Te Puia, the next forty years: Stories of those guiding The Maori Arts and Crafts Institute, Rotorua. (A bicultural research project)

The Open Polytechnic of New Zealand Monographs in Maori Business: Breaking the Boundaries No. 4.

Knowledge Carriers/Researchers
Andrew Te Whaiti (CEO, Te Puia)
Robert Macfarlane (Chairman, Te Puia)
James Rickard (Carving School)
Edna Pahewa (Weaving School)
Grace Neilson (Environment)
Ngarepo Eparaima (Guiding)

Facilitators/Editors
Wayne Taurima, Research Fellow, Open Polytechnic of New Zealand
Dr Michael Cash, Research Fellow, Open Polytechnic of New Zealand

Photography
Wayne Taurima
Te Puia
Te patae o ta matou puka puka — nga Piripi Paea o Ngati Porou i whakatakato — i roto i ona ringa ringa — te kaupapa nei. He tangata rongonui mai. Poi Hakena (Australia) me Aotearoa, mo ana mahi whakaatu, me ona whakaaro hoki, he tohunga mahi tonu. Tana nei kaupapa.

Tumatanui — He whaka tau-aki, kia mataara kaua e hunanga te kaupapa nei. Tonu waiwata mo te Maori, mai e tona whangutanga = kia tipu, kia rea, tua-uri tuatea aro nui — hei pou mo te tangata i runga. Ona hikoi, i tona waka, hapu, whanau. I te ao Wairua.

Artwork on the cover by Phillip J Paea of Ngati Porou, a Graphic Artist/Illustrator for most of his working life for reputable organisations in New Zealand and for a number of years in Brisbane, Australia. He is self-employed and is a very busy person.

Tumatanui (‘open, public, without disguise’) explains our research. The Maori motif is the ‘tree of life’ which allows us to be born, to grow, and develop from the baskets of knowledge, (nga kete o te matauranga), which helps us to make a choice of the direction that we desire to travel on our waka, whether it be sacred, ancestral or life’s knowledge.

_Whaia te ara tiki mau ake_

Follow the path that is right
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Introduction

Tena koe, tena koutou katoa

Greetings one and all ...

This narrative-based research project presents stories from a sample of key decision-makers guiding the Maori Arts and Crafts Institute, Rotorua, an icon of the New Zealand tourism industry. In recent years the Institute, founded by Act of Parliament in 1963, to ‘preserve Maori arts and crafts’ has celebrated its first 40 years in operation, a milestone that marks it out as a ‘long-lasting company’. For this reason, we have titled this study ‘The next forty years’.

The Institute is now part of a recently re-branded tourism centre, called Te Puia, which presents the face of Maoridom to the world. But the Institute remains intact as an essential part of the whole cultural experience presented to the visitor at Te Puia. It is important that the reader knows that these stories were given to us at a time when the total complex was still known as the Maori Arts and Crafts Institute.

The research project invited the participants (in our view, the true researchers) to reflect critically on their experience in the two inter-twined worlds that are key to the success of their venture, that of the preservation of Maori arts and crafts, and that of presenting a unique cultural experience to the visitor to their very special traditional site, the geothermal valley (Te Whakarewarewa). The stories presented here give us important insights into how the Institute reconciles these two interdependent worlds. Our own research story is included to give another dimension to the strategic and cultural conversation that the project engendered.

Through these stories and the critical reflections that accompany them, we are invited to look in an appreciative way at this unique cultural venture. The aim of the series has always been to hear the stories ‘from within’, giving what we call Tumatanui, the view from within the Institute at a significant moment in its history. We are looking for the spirit of the place, the things that make a difference.

We are eternally grateful to our knowledge-carriers who came forward with their insightful stories. We hope that you also will find them enlightening.

Wayne Taurima and Michael Cash
Ethical Statement


Declaration of the First International Conference on the Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Whakatane, June 1993)

We

Declare that Indigenous Peoples of the world have a right to self-determination, and in exercising that right must be recognised as the exclusive owners of their culture and intellectual property

Acknowledge that Indigenous Peoples of the world have a commonality of experiences relating to the exploitation of their cultural and intellectual property

Affirm that the knowledge of Indigenous Peoples of the world is of benefit to all humanity

Recognise that Indigenous Peoples are capable of managing their traditional knowledge themselves, but are willing to offer it to all humanity provided that their fundamental rights to define and control this knowledge are protected by the international community

Insist that the first beneficiaries of indigenous knowledge, culture and intellectual property rights must be the direct indigenous descendants of such knowledge

Declare that all forms of discrimination and exploitation of Indigenous Peoples, indigenous knowledge and indigenous cultural and intellectual property rights must cease.

[www.tpk.govt.nz/publications/docs/tangata/app-e.html]

In accordance with the Mataatua Declaration, the protocol used in this research project aims to protect the moral rights of the indigenous knowledge-carriers. In accordance with this protocol, no material from the following stories should be used in any form without prior approval of the authors of the stories.
Dedication to Wayne Taurima

Tena koe, Wayne.

This fourth monograph is respectfully dedicated to Wayne Taurima. Wayne has been the principal Maori researcher for the four monographs of this series, of which he is the Founding Father. Accepting the Maori view that research should be ‘for the good of the community’, Wayne envisaged bicultural research as a fruitful partnership between Maori and Pakeha researchers so that both worlds could contribute to the benefit of all Aotearoa/New Zealand. He has been dedicated to educating his non-Maori partner (Michael Cash) in the spirit of things Maori to make such a genuine collaboration possible. His generosity of spirit and remarkable wisdom have formed the bedrock on which this research project has been based. Wayne’s extensive associations with so many people and things Maori have opened many doors not previously open to researchers. In the process of working with so many knowledge-carriers, Wayne has endeared himself to all participants by his wonderful humour and his striking humility.

Kia ora, Wayne.

Ki te tuohu koe
Me he maunga teitei

If you bow your head
Let it be to a lofty mountain

Wayne Taurima (with Michael Cash) beside the ‘Pou Rakau’ at the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand
Acknowledgements

We would like to give our grateful thanks to the knowledge carriers, Andrew Te Whaiti, Robert Macfarlane, James Rickard, Edna Pahewa, Grace Neilson and Ngarepo Eparaima, who trusted us sufficiently to publish their stories.

Our grateful thanks, also, to Te Puia for their permission to print extracts from their website, Te Puia, The Maori Art and Crafts Institute.

We wish to give our personal thanks to Dr Paul Grimwood, Chief Executive of the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, and Jane Needham, Dean of the School of Business, for their generous support and encouragement.

Special thanks also go to Professor Colin Campbell-Hunt of Otago University, who actively supported our entry into the CANZ Research Group.

We would like to express deep gratitude to Associate-Professor Lawrie Corbett and members of the CANZ research group who have funded this monograph.

Dave Hornblow (Research Coordinator) of the Open Polytechnic has given us invaluable help in publishing this monograph. Thank you, Dave.

We would also like to record our appreciation of the generous help given us by staff of the Open Polytechnic: Richard Drummond, our editor, Robyn Morete, (Ngati Porou, Ngai Tamanuhiri) for her help with the te reo, Megan Henson and the Publications staff, the Library staff, Kristeen Lockett of the Design and Development Group, Kathy Maguren and Christine Emery, our administrators, as well as our thanks to our word processing operators, Lynne Davis and Diana Parlane.

Without the active support of and encouragement of these people, and many others too numerous to name, this research project would not have been possible.
Our Research Support

Partnership with Competitive Advantage New Zealand (CANZ)

The purpose of the CANZ research programme is to build the capability of New Zealand enterprises to discover and exploit positions of sustainable competitive advantage within a global economy. The majority of the programme is devoted to the development of innovative manufacturing and service organisations, because these are the primary vehicles for the creation of economic value from the country’s distinctive natural, social, knowledge and creative resources. In addition, some contribution will also be made to the distinctive competitive development of new knowledge-based enterprises, and to certain regional-level elements of the infrastructure for a knowledge economy. A partnership research objective aims to build the competitive capability of Maori enterprises.

The research team includes a wide range of business disciplines, and draws together principal researchers from four of the country’s universities, plus one polytechnic. Since its inception in 1998, the team has been an active producer of research on the distinctive realities of New Zealand’s competitive development. It includes several of the country’s most active researchers on New Zealand’s economic and business development. The team will also now include a number of emerging researchers whose development in the project will add to the country’s research capital in future years. A partnership research objective on the evolution of advantage in Maori enterprise has been initiated and will be extended during the current research plan. Throughout its life, the project has maintained close ties and direction from a number of key user groups including Business NZ, Trade NZ, MED, MORST, NZIM and more recently Industry NZ, and the NZ Business Excellence Foundation.
The New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute

Like the pictures of a book, arts and crafts are the pages of the Maori culture. It’s how stories were told and passed down through generations; how traditions and genealogy were preserved. History was carved and woven.

For 38 years, students from tribes across New Zealand have converged on the New Zealand Maori Arts & Crafts Institute (NZMACI) at Te Puia to learn traditions in danger of being lost forever.

“If you forget your ancestors, you too are forgotten”

So significant was the threat, an Act of Parliament was passed in 1963 to ensure the ancient arts and crafts would never be forgotten. That Act set up the schools of NZMACI.

Carving School

In 1967, the first intake to the carving school, Te Wananga Whakairo, began the task of learning and retrieving the disciplines of ancestors.

Among those students was Clive Fugill, the man who would become master carver of the institute today.

"I’ll never forget that first day. Our master carver, Hone Taipapa, looked at us all and said “You are here to learn the art to pass it on to generations. Keep it alive for we could lose our identity,” says Clive.

"It was the concept of it all, the idea that we were playing such an important role to save Maori art. Everyone has a reason in life. This was my reason.”

Today, 12 fulltime students study for three years at the carving school, under the guidance of those who were once institute students themselves.

Visitors are welcome to visit the school to watch and talk with carvers.
Weaving School

At Te Rito, the weaving school, Maori young and old are taught hands on in a craft centuries old.

Like the carving school, Te Rito thrives and not only through the dedication of staff and students. Tourism revenue contributes to the schools’ continued existence and visitors are more than welcome to view the practical training.

From the wood shavings of the carving workshop and the woven mats of the weaving school, students are happy to share the stories of their work, their ancestors and their lives. History is not only being retained. New pages are being written.

Sacred meeting houses across New Zealand have been restored. Carvings and woven art are requested by major overseas exhibitions. Most of all, the ancient teachings continue.

"I believe weaving can only be learnt the old way, by sitting, by listening, by touching and by doing," says head weaver, Edna Pahewa.

"There is no certificate at the end. To us, that is a piece of paper. Your diploma is the work you do. As long as you complete from start to finish and put your heart into it, your diploma is the work you have created."

From planting by the moon to the prayers of thanks for the flax and trees they use, from designs unique to each tribe to the story of a particular ancestor, students learn every aspect of their craft.

The weaving school, Te Rito, for example, is named after the baby shoot sitting deep at the heart of the flax.

That baby is protected by two outside stems, the mother and father. When cutting the flax, students learn never to touch the inner three. They are the nucleus, the family unit too precious to be broken. Without them, the flax will lose its identity.

"That’s why I’m still here after 38 years. If we lose our arts and crafts we lose our identity,” says Clive.

"I don’t know it all. I’ll never know it all. But I will pass on what I can to all my students, not just the clever ones. Everyone has a right to learn their history, their place. To me, a good teacher will bring the one who is struggling up to the level of the very best student. That’s a good teacher."

It is an absolute and fundamental belief of the institute that for the arts and crafts to survive, for the culture to survive, the knowledge must be shared.

"I give this knowledge freely. I give it to you for nothing. Do the same when your time comes to teach."

www.tepuia.com/thingstoseeanddo/maci.html
Accessed 19 October 2005
Whakarewarewa Thermal Valley

For local Maori, the Whakarewarewa Valley is more than a natural wonder. According to tribal history, this was the place where the Goddesses of fire, Te Pupu and Te Hoata, emerged from the earth’s core, inhaling and exhaling, creating the geysers, hot springs and mud pools.

It is within this valley where the fortress of Te Puia once stood, a stronghold never taken in battle.

And it is here where the descendants of the ancients still live today, walking and guiding you through a land more than 40,000 years old.

The richness of history in the valley is second only to the power of Nature.

Where Gods Once Breathed

Here is where the earth’s crust is thinnest, where awesome drama unfolds daily as geysers erupt, mud pools bubble, steam hisses and warm water rains down.

Some 500 pools and at least 65 geyser vents, each with their own name, are found on this site. Seven geysers are active, the most famous, Pohutu, meaning big splash or explosion.

In front of visitors Pohutu can erupt up to 30 metres high, depending on its mood.

“Every geyser, every pool has their own personality,” says Environmental and Assets Manager, Grace Neilson.

“They have good days and bad days. You can hear whether they are happy or not by the sounds they make. We’ve learnt to listen carefully.”

The Land Management team knows every corner of this wonderland. Tracks and valley are checked daily for signs of new activity and not a hairline crack goes unnoticed. While safety is paramount, so is conservation.

Native birds are an important part of life in the valley, their very survival in this volatile environment a tribute to Nature herself. As well, more than 500 different varieties of flora support the ecological system from the delicate orchid to the humble weed.
“Bracken, the fern plant is seen as a weed. Yet held by the stem and placed upside down in the stream, that bracken will trap a feast of crayfish in its branches.”

While a special Waka express transport is available, visitors are welcome to guide themselves through easy walks. Guided tours, however, are a wonderful step into this world of supreme story telling.

There are remarkable accounts of how ancestors survived in a land where hot pools, certain death for strangers, were as familiar as a kitchen stove to local peoples.

Indeed, the first occupants of the valley around 1325 were a people known as the dragon slayers. Some present guides can recite their genealogy back 25 generations to those original inhabitants.

“The land was, is and will always be everything to us. The old people taught us to work with the land, not against it. That’s how you win your battles,” says Grace.

It is the popularity of stories that has inspired the opening of a new and special nature walk for 2005.

For the first time Te Puia will share ancient beliefs, the journey of its’ people from the beginning of creation, through the heavens to the world of mankind.

The story will walk through previously inaccessible parts of the valley where events and deeds took place — a story that will be related by true descendants.

It is a reminder of all that went before. For the Whakarewarewa Thermal Valley is a step back in time and a step forward to understanding.

Accessed 19 October 2005
How We Got Our Name

For Maori everything is in a name. It represents Mana, honour and prestige, land, deeds and ancestors. Every piece of history within a name is passed on to those who bear it. So the selection of one is often vigorous and lengthy. No truer than at the New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute.

Since 1963 NZMACI has preserved and nurtured Maori traditions in Rotorua. The new millennium inspired new thinking.

Changes

_Turuki, Turuki! Paneke! Paneke!_
_Advance, Advance! Move forward! Move Forward!_

The institute had developed beyond initial hopes – from carving and weaving schools to a premiere cultural experience. It did not receive Government funding. Tourism and visitor revenue had, indeed, been the main source of income. Without it, the schools, set up specifically to save Maori arts and crafts, would never have survived. In the new competitive market the institute had to raise the bar.

By 2000, it oversaw guided tours, cultural performances, kiwi breeding programmes, nature walks, education workshops, management of the geothermal valley and so much more. A new name was needed to encompass and reflect all the gifts on the site. The challenge was finding the right one.

"We needed something that could protect and be connected to everything – the arts and crafts, the culture and the geothermal," says cultural advisor, Te Keepa Marsh.

_"We searched the past for the answers. We looked to the valley. There was only one name. Te Puia”_

Te Puia

Te Puia was the impenetrable fortress of the Whakarewarewa Valley.

First occupied around 1325, a similar time to medieval castles in Europe, it was strategically built beneath the cliffs of Pohatuaroa Mountain and surrounded by a natural moat of lethal hot pools.
Terraced palisades, cleverly designed to trap enemies in trench warfare, could be erected at a moment's notice. When the warning call went out, tribes from around the area took refuge inside its' protective walls. For centuries, Te Puia never fell in battle.

So, by its very position it was connected to geothermal. It guarded the culture, the people and the arts and crafts that lived through them. If any name could be a blanket of protection today it was Te Puia.

"But you cannot erase what is here. Everything has its own identity. Every name has a history. It could come from the land or an ancestor. There was always a reason," says Te Puia chief executive Andrew Te Whaiti.

“Our role is to take Te Puia forward but ensure nothing is ever compromised.”

Future

For that reason, every identity will be preserved within the korowai, the cloak of Te Puia. The New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute will retain the title and uniqueness. Rotowhio Marae, home to the Maori village and named after the lake behind it, will always be Rotowhio. And nothing on earth will ever change the power and personality of the Whakarewarewa Geothermal Valley.

"We are privileged because we are here at a time managing a gift. The gift is the land," says Andrew.

"But we have to ensure that it survives. We have to move forward and we have to develop because everything on site here is being set up for the next generation.”
The Stories of the Knowledge-carriers

Andrew Te Whaiti

ANDREW TE WHAITI is the Chief Executive Officer of The New Zealand Maori Arts & Crafts Institute. He has hapu affiliations with Ngati Kahungunu and Ngai Tahura. Andrew has a Master of Business Administration (MBA) and has been entrusted to guide the Institute in its future initiatives.

... all we do here is tell stories ...

There are many reasons why the Institute has survived through to a 40 year period. One of the major reasons for that, I think, is that if you look from a commercial point of view, our product mix is very, very strong. Also, our product mix is one you can’t replicate. Essentially, all we do here is tell stories about what we have in the product mix, which is all about the geothermal valley. It is essentially that simple. Because New Zealand’s profile as a tourism destination has obviously been increasing and increasing — I think by 2009 is it forecast to hit the 3 million mark — the Institute is very much at the heartbeat of it all, due to the geothermal valley — and the cultural value is what we bring to it. So that has added to our success of being able to be here and be in a position where we have a very sustainable business, and one which will continue for another 40 years — and then some more years, probably.
The success of the business is very, very much hinged around the people within it. The people that work here — it’s a cliché I know — but it’s more than a job, and for these people, it really is. They live the culture. Quite a lot of them still live around the geothermal valley, and there is a high percentage of them whose Mums or Dads worked here, or their Aunties worked here and their grandparents worked here. The stories are passed from heart to heart, as opposed to being passed from head to head.

I think all of what we do needs to be directly linked back to the Act and the obligations that we have to bringing about what is written there. It is really quite simple: we use tourism as a vehicle to create funds, which we then reinvest back into our arts, crafts and culture. It so happens that the tourism landscape is probably better than it ever has been. One of the main drivers of our commercial success is that tourists want to know about the indigenous people of the country, and they want to experience their culture. We have an Act that tells us to do that, so we sort of get the best of both worlds. The Institute is in a perfect position because we can be commercially savvy and competitive in a commercial sense, because we are a standalone organisation. We live by the same commercial reality as any other business. So we can implement some of the commercial skills that the management team and the board have to generate more funds, but we don’t have a pool of shareholders that take a surplus in other areas. We have a shareholder, effectively, which is arts, crafts and culture, so it is the perfect scenario for us. What we want this organisation to be now is not only to be recognised as New Zealand’s leading repository for arts, craft and culture but also to be acknowledged as a very prudent, well managed business. We often talk within the organisation of mana (prestige) and money, and how there is nothing wrong with having both.

There is a perception out there that we are publicly funded and have it easy, but part of that comes back to the Act. We do have obligations to maintain the arts, crafts and culture, but we very much see that we have obligations to tourism for New Zealand as well. If we are performing very well, then we know that tourism in general is performing well. Again, it is essentially about us communicating our reason for being out to the wider tourism industry and taking that further, to New Zealanders in general. More New Zealanders should experience what we have here, not just the international tourists. The only way we can change that perception is by actually telling people about us,
and giving them the opportunity to come and experience this. So that is very much part of our five year plan — to basically change the perception and to inform people about what it is that we are here to do.

... not just carving and weaving ... not just ... Rotorua ...

We have been gearing ourselves up for the future. We have looked at arts, crafts, and culture and said it is not just carving and weaving. In some respects, we have limited ourselves to those two schools, but we are not planning to keep it that way. We are very much in development phase with both of those schools. That also means that we are not just limited to operating in Rotorua. The name of the organisation will be ‘New Zealand’, and that is there for a reason. We want to increase the value of those schools, which are very much in the development phase at present.

... contrast the traditional and the contemporary ...

What this organisation needs to do over the next forty years is to showcase and, in some respects, contrast the traditional and the contemporary. Most of what we do here is about telling stories, so we can use the arts and crafts to tell stories and also to reinforce the culture, and make sure that it is a living culture. The culture lives; it doesn’t stand still, and it develops over time and over years, and what we want the arts and crafts to do, and the guided tours of the geothermal valley to do, is to tell a story from the early 1800s and perhaps before that time, right through to today. Part of our culture is commercial technology, so we need to contrast technology with culture. It is not about diluting the authenticity of it; it is about telling stories in a certain medium. There is a lot of information sitting in the heads of people. We can pass stories on, and that is fine, but at some point, we need to be able to accurately store all of that information. We use technology to do that.
... leaders in land management as well as in preservation of the arts ...

The Institute has the ability to lead, certainly other indigenous groups, who possibly are the market for other countries of the world. In terms of our land management, we are very much into sustainable tourism, I guess that’s what the textbooks call it. We have been doing it for hundreds of years. We think we will be leaders in land management as well as in preservation of the arts, how we store it, how we showcase it and how we tell people about it without diluting it.

The land is the basis for it all because all of the stories, certainly around here, are all part of the land. We have simply built on or added value to those stories.

... keep our culture alive ...

Our stakeholders are important to us. There are the tangata whenua (the people of the land) and, of course, the Crown, and we also have obligations to the tourism industry, to Maoridom within New Zealand, and even as far as to other indigenous groups. We have to try and link with Hawaiian culture. If we have a model which is enabling us in a tasteful way to keep our culture alive and keep employing people and upskilling them, then if we have a template for that, we can pass it on.

We very much want to create within this organisation experts, if you like, in tourism and experts in the understanding of the distribution chain within tourism. Plus, on the flip side, we want to be known as New Zealand’s leading cultural repository. We want to raise the bar in terms of the knowledge of the people here in whatever area of expertise they are involved in.

... we contribute within Maoridom ...

In Rotorua, we are putting in excess of 500,000 people through the Institute on average, year in and year out. We are putting in place fairly robust plans to increase those numbers. Just the economic benefit alone that will bring to the city is reasonably substantial. We contribute within Maoridom. We can do a lot better, and plan to do that in a number of areas, from using the carving school for restoration projects to running night classes for weaving, and other things the school is thinking of getting involved in over the next few years.
... commerce and culture should complement each other ...

If you were looking at a flax mat on the ground and saw how all the strands are all interwoven together, that is very much how I see commerce and culture should complement each other. I can’t see any reason why you can’t combine the two and still achieve outcomes that you want. If you look at things like manaakitanga (hospitality) and customer service, they are very, very close. The way that you want the ethos of your company, and the way you run it in a prudent way and in a way where people respect opinions and are happy to challenge in an open environment, this is similar to whanautanga (kinship/relationship). There are a lot of similarities, and you can embrace them in the way that we have and push forward, and they should complement each other. I don’t think they need to be pulling in opposite directions.

... working together and talking about initiatives ...

For our neighbours, in Rotorua, they are a very successful tourism business in their own right now. At the very, very least, we should be working together and talking about initiatives, and particularly around culture and tourism. We are so close and, in fact, we are doing that. As for what the future holds, I would hope there is a day in the future where we will sitting here and saying, ‘It’s great what we have done’. How we do that is another story.

... a sleeping giant

I very much see us as having been a sleeping giant. We have been planning programmes for 5–10 years up until 2010. These are fairly ambitious plans, but they are also done in such a way as to keep adding value to what we currently have. You can’t replicate our product mix, and you can only add value to it. We very much want to see ourselves as New Zealand’s leading cultural and geothermal attraction. Globally, we can have an impact on other countries in the way that we manage our business, from environmental management issues to what we bring to the business, and also some fairly unique marketing strategies where we can, hopefully, act as a catalyst in attracting tourists to New Zealand.
... the development of our people.

Running parallel with that is the development of our people. We want to again implement fairly ambitious development plans with the staff that we have here, so that they are in a position of being experts at what they do. Segment one, which we are involved with now, involves schools of learning, not limited to carving and weaving — arts and crafts are a lot more than that. We want to be seen as a place where you can come and get taught some of those traditional skills and to be taught in a manner that keeps the culture living. We want it to be done in a way that changes the lives of the tourists who come to have a look. By that, I mean someone who can look at a carving and can understand the story of what has been carved. They can hear a story of the geothermal valley and Pohutu Guyser and be brought to tears, experience the concert and the evening show, and get to view the geysers under the lights and gain images they won’t see anywhere else in the world. We really want to raise the profile of the Institute.

...A visitor’s centre that is world class

The second segment is to create a visitor’s centre that is world class. We want it to have the ability to host exhibitions, not only within Maoridom but also to showcase other indigenous peoples’ culture, for example, Aboriginal work alongside Maori work. Again, let’s not restrict it to carving and weaving but look at other things in the culture.

... a life-changing experience ...

Segment three is about the geothermal valley itself. The whole valley is one particular treasure, and we want to continuously tell stories of the valley. It just so happens that one of the main drivers for the international tourists is that they want to know stories about the indigenous peoples of New Zealand. Some of the stories that we have were born in the geothermal valley. They are just magic, and some of those stories do literally move people to tears. Part of manaakitanga is welcoming those people as tourists and leaving them with an experience that will hopefully change their lives a little. Certainly, that is what we are seeing at the moment, where people are looking at some of the things that we do. Five or ten years ago, when they looked at a carving, they would have thought it was pretty to the eye. Now, they are asking, ‘Is there a story
behind that?’ ‘Why is that shaped in that particular way?’ and ‘What is the link to the land?’ Because there is not a lot of certainty in the global environment that we operate in now, history all of a sudden becomes very important to people, just as whakapapa (genealogy) is to Maoridom. We are capturing a lot of stories in carvings and weaving, and tourists love it. It is all part of the mix, to be able to give them a life-changing experience while they are here.

... use technology to showcase ... stories ...

We can use technology in telling the story of a carving. You have a seed that is blowing around in the wind that is planted and grown into a tree. The tree is cut down, and it is brought to the Institute. All of a sudden, it is there in front of you, as a carved piece. To show the virtual story of that tree and the stories that are attached to it, you can use technology to showcase those stories. So that, in general terms, is where we are heading. It is fairly ambitious, but we are committed to taking the organisation forward.

Over the last year or so, we have been looking at the science behind things, and there are no major obstacles in front of us bar ourselves. So the environment is right for landscape. Recognition and point of view are good, and we are comfortable with the space that we are at. The ball is in our court to turn all of the work that we are talking about into action. We do have a strong product mix, and we do have some wonderful things to do to prepare on the outside.

... the wonderful authenticity of the guides ...

Without doubt, the highlight of what people experience is the interaction they have with the guides. It is one of the major highlights of this whole place. So certainly in my time, I don’t want any change from having the guides do what they are doing. All the guides tell their stories using their personalities. While the overall stories are the same, some guides sing, some don’t, some have people in fits of laughter, others tell a more serious side. That is part of the wonderful authenticity of the guides here.
Robert Macfarlane

ROBERT LESLIE MACFARLANE of Rotorua is of Ngati Wahiao and Ngati Tuwharetoa descent. He is Chairman of the Board for the New Zealand Maori Arts & Crafts Institute at Rotorua and has been for some years now. He was Managing Director of Cable Price (NZ) Ltd in Wellington. Now retired, he is self-employed as a restaurant owner and still works long hours, but he still enjoys life.

… our kitchen table became the office for our people …

My connection goes back before the Institute, when Tuhourangi Ngati Wahiao tribe of Whakarewarewa were the tourist operators as such. I actually grew up in that environment. And I grew up in the environment with the understanding and feeling that, during all those years, my father was constantly involved with the village tribal affairs. I have the memory that he was always either Secretary or Chairman of the Maori Committee, or whatever it was to do with all of the tribal affairs and, of course, with the tourism side of the business. Back in my primary school days, our kitchen table became the office for our people every Sunday night. Dad spent a fair amount of time at the weekend, dealing with all the guides and all of the other people in the village associated with the tourism activities, and there was cash money, and Tourist Department passes, and they were all gathered, and the Tourist Department passes were a whole set of different colours. I don’t know what the colours meant, but they had such significance that I guess there were the adult passes and the children’s passes, and whatever. And so, around our kitchen table every Sunday night, we counted, recorded and prepared the money for banking. The tourist passes were sorted out in the various colour codes and put into groups.

Next morning, I would go off to school, and Dad would go to work, and Mum’s job on Monday was to take the money be banked. When I got home from school, and school in those days for me was a Whakarewarewa Maori school, my job was to run into town with the little Tourist Department vouchers and hand them into the Tourist Department, where I received a receipt. So that was my first experience, and I guess you could say that was my apprenticeship!
... good training ground for me to become Chairman of this place.

It was a good training ground for me to become Chairman of this place. I can also recall the days when the Tuhourangi-Ngati Wahiao people were going through the transitional stage of moving from being a tribally operated business to what we have here, the New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute. My Dad was one of the people who were heavily involved. This particular site here, I can always recall it as the model pa (fortified village). This model pa was established, I think, back in the 1930s. As a kid, I always remember this model pa being here, and it was a favourite playground for us. I was told that John Hartstong, the then General Manager of the Tourist and Publicity Department, as it was known then, suggested that, because this was government land, maybe this could be turned into an income-earning site so that the money could be used for the fostering and development of Maori culture.

I guess it flowed on from there, and in 1963, an Act of Parliament was passed, creating the Act of the New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute, and it thus gave permission for government-owned land to be used to generate income.

... we have just had our forty year celebration ...

The Prime Minister of the day, Keith Holyoake, was lobbied by these people to allow us to do this, and the result of it was the Act. So that Act was established in 1963, forty years ago, and we have just had our forty year celebration of that Act, and has remained in force virtually unchanged. The only two changes to that Act have been the name — originally the Rotorua Maori Arts & Crafts Institute, and it’s now the New Zealand Maori Arts & Crafts Institute — and the other change has been the qualifying details for the appointment of directors. Since then, it has remained unchanged.

... two-in-one organisation ...

The importance of this place was recognized very early on. The status of the organisation needed to be recognised. Changing its name to ‘New Zealand’ gave it that recognition and national status. People were starting to think as a nation, and as a people we needed to do things to become active in preserving our culture. That was the fundamental reason for going down this path. And maybe government saw this as well. Somebody with a bit of enterprise worked out how to do it by having a two-in-one organisation, which is what we are.
We are a tourist attraction, which generates the income, and that income is allowed to be used in its entirety as investment by us into the preservation, fostering and ongoing development of our culture. It is important to note that, while we are Government owned, we have never ever received any Government funding whatsoever. From day one, the business struggled into life and largely got going through the unpaid work of so many of the Tuhourangi-Ngati Wahiao people who wanted the Institute to succeed. By way of example, the two tribal representatives on the Board worked for 8 years before receiving Director’s fees.

... even more important than it was 40 years ago.

The thing that has changed is that, without a doubt, people change and cultures change. I think it is a very important debate. If we talk about Maori, we must accept that the Maori of today are not precisely the same as the Maori of 100, 200 and so on years ago. That is, I guess, the consequence of the impact of life in general upon us. As I mentioned, we just had our 40th celebration, and as part and parcel of it, I did a reasonable amount of research, and read the old minute books. The message that came through to me, loud and clear was that, from the Institute’s point of view and the people’s point of view, the need to have an organisation like this now is even more important than it was 40 years ago.

I put it down to the way the world has moved and that communication, travel, and technology have made the world, in some respects, a smaller place. But the big are getting bigger, and the smaller can easily be steamrollered over. We see plenty of evidence of this happening around the world. So here we have New Zealand, a small country and population in world terms, together with our culture, which, if we don’t do anything positive to preserve it, could quite easily disappear into the sunset. This is a struggle that any small culture in any small country has. I think it is good that governments, over the years, have always been very positive about this organisation and this type of organisation. That signal is still coming through loud and clear. There is a strong will, I think, amongst New Zealand society for the preservation of our culture, and therefore organisations like this, I am sure, will survive.
... I’ve always known our tribe to have tours ...

I see no problems with combining tourism and cultural preservation. To me, it is purely a natural thing because, if I go back to my early pre-Institute days in Whaka, that is really how it was. **I’ve always known our tribe to have tours** flowing through the village and thermal valley. So it was something I was born into, and I have grown up with it, and so to me it is a completely natural type of situation. Most of the people who work here, over the years, have mainly had a tribal connection to Tuhourangi-Ngati Wahiao and certainly to other iwi (tribes) and hapu (sub-tribes) throughout the Te Arawa **rohe** (area), so this is part and parcel of life. This is something quite normal and usual for us to have.

If you go back to the early 1960s, there weren’t, to the best of my knowledge, very many Maori organisations set up for the specific purpose of teaching, training and preserving our culture. And I think one of the good things that has happened since then is the proliferation of these things throughout New Zealand, and I would hope that maybe the establishment of the Institute back in those days may have been an instigator for promoting these developments.

... an organisation that has set standards.

This does not mean we have done our job. One of the main roles is that we have been **an organisation that has set standards**. We discuss amongst ourselves that we have an organisation that is a value to have and to cherish. And we want to try and perpetuate that in the decisions we make. So if you want an organisation to be a yardstick for anything, we would like to think that we are. In fact, I think we are a very good two-pronged yardstick: one as, essentially, a successful Maori-operated tourism business, and secondly, a successful Maori cultural operation.

I am trying to think how best I could demonstrate our success from a **whakairo** (carving) and a **raranga** (weaving) point of view. If you look back over the 40 years, the tutors we had back in those days went out and did the teachings far and wide. It was from this era that the framework was established around the country, where the basis of the next level was established. From there, the next level and the next level grew. While I won’t automatically say that we have the best throughout the country, I think that if you wanted to take the score of the top 10, top 20, top 50, or top 100 carvers and weavers, this organisation would be well represented. But I don’t know how you measure it. I haven’t thought about measuring it, apart from the respect and regard that this organisation has earned.
Traditional culture … is something that you learn from and evolve from.

I think our strength to date has been traditionally based. It is a very interesting debate, and it is one that, in this current Board, which has been in place for four years, we have had numerous discussions on. But basically, we think that culture, arts and crafts is a living thing, and it has to progress. It has to recognise evolution and changing times. Perhaps this is an area where more concentration needs to be placed. We want to do that, and we like to think that we are not doing things just for the sake of making money — we certainly have no objective in trying to do that at the expense of our traditional culture. Traditional culture is there, and it is in place, and it is something that you learn from and evolve from. It provides the foundation stones to build from. So we would like to think that advances in our arts and crafts can be and should be encouraged. This is something that we are trying to do into the future. I have talked to quite a number of kaumatua (elders) about this, and most people are relaxed about this sort of thing because we are so used, in our lifetimes, to experiencing change. And really speaking, I acknowledge I am not a real expert on our culture, especially whakairo, but the experts can look at traditional carvings, and they can point out their evolution throughout the ages, from way back then. But we would look at that whole group as being traditional.

... more humanness in Maori organisations.

I think we have a harmony between Maori values and commercial values. I would like to think that the foundation of my values comes from my father, well, my parents. I think my father played a big part in that. He was more Maori than me, in that he had more Maori blood in him than I do, but growing up in a mixed environment, I have never had any conflict. I have operated in the European business world for many years, and in coming back to my tribal roots, I have never had any real serious conflict between the values.

I think non-Maori businesses generally have a solely commercial objective. We don’t have a solely commercial objective. We are moving into the bottom-line-type reporting in this organisation, where we want to have a cultural objective or people objective and an environmental objective. I think this is also the way the rest of the world is moving, too. I think we seem to be very comfortable in thinking about that and adopting that process. I think there is more humanness in Maori organisations. I also see that in trusts that I am a shareholder in.
... don’t ... have an acceptable yardstick by which we measure success in cultural activities.

At this stage, I have to be perfectly honest in that I don’t think we have an acceptable yardstick by which we measure success in cultural activities. On the tourism side, with the income-earning side, there are measurement standards, and these are the usual commercial ones, like returns on assets and market shares and what have you, but generally speaking, I adopt the rule that I am never satisfied. That is my personal one: you can never be satisfied. And if I want to be critical of us, I seriously believe that we could do more, in things cultural, a lot more.

In a general sense, we see ourselves as being accountable to our people, but there are no parameters established for us to achieve this ourselves. You know, if I look back over the history of the Institute, I wonder whether the Institute was rigorous enough upon itself to set goals that it had to achieve.

I think we have set ourselves some standards, and we have set policies that have never been in place before, but we are still coming to a certain accountability. For example, we haven’t, to date, set any financial goals as to how much money we should spend on Maori development and our culture. That is something we are putting into place now. From a tourism point of view, we generate a reasonable profit, and there is no other purpose for making the money than spending it on our culture.

Well, when I came back to Rotorua 2 1/2 years ago and I looked through eyes that have been out of the place for 30 odd years, one of the things that hit me was that, as you know, Te Arawa is made up of a federation of tribes. We all have different views, and each group has an opinion, and but I feel that there is a great benefit in collaborating and working together. The Institute and local iwi are going to collaborate on certain issues. Our Board just last week agreed that there is a lot of commonality in goals and major objectives, and I am saying, ‘Let’s work together’.

... instigator ... for co-operation between Maori organisation.

I think we are just starting that journey at another level, and I would like this place to be an instigator for that, for co-operation between Maori organisations. Rotorua can be recognised as one of the birthplaces of tourism in New Zealand. You could argue whether it is the first place, but if not, it is the second or third, and so there is a real big history of Maori involvement in tourism in this town. So there is a lot of experience, there is growing wealth
amongst us, and our organisations want to move their level of involvement to new heights. Here, I can give an example of the ‘spa’ idea, which is coming back. Rotorua was a ‘spa’ town way back, and it went away, and now it is coming back in.

Well, if you want to build a spa today, you are talking significant investment, millions of dollars, and so there is no point in us, for example, looking to build a spa at the same time as two other iwi or hapu of the district. With a real business opportunity available for the next five or so years, you want to build one decent one. This is the sort of thing where I am saying, ‘Well, why don’t we talk? Why don’t we say, ‘This is the type of business that should go in here and then, down in that part of town; that is the type of business that should go down there’?’ This is the sort of path that we will start going down, and I think that would be great for Maori development. We should take our knowledge and skill out and help other Maori organisations. That is an objective which sits comfortably with me and our Board. And that is probably why we are talking now with other organisations.

... great gulf in the understanding between people ...

I generally think that there is a great gulf in the understanding between people in New Zealand still. I still believe that. I guess I look more Pakeha (non-Maori) than Maori, but I mean I have moved across managing a nationwide organisation for so many years. I travelled from the Far North to the South, and I have done that regularly for many, many years, and I have associated with a very wide cross-section of New Zealand society at all levels, and that is why I think that basically there is not a great level of understanding. I don’t think Maori really understand Pakeha any better than Pakeha understand Maori. But right in the middle, there is a huge growth in part-Maori or part-Pakeha. Statistics show that the Maori population is growing quite dramatically, but in reality, it is the part-Maori population that is growing, and to me, that must have a flow-on effect to both Pakeha and Maori: it has to, and I would like to think that it will be positive. That is the way I want to look at it.
... there is an evolution of more understanding.

I think probably if you look at New Zealand society, the gulf between Pakeha and Maori is actually wider than it should be, and I think that one of the fundamental causes of it would be the lack of understanding, which often started right down at primary school level. I can recall that, back in my primary school days, like in the 40s and 50s, I went through a Maori school, so I guess I had Maori action songs, *haka* (war dance) and all those sort of things that were part and parcel of it. But my friends in the neighbourhood that I lived in were mainly Pakeha, and they went to the local primary school down the road, and they didn’t learn anything Maori. Now, that has gradually changed over the years, and I am at the stage now where I have grandchildren. I have a couple of grandchildren living in Wellington. One is aged 10 and as blonde as can be. I was down in Wellington two or three months ago, and there she was with the *poi* (swinging ball used in dance), and she is in the Maori club at school. My eldest daughter, living in England, she was in the Maori club at school. So there is an evolution of more understanding.
James Rickard

TAONUI-A-KUPE RICKARD is of Ngati Koata/ Ngati Hinerupe descent and is employed as the Master Carver for the Maori Arts and Crafts Institute in Rotorua. He was one of the original group in the first intake of students. His desire was to join the Air Force, but his direction was changed by his beloved grandmother, who had enrolled him as a student carver. He has not regretted this decision and now tutors at the Institute.

This school is really unique...

Well it’s a long story, my connection with this place. When I was about four, my grandmother, she could see the world was changing rapidly, and she could see that the taonga that she had or held dear were going to be lost if she didn’t have someone to pass them on to. So she said to my mother, ‘I want one of my mokopuna (grandchildren) to carry on this stuff’, and apparently I must have been a little bit of a tutu (mischief), because the old lady didn’t even think of me, and when my grandmother said, ‘Oh, that one’, my mother nearly fell over. After that I used to get dragged to tangi (funerals), and I used to get dragged here and there, and I ended up here because my mother made me come here. I wanted to be a pilot, and I was pretty good at military stuff. We had cadets then. The Air Force wanted to send me to England. An application for the Institute came to Raglan, so I signed the application and I never thought anything of it. Then, Maori Affairs notified my mother, at Christmas time, and she rang me up and said: ‘You’re in,’ and I said, ‘I’m in where?’ She replied, ‘In the Carving School,’ and so I was dumped off at Rotorua, and that was that. I remember driving the old lady to a meeting about 2½ years before she died. She was looking at me and she said, ‘Do you have any regrets?’ and I said, ‘About what?’ and she said, ‘About me making you go to school’, and I replied, ‘No, I would never have learnt all the things I have learnt since then if I hadn’t have come here’. It kind of opened my eyes to who I am and what my responsibilities are to the wider community. This school is really unique because you meet a lot of people from other iwi and other hapu, and you all come here with your own little story to tell.

At one point, there were about 26 guys here, all at different levels of carving, and with different experiences, and they all brought their baggage with them and shared their baggage amongst all the boys, and even now, we still meet up
and talk about the old times. It’s like a fraternity and the answer to the question, ‘Has this place succeeded in what it was supposed to do?’ is ‘Yes it has. It has kept whakairo (carving) alive, to a point.’ That doesn’t mean to say that the institute should stop doing what it is doing because it is successful.

... we are still trying to spread the skill base throughout the country.

In these early days, you were picked tribally. So there were seven guys who represented seven tribes. And all those Uncles and Aunties send you here, and they expect you to succeed, and you don’t go home without succeeding. At some point in time, they started picking anyone, and it changed the concept of sharing the skill amongst all the iwi.

The original idea was to pick iwi that did not have carvers and iwi that had projects in mind, so that they could send their own carvers here. I remember Ngati Whatua had the meeting house at Orakei being carved. They sent one guy down here, and he didn’t arrive, so they sent another guy down, and he lasted a month. They then sent another guy down, and through it all, the institute refused to give up on Ngati Whatua, as they needed a carver to be trained. It has been a while since we had anyone from Ngati Whatua. 28 years to be exact. We have a first year student from there at the moment. So we are still trying to spread the skill base throughout the country.

The purpose was to perpetuate and foster the art of whakairo. It was nothing to do with the rest of the concept of the Institute. Whakairo was in danger. This place was just the administration building with the secretary working downstairs, and that formed the basis for everything you see here now. Whakairo was in danger, and it still is. We are getting on now, the first intake, and it doesn’t take long before life catches up with everyone. The old carvers are all going to start dropping off, so you need replacements, as life rolls on.

... carving was ... extremely tapu.

The thing about carving was that it was extremely tapu (sacred). It was kind of secretive and hidden away from most of society. The modern generation didn’t want to be tied up by the restrictions involved in the whakairo, so nobody was learning. So all of a sudden, this guy Apirana Ngata saw that, without young carvers, none of the houses down at Ngati Porou would get carved, none of the houses anywhere. So he came here to Te Arawa and asked the kaumatua
of the time about supporting the idea of setting up a carving school in Rotorua, to which the elders agreed, but the carvers didn’t. When John and Pine Taiapa from Ngati Porou and Piri Poutapu and Waka Kereama from Waikato arrived to be taught by Te Arawa carvers, some of the Te Arawa carvers refused to teach them. So they ended up teaching themselves how to carve by looking at photographs sent to them from what was then the Dominion Museum. That is how they learnt part of the art of whakairo. They never had a teacher, until they found out about Eremiha Kapua, who was one of the last Tohunga (Priest/knowledge holder). In discussions over at Te Teko, he agreed to come and teach them the art of adzing. So he came to teach here and one of the students parked his bum on one of the carvings while he was smoking a fag. The old fella just froze up, and I think it was Pine Taiapa who asked him what was wrong, and he said, ‘You were never brought up in this world, so let’s leave it’. It was Eremiha who decided to set aside the tapu in order for the young ones to learn the skills of carving.

Once he had decided to set aside the tapu, he set aside about half the knowledge base pertaining to whakairo, which only leaves you with a skill base. From that point on, it was about teaching the skill as opposed to teaching the real heavy stuff that those old people used to know. So in terms of whether we have taught the skill, the answer is yes, but that doesn’t make it all of the knowledge of whakairo, because half of it was left behind. At some point in time, if people want to go and pick it up again, that is for them to do. The school is really chartered with teaching the skill.

... adapt Pakeha things and try and draw people back to the culture ...

At some point in time, Apirana Ngata could see Maoridom just disappearing at a rapid pace, much like my grandmother could. So he began a revival by using modern tunes and putting Maori words, like all of these modern *waiata* (songs), but it captured the imagination of the people, and they started to want to learn their own waiata again and wanted to do action songs and all of those things. He used this way because it changed part of it and adapted part of it to suit the modern day. All our prophets used to do that. They took part of the Old Testament and adapted it, and it became the *Ringatu* (a Maori Church) and all of those things, so they adapt Pakeha things and try and draw people back to the culture. When it came to the art of whakairo, I think they believed that, for your culture to survive, you have to have every part survive, otherwise you lose. I don’t think they ever believed that the language would come under threat, so they didn’t bother about it.
They didn’t bother about weaving because there were so many weavers, and there still are. Carvers were limited to Te Arawa, and they were the tribe that had all the carvers. Brilliant carvers around here. If people were to ask me, would this place have survived anywhere else? I would say, “NO.” Of all the places to have a carving school built, Rotorua has within 30 miles of this school some of the best carved houses in the country, and all are different. So the guys experienced the wealth of knowledge of all these old carvers. You can get any one of these students, and he can identify the houses around here, and who carved them, and it is not about skill but it is about putting back into their minds how to think like Maoris, how to think like carvers, how to think like the old carvers used to think.

... a relationship between the environment and carving and the people...

Every tribe is different. Ngati Porou, if you are talking about carving, is what they call ‘agoraphobic’, in the way they carve, the same as Tuhoe. And it tells you about the people and where they live. Tuhoe’s own land is enclosed in the bush. You come upon these little settlements, and their carvings are exactly the same. There are masses of design all over the carving, and they call it ‘agoraphobic art’ in the Pakeha world. I was sitting there trying to figure out why they call it that, and found that the word means the fear of open spaces. So carving tells you a lot about the psyche of a tribe. It is not just a story about a tupuna (ancestor). It shows the psyche of the whole tribe and how they think about the environment around them. It impacts on people. So there is a relationship between the environment and carving and the people. When you take one part of it out of the equation, then you are missing a piece. You are missing a vital piece of information that relates the environment to the people.

I was doing a meeting house down South. I went down to help them, and they were carving people that they had photographs of. I said, ‘There is no way you can carve better than that photograph, so you don’t need to put carvings of photographed people inside a wharenui. You need to go back a few generations, to a time when there were no photographs.’ There is a big gap in our history, and it is prevalent through all the tribes. In every hapu there is some rangatiratanga that you read about who was a big chief, and if you try to find out anything about him, there is no information. One of the things that they have done during the 20th century is to build multi-tribal houses. On one wall you have all the captains of the canoes, and on the other side you have got bits and pieces of local history, and they have left a huge piece of our history out. My whakaaro (thought) is this: People should do now what they should have done in the beginning, just tell the history of the hapu that owns the wharenui.
You should be able to walk from the top of the North Island to the South and **learn the history of this country by just going into every meeting house**. Instead, you go into every meeting house and they are all the same, because they all want to connect up to the tribe. You don’t have to. I keep telling people that a house should stand there under its own mana, and when tribes come to visit, they should connect to the house, not vice versa. You have to try and understand the whole process of carving and what you are trying to achieve at some point of time in your culture. That is what Apirana Ngata tried to do. He put a peg in the ground, and he said, ‘That’s it. We are not going to move from here’.

So when this school started up again in 1963, it basically put a peg in the ground and said, ‘We are going to teach this, we are going to dispense with tapu, we are going to teach the skill of whakairo, and this is how we are going to teach it. It doesn’t matter what happens in the world around you, as long as you retain the seed that has been planted.’ It is important, what do they say: ‘**Ka whati te kaupapa, ko ngaro**’. (If you break the covenant that you make, you’re lost).

**The kaupapa is to preserve, to foster, and to promote...**

In the future, even this place might close — if you listen to the way people talk, it is tourist talk. They shorten the name of this place from the New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute to ‘MACI’, and so you lose the mana of the place in just saying that. You are put in to a category and matched alongside every other tourist organisation. What I keep saying is that this place is not about tourism. If you don’t understand that, you shouldn’t be here. It is about your culture. Your culture is not a brand, and you are charged by law to keep the art of whakairo, not just for this place, but for all of Maoridom. You are responsible to all those marae (settlements/villages) out there, not just Te Arawa. Along the way, the institute has lost that kaupapa (basis/reason), and they will continue to struggle until they get back to the Kaupapa.

**The kaupapa is to preserve, to foster, and to promote** — all of those things. Not just here, but nationwide. The trouble with the nationwide scene is that, when you go back to the original selection process and ask why they started picking from tribes, it was to incorporate all the tribes into this place, and once they got away from that selection process, the institute lost connection with the marae and with the tribes, and all of a sudden, the tribes don’t even know what this place is all about.
The meeting house reconnects you with people.

To reconnect, I would just start doing meeting houses. If you do a meeting house, there are about six tribes that will turn up because they are all related. You do one meeting house, six tribes turn up and say, ‘Oh, who did that?’ and straight away, one meeting house will connect you to six tribes. At the moment, we have got about three houses lined up, and they have heard we are going to start doing new meeting houses after a gap of 21 years.

It’s not a change. It is going back to how it used to be. In the first 15 years, we did umpteen meeting houses, and that is all we did. It helped a lot of people get started and helped a lot of meeting houses get done, which was the priority then. As your meeting houses deteriorate, then the process of restoration begins and you go around the cycle again because life doesn’t stop.

When you start a meeting house, on day one, you ask if they have their history, and then suddenly you are sitting in the meeting as a stranger, and the whole tribe is arguing about the history. You say ‘I will come back later when it is all settled’. The meeting house reconnects you with people. Houses are about people and about how they behave and operate around one another when they come together to try and bring to life, to rejuvenate, their tupuna. It is about the emotions during a period of time that it happened. For the locals, it is their dream. You are there to help them see their dreams through, and that is what you have to understand as a carver.

… not just a carving school ...

You also have to understand that they have to trust you with their genealogy. They are not just going to hand their genealogy over to any Tom, Dick or Harry, so you have to prove to them that you are worthy, and that they can trust you as a carver when they hand over their genealogy. It is all part of that learning process for these young guys. They have to stop and think at some point in time and stop acting like larrikins, and behave like carvers in order for their people to trust them. So it is not just a carving school, just teaching carving skills, it is about teaching about life and what is required of them. Not necessarily just by people.

When tourists come in and say, ‘How do you people get paid when you don’t receive any government funding?’ I reply, ‘You fund our wages when you walk through this school. The entry fee into the Institute goes to keep the school running’. So when tourists hear that, they don’t mind the price because they
know that they have contributed to the retention of a culture. Now if you take
the culture out of the equation, you might think, ‘Well, what have I come here
for? ‘To see a geyser?’

... hard to understand about this cultural side to this place.

I think, along with most government plans, most people thought that this place
would fold up after about 10 years — but it didn’t. Lucky for this place, we had
guys like Kuru Waaka to run the Institute, who wouldn’t spend money on any
development until it had money. They were from the old school, where you
don’t buy anything until you have the money to pay for it. So that is how they
built this place up. They never went out and borrowed. I don’t think they could
borrow in the early days, anyway, but tourism has been great for the culture
and for the people, for all the carvers that it has taught. But you can go over the
top and forget your kaupapa — and suddenly it becomes a tourist operation,
as opposed to a cultural operation. And a lot of them are finding it hard to
understand about this cultural side to this place.

It is actually a cultural school with a bit of tourism attached — that is how it is.
That is the actual foundation of this place, and it does really well by having that
symbiosis. You take one away and a lot of the Asians wouldn’t come, because
they are culture orientated.

I think there needs to be a connection for this place. Really, there needs to be
a connection back to the shareholders, which is Maoridom in general. There
needs to be a reconnection back there first rather than to the rest of the world,
because the rest of the world can buy any tribal art it pleases. For the rest of the
world, tribal artwork for sale can usually be found in art galleries, where guys
coming out of the school can get employment, but for our culture, the base is in
the tribes.

... the world of carvers... spreads right across the spectrum of the culture ...

I think, now, there needs to be appreciation across the board of what carving
is and what the culture is. The carvers can help in that, but the trouble is, the
skill that they have is not recognised by anybody outside these walls, including
government departments. These carvers could go out and into the schools and
make people appreciate the culture for what it is — not just New Zealanders,
but every tourist that comes through here. When you start talking to them
about music and all these other things, they start to appreciate the culture in general.

In the 1970s and 80s, Maori protestors were always being pictured on the front page of the newspapers with a flag, and that has been the culture. It has been a culture of protest, but the world of carvers operates in a different way. It spreads right across the spectrum of the culture, from musical instruments right through to meeting houses. A carver has a hand in all of those things, and his knowledge base has to be a bit wider than just ordinary Maori, if he wants to get on in life. Isn’t that what you are talking about, how to get on in life?

For me, if people don’t recognise the skill of carving, that is their loss. If people recognise the skill, then they will gain a hundredfold in terms of what they learn out of it, and it’s not a big deal. Most of these guys have survived without recognition from government departments for 36 years, and they have done really well with no recognition. Most of the Maori now that are really to the forefront in the art world have come out of this school or have been influenced by graduates from this school.

... the base gives you all the ideas, and all the designs ...

If you want to answer the question of the carving relationship with Pakeha, you have to go back to the late 1800s, when all the ‘tomb raiders’ were all coming here to buy curios, and all of a sudden the carvers were getting paid a pound for a design board. These guys soon realised there was money to be had by producing stuff that had no function at all. The culture had had a function up to that point in time.

All of a sudden, the masks and all of the tekoteko (carved figures) were being produced primarily for a tourist market, and this whole tourist thing has been driving what our carvers do through the whole of the 20th century. They have been producing stuff primarily because somebody said ‘Maori art’. IT IS NOT ‘MAORI ART’. It is about the culture. ‘Art’ is part of someone’s creative mind. Once they used the term ‘art’, I would say half of our culture went out the window because it was no longer relevant. Everything they taught was no
longer relevant; they were just making curios, and they still do. When you get down to this particular point in time now, the guys are producing for different galleries around the world, they are producing contemporary work, and there are huge sums of money involved. So people are beginning to think, ‘If I learn how to do the traditional stuff, then I can change to contemporary art, and then I am going to have a lot of money.’

The good thing about people who have learnt in the school is that, even if they do contemporary arts, they can always go back to doing the traditional stuff. If the guys that just start off with contemporary art suddenly realise there is no more money in it, they can’t go back anywhere. So the base gives you all the ideas, and all the designs, and everything that you need to go crazy out in the contemporary art world.

Once they stopped doing meeting houses, then the harmony went out the window because it became slanted towards the commercial end of the scale rather than retaining the balance. I think that balance is possible. All you have to do is start doing meeting houses again, and the balance will come back and will work itself out.

They never sold anything for money.

If you go back to the early days in Waikato, the tribes supplied wheat to England, and they supplied a lot of things around the world. They always had a business ethic. I look back to how my grandfathers lived without the dole, without any handouts, and they managed to bring up huge families, and you have to have some sort of management — time management and all of that — to feed so many children. I mean, they had huge families, and yet they all managed to survive. We should be grateful for that, that they had this time management thing. They got up early and they went to bed late, but they managed to do it all. That is business — how you manage your time, and what you do with it. It’s about all of that, and it has always been there in the Maori psyche. They never sold anything for money.

It makes a big difference to how people think when selling for money. All of a sudden, they don’t want to work to feed their families; they want to sell work instead of doing the important things first. Feed your family first, and whatever you have left over, go down the shops and then sell it. You should do the important things first and use only whatever is left over to buy things.
**I am accountable to Maoridom …**

I think, if you go into business with a values structure, you will survive and you will succeed because of the values that you put in. Not because you have the cheapest product in town. Most of the guys who are carving now and who succeed are the ones who refused to budge from quality. They will retain the quality, and they would rather starve than drop their quality, and that is the value system that you use. It is there.

I am accountable to my people. **I am accountable to Maoridom**, really. The CEO comes second. You are charged with keeping a skill alive for all of Maoridom, not for the CEO. I mean, he is charged with the same responsibility: to make sure that I do the job that I am charged with.

**… the young carvers that come in now, they have more expectation …**

All I have to do is look around in the papers and I see the boys doing really well. We keep in touch, and people are doing really well out there, and a lot of them are the people I have had a hand in teaching. I know a lot of guys will get out there and do well if we train them well. I guess this is where things have changed a little bit. We have had to try and include business management, marketing skills and everything else in this programme. If they don’t get a job teaching or doing meeting houses, then they may get a job doing commercial or tourist work.

One of the things about the Institute is that it finds it hard to get all the graduates together, because the ones you really need are so busy that you never get them unless you give them a year’s notice. The idea of getting them together to stage an exhibition of all the graduates is a hard one. You need to give them a year’s notice because they don’t just pop out of the blue, and they are so busy. Some of them earn $1,000 a day doing tattooing. A lot of them have gone into tattooing and all that sort of thing because it is more lucrative. But they still have a skill base in their hands to go back to meeting houses, which is good. It is giving them more avenues to go down after learning the skills here.

Yes, **the young carvers that come in now, they have more expectation** that you will give them more for the time they are here. If they have any drive or motivation, they should be more successful than the ones that are successful now. They should be more successful because they will have learnt more. But first we still need to train their hands and their eyes and their ears.
You train your hands, your eyes, and your ears …

You need to train your mind to do the work. I mean, if you take a meeting house and you say to the people, ‘I will do your house’, it is going to take you the best part of 4 years on your own. You have to be able to concentrate for 4 years, and not many people can do that. We need to train people to relax while they are focusing on things. You train your hands, your eyes, and your ears, to do the job. You don’t necessarily have to use your mind all of the time, so you can think of other things while your hands do the job. It is due to the training.

When I say, train your ears, it means that the mallet has different sounds. You don’t have to see what people are doing but you can tell by the sounds the mallet is making. I was at home carving, and I decided to watch TV while I was working, so I put a carpet on my mallet to deaden the sound, but it just didn’t work. Your mind, ears, eyes and hands are not in synch, but once they are in synch, you can carve without your mind being there. You can think of other things.

The Hawaiians … want me to … talk about cultural survival.

In native North American cultures, they have a bit of trouble with passing on things to somebody other than their own relations. So they aren’t really forthcoming about passing it on. When I was over in Canada, I said to them, ‘How is your society made up?’ They told me, there are the chiefs, the carvers, and the baggage. Everyone wants to be a carver, but the carvers don’t want to teach anyone else. So they have this problem of sharing the knowledge base, but lucky for us, we did have an old fella who was willing to share his knowledge base. The Hawaiians at the moment want me to go and talk about cultural survival. They want to establish a school just like the Institute and to run one along similar lines. They have the money base to do it without government funding. They want to start up one like ours, and I am going up in 2004 and will give a talk on cultural survival and what not to do, and hopefully that will give them some ideas to think about as they get established. Hopefully, this Institute can work with them to get them up and running. We may even have to show them how to carve some of their things. I won’t know until I get there. So they are starting to look at their own culture and say, ‘Well, if we don’t do something now, it will be lost.’
You will become a cultural refugee …

The carver finishes up as a kind of repository of Maori cultural knowledge. You end up with a lot of knowledge that most people don’t have over a period of time. You don’t realize until you start trying to tell people how things used to be, and you suddenly realize that they don’t know what you are talking about. I will tell you what you will become. You will become a cultural refugee, and people will look at you and say, ‘What on earth is he talking about?’ And it wasn’t until I went home and I started trying to teach or explain to people, that I realized I was talking to myself. None of these people knew what I was talking about, even though they are my own family. I had stuff that I knew that they didn’t know. Suddenly, you are a refugee all right, because you are isolated in what you know and what you do. You can’t give a lot of stuff to them because you know they really haven’t learnt it properly, so it is just information to them.

… what this place is about and what the old people left.

When I came back here, I gave myself five years to get into the school the technology needed to deliver and speed up delivery of lessons. I am part of the way through but am stuck there with documenting everything, things like meeting houses coming in, and you need documentation of all the carvings here. Nobody has documented anything in this place for 36 years, and that all needs documentation, so we are getting there, but hopefully in about two years time I will have young guys, say, in their 30s, that have the skills to take over and have the understanding of what this place is about. You have to understand what this place is about and what the old people left. If they don’t understand what this place is about, then I won’t leave until I do get people who understand what this place is about. You can very easily lose the plot, and it could become a temporary art school overnight — just like that — without people realising. We will need to have a traditional place to operate from, and the traditional base is a huge base — thousands of years of history. A contemporary base is just out there, floating around in space, if you like. You have to decide for yourself what you want: thousands of years of knowledge, or a fanciful idea that is out there. And that is really what the school is about: keeping that base.
Edna Pahewa

EDNA PORENA PAHEWA has a great inheritance from the Tuhourangi iwi and is the daughter of Emily Schuster. Known as a Master Craftswoman whose talents and skills were known throughout the world, Emily taught her daughter well in the art of weaving and Edna is now the Tumu Raranga for the weaving school at the New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute in Rotorua. Edna has qualifications as a tertiary teacher, and her students respond well to her direction.

It is very much a family thing.

I am the Head of the Weaving School here. Since I was about 8 years old, my Grandmother, who was the only sister of Guide Rangi, was the one who introduced me to weaving, and it was later finely tuned by my mother, who was Emily Schuster. Then I had a twin sister who was also a weaving expert, and these are the ones who have taught me over the years. It is very much a family thing. I think places like the Maori Arts and Crafts Institute, or Wananga or other institutions, can offer weaving to other people who were not born to that role. You know, if you weren’t born to a weaving family, you didn’t know how to do it. But other places are giving Maori people the opportunity to learn, as I call it, part of their heritage, like Te Reo (Maori language) or whatever. My mother was a great matriarch, with an international reputation as a weaver. It is quite a hard thing to live up to sometimes! I have to keep telling them that I may be Emily Schuster’s daughter, but I am not her!

... what the ... Institute is about — traditional techniques and traditional ways of weaving.

I do love weaving. I love all it stands for, and I think I have been brought up to respect that way, the old way. That is what the Maori Arts and Crafts Institute is about — traditional techniques and traditional ways of weaving. You have got a lot of contemporary ones now. I have worked for Te Wananga O Aotearoa under Rongo Wetere, I see his name here. I had to learn another way of teaching weaving, which was NZQA unit standards, and I am just glad I had the opportunity to come back to a way of weaving that is of the old way, if you can understand what I am saying.
It keeps you in touch with the reality and the history of weaving.

I have just come from harvesting the flax. We have to go and gather whatever we want to make. It is really good. Weaving, I feel like I can never stress out, because you have got to get out there and get the material, you have to prepare it and then you have to sit there and weave it — and all the different stages have their different benefits, if I can call it that. Plus all the different weavings that you can do.

It keeps you in touch with the reality and the history of weaving. One of the first stages you have to learn is the harvesting — which one, how to… all those questions. That is the most important part of it. And I, even at this age and time of life, still love best the harvest, just getting out in the flax and just cutting it and cleaning it. We were actually out at a marae at Te Teko that had harakeke (flax) there, and we could just sit there all day cleaning up the harakeke, because that is part of keeping it going for the next time.

There is flax on this site also. But there are marae who ring us, or different people ring and want their flax cleaned up, so it is a good resource for us and it keeps ours going a bit longer.

We have to harvest it, and then another day is spent preparing it for whatever garment you are going to make, or kete (flax basket), or whatever project or next process the harakeke is going to be used for.

We specialised in piupiu here … it is what the tourists wanted to see …

The important part of the selection lies in knowing the different varieties, because in weaving, we have got probably 60 to 70 different kinds of harakeke. Some have stronger fibres for the purposes of muka (fibre extraction), getting the fibres out, for piupiu (flax skirts), and then you have the other varieties for kete and harakete, the mats.

There is a lot of detailed plant knowledge in this selection. It has got more complex, but in your area, whichever hapu or rohe (area) you were from, you specialised in what was done best in your area. We specialised in piupiu here in Rotorua because it is what the tourists wanted to see, so we have all our harakeke here.

Source: http://www.tepuia.com/thingstoseeanddo/cultural_performances.html
They learn the old way, by sitting … watching … listening … waiata …

Our weaving school has about a hundred students. Classes run at night time, for the working people, as well as during day time. It is very much that we have to look at our teaching in a unique way. Our students have come to learn what they choose to learn. But if you go to an institution or Wananga, you have a programme that you have to work to.

We only have three hours per week with our evening students — Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday nights, classes are run from 6pm–9pm. So it is very much hands on.

For our daytime students, we have 20 week courses, which I am not sure is a full-time one. It is very minimal in hours. They just come up, and it is all hands on. There are two-week courses that are run through the year in the school holidays that are for people who can’t come up for a full-time Monday to Friday 9am-3pm course, but it still uses the practical way of learning. Some people become full-time craftspeople.

After coming out of a Wananga that has unit standards and piles and piles of paperwork, it is really good that we don’t have any paper work. I probably do three evaluations throughout the year, and it is student/tutor evaluation, nothing else. They learn the old way, by sitting there and either watching and listening or getting waiata input to their learning.

… when we learnt, you weren’t taught; you had to watch.

The waiata (songs) are harakeke waiata. The students learn which different species to use or different ways to prepare the harakeke by learning the waiata pertaining to whatever they are doing at the time, be it rauru (cord) or konae (small baskets) or things like that. Or else it is just general conversation, where they can find out things that are maybe not in a unit standard that you need to know. Questions and answers mainly. We are teaching in the old way, the Maori way. The Maori way of teaching is very much hands on. I think when we learnt, you weren’t taught; you had to watch.
... two months living with our kuia ...

My Grandmother believed, if you could contribute to the daily needs of the hapu, monetary wise, you had to learn how to do so, and she made us sit down and learn to do piupiu — even between the ages of 8 and 10. Even our famous mother, Emily Schuster, she would never force you to learn anything. She believed, when you were ready, you would go to her.

But our kuia (female elder) was of a different mind, as kuia were in those days, and she said, ‘No, you are going to sit here and learn to do it’. We had two months living with our kuia, my twin sister and I, and I believe that is what sowed the seed within us because, out of Emily Schuster’s five girls, only the two of us have taught weaving. So that kuia, an old battle axe she may have been, but she instilled in us the values of weaving and helped us to carry it on.

My sister passed away two years ago. She had a heart attack. But she was up here after Mum had died, and I actually knew I had to come up here one day to teach, but it came a bit quicker when she passed away.

I love teaching the way I teach here. We don’t have to worry about funding like Polytechnics do, because the business arm of the Institute feeds the cultural side.

... run marae projects where we can go out to them and teach and deliver out to them.

I often ask my pupils what brought them up here, and a lot of the response is that they remember their kuia doing it. They remember the old people doing it, and at the time, they didn’t want to learn it, but now they choose to learn. They are all very much an older group. I have just finished a course at Ruatahuna where I had to go and teach korowai (cloaks), and the average age out there would have been 60. And those kuia felt comfortable with me going out there. They would never have come in here to a place where people could see them.

But part of our work through the year is to run marae projects where we can go out to them and teach and deliver out to them. The oldest was 84, and she had never made korowai. It was sad for Ruatahuna because that marae had been a strong place for korowai, but they lost the knowledge over the years and had to get our assistance to bring it back. Korowai are the cloaks that our people wear. Ruatahuna, especially, was where some of the finest korowai were made.
It took me two hours to get there, on windy dirt roads. It was really in the bush. But I love that. The cell phone went off at Murupara, and that was it for three days! I had no contact with the outside world until I came back on a Wednesday. We didn’t even have a radio, but it was lovely, it was really lovely. We just talked and wove and ate and slept for three days. For me, there is something special about that.

I used to feel quite shy about teaching older people. Then one kuia in my early days said they should be the ones that felt shy, because they were at that age when they should know these things, and I was at my younger age teaching them things that they should have known. So we sort of came to be comfortable with each other, and we just got on with it.

... the depth of knowledge now is not as strong as when I was learning.

Personally, I feel fulfilled teaching anybody our craft. I get a bit worried that the depth of knowledge now is not as strong as when I was learning. And we are losing it more and more. Do you understand what I am saying? Probably on the marae, that was a good depth for me, but at the weaving school, we have lost that depth, and you can see that there are no kuia. I go to Aunty Tekanawa once a month as part of my professional development, and that just feeds me more and more. But you don’t have those older experienced people any more who live inside their culture.

I see weaving as being very strong now. Maori weaving is going through a revival at the moment, and probably for the last three years, it has been getting stronger and stronger than it has ever been — just people wanting to learn. We went to a national hui in Palmerston North, and there would have been 300 weavers there. Young and old, and they are just all dying to get at it and learn more and more.

We don’t make cloaks with kiwi feathers any more because we can’t get any kiwi feathers. All our native birds are protected, except the pukeko (a common swamp bird). We can shoot those, but all the birds that we used back in the old days are all protected, and you can’t get feathers unless it is road kill or, dare I say it, through the wrong means of getting them.

Quite recently, I wove a mini kiwi cloak, and that was a real honour. It was just that we got two birds from DOC. One was caught in a trap and died, and the other one was a road kill that they had given to us. Even just plucking the feathers, as a Maori I felt quite sad that this had happened, but I still wanted those feathers!
… following tradition in the ways of our old people and how they had used kiwi feathers.

DOC are pretty good. When we first asked DOC for the kiwi feathers, they said, no, there was no way. But then we wrote back again and told them that we were following tradition in the ways of our old people and how they had used kiwi feathers. I mean, DOC were only going to bury the birds. They weren’t doing much with them, so they gave them to us after a bit of debate.

However, I am concerned about the commercial side of weaving. Not because of making money out of it, but because of the reasons that go behind some of the people who would like to learn weaving. Being a traditionalist, I know there is a lot more to weaving than coming to learn to make a kete. You have got to learn the history behind it, especially gathering the harakeke. There is a spiritual side, as well, to weaving.

Probably being brought up with who I was brought up with, we had to learn those spiritual values before we marketed our group. I realise our group has to make money, and even my kuia said that, as long as you were able to contribute to the family’s needs by making piupiu, you had to, but we learnt all the other things before that. And I feel, nowadays, you get those who just come to learn to make a $1,000 garment. When I learned to weave, money was nothing. It was the least valuable part of weaving at the time, and I think we need to instill those old values in the students.

I believe that tourism and money are nothing, but they put a high price on things. I think there are two markets. There are our Maori people, and there are the tourists who can probably afford to pay high prices for art. Now, if I was making a kete that would sell to a tourist for $400, and if a kuia asked me for the same kete, there is no way I would even think of charging her that amount. You get the old values coming in there.

After a while, you sort of build up your knowledge. You learn the roots and values of the Maori as people, and you learn how things came to be where they are now. Those people who come to learn need to learn the history before they go on. They need to learn to value their work and what they have learnt. But you do get ones that come, and you don’t know if they have come for that side of things, and then you might see their work selling for mega amounts, and you know that they have just come along, learnt the skills but not the values, and gone on. We get even our own Maori people like that, who take just what they want, but I suppose you get that with everything, don’t you.
… our aim is to keep perpetuating our art.

In weaving, we are all a very close circle. No matter what, if you are a wananga, a polytechnic or even the Arts and Crafts Institute, our aim is to keep perpetuating our art. The whole lot of us want to do that. We may have different ways of teaching, and that maybe comes from different tribal areas, too, but we all want to perpetuate our craft. Just like Te Reo Maori, I suppose.

I get feedback from the places we have been to and from the students who have been here, and that is always excellent. I just know that it is going well. The main feedback is the ‘word of mouth’ from these groups. Some of them out there think that we are just a Rotorua-based people or teaching centre, but we are actually obliged to teach Maori arts and crafts through all of New Zealand, so we may be obligated to go to Stewart Island or to Cape Reinga for teaching — and it happens. Even globally, we have been overseas demonstrating. We teach weaving right throughout New Zealand.

… go back to their kuia or kaumatua …

But even with the students I have taught from all over New Zealand, I still encourage them to go back to their hapu or iwi to learn the protocol around their own area. I have taught them maybe the Te Arawa way, the way I was taught, but it is some sort of way, but then they need to go back to their kuia or kaumatua to find karakia (prayers) or different things that only they would know.
Grace Neilson

GRACE NEILSON is of Ngapuhi descent and is employed as the environmental and property manager for the New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute in Rotorua. Grace has a lot of practical experience and is an ardent supporter of a clean, green environment. She is very loyal and supportive to the Institute.

I am only kaitiaki...

The title of my role here is Environmental and Property Manager. I am only kaitiaki (guardian, or custodian) of the whenua (land) here, and I think it is about maintaining all of the buildings and pathways, but probably the priority is the geothermal field, not just the land. So I have a crew of maintenance workers, hygiene workers and horticultural workers, and I am also in charge of security as well as and the kiwi house staff. It’s about presentation and safety aspects for the visitor. Maintaining what we have, that is, with the buildings, but most of all with the land — making sure we do nothing today that is going to have side effects tomorrow. Next comes environmental — there is a big push for Maori arts and crafts and environmental issues, which is part of us as Maori, culturally, in terms of conservation and preservation.

... the land can tell you what you can do and can’t do ...

It comes down to whakapapa (family history), and knowing that you can relate that to how you do conservation. It’s like the natural land conservation methods all those years ago. You know when there is a certain time you do not go and harvest birds because they are breeding. The same with coast people — you know the oysters are spawning, so you do not go and pick them. It is the same principles as happened all those years ago. It is about practicality. I believe that the land can tell you what you can do and can’t do, so that a business sense actually works into that. If you were to look at geothermal land, you know you cannot put a track there because it’s a geothermal area. It is about bringing in the practicalities of things, and if you are looking at it as a commercial business, you have to weigh those things up and balance them. It is about finding an area
that you know is not going to be damaged by the high impact of visitors, so it is about balancing things all the time.

You also have to be strong in commercial terms, thinking ‘We can make money from that’, but I think that, for me, it will be the Maori practices that will outweigh the commercial, because that is who I am. I have finance and marketing managers to take care of the commercial aspects. It is about saying, ‘This is what is going to happen if you do that’. I think that working with young Maori — because our team is virtually a young Maori team — has some good things about it.

Yes, and I think that it is good and healthy that we do have such a team. Because I would say, ‘No, you cannot put it there’, and they would say, ‘Yes, we can,’ or ‘Why not?’ So you have to back up everything with facts, and I could probably do that if I ever needed to, to say we can’t go there. Basically, we have a skill base at this table. That is what we are employed to do, give our respective recommendations. I am very lucky with my co-workers, who say, ‘That is what you are employed to do’. So recognizing that skill base makes the job a lot easier, too.

... we can adapt so well as people to our environment.

The land belongs to certain hapu, and it was their living place. This is where they lived. If you understand the whakapapa of those hapu, I wonder how they could have survived here, the people within the geothermal grounds, as well as adapt to modern life. It is an awesome thing to know that we can adapt so well as people to our environment. Being at Tarawera and, with the eruption of Tarawera, having to come here to live, two different environments, but that is adaptability and making it work for them wherever they went to. For Maori, the land is probably the most precious thing of all.

... the carvers were coming from all over the motu ...

The Institution belongs to certain hapu, but there was an agreement a long time ago, because they believed there was a need for the perpetuation of arts, crafts and culture.
The Institution is here because we have an Act on the one hand, but what has happened is that the people asked to have an Act. They needed to find a place that could generate an income so that they could continue to perpetuate the arts and crafts. So the agreement was made all those years ago that the stakeholders of those hapu would allow it to happen. An agreement has been that a rental is paid to them, and the agreement was that anyone employed here would come from those hapu. So the relationship remains very strong. They saw that it was employment for our up-and-coming youth, so that relationship was strong.

Basically, you bring the arts and crafts back to Arawa, but the carvers were coming from all over the motu (Island, or nation), so it was appropriate, I believe, that the Institute is called the New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute. The carvers were not just coming from Arawa, so the name was changed from Rotorua Maori Arts and Crafts Institute to New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute. That made a difference, because then we were looking after the motu as part of what we do. So I do believe it was appropriate in that sense, because we were getting students from Invercargill to up North. The name change was important because we could then, as an organisation and under the Act, service the motu with their needs in terms of the arts of carving and weaving.

People from the weaving school go out to different places around the motu. They have even gone to Australia to teach the Maori that live in Australia. So there is an exchange.

...a bigger need in terms of supporting the motu ... what is the gap?

I think there is a bigger need in terms of supporting the motu. That support needs to be a lot more ongoing. I think that, maybe all those years ago, we were probably not in a position financially to assist with a lot, but we are now. I think that we need to be making more effort in terms of what we can do. Not necessarily in ways like supporting carving. Most Polytechnics have carving qualifications now, so we just need to say, 'What is the gap? Where is the gap?' and fill that gap. We need to find what isn’t happening out there, because we still have that auspice of Maori arts, crafts and culture. It doesn’t just pertain to carving and weaving specifically. There is a lot more we can do.
...making sure that what is on the land is what was here originally.

I think it is unique here in that we can practise our culture and share it to educate visitors. A good example is that you don’t cut a tree down just because it is in the way. We can explain that we are not touching that tree because it was there long before we were here, and it is indigenous to this land. I think that is what is important as well, making sure that what is on the land is what was here originally. You cannot restore it back to its glorious past in terms of native trees. In the Puarenga Stream there used to be raupo (bulrushes). Well, that has gone, which has to do with waterways further up. But sharing our culture with the visitors is something unique, and we can practise our culture and enhance the knowledge of the visitor.

That is what the guides are there for. That is what they are renowned for, the one-on-one, face-to-face talks. The place got built up from those old people. History tells you that it made a difference, and people ‘got it’ because they came back and got bigger in numbers.

Overseas visitors are very understanding of our conservation work because of the training that is has been going on in the past 5-10 years. They want that because a lot of the countries they come from, say, Germany, have hardly any trees left because of disease. They actually enjoy the scenery, so that is what they want to know about.

Where visitors fail to respect our land, my staff or I will to go up to them politely and say, ‘Please don’t do that’, and ask them, ‘Please respect our land’. No matter who comes here, we respect them. At the end of the day, it is they who pay our wages. But please, our land needs to be respected, too. We will say that if people have not respected our land, because most of the people who work here are from this land. So they have no problem in putting it nicely. ‘You may come here and you may pay our wages, but there are limits.’

... tangata whenua will tell me whether I am doing a good job or not.

There are two ways I know if whether we are doing the right thing. There is the commercial aspect, and there is the social aspect. I say this because tangata whenua (the people of the land) will tell me whether I am doing a good job or not. I do not want the kaumatua and kuia (elders) to come up and growl at me because I have not looked after their land. So for me, they are my biggest gauge. On a commercial side, we have things in place. We have a plan in place, and you review things as they go by each month, and you marry that up with
your budgets and things like that. But I think that the biggest influence I have is the kaumatua and kuia, who come up here and are invited to participate in different events, and they let me know whether or not I have been maintaining the *kaitiaki* (guardianship) of this place. They tell me. I see that as a social obligation in terms of tangata whenua.

I know if our visitors are happy or not through complaints about accidents and incidents. Visitors tell me if the ablution blocks are not clean, or will complain about security. That is how I can gauge, from how many complaints I get from a particular area. Then I would know. It is very good here because the staff are aware that you should set a certain standard. If the staff complain, you know that there is something wrong, so you deal with it straight away. They know about presentation and levels of standards, which makes things even better. So you deal with those immediately. If it is in the hygiene area, it is natural to deal with it straight away. You try to stop the complaint before the complaint gets to you. If the staff moan about it, you deal with it before the visitors complain about it.

... the people will give it back.

I think my job is about the about the people. It has to be an honour to be a kaitiaki because that is all you are. It’s up to the people, and if we give pleasure to the people, the people will give it back. I have the philosophy that, if they come up and say, ‘Grace, we have got our land back, but we have got our people here and we would like to put them in your team’, that is a good sign for me, because that is where it is supposed to be. Environmentally, that is where my passion is, land is where my passion is. You must like your job to be in it.
Ngarepo Eparaima

CHARLES NGAREPO EPARAIMA is of Te Arawa and Ngapuhi descent and is employed as Duty Manager at the New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute at Rotorua. Charles has a NZIM Certificate in Supervisory Management and has been employed in different roles at the Institution. He has traveled the world extensively and has a positive outlook on the future.

... carrying on a legacy passed to us from our Grandmothers.

I started about 10 years ago as a seasonal guide. For a lot of us, who are from this area, we are just carrying on a legacy passed to us from our Grandmothers. So it was a natural progression, especially into the tourism area. Manaakitanga (culture of hospitality) was instilled into us, the ultimate in looking after people. That was something we were brought up with and amongst.

The season lasted for the summer period; at the end of this time, an opportunity arose when the ticket box managers left, I applied — and was successful with obtaining that position. After a summer of interacting with people as well as the guide training, I received, it was easy to explain what the place was about and why the Institute was here. The questions that were asked about the place, were easy to answer. New developments started. A new department called ‘pa activities’ was established, which was designed to have different things happening throughout the site, such as hands-on activities.

Mai Ora, which was our night-time experience, was also created. I played a supervisory role, making sure we had the right staff and the right sort of people and procedures. We had to have people with an assortment of skills.

We tried to hire from people of the village. But at times, especially when there was a tangi (bereavement) in the village, we would sometimes be left short handed. This meant that I as the manager was left having to cover. I started to branch out a bit and looked into getting people from other areas, and based recruitment more on the skill that we needed.

Due to a dramatic drop in the Asian market, things were strained and our developments was put on hold, causing our staff levels to drop from 138 to about 50. I was one of those casualties, and ended up staying at home for a year.
All the senior managers worked Monday-Friday, and there was a requirement for some cover for Mai Ora. I received a call from Graeme Osbourne, who was the first European CEO here. From talks he had had with Leah Ratana, Karen Grant, and Allison Lawton, he offered me the opportunity to work as a Duty Manager. This is the position I currently hold, but other duties have been added.

Over the last three months, I have been acting Operations Manager, which entails managing the guides, the admissions staff and the display area, ensuring that the place ticks along and that the visitors are looked after.

... through the people telling the stories.

Guiding is central to this business. That is how the tourism industry was created: it was and still is through the people telling the stories. This may be the only place where a visitor will have interaction with Maori or even see or talk to a Maori. We need to give them the best experience that we can, and be as natural as possible. I think Maori have those natural people skills. We have an affinity to be able to communicate with people just by the way we are, being Maori. For the ones we bring in from outside the area, they can describe it as it is told in the training scripts, whereas the people from the village can talk about it from a different perspective. We lived on the land, we swam in the pools, we can tell the stories from a personal point of view. Others can only say, ‘This is where the people from here swam in these pools.’ They can describe it, but we can tell them that we actually did it.

From what I’ve been told, the guiding started from Tarawera, when the first visitors came in to see the Pink and White Terraces. They were taken across the lake on boats to the Pink and White Terraces by the Tuhourangi people. They were then shown around and looked after by the guides at the time. When the eruption happened and the Tuhourangi people were displaced, they settled here at the Whaka Village.

It was an easy transition to carry on the guiding through this thermal valley. Guiding was an integral part of the landscape, as it was so dangerous. People couldn’t just wander around on their own, and in the old days, the tracks weren’t as clear and easy to find as they are now. There were places where you
couldn’t take people because of the ground. Only if you had been from here would you know that. It was a safety issue that our people did automatically because they knew the dangers of the place.

**Most of our culture is based on nature ...**

The type of visitor we get now has changed. They are a lot more learned and well travelled; there is a diversity of cultures now. Guides need to adapt to the requirements of the groups they have. Some groups are more interested in the culture, whereas others just want to go and see the valley. **Most of our culture is based on nature**; therefore the visitor will always get some cultural content because of the stories that are told. Some are here for the culture, others are more here for the scenery, and then you get others who only want to see a concert, so it all depends on what the people’s requirements are. Groups can range from school children, right through to intellectuals, and the groups arrive one after the other. So the type of presentation given is shaped to the type of audience being presented to.

**... balancing your presentation to the requirements of your group .**

It is a skill that you learn by experience and by watching others. We say that, within the first five to ten minutes, you should have determined how and what to present to your group. By talking, watching the body language and by questions that are being asked, you can determine what interests them and at what depth it needs to be covered. With mixed groups, one option is to take the group directly to the valley and show them the geysers and mud pools, then on the walk back, you pick up the ones that are more interested in arts and crafts.

Guide selection and training is important because guiding is the core of our business. After all applications are in, we shortlist and interview. Then the selection is made by the panel consisting of myself and two senior guides. We look at the applicant’s background and make our selection on their personality and how they answer the questions. One of our questions is, ‘Stand up and give us a five minute talk on ‘What makes you a Maori?’ They often ask why, and we tell them, that is one of the questions they may be asked. They might be very fair skinned, and people might say, ‘You are not Maori’, so they have to try and explain it. And if they can answer it, then you know they have got a capability to answer off the cuff. The training covers all the areas that they
will need to guide a group for about an hour. It covers the welcome, the reason for the institute’s being, carving, weaving, Maori structures and life of old and their relevance for today, kiwi birds, mudpools and geysers. If people are more interested in one area, you may be able to brush over another area, but go in-depth there. It is about balancing your presentation to the requirements of your group.

...they mould their talk to suit their own way of presentation.

The way that the old guides spoke was unique. We have only one who can guide in that old manner now, Ramona Thompson. Depending on the type of group they had, they could talk about the same subject but in different ways. Today, we give the new guides standard information that we ensure they know, and we also get them to go with other guides and learn from them. As each guide gets more confident and does more research, they start to mould their talk to suit their own way of presentation.

People today want to make a connection with somebody.

When I talk with the guides, I tell them, if a person leaves here and the only thing they remember is that Paul was their guide, then Paul has done his job, because they have remembered him as a person. People today want to make a connection with somebody. They want a relationship. That relationship can only depend on how far the guide wants to share. It is about sharing. Guides can get as personal as they want to, but only they can choose what they want to share. For me, it depends on who I am talking to. I might talk about my family, and from my family it may stem to issues like education.

It depends on who sets the rules.

People who visit our wharenui (meeting house). Don’t have to take their shoes off. Maybe they did at the last place they visited, but it’s not necessary here. We tell the visitors that it’s not necessary, but if they feel more comfortable in taking them off, then that’s fine as well. Our kaumatua said it was better that our visitors feel comfortable. Imagine a visitor who has smelly feet. If the shoes come off, the visitor feels uncomfortable, everyone around is made to
feel uncomfortable because of the smell, and think of what’s being embedded in the carpet. **It depends on who set the rules.** It’s like family rules — at your house, you set the rules, and at our house, we set the rules, so they may be different. People are not all the same. We have all been brought up differently, we have all been taught different things. None of us are wrong. We have just got different perceptions, and if we all take that line of thinking, we will get on okay. What I say is, ‘Today, I am telling you the rules that are for here. You might find that you go to another place and the rules are different. They are not wrong; they are just different.’

... the only place where they are going to meet, touch and see and feel and smell a person of Maori descent ...

Guiding will change, but it will be more important than ever in the past, because the guided tour through Whaka might be the only place where they are going to meet, touch and see and feel and smell a person of Maori descent, I think guiding is always going to be high profile here. I notice groups are coming through now with their own guides. A lot of Asians come through with their own guides.

That could change, and we might need to be moving that way. We already have two people who speak Japanese, and who are always in great demand. My worry is that we only have two foreign-speaking guides and we have a lot of Japanese tourists coming in during the day, so there may not enough to go around. Where do you draw the line? Someone has to miss out. Once you have specialist guiding, it doesn’t become an add-on, it becomes a demand. They say, ‘You have a Japanese guide, I want that guide.’ Then you might have to say, ‘They are not available, but you can have an English-speaking guide if you want,’ then they have to translate. We have to ensure that they are aware of our limited resource in this area and not to expect a foreign-speaking guide. We don’t want to get into the situation where the expectation is that having a foreign-speaking guide becomes the norm.

... they lost their personality without the people.

We were looking at station guiding. Having people at a station and letting visitors just wander up to them and get the information. But when we tried it out, our guides said, **they lost their personality without the people.** Some time is required to form a relationship with them, which is minimal when you are
just standing on a station. You may as well have a TV screen doing the same thing.

_We don’t want to exclude anybody_ …

A couple of weeks ago, I guided three Germans, which included the second in charge of the German government. He had an excellent translator who had an excellent grasp of English. He started translating straight off, and he translated so fast, it was almost like it was I was talking directly to the whole group. I started talking directly to the translator, but I was able to talk to the group because there was very little lapses between translations. Although most of my focus was on their leader, I also included others in the group and others around our group by answering their questions. _We don’t want to exclude anybody_, and so we try to encompass all the group.

We try to keep our groups to a maximum of a busload, which is about 30–40 people. But we have in the past taken up to 80 people in one group. Trying to move that number along is difficult and something that is difficult to teach. It is something that you learn only with experience. When a new guide starts here, we never put them in that position. Part of training is to go with older guides and watch how they handle different situations. We start them on small, fit groups, maybe little families, to build up their confidence. They don’t take out any visitors until our head guide has taken them through herself and she is happy that they can do it.

_... a rough diamond with enormous potential._

I think we are still what you would call a _rough diamond with enormous potential_. I think that the potential for this place is phenomenal. And the gold is always going to be in the people. In the Institute, you have a commercial arm and a cultural arm. Without the cultural arm, the NZ Maori Arts and Crafts Institute has no reason for being. This is what the place was originally created for. The commercial arm generates the _putea_ (the finance). Without the _putea_, this place can’t operate. Therefore, both areas are as important as each other, but both parts need to be in balance.
I think we could do a bit more in our cultural area, and we are heading that way now. There are many opportunities for us to be out there, and we need to develop more relationships in both the cultural and commercial areas. We want to be one of the better ‘one-stop shops’, where people can say, ‘If you want something Maori, let’s go and ask this place’, and we can either help them here or point them in the right direction.

On a personal note, everything I now do is for my family. I want my children to experience as much as possible, so that they can make some better decisions. My wife and I both work within the tourism industry but have created passive income options. We both work hard but also ensure that we enjoy our life as well. We have also travelled extensively throughout the world, both individually and as a couple and now enjoy travelling with our children.
Our Research Story: Wayne Taurima and Michael Cash

For the past six years we (Wayne Taurima and Michael Cash), the one Maori and the other Pakeha (non-Maori), together with our mentors and the ‘knowledge carriers’ who have shared their stories and ideas with us, have been developing a bicultural research process, or an appreciative and critical inquiry. Our field has been successful Maori businesses. Our aim has been to give voice to the hidden culturally-based organisational stories that had not yet been told, because researchers have assumed that there is no difference between a Maori Business and any other kind of business, under the mantra, a business is a business, is a business. Our idea is to uncover the ‘inside stories’ of bicultural ventures, using ‘opening-up stories’ (Tumatanui).

The assumption that business is acultural is widespread because of a peculiar form of cultural ‘blindness’ that affects business and management practice. Our early studies (Taurima & Cash 1999, 2000, 2003) did not support the view that business is culturally neutral. Rather, our inquiry suggested that business, like all forms of social activity, is culturally based. A bicultural inquiry recognises that culture touches every aspect of the business enterprise (Hofstede, 1980). We found that Maori-centred businesses ‘dance to a different drum’ (see our ‘Cycle of Aroha’ in Taurima & Cash, 1999). Our conclusion that the nation needs to capture all its cultural capital if it is to realise the enormous potential of a bicultural brand is nowhere more apt than in a study of the tourism industry with its culturally restricted ‘100% pure’ brand. We saw a failure to accept this challenge as a nation-wide failure of imagination.

When we began this inquiry, we were faced with the question, what is a bicultural inquiry? We were forced to face this question when our attempts to find the authentic stories of Maori entrepreneurs using the normal mainstream (Western/European) research techniques proved to be disappointing in their results. Our first project, therefore, was to look at the distinctive features of a Maori-based research process.

Two features that impressed us were that Maori were only interested in research that was for the good of the community, perhaps because, historically, research was used as an instrument of political power. The questions of who began the inquiry, who owned it, and to whom the researchers were accountable were also critical for us. We saw the need for the participants to own the process and for Maori mentors to safeguard the participants (and fellow-researchers) as well as ourselves. The cultural integrity and safety of our research process required us to be accountable to our mentors. Our first inquiry into the features of a culturally based inquiry process led us to develop a bicultural research protocol, based on the Mataatua Declaration (Taurima & Cash, 1999).
In our desire to develop our bicultural inquiry process, our aim was to find, to develop, and, where necessary, to create a new methodology of inquiry within this complex field. We wanted to ensure that the voices of those doing business or shaping organisations in a bicultural way were heard for what they were saying and not discounted by either political correctness or political incorrectness. In this search for what we have called ‘the inside story’, we were particularly influenced by three important contemporary thinkers, two Maori and one Pakeha, each of whom we were fortunate to meet and with whom we had the opportunity to discuss our research issues. We wish to pay tribute to them personally for their support and professionally for their work in opening up the critical cultural debate.

Firstly, we were fortunate to find in Russell Bishop, now Assistant Dean of Maori Education at Waikato University, and a major bicultural researcher in his own right, a mentor who generously helped us develop our ideas. Professor Bishop became ‘our friendly critic’. Bishop’s Model of Cultural and Critical Consciousness (2000) became central to our approach. We simply extended the model by applying the model, not only to our research, but also to Maori Business itself. The idea that a business itself is a narrative or an inquiry system may be seen as a radical one, but it is also quintessentially contemporary. One of the surprises in our inquiry was that the Maori understanding of matauranga (knowledge), and knowledge applications (such as business), reflected in the ‘three baskets of knowledge’ (seen in our cover design as within the seed of the ‘tree of life’) is a very contemporary one.

From our first study, which told the story of a group of Maori funeral directors, we realised that an authentic inquiry in this field must be a critical one. If our inquiry was to help the community, it was necessary not only to hear their stories, but also to pick up the critique implied by them. Otherwise, nothing would change. The story of the Maori directors, cut out from this industry and actively persecuted when they attempted to break into it, was not only shameful; it was also inspiring. So many barriers and boundaries were set up to keep them out of the industry that it was remarkable that any were able to ever establish themselves as funeral directors. The key characteristic of these entrepreneurs was a capacity to ‘break boundaries’. We were so impressed by their ability to go around, over, and under these boundaries that we entitled our inquiry process ‘Breaking Boundaries’.

It was apparent from the beginning of our search that only a critical systems approach would provide a Western/European inquiry system that was open to the question, how can we evaluate a system that keeps people out? Critical Systems Thinking is concerned with the key question of who is involved and who is left out (as the Maori entrepreneurs were kept out of this industry). In later inquiries, we made use of critical questions drawn from the work of Swiss
systems thinker, Werner Ullrich. Inspired by a meeting with Ullrich himself, who visited Victoria University, Wellington, in 2000, we have adapted his Critical Systems Heuristics model (1994). Ullrich’s critical questions aim to unearth the always-unasked (because silently censored) question, who is left out of this system? And, why are they left out?

Finally, we were greatly assisted by the work of a leading Maori academic, Professor Mason Durie, now Pro-Vice Chancellor (Maori) of Massey University, who made available to us an important presentation he made to a Maori hui (meeting) in 2002. In his paper, Durie asked a similar question to our early probe (what makes a Maori business Maori?) and answered it from a Maori perspective. We found the six principles of a genuine Maori business or organisation outlined in his exposition helpful in our own development of a series of critical questions (which we called the ‘Twelve Critical Questions’). These questions added a new level of critical inquiry to the original level of ‘opening up stories’ (the meaning of tumatanui). We felt that Durie’s answer to the question of when is a Maori organisation truly Maori? (when it contributes to Maori Development) was a genuine bicultural one. It points the way to a bicultural answer to the business ethic. Durie’s strategic answer to the paradox of business/organisational life (adapt, do not adopt, the business ethic) has profound implications beyond the bicultural debate.

Over the past three years, we have also received generous support from a group of largely Victoria University of Wellington-based researchers, called collectively Competitive Advantage New Zealand (CANZ). Their work focuses on those New Zealand organisations that have tapped into the global market for goods and services. They have asked the question of these successful companies, how, from such a tiny base, did they do it? How is it possible that Kiwi companies have made most of the world’s humidifiers or electric fences? The attempt is to unearth their secrets by building a theoretical framework to explain how these firms gained and held their competitive advantage in a global market. CANZ’s aim is to inform and inspire firms in or about to enter the international business arena. As we saw it, the purpose of their inquiry, like ours, was ‘to help the business community’.

In 2001, CANZ published their initial findings in a book, World Famous in New Zealand under the editorship of Professor Colin Campbell-Hunt (now Professor of Strategy at Otago University). It did not surprise us that they found that the success of their chosen firms had a great deal to do with their cultural identity, their ‘New Zealandness’. We saw the possibility, in studying internationally involved Maori organisations, of adding another dimension, the bicultural dimension, to these findings. Our first collaboration with CANZ studied a Maori wine company, Tohu Wines, a company that exports almost all its wines. In this monograph, our second CANZ-supported study, our aim is to study a
successful Maori firm that has developed an international market from within New Zealand. The obvious choice was a successful Maori tourist organisation.

**Choosing a successful Maori tourist organisation**

How do you measure the success of a firm? One simple measure that is often used is to see how well it has lasted over the years. Has it, as we say, ‘stood the test of time’? Long-standing companies are especially interesting because they have survived the sorts of economic and global shocks (recessions, oil shocks, share market collapses, industry restructurings) that have brought down many otherwise seemingly invincible firms. In *World Famous in New Zealand* (2001:3), Campbell-Hunt explains why CANZ selected companies that had ‘created and sustained a successful company over many years, indeed decades’ for their study:

> We deliberately chose companies with long histories so we could pick up the full force of the evolutionary processes shaping each company’s development. In particular, we selected companies that predated the 1984 reforms to see what effect these had on their progress. (pp. 3-4)

But how long is a ‘long history’? The benchmark answer to this question is probably that given by Collins and Porras, whose major research study of long lasting firms, *Built to Last: Successful Habits for Visionary Companies* was published in 1998. The authors’ rule of thumb for a long-lasting firm was 40 years. To survive for this period, companies require a sustained vision and a capacity to adapt to significant and threatening environmental challenges. It is reasonable to assume that such companies have a real capacity to learn from their experience and have built a robust capability to ride out the difficult patches all businesses face over time.

When we looked for a long-lasting Maori tourism venture, one institution stood out from the others, not only for being ‘world famous in New Zealand’, but also for its role in capacity building in the area of arts and crafts. We knew that The New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute in Rotorua had celebrated its 40th birthday in recent times. In an earlier life and on its current site, the Institute
had regional links going back to 1925. In terms of tourist guiding, the Institute has ties with the very earliest 19th century Maori guides, such as Guide Rangi, who might be considered the founders of tourist guiding in this country. Historically, the Institute embodies generations of Maori tourism experience.

Moreover, the Institute has many other signs of success, including a distinguished array of carvers and weavers from the Schools of Carving and Weaving. Artists and craftspeople who have graduated from the Institute (or who have been taught by those who did) are themselves involved in national and international business ventures. The Institute has also gained numerous tourism awards for industry excellence, becoming in many ways the benchmark for Maori tourism, even national tourism. It has a distinguished reputation and is often hailed as ‘the jewel in the crown’ of tourism in this country. This long-lasting institution seemed the ideal partner for this inquiry. We were fortunate indeed that the Institute generously agreed to share their plans with us as they reviewed the past forty years and considered their future as a key Maori tourism venture in this country, and, perhaps beyond these shores. We appreciate their generosity, and their openness and honesty in themselves playing the major part in this inquiry. The members of their leadership team are the researchers here. Our hope is that the inquiry will help them in their strategic review at this important stage of their development as a Maori and mainstream tourism leader.

The Inquiry Process

Building on the results of our first research project, our inquiry takes place on two levels. The first level is capturing the inside stories of the participant researchers, in this case, a group of key leaders within the Institute. In gathering the inside stories of the knowledge carriers, we were following our own consistent inquiry process. At this level, the inquiry is firmly within the traditions of collaborative research stories (Bishop, 1996), narrative inquiry (Cash, 1997, Connelly & Clandinin, 1990), and of historiographic research (Goodman & Kruger, 1998). At one level, our collecting of stories could also be seen as a form of ethnographic autobiography. Our model here is the work of Mary Kay Duffie, whose ‘autobiography’ of Maori Elder, Heeni Wharemaru entitled Through the eye of the needle (2001) explores the cultural experience of one significant bicultural person ‘from the inside’ (the emic) rather than from the outside, the objective perspective (the etic). More accurately, our inquiry seeks to engage both the emic and etic perspectives. Our ‘many storied’ approach reflects the insights of anthropologist Clifford Geertz as adopting a ‘polyvocal posture’, allowing a ‘thick description’ to emerge ‘using both the emic and the etic voices to expose, layer by layer, an authentic indigenous meaning’ (Duffie, 2001).
This monograph presents the stories of key players within the New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute and their Council as they were told to us. These stories, edited with assistance of the participants, form the greater part of this study. This story is the only story told by the research editors themselves. As we see it, it is important that we place ourselves within, and not outside of, the inquiry process and that we are prepared to be accountable to our peers, both Maori and Pakeha, for our part in this collective story. Perhaps the most important part of a bicultural research process is the sharing of the stories and the dialogue that ensues. It is through this dialogue that the contribution to the overall bicultural debate will most benefit, not only the business community (which has historically stood outside the debate as irrelevant to business), but also the many other wider communities of interest.

The second level is that brought about when the storytellers are confronted by The Twelve Critical Questions, which invite the storytellers to reflect critically on the experiences they have recounted. We came to require this critical level because we were shocked by how the knowledge carriers in our first inquiry, Maori funeral directors, were treated when they attempted to break into their industry. It was clear that a bicultural critical systems inquiry needed to be built into our methodology if the mainstream institutions and business interests were to become aware of the ethical fault-lines built into an essentially monocultural system. For this, as indicated above, we made use of what we call the Twelve Critical Questions. Our aim is not so much to develop our own critique of organisational life in this country as to depth the critique of our storytellers themselves. After all, they are for us the ‘knowledge carriers’.

What the stories tell us: Retaining the culture with integrity

The consensus of the storytellers about the role of the Institute and its future direction is impressive. In their own words, ‘The Act has created a unique institution with unique issues’. It is a ‘two-in-one organisation’ that ‘involves commercial and cultural values’. These values coexist in a ‘closely linked symbiotic relationship’, which could be characterised as ‘mana and money’. The cultural values derive from kiatiaki (guardianship) of the land and the thermal valley, and are ‘based on nature’. Both tourism (especially its core activity, guiding) and the arts and crafts are about ‘telling our stories’. Moreover ‘the arts and crafts have a spiritual side as well’. For them, the key success measure is the guarantee of the ‘authenticity of the cultural experience’. In this, an encouraging sign for the next forty years is the growing expectation by better-educated tourists for ‘culturally authentic experience’. The vision all share is of an Institute that is more and more seen as ‘a leader’, ‘a model’, ‘standard-bearer’, ‘instigator of Maori co-operative ventures’ in a wide range of fields in
which they have proven competence — tourism, heritage preservation, Maori start-up businesses, Maori arts networks, and indigenous arts preservation.

The storytellers appear to largely accept that the Institute has at times responded more strongly to its commercial drivers and are determined to redress the balance in their future development by a renewed focus on the Institute’s cultural viability. There are bold plans to extend and strengthen the cultural value of the tourism experience. They aim to ‘reconnect with iwi, to ‘expand how we are helping Maori’, and to ‘do more for the motu (the rest of Maoridom)’. They plan to reposition the Carving and Weaving Schools as places of higher learning. Despite their strong sense of place (Te Puia) and local and regional community (the Te Arawa people and Rotorua), they recognise the critical importance of their national role, ‘we travel from Kaitaia to the Bluff’ and ‘are not confined to Rotorua’. Through their guardianship of the Thermal Valley (Te Whakarewarewa) they are ‘a model to other indigenous cultures in land preservation’. They recognise that sharing their unique intellectual and cultural capital with all of Maoridom (the motu) as well as with other indigenous cultures is likely to be more important as the Institute becomes more ‘global’ in its focus.

But, as can be expected in any healthy organisation, there are debates about fundamental strategic issues. Are cultural and commercial values always in harmony (‘there is no contradiction between them’), or is there a need for ‘bifocal vision’ because ‘sometimes commercial and cultural values are different paradigms’? Does tourism drive culture or culture, tourism? Should the Institute maintain its focus, mandated by the Act setting it up, solely on the preservation of traditional arts and crafts on the grounds that successful Maori artists are so because ‘they know the traditional world as well as the contemporary one’? Or is there a place also for a Contemporary Arts school on the grounds that Maori culture ‘is a living culture’? Does the Institute need to develop some measures of cultural success, given that there ‘are no measures of cultural success’, other than the stark ‘Maori will tell you, what they think or walk away’ (and so declare the Institute irrelevant?). As the Institute is a national institution (the New Zealand Institute) and is accountable through the Act to (a largely Pakeha) Parliament, is there also a need for a dual accountability (or, as we have called it in our research a ‘double audit’) to Maoridom more broadly (the motu) to strengthen its claim to be a ‘prime repository of Maori culture’? And, given Robert McNamara’s family experience of a blending of cultures over generations, a further question emerges, one that bedevils all bicultural discourse, where do Pakeha fit into the picture? There are many signs that such questions are being and will be confronted in the new ‘Te Puia’ Institute. All relate to the key message of the stories, ‘to retain our culture with integrity’.
It did not surprise us that, when re-branding the Institute, its leaders chose to go back to the name of the original fortress site situated in the thermal valley (*Te Puia*). The task for the next forty years is clearly foreshadowed in this choice. The new brand draws inspiration for the future from its cultural origins. The Institute’s future is in its past. Strategically, its commercial success, which has already contributed so much to the tourism industry and to capacity building in Aotearoa/New Zealand, lies in building on its cultural mission. It is by developing this ethos that the Institute has historically differentiated itself in the national and global marketplace and will do so over the next forty years. For this Institute, it is necessarily culture that counts.

*E motuotia ana a waho kei roto he aha:*

*One cannot know from the outside what is contained within*

*(unless one can see inside)*
The Mentors

The Tumatanui series has benefited from the generous support of the following mentors for the past seven years. We are most grateful for their advice and encouragement.

Trevor Moeke

Trevor J Moeke, born of Ngati Porou of Ngati Awa, and Ngati Kahungunu, lives and works from the capital city of Wellington and currently works in the development of Wananga, and at a national level in the tertiary sector. He also works in Quality Assurance/Accreditation Projects for the World Indigenous Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC), New Zealand based.

He has an extensive career, with over 25 years experience in leadership and delivery roles within Māori education, economic development and broadcasting. He has continued to support and contribute to The Open Polytechnic’s key role in distance provision.

E rau rangatira ma tena koutou katoa.

The research team again brings a talent, dedication and methodology for inclusiveness and engagement — holding fast to the principles for research outlined and born in this land, and for others. To you both — kia ora! formidable, lasting!

The publication continues the Institution’s commitment to think and create in “panavision”.

I commend the Te Puia team and whanau for their courage in expressing their stories, in their voices, and in their contributions to learning about what makes things “tick and go” in Aotearoa.

The highlights of the dedication and the sense of taonga — legacy and commitment for a future built today — are strong, world-class ideas and practices.

The legacy is a people of talent and resolve; the business is with people!

Kia kaha ra.

Trevor J Moeke
TOBY CURTIS is considered one of the country’s foremost Maori educationalists. His distinguished career includes primary, secondary and special education teaching, lecturing at Teachers College and University levels, becoming Tumuaki (Dean) of the first Maori faculty in the country, and being appointed first Te Ahurei (Vice President Maori Development), then Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Auckland University of Technology. A former recipient of the Fullbright Award, Toby is active in a wide range of Maori organisations.

Kia Ora, Wayne and Michael,

I thoroughly enjoyed reading the material you sent me and virtually concur with everything that was stated, claimed and suggested. Because of my deep connection with Rotorua, the stories also brought back many memories of earlier days.

I was in Rotorua at the time they established the then Arts and Crafts Institute, under the stewardship of Paakake Leonard. I felt the resistance from the locals, including Maori, when the decision to charge for entry was publicized. All hell broke loose .... racism came to the fore, but way back then it was called something else! For more than a hundred years prior to this tariff being imposed, entry was free of charge. I recall Kuru Waaka, who was Kake’s deputy at the time, mentioning to me at his home during his retirement years, the reason for imposing an entry fee. Government did not provide any establishment grant as was virtually promised. The Board had got itself into debt because of this understanding. Despite this, the government still insisted that the venture had to operate and achieve a surplus return by year’s end. Hence, the entry fee. To satisfy the public opposition that the fee had a worthwhile purpose, they established a national carving school for the whole country, not just Maoridom. The government has never been slow to bask in the glory of the success of the Institute and still suffers from amnesia!

The different accounts recorded are valuable to use as a base to plan for the next decade and hopefully beyond. I am sure that Te Puia is already developing a strategic plan and staff professional development programme for the medium term, with the Rugby World Cup perhaps providing a focus. They are also uniquely placed to collate and develop the definitive comprehensive booklet outlining the history of tourism in Rotorua, as well as the historical and cultural sites, The Pink and White Terraces and Whakarewarewa, which every first-time visitor “must have”, as part of their visit. I wish them well for the next forty years.

Nga mihi ra,

Kia kaha

Toby Curtis
Russell Bishop

Professor Russell Bishop is one of this country’s most skilled bicultural researchers. He has developed a cultural and critical approach to Maori research that is embodied in his ‘Model of Cultural and Critical Consciousness’, a model that has profoundly influenced the bicultural approach adopted in this research endeavour. Russell is the author of many research papers and several books, and co-authored the acclaimed ‘Culture Counts: Changing power relations in Education’ (1999). Professor Bishop is currently Assistant Dean of Maori Education in the School of Education at Waikato University where he teaches research methods to the advanced students. From the beginning of this series Russell has guided the series editors, becoming ‘our friendly critic’.

Kia ora Wayne raua ko Michael

I read with interest the draft copy of your latest research report, Tumatanui No 4. Once again this report is well founded in a quality approach to research. For your recent work you have used Mason Durie’s model together with that of Ulrich and my own to develop an even better means of research analysis. The personal and cultural stories provided in this study are important ones that deserve our full consideration.

Keep up the good work,

Naku na

Russell Bishop (School of Education, Waikato University)
Bibliography


Appendix: Extract from the New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute Act 1963 (as amended)

NEW ZEALAND MAORI ARTS AND CRAFTS INSTITUTE ACT 1963

1963 No 51

AMENDMENTS
1967 No 104
1994 No 155

An Act to establish the [New Zealand] Maori Arts and Crafts Institute and to prescribe its functions and powers

14. Functions of Institute—

The general functions of the Institute shall be—

(a) To encourage, foster, and promote all types of Maori culture and the practice and appreciation of Maori arts and crafts;

(b) To train Maoris in the practice of Maori arts and crafts;

(c) To provide . . . demonstrations or exhibitions of Maori arts and crafts and suitable premises for any such demonstrations or exhibitions;

(d) To arrange and conduct exhibitions of Maori arts and crafts and of tours of performers demonstrating Maori arts and aspects of Maori culture;

(e) Develop and maintain areas in the Rotorua district or elsewhere as scenic or tourist attractions;

(f) To foster and maintain public interest in Maori culture and Maori arts and crafts;

(g) To assist in the preservation of Maori culture and Maori arts and crafts.

History
Section 14(c) was amended by s 2(4) of the New Zealand Maori Arts and Crafts Institute Amendment Act 1967 by omitting the words "in Rotorua or in the vicinity of Rotorua".