



Editorial

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Edition Eight of the Journal of Indigenous Wellbeing Te Mauri-Pimatisiwin reclaims the original intention to enable expression of authentic Indigenous voices freely accessible to Indigenous peoples worldwide. With guidance from the Journal Editorial Board, this refreshed journal is presented in three categories. The first category prioritises the voices of lived experience through reflections and essays. The second category presents scholarly Indigenous voices in an array of interesting professional and academic articles. The final category reintroduces Mahi Toi- the crafting of mātauranga (knowledge) into artistic form. This more expansive and inclusive section allows for a fuller range of

indigenous knowledge and expression to be heard that is often excluded from academic writings. Beyond aesthetic purposes, creativity has allowed indigenous peoples the ability to survive and adapt to the massive changes brought about through historical challenges such as colonisation, including the decolonisation of academia (Hernandez Ibinarriaga, 2025; Smith, 2021).

The infinitely diverse nature of Indigenous voice is the central thread that weaves this collection together. The diverse collection presents lived experience, academic and professional articles and reflections from around the world, alongside creative works. Indigenous cultures and languages have

always mirrored the natural world around us, people and the environment intimately entwined, reflecting each other. All that exists within this world is interconnected. An intricate web of life that for thousands of years was honoured and lived with in harmony (Gbadegesin & Gbadamosi, 2024; Sinclair, 1991).

The modern colonial extractive behemoth that dominates our world currently is run by faceless multicorporate interests using monocultural institutions, farming and horticultural practices. This one-size-fits-all approach to life is as far away as we can possibly get from harmonious Indigenous models that recognise diversity. The poly-crises we face in all spheres of our society including health, environment and education are the direct result of colonial man's patriarchal determination to dominate and subjugate our Mother Earth to the will of one culture, one language. A path of destruction that all Indigenous cultures worldwide warned their colonisers against - and were ignored. Sadly, Indigenous peoples have also paid the greatest price for this destruction (e.g. for peoples of the Pacific Islands, Bryant-Tokalau, 2018). To this present day, Original Peoples still receive so little of the abundance that continues to be stripped from them and our Mother Earth.

Devastation by genocidal destruction, aimed at disintegrating cultural structures of indigenous governance and lifeways sustained over generations, has created a landless, cultureless wasteland, by destroying our links to land, waters and each other. The pathway to recovery and optimal health has long been held to by colonised Indigenous cultures throughout the world as reclamation of these original lifeways.

Perhaps one of the most powerful and meaningful ways in which humans make sense of the world around us and our connections to one another is through storytelling (Lee, 2009). We recognise each other in the stories we share. Seeing ourselves in the stories that people tell can help us to feel less alone in our own struggles, give us courage and inspiration to keep going when times are tough and remind us of the common humanity that we all share. Ultimately, these stories repeat universal themes that everything and everyone is interconnected - our fates are intertwined with the world around us.

The foundation of Indigenous cultures are the stories we share from one generation to the next and the languages in which we speak them. The stories of Creation and how we and the world came to be, our relationships to 'all our relations' the human and more-than-human, to the spiritual

'unseen' world and the 'seen' or material world. We share stories of our ancestors- their triumphs and their downfalls- as both instructions of to how to live a good life, and as cautionary tales of what not to do. These stories hold wisdom of how to live in balance with the natural world and with each other. These stories provide us with pathways to restoring health and balance if this should be disrupted, and they give us pathways into the future that preserve wealth and abundance for the generations to come.

Lived Experiences and Reflections

E tipu e rea mo ngā rā o tou ao

Grow up and thrive for the days destined to you
(Sir Apirana Ngāta, of Ngāti Porou, Statesman and
Leader -1874-1950)

Indigenous languages and their stories evolve through time and are intrinsically connected to the natural world around us and enshrined in the stories told through the generations by our parents, elders, leaders and medicine people around campfires, in community gatherings and over shared food and activity. Our stories and languages are deeply embedded in our DNA, passed on from parent to child to grandchild through whakapapa (genealogy) an unbroken chain from the beginning of time.

We are in a time of continued revitalisation and resurgence of Indigenous cultures

worldwide. There is a transformation occurring from within academia and the birth of this journal was an intentional action to foreground indigenous knowledge within a system historically inimical to indigenous thought and endeavour. For decades, trail-blazing Indigenous academics and mentors, alongside whānau (family) and community leaders have carved out transformative and healing spaces, within which our rangatahi (young people), our students, our babies can be nurtured to thrive, instead of merely survive (Smith, 2021).

All of the papers included in this edition showcase fostering by academic mentors of the next generation of indigenous scholars- the understory, the succession plan, the dream of our expanding reclamation and healing of the spaces that tell the stories that determine our futures.

Despite the impact of historical trauma such as genocide, displacement, war and colonisation, the seeds of our ancestors remain embedded within us. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the beautiful reflective piece by Ratana et al., and the voices of young people in response to our call for papers with a focus on lived experiences of youth. Te reo Māori (language) and English are woven together to create a masterpiece of reflection upon what it means to be rangatahi (young

person) - not bounded by chronological age, rather a fuller and more encompassing understanding of life development and the task of moving from protected childhood to autonomous adulthood, deeply embedded within culture and community. Reclaiming a collective experience of 'a village raising the child' within a modern society obsessed with individuality.

The youth voices resonate also in McGregor et al., presenting their perspective of Anishinaabe knowledge and how this knowledge is protected and passed on from one generation to the next. This piece illustrates how current research practices can be adapted to allow for the unique cultural processes of bringing elder wisdom to meet youthful curiosity and energy to allow for the conscious and intentional transfer of knowledge and wisdom with integrity and respect.

Youth are featured again in an uplifting and inspiring reflection from Antonio et al. on the inaugural celebration - Kalākaua Lā Hānau at Mauiola Ke'ehi. The intention of this event was to emphasise the central role and importance of remembering, reclaiming and honouring cultural stories, histories, practices, places and ancestors in the health and wellbeing of Indigenous people. Feedback from Hawaiian youth and community who attended this event was almost unanimous in their agreement that

not only was the day an absolute success of reconnection and celebration of their culture, but overwhelmingly supportive of the need for more opportunities that this kind of event provides into the future.

These three pieces lead our current edition to honour the important, and often neglected, voices of our youth, our future. Voices that are all too often lost and silenced in the modern world, leaving them to feel powerless, unheard and unworthy. Placing our youth on centre stage allows for the honouring of the ancient knowledge that flows through their veins, speaking in the tongues of their ancestors.

These reflections are followed by the powerful piece written by Paora Moyle reclaiming cultural understandings of the whare (house) as a taonga (treasure), elevating the mundane and practical modern understanding of the housing crisis we are currently experiencing worldwide to a deeper issue of rangatiratanga (Indigenous sovereignty) and echoing the global Indigenous cry for 'land back'. Kāinga (home) is a sensitive issue when viewed through the lens of colonisation that has disrupted Indigenous ties to whenua (land) and whakapapa by such practices as land theft and forcible displacement. The Indigenous voices of grandmothers and great-grandmothers are honoured here in their assertion of their right to re-establish

these ties under the founding document of Aotearoa New Zealand, Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Treaty of Waitangi). Their voices are clear, demanding that papakāinga (original homes) be returned to whenua (land) for the generations to come, reconnecting uri o Hauraki (the descendants of Hauraki) to their turanga waewae ('place to stand', their homelands), re-establishing the balance for the health of both tangata whenua (people of the land) and the whenua itself.

Together these pieces instil hope, pride and celebration of the intergenerational taonga (treasures) that we as Indigenous people inherit from our ancestors and our elders-not least of all our whakapapa embedded within and embodied by our youth. Beginning with these offerings from our youth and our grandmothers, we are reminded that we are all taonga.

Academic and Professional Papers

Ka Whawhai Tonu Mātou

Struggle Without End

(Dr Ranginui Walker of Whakatōhea, Academic and Leader - 1932-2016. After Chief Rewi Maniapoto of Ngāti Maniapoto in 1864)

Colonisation caused death and destruction to the Indigenous lifeways of many people globally through the imposition of governance, educational, social, penal and health structures foreign to the incumbent human occupants of the lands they

'conquered', often through violence and force. Physical diseases such as influenza alone killed millions of Indigenous peoples worldwide. This genocide has gone hand in hand with ecocide, the decimation of our more-than-human relations through 'progress' that looks very much like the rape and pillage of our Mother Earth. The impact on nature and Indigenous peoples has far-reaching and generational negative effects on the health and wellbeing of people and planet, leading to the poly-crises such as global warming, species extinctions, widespread pollution, famine, suicide and cancer.

In the early days of colonisation, there was an imposition of societal institutions foreign to Indigenous cultures such as monotheistic religions forcefully replacing Indigenous spiritual beliefs, practices and faith. Similarly, an education system culminating in the lofty heights of academia, asserted a worldview and associated practices as the only legitimate way to accumulate and share knowledge, excluding all natural learning systems of Indigenous peoples. Once established, this system helped to ensure the simultaneous virtual exclusion of Indigenous peoples from imposed structures of power and influence in this 'new world'. Ever resilient and resourceful and able to adapt, Indigenous peoples have, against all odds, managed to assail these imposed

structures with vigour and now can be found 'successful' in these modern-day institutions, albeit in relatively small numbers still.

However, the struggle and challenges remain real and this fact is reflected in all the following pieces that maintain mainstream academic rigour and adhere to scientific mores. In some instances challenging these at the same time while also acknowledging Indigenous cultures, knowledge and lifeways. This almost impossible balancing act, often necessitated out of survival in environments inimical to Indigenous health and wellbeing is astounding and inspiring.

The paper by Quinn et al., reflects this challenge perfectly, calling into question the deficit approach of many researchers towards the health and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples. Drawing upon the quantitative results of previously conducted population-based studies, the paper reframes the narrative by asking what and how healthy functioning manifests itself, rather than focusing on what is 'wrong' with Indigenous peoples. This identifies promising future steps to analyse health statistics through the lens of health, rather than framing results by lack and dis-ease and ultimately to understand what flourishing looks like for indigenous peoples.

Along similar lines, Lee et al., bravely examine the extremely sensitive topic of sexual health, including statistical analysis of Indigenous Native American College students' responses to a survey on their knowledge and attitudes to the use of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). Barriers are identified as well as the need for culturally grounded strategies to improve uptake for this form of HIV prevention practice. While specific to this pre-exposure prevention method, this paper opens the doors to many wider ranging issues facing Indigenous peoples regarding appropriate health care in general and the need to conduct any research from a sound base of cultural knowledge and sensitivity.

BearEnemy et al., demonstrate another way in which Indigenous people who are incarcerated, and often distanced from their original indigenous lifeways and values, can engage with financial knowledge that is essential to survive in modern society beyond prison walls. They present a culturally adapted Self-Evaluating Financial Literacy Program, engaging with Indigenous people in a culturally sensitive and appropriate manner, preparing for re-entering the community, to maximise their ability to navigate financial matters and enhance their quality of life, and that of their families. In a world dominated by money and the economic bottom-line, this

is an essential life skill to ensure Indigenous people newly released from incarceration can survive in society and help to prevent recidivism.

Moving from the individual focus of these first papers, Ahuriri-Driscoll et al., bring into the light the need to examine health and wellbeing of Indigenous individuals with respect to the influence and impact of the world around them, particularly the effect of culturally determined factors. This excellent piece examines the politically determined mainstream 'social investment' approach of the current New Zealand government with respect to cultural appropriateness. The authors argue that if this new mainstream approach is to come anywhere near addressing and remedying the multiple and stark health and wellbeing disparities, for Indigenous Māori as compared to non-Māori, there is a need to employ models and theoretical understandings of Māori health and wellbeing presented in this paper. Failure to remedy this oversight is further contended to ensure discrepancies will continue to grow, rather than lessen.

Rēnata et al., support the previous paper in its analysis of government strategic failure to adequately address the needs of Māori in a health system that is failing them. They critically examine one of the New Zealand government's strategic documents

intended to implement 'social investment' through the Health Workforce Plan 2023/24. This piece reflects on the frequently stated 'partnership' of Māori and settler Pākehā within Aotearoa being relegated to rhetoric because of the continued undermining of the Treaty by politicians in the incumbent right leaning government. Their thorough analysis shows the social investment plan falls far short of adequately providing a culturally responsive framework to allow for the changes to occur that are needed to ensure Māori enjoy fair and equitable access to health services on par with their non-Māori counterparts.

Carter et al., illustrate the wonderful ways in which professional and research practice can and does , with heart and intention, include the elements of culture to meaningfully include Indigenous communities and help to build their research capacity and capability. This approach provides pathways for mainstream researchers to do no harm and bring tangible and meaningful benefits to the communities they engage with. The reciprocal beauty of enhanced research results is in part achieved through the honouring of relationships that already exist within the community that in turn engender trust and greater engagement through creating a 'research community'-

another inspiring example of collective endeavour.

The theme of looking to the role that wider socio-economic determinants of health play as discussed in previous articles in this section is extended by Karapu et al. This paper shares the knowledge gained from the lived experiences of Māori practitioners' in the area of Māori family and sexual violence. This knowledge is grounded firmly within communities and provides a thorough analysis of the Māori family and sexual violence workforce within Aotearoa. This article illustrates the stark contrast between the lived reality of Māori practitioners and community on the ground and the rhetoric of proposed government policies and strategies, also aptly illustrated in the previous articles. Karapu et al bring to light the many systemic and institutional barriers faced by the Māori workforce to providing the culturally appropriate manaaki (care) and aroha (respect, love) that this mahi (work) requires to meet the needs of Māori whānau experiencing sexual violence. The authors clearly state that for real change to occur and for real health and wellbeing to be achieved for Māori, government policy and practice needs to reflect and listen to the frontline practitioners who can champion true

healing from the intergenerational trauma experienced by many of our whānau.

Mahi Toi – Creative Works¹

Kāti, anei tēnei o ā tātou taonga kua puta hei whakamīharotanga mā te tangata. Ko ngā momo toi e whakaata ana i tā ēnei whakatipuranga titiro ki te ao.

Well, this is our treasure that has appeared for people to admire. The types of art illustrate how these generations look at the world (1997).

(Sir Hirini Moko Haerewa Mead of Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Tūwharetoa, Tūhourangi, KNZM, Māori leader, anthropologist, academic, historian, artist, teacher, and writer. 1927-).

Edition eight concludes with a newly added section that honours perhaps one of the most neglected ways in which Indigenous voice expresses itself within academia- the creative arts. In saying this, Indigenous creativity cannot be suppressed! All of the writings presented in this edition demonstrate the creativity and courage required to adequately challenge the dominant professional, academic and institutional status quo - both in practice and in scholarly writings.

Prior to the publishing of this edition, the Journal Editorial Board met to discuss the journal, including a re-examination of the original intentions for creating the journal,

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The word toi explained by Te Aka Māori, the Māori language dictionary, has levels of meanings that

include 'native, Indigenous, aborigine', a 'tip or point', a 'summit', the 'origin, or source (of mankind)', and 'art, knowledge'.

and its future. There was unanimous agreement that this journal was essential to continue as an opportunity for Indigenous voices to be heard (in all its forms), with a focus on the voices of lived experience and a need for creative work to be included.

Creativity has long been acknowledged by Indigenous cultures as a direct link to the 'unseen' world of wairua (spirit), to our ancestors, to health and wellbeing, to beauty, to hope, to joy.

Creativity allows a wealth of expression far beyond the borders of secular academia and has long been excluded and marginalised by narrow materialistic borders of modern society and education. Important aspects of Indigenous voices have previously been made largely invisible, as well as devalued and ignored.

This addition to our Journal is intended to give Indigenous contributors an opportunity to 'speak the unspeakable' through creative means when words contained within accepted secular science and technology fail. An opportunity to reclaim our own authentic voices when 'academic speak' and professional jargon fall far short of describing the worlds we inhabit. We have been conditioned to regard our visions and realities distinct from modern society as 'crazy', and we have

often been labelled, pathologised and punished should we dare to try to articulate our unique experiences. A return to our traditional and natural creative mediums can provide pathways to health and wellbeing that transcend this conditioning and can allow us to access realms of experience and expression that our ancestors accepted as 'normal'.

We have only two pieces to present in this section, but we envisage that this section will be well populated in the future. Both contributions are poems that complement each other. Janine Copeland's poem follows the whakapapa of colonisation to the present day and was a creative inspired response to a written essay assignment given to her as part of her academic Indigenous Studies. This lyrical and 'pull no punches' poem pummels you with the undeniable history of colonisation and can be hard to read all at once. However, Janine artfully brings you into a present-day of reclamation and leaves you with an understanding of the resilience and greatness of our Indigenous forbears handed down to us, *through* us.

Phillipa Te Paea Pehi's poem is much shorter and more succinct and came to her through inspiration when listening to the wisdom shared by a First Nations elder and medicine man, she was interviewing for her research project 'Hikoī for Healing'. The

poem flows from her heart to tell not only her own story, but the story of her ancestors that resonated with the wisdom of this revered elder from the other side of the world through the stories that he shared of his experiences and of his people.

Mauri Ora!

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