

Keynote Address  
Mark Solomon  
Maori Research Symposium  
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### Wake-up call

#### **Mihi...**

I welcome the chance to address Nga Kete a Rehua the first Maori Research Symposium to be held in Te Waipounamu - and I must commend both Te Tapuae o Rehua and especially the staff from Canterbury University's School of Maori and Indigenous Studies - ,Aotahi - for having the initiative to organise what in my opinion is an event that is well over due.

Research, as we know, is the cornerstone of development – it informs our thinking and decisions, it enlightens us, gives us courage, enables us and leads us down creative and new paths of discovery. And while it provides us with solutions, research will more often than not reveal new questions to be answered as well.

In my experience - and I can only talk about the Ngāi Tahu experience - as an iwi I think we have not done enough to make the most of the opportunities that exist.

I view this symposium is a wake-up call for us – and my hope is that it heralds a call to action that will invigorate and refocus our attention on the community of researchers, scientists and academics in this room and around Te Waipounamu.

It offers us a wero – a challenge to – without putting too fine a point on it – get our act together!

I hope that this is the first of many symposiums creating opportunities for like-minded people to come together to network and build relationships which I believe are fundamental for success in any field of endeavour.

Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu isn't blind to the benefits of research – we have ventured down this path in the past establishing a Research Committee in 2001 charged with achieving greater coordination and planning in the areas of research undertaken by Ngai Tahu.

Back then we recognized that research activities undertaken by the iwi were often on an ad hoc basis and involved individuals, runanga and different units of Te Rūnanga working with various research organizations – and the situation hasn't improved much with time.

Today we continue to work with organizations like Manaaki Whenua and NIWA and the polytechs and universities of which Te Tapuae o Rehua forms an important conduit.

Te Tapuae has made in-roads in this area and has recently completed a stock-take of the research being undertaken within our partner institutions with relevance especially to Ngāi Tahu, but also all Maori. This symposium is one of the outcomes of that stock-take and the next positive and necessary step, but there is still much more that can be done.

Only recently I spoke at the Maori Business Symposium in Dunedin and there I talked a lot about the importance of relationships and sharing information and I truly believe that we just don't talk to each other enough and we don't take time out of our busy work lives to create opportunities to talk to each other - times like today! Ask yourself - why is this the first Maori research symposium to ever be held in Te Waipounamu – we all know it's a great idea – my guess is we simply haven't given it the time and energy needed to make it happen until now.

It's a simple premise - through relationships comes knowledge and with knowledge comes the wisdom and capability to build better futures – our futures!

One of the major issues before us is about gaining access to the opportunities of a globalised world and it will be new technologies that will enable us to achieve our aspirations. Creating an asset base, building a Maori economy, growing our skills and our willingness to do so will drive this - fuelled by good and relevant research.

New Zealand has a rapidly changing demographic profile. Over half of the Maori population is under 23 years of age. The next generation of Maori will form around a fifth of the total labour force and there is an emerging Maori middle class. We need to be thinking about this and planning for the future – research is one of the keys to preparing and capitalising on these trends.

Maori participation in education is improving. A recent report from the Ministry of Education shows 43 percent of Maori students leaving secondary school in 2007 achieved level 2 NCEA or above. Maori tertiary participation is at record highs – this is the generation that carries our aspirations.

Unemployment is low, Maori are recognised as one of the most entrepreneurial people in the world and wherever we look Maori are succeeding in business, both nationally and overseas

Success for Maori will be by Maori. We need to begin to operate smarter. We need to add value to our products and services and become the price makers. Talented individuals need to be celebrated, for Maori success will also be New Zealand success.

We have to have clear purpose, the right structures, and the right people and we must be able to recognise when to co-operate and when to compete.

We need to get smart about research, how to work together, how to identify what research we need to be doing, how to fund it, how to utilize it and how to maximize its benefits for the benefit of our people and our futures.

Now, more than any ever our potential has never been greater, some time spent concentrating on building relationships within iwi katoa, sharing our knowledge and our experience will not be time wasted and is a key to fully utilizing the potential of Maori research.

This year Ngāi Tahu is celebrating 10 years since the signing of its Deed of Settlement, a lot of water has flowed under our bridge, we have learnt much in that time - as have other iwi – collectively we have a lot to offer each other - we have valuable experiences to share and similar needs and desires. Why repeat or replicate research or make the mistakes others have already made.

That is why I applaud this symposium and what I hope it will start in Te Waipounamu – a dialogue that will lead to change.

I believe the conditions are ripe for growing Ngai Tahu research capacity and capability, we have a commitment to a shared vision, we have talent coming through and the resources to recognize and grow this talent. Now we just need the commitment.

There have been, are and will be critical junctures in Ngai Tahu development when research is vital to our ability to advance and to develop ourselves in the most advantageous way.

The critical issue is the ability of Ngai Tahu to exercise control over that process.

Back in 2001 through the Research Committee we identified a long list of gaps that need filling in our research requirements, including:

- comprehensive demographic data on Ngai Tahu whānau and the Ngai Tahu tribal profile
- economic development models integrating tikanga and commercial viability
- cultural, scientific, political, social and historical impacts of environmental management approaches
- Potential of technology usage in language and cultural and other development targeting whānau
- Methods for utilizing group purchasing potential
- How to mobilise Ngai Tahu consumers
- Science capacity and capability in marine biology, aquaculture, farming and land management.

...and that's just for starters. Over the past seven years that list hasn't changed, instead it has only gotten longer.

Ngāi Tahu has very specific needs and issues that research can assist – and the reality is that not a lot of national or international research meets the needs of an iwi at the cutting edge.

If you are the first indigenous people in the world to own a natural resource like pounamu or want to start an incentive savings scheme for your people where do you go for help if no one has done it before.

This is where relationships and networks and the value of taking time to talk to your neighbours bears fruit.

For example I understand Canterbury University has had a marine research laboratory in Kaikōura for many years...**adlib**

- Te Korowai o te Tai o Marokura - benefits
- How do we access that information?

Also Lincoln University has done over 50 years of collecting research around the Oaro Wetlands/River....**adlib**

- Huge benefits to local community
- Again, how do we access this info?

Every year our Ngāi Tahu Holdings Seafood division writes off about 40% of its quota because there is no demand for certain species in the market...**adlib**

How do we create demand?

How do we create new value added products from these species and take them to market?

Who will help us?

As I understand it many of our brightest minds are begging for research to do.

Pegasus Health is a prime example of Ngāi Tahu using its head and working with an organization to carry out meaningful and useful research...**adlib**

- Maori not going to the doctor
- Maori not filling out their prescriptions

I think this illustrates quite nicely the benefits that can come from talking to each other and taking the time to build relationships – so let's get smarter and start talking!

Kia ora...