

TE KOHANGA REO – MODEL OF ORANGA A TINANA – HORIANA ROBIN

Ko te kupu tuatahi ki te Runga Rawa

Ko Kahuranaki te maunga

Ko Ngaruroro te awa

Ko Takitimu te waka

Ko Ngati Kahungunu te iwi

Ko Horiaana Robin ahau

SITUATION

As we all know, our current government is launching a sustained attack against our identity as Maori and our sovereignty as tangata whenua. Some examples of this are - legislations to remove Maori wards on City Councils, the removal of Te Reo Maori in government departments and an assault against the Treaty of Waitangi. Over several decades, many gains for Maori throughout all sectors of society, have been hard fought for and progressed by Maori for the benefit of all. This unsettling situation calls for Kotahitanga and strategies to oppose this government's onslaught, least we progress backwards politically, economically, socially and culturally as tangata whenua. I believe that once the mainstream acknowledge us as the Tangata whenua of this country, then things can only be enhanced and improved for all.

INSPIRATION

I am inspired by the Kohanga Reo Movement, which in my opinion is the most significant, transformative and positive movement for Maoridom within the last 41 years. Our cultural values of tika, pono and aroha encapsulated not only within Te Kohanga Reo but on our marae and in our homes, I believe provides a template, a solid foundation, a strategy for us all to reach **Kotahitanga** as ngai Maori. Te Kohanga Reo is proof that **Kotahitanga** can be achieved across the motu because the unifying purpose is our **mokopuna**.

Mana Motuhake

Kohanga Reo was established to stem the loss of our language and initially was taught in homes, marae, halls, churches, any available space, with next to no funding and minimal resources. These obstacles did not hinder our nannies, koros, mums, dads, aunties, uncles, nephews, nieces, cousins and friends who committed themselves to the kaupapa of Te Kohanga Reo. They committed themselves because the purpose was our **mokopuna** and through our **mokopuna**, the survival of our language and identity as tangata whenua has thrived. From Kohanga Reo, Kura Kaupapa has followed and Whare Wananga.

For 41 years, despite all the hurdles Kohanga Reo has faced, the fruits of their labours have well and truly arrived. The most publicly known of this Kohanga Reo generation today, is Hana Rawhiti Maipi Clarke. She has made history by being the youngest Member of Parliament New Zealand has ever had and she is a Kohanga Reo baby, who knows her reo and lives and breathes tikanga Maori. There are many others of this Kohanga Reo generation, who are also confident in their identity and values as tangata whenua of this country. They are unapologetically Maori and are leading the way hei Maori within whanau, hapu and iwi and they are wonderful role models for their future generations,

kei te heke mai. The Kohanga Reo movement is a great example of **Mana Motuhake/Self determination**, instigated by maori for maori for the purpose of language and cultural preservation and supported within the entirety of Maoridom.

Kotahitanga

Te Kohanga Reo movement also provides the best example of **Kotahitanga** within Maoridom, because the Kohanga Reo is about **mokopuna**. Throughout the last 41 years of Kohanga Reo and despite our tribal, hapu differences etc. no one has thought it wrong to support **mokopuna**. If we remember to be **Mokopuna focused** first and foremost in all of our huarahi going forward, rather than focusing on funding and our egos, we will always unite with a common purpose and that purpose is **Mokopuna**. The **Te Kohanga Reo** movement has shown us that.

SOLUTIONS

Te Kohanga Reo also provides us with a model of **Oranga a tinana, Oranga a wairua and Oranga a hinengaro**.

This country's health system being the desparate shambles that it is, is a major threat to our health and therefore our physical survival. I believe we need to get back to our traditional health practices, our **Rongoa Maori** to stem this. Through our mokopuna at Kohanga and Kura, we can all learn about our indigenous plants, the karakia and tikanga of our plants, the growth and nurturing of our plants and of course the use of them. We need to **normalise** these **Rongoa** practices in our lives just as we have normalised the wearing of Moko Kauae.

Oranga a tinana

I am distrustful of Pakeha medicines with their inorganic properties, side effects and costs. I am not minimizing the usage of western medicines for some whanau but I don't like it when a lot of whanau, especially our elderly become dependant on pakeha medicines and the "suggestions" of doctors who are not God, that they need all of these chemicals in their bodies to survive. All of those pills come at a great expense and in my opinion Western health models are not the only health models or the best health models to follow. Western health models also fail to address our holistic approach to health, dealing only with the physical symptoms of illnesses. I suggest that we go back to our **rongoa maori** and normalise this matauranga and usage all over the country.

Oranga a wairua

As I write this, the Speaker of the House in Parliament, Maureen Pugh has rudely interrupted Karakia being performed in the gallery by a Te Whakatohea Kaumatua. She has called for "Order in the house". Te Paati Maori supported by the Green party and the Labour party have immediately called for the Speaker to apologise to Te Whakatohea. Whilst this is highly offensive not only to Te Whakatohea but to many of us, I myself am outraged. When is it tika to call "Order in the house" on Karakia, like it is something evil? How dare they! Heoi, it is another example of this government's disregard and disrespect for our values as tangata whenua. Karakia is tapu and our spiritual life is so important for our health and I take heart that Kohanga Reo, Kura and Wananga, start and end their days with **Karakia**. Having a spiritual life is part of our oranga, as it affects our sense of wellbeing, protection and guidance. Going back to our **rongoa maori** practices and normalizing it with our mokopuna will help strengthen our spiritual wellbeing, to help us face not only this government's attacks but life's adversities.

Oranga a hinengaro

New Zealand has the highest rate of suicide in the developed world, with most of that statistic being maori. The reasons for this are varied and I personally believe that we can become rangirua, when we are having the wrong thoughts and values, i.e pakeha thoughts and values. Having a spiritual life, karakia, knowing right from wrong will teach our children that life in all it's forms is precious and their lives are the most valued of all. Also a lot of our mokopuna are being affected by the pollutants in our environment and are being born in greater numbers with neurological conditions like Autism, ADHD and foetal alcohol syndrome to name a few. **Rongoa maori** is also healthy for our environment and as I keep saying, it is a tikanga we need to go back to for the health of our air, water, land and therefore our Oranga a hinengaro.

PROPOSAL

I propose that all Kohanga Reo and Kura Kaupapa around the motu start growing their own maara kai and rongoa maori, for all of the reasons I have given, as this will be so relevant and important for their future, for our environment and for our health and for our physical and psychological survival as iwi maori.

CONCLUSION

As Te Kohanga Reo in it's 41st year has shown, that their strategy for the preservation of Te Reo Maori has been **rongoa** for Ngai Maori. I believe the same passion, belief in ourselves and commitment to our values and beliefs can also be applied to our other assertions of **tino rangatiratanga**. Let us be brave, let our purpose and focus be our **mokopuna**, let's commit ourselves to the long game and be **Tipuna inspired and Mokopuna driven hei rongoa mo tatou**

No reira, ko enei aku kupu ruarua

Horiana Robin