

## Developing a vision for the future of Aotearoa

I have a vision of a strong, vibrant and limitless future for Ngai Tahu. As kaiwhakahaere (chairman) of Te Runanga o Ngai Tahu I feel a weight of responsibility to help provide the opportunities that will see Ngai Tahu succeed. That success will be defined by the individual, but it will be the collective that gives the work true meaning.

We are 10 years on from our settlement with the Crown. It was a defining event in our tribal history, when six generations after the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, we were finally restored to a position where we can fulfil the visions of our ancestors.

The Treaty of Waitangi still holds great promise for our nation and within its words I believe rests a vision for the future of Aotearoa.

The Treaty is a vehicle for ongoing national building and resolution. It presents us with some unique opportunities for framing the quality of our relationship and building our nation together. At its most fundamental, the Treaty affirms the right of all of us to be here, with our own beliefs, values and associations with the country.

Moreover, I believe the real value of the Treaty in the 21st century is that it provides the vehicle for us to talk about our common vision for the nation. As a partnership document, the Treaty enables Ngai Tahu to engage with the government of the day on emerging and important issues.

We have an expectation of ourselves that we will do this responsibly and intelligently to progress not only our own interests but the broader interests of the wider community.

The fundamental nature of our relationship with the Crown, as defined by the Treaty, means that Ngai Tahu will continue to give effect to our responsibility to contribute to the national good.

Already we contribute significantly to the wealth and welfare of those in Te Waipounamu and it is our goal to be a significant contributor to the welfare of Aotearoa. Unlike multinationals, we will not be here only when the economic climate suits or the tax incentives are right. We are here for good.

In this sense I look forward to engaging with the Government

The Treaty of Waitangi is a partnership document that lets Ngai Tahu become engaged in important issues to advance the interests of the tribe and those of the wider community, writes MARK SOLOMON.



Turning point: Then prime minister Jim Bolger and Ngai Tahu leader Sir Tipene O'Regan hongi after signing the Ngai Tahu deed of settlement at Takahanga Marae in Kaikoura in 1997. Photo: PETER MEECHAM

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and community leaders on models for economic and community development and environmental management.

I sense a level-headedness with regard to recent community debate about Treaty matters. It is reassuring and provides room for relationship building, renewal and bright ideas. It is important now that we build on this goodwill as we deepen our understanding of each other and work toward

common outcomes.

The Treaty can provide a platform for government and iwi to work together to provide the most tangible and practical of outcomes – new infrastructure, improved utilities, job opportunities and better health outcomes.

Ngai Tahu has regained its position of being able to fully replicate the creativity and vision for the future held by those Ngai Tahu signatories to the Treaty.

The Treaty is both the affliction and the remedy, but our grievance period is over. The way forward is to fund and grow the capacity of our communities and we will look to the Treaty as a tool for doing that. The momentum on Treaty claims must continue; it is critically important to iwi, and the economic development of this country.

I have no doubt that recognition of the Treaty, and the rights of Maori under it, will be an inescapable feature of our constitutional architecture. Let's look for continued opportunities for reconciliation, let's be long-sighted when it comes nation-building, and let's share responsibility for making Aotearoa everything it can be for us and our children after us.

Although the number is still small, Islam has become one of the fastest-growing religions among Maori.

ABDULLAH DRURY explains why.

## Treaty compatible with Islamic philosophy

Waitangi Day provides us with an excellent opportunity, or an excuse, to examine the spread of Islam in Aotearoa among the Maori population. According to Statistics New Zealand, Islam is one of the fastest-growing religions among the tangata whenua, leaping from 99 in 1991 to 708 in 2005. The figure may now be over 1000.

Historically there have been sporadic if uneven attempts by immigrant Muslims to proselytise the Islamic faith here since the 1980s. In 1990 the national Muslim organisation, the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand, organised a First Official Meeting of Muslims and Maori at a Wellington marae. This was initiated by Dr Hajji Sandhu, then president of the federation, who went on to pioneer Muslim-Christian interfaith dialogue. Since then many Maori converts to Islam have been chosen for Islamic training courses in Malaysia or for free haj, or pilgrimage, trips to Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

Closer to home the Muslim Association of Canterbury organised an Aotearoa Maori Muslim Day in February 2003, partly at the mosque in Riccarton and partly at the Aranui marae. Several Maori

converts to Islam from the North Island were flown down, including prominent members of the Aotearoa Maori Muslim Association, which was set up in Hamilton in 2001.

The Aotearoa Maori Muslim Association was itself, for a period, active in mission work in prisons and evidently had some success in winning over some gang affiliates to Islam. This was famously derided by Winston Peters in 2005 during his election campaign.

Perhaps of more pertinence is that some Maori converts vocally perceive tino rangatira akin to the theological paradigm of defensive jihad.

Can Islam, or radical Islam, become a vehicle for Maori nationalism?

Tino rangatira is often defined as Maori self-determination or political sovereignty, while jihad simply means struggle and can refer to either an internal personal spiritual struggle or a jihad of the sword.

In a 2005 interview, the chairman of the Aotearoa Maori Muslim Association expressed support for Osama bin Laden in his campaign against US foreign policy.

Where is all this leading, one may ask?

Strictly speaking, from an

Islamic theological perspective, it is hard to see the Waitangi Treaty holding much weight among Muslims. Essentially, it is a piece of paper with ink on it – only as important or unimportant as this society chooses to determine. Composed and signed by Christian missionaries, Maori tribal chiefs and representatives of the British Crown, the Treaty itself has little bearing on or relevance to local Muslims beyond a few vague legal formalities that all citizens are obliged to observe. On the other hand, the intent of the Waitangi Treaty – as an agreement to share in the wealth and government of New Zealand by Maori and its newer non-Maori residents – fits in nicely with many aspects of traditional Islamic political philosophy.

It is difficult to see the spread of Islam here among Maori leading to violent social confrontation within New Zealand, despite the more paranoid critics. Islam in New Zealand is simply too peaceful in culture and spirit, and the overwhelming majority of Muslims here – both immigrants and converts – are by inclination too pacificist.

Abdullah Drury is the author of *Islam in New Zealand*.

### CORRECTION

An opinion piece on the Perspective page in yesterday's Press was incorrectly

attributed. The author of the article commenting on the Resource Management Act

changes was Federated Farmers national president Don Nicholson.

## It's difficult showing up to the protest rally in a BMW

Where have all the protesters gone? Gone to Wellington everyone. When will they ever learn?

Do you remember when Donna Awatere and Ripeka Evans headed off to Cuba to supposedly train in Marxist revolutionary tactics? Ripeka was quoted, at one time, as suggesting it was all right to spill the blood of white people here in New Zealand. She is now a consultant operating out of Whakatane.

Donna, of course, has had a much more colourful, and public life. She wrote books, joined the ACT Party and entered Parliament, before being charged with fraud over the Pipi Foundation and then sent to jail. She has probably had the hardest road of all the old-time radicals, but not because of hard out protest. She just screwed up.

Hone Harawira stands out as the obvious renegade gone good. He was a regular at Waitangi Day commemorations and he was often the man holding the bullhorn issuing the command for the next push over the bridge. A seething mass of brown bodies would lunge forward, moving symbolically closer to Te Tii Marae and Hone, wearing his sharkie sunglasses and a T-shirt, would be glaring with intimidation and leading from the front. Hone and his whanau are synonymous with Waitangi and the Tino Rangatiratanga movement, but

Tahu Potiki



nowadays we are more likely to see Harawira's mother, Titewhai, escorting senior politicians as opposed to yelling at them, and Hone, well, he is one of them.

I once saw a photograph of Hone Harawira standing with Shane Jones and Ben Dalton. They were the young radicals of Nga Puhī fostered by Sir Graham Latimer and encouraged to fight for the rights of their people. Dalton is now the CEO of the Crown Forest Rentals Trust and Jones is one of the young turks of the Labour Party. Well, that was until this immigration scandal set him back a stride or two. But Jones is no slouch. He made his mind up many years ago that being a ragtag Maori protester was not his game and that reform for Maori would best be facilitated via the more sophisticated

channels of government bureaucracy. I would be very surprised if this little slipup actually set him back.

I could go on. Mike Smith, the infamous, but useless lumberjack, is currently a documentary producer. Willie Jackson, who was a champion of the urban Maori underdog, is now a pretty famous broadcaster on television and talkback radio. Not to mention his brief stint in Parliament. Then there is Tame Iti, who really knows how to protest in bare-buttock style, and who was accused by Parekura Horomia of being "an ageing rock star".

So who are we left with to give us a good old-fashioned protest this Waitangi Day. I suspect there will be a few flag wavers and slogan shouters, but we won't remember any of their names. All the old hard-out boys are getting free Air New Zealand flights and Corporate Cab taxi trips up to Waitangi this year – all at the taxpayers' expense. It really is difficult showing up to the protest rally in a BMW.

Maybe all the big issues have been sorted out or perhaps the

modern bureaucracy has forced all the potential disgruntled players into a holding pattern. I don't quite know where they have all disappeared to, but I suspect that over the next few years things will change dramatically.

There is some suggestion that China's apparent silence on the question of democracy has been a result of the astounding success of the Chinese economy. So long as the government appeared to be performing well then there were few cries for democratic reform. Many are predicting that this complacent attitude will be overturned once the recession begins to bite. The people will no longer enjoy high rates of employment and, in a nation where there is no free health care or education, they will begin to demand democratic accountability.

An age of protest being launched elsewhere will most certainly herald protest on our own shores.

Just as the English suffragettes inspired our own local movement for women to acquire the vote, so too did the protesters of 1960s' US inspire the marches and demonstrations of New Zealanders for Maori land rights in the 1970s.

If we hit even lower points of unemployment and poverty then the people will take to the streets to have their voice heard and I genuinely look forward to seeing a new generation of radical thinkers.

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**Muțumesc, Sergiu!** 😊

Thank you, Sergiu!

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