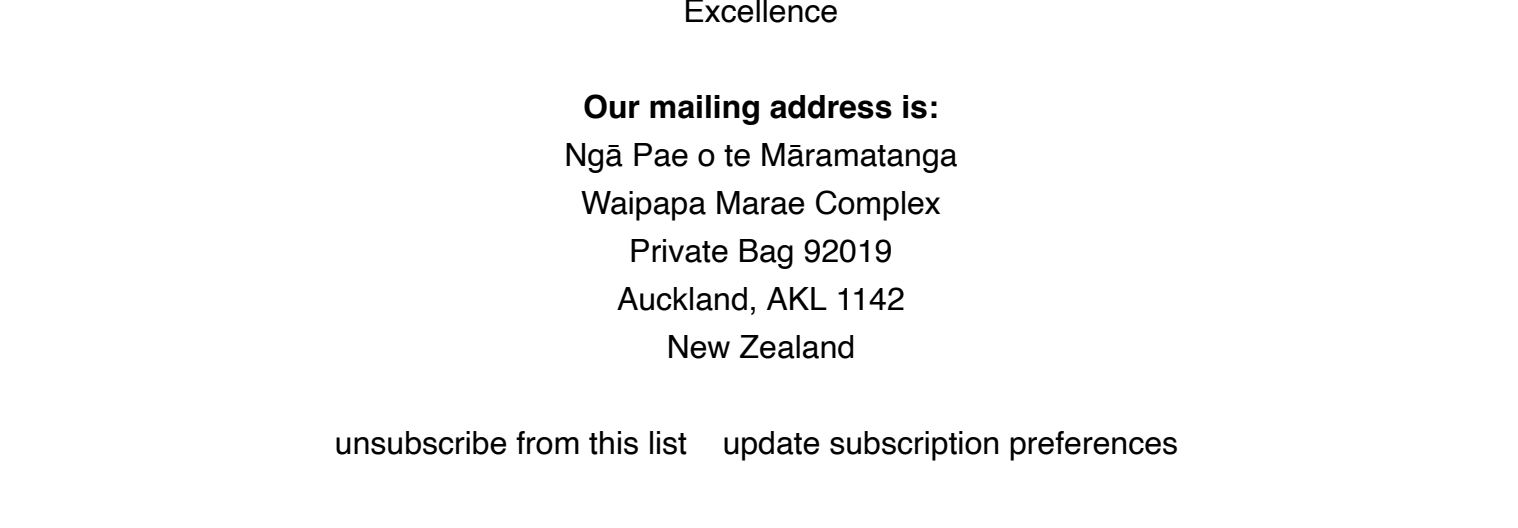
It also fosters a space that validates and reminds me that "I'm ok and that I can do this research"

Photography: Josie McClutchie | Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga

What is Te Kupenga o MAI?

The Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Māori and Indigenous (MAI) programme is for the enhancement of Māori postgraduate students throughout Aotearoa New Zealand.

While similar initiatives were under development in other parts of the country, it was the establishment of Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga as a Centre of Research Excellence in 2002 and the guidance of Professor Linda Smith that has facilitated the development of Te Kupenga o MAI, (MAI) the national network.



Photos: Josie McClutchie | Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga

Te Pūtahitanga report available for download

The widely acclaimed report 'Te Pūtahitanga, A Tiriti-led science-policy approach for Aotearoa New Zealand' is now available for free download online: DOWNLOAD REPORT

The paper examines the interface between science and policymaking and calls for a policy approach that is enabled by, and responsive to, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Mātauranga Māori.

For a science sector to have its greatest reach and impact for all citizens, it must demonstrate relevance, accessibility and inclusion. In Aotearoa, there has been concern about the exclusion of Māori and Pacific expertise from science advice and key decision-making roles.

Te Tiriti offers a powerful framework for connecting systems and communities of knowledge in ways that are mutually beneficial and future focused.

Authors: Tahu Kukutai, Tracey McIntosh, Amohia Boulton, Melihana Durie, Melka Foster, Jessica Hutchings, Melanie Mark-Shabot, Helen Mowaka Barnes, Te Talawatea Moko-Mead, Sarah-Jane Paine, Suzanne Pitama, and Jacinta Ruru.

Reviews and Interviews

- 28-April 2021 | Stuff Interview with Tahu Kukutai
28-April 2021 | Morning Report with Tahu Kukutai
28-April 2021 | NewsHub with Tahu Kukutai
28-April 2021 | Waatea News with Tahu Kukutai
28-April 2021 | The Spinoff with Jacinta Ruru & Tahu Kukutai
03-May 2021 | Research Professional Article

Te Pūtahitanga Webinar

Webinar details for Te Pūtahitanga, A Tiriti-led science-policy approach for Aotearoa New Zealand. Includes speakers: Professor Tahu Kukutai, Professor Tracey McIntosh, Dr Jessica Hutchings, Dr Amohia Boulton, and Melanie Mark-Shabot. Date: Wednesday 28 April 2021 (12:00pm NZT).

On the day of the release of 'Te Pūtahitanga, A Tiriti-led science-policy approach for Aotearoa New Zealand', NPM hosted webinar with some of the authors.

Five of the report's authors, Professor Tahu Kukutai, Professor Tracey McIntosh, Dr Jessica Hutchings, Dr Amohia Boulton, and Melanie Mark-Shabot explained why this kaupapa is so important for Aotearoa.

The webinar is now available on our Media Centre and can be viewed here: Te Pūtahitanga Webinar

Noho ora mai rā,

Ngā pae o te Māramatanga | New Zealand's Māori Centre of Research Excellence

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