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# Why Place Māori Children with Māori Caregivers?

A dissertation presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Social Work (Applied)  
Massey University, Palmerston North,  
New Zealand

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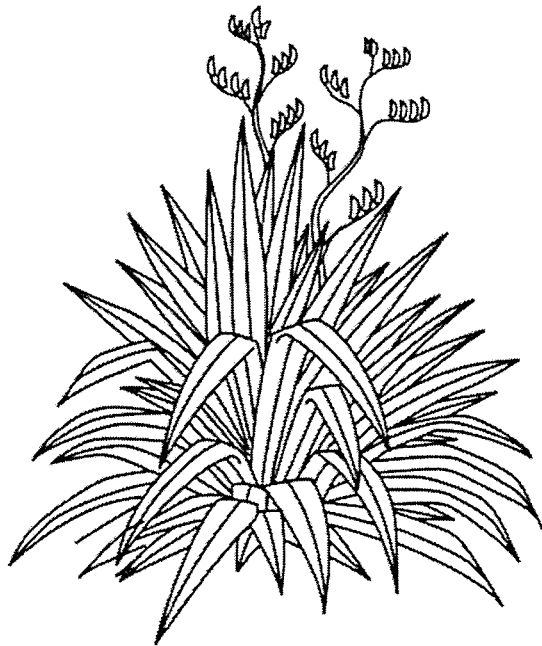
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## WHAKATAUKI

Hutia te rito o te harakeke  
Kei hea te komako, e ko  
Kī mai ki ahau  
He aha te mea nui o te ao  
Maku e ki atu,  
He tangata, he tangata, he tangata  
*(Te Meringaroto - Te Aupouri)*

*'When the heart is torn from the flax bush,  
where will the Bellbird sing?  
You ask me what is the greatest thing on Earth,  
My reply is, it is people, it is people, it is people.'*



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Kia mihi te mano tini kua wheturangitia, rātou te whakahorohia o ngā momo tikanga tiaki tamariki, hei whakamekemeke ngā kawekawe o ngā whānau mō naianei; nā te kī o Te Aupouri, 'He kopu puta tahi, he taurawhiri tātou. Whiringa-a-nuku, whiringa-arangi te whaita e!' Heoi, waiho ake rātou ki a rātou. Tātou ngā kanohi ora o rātou mā, ngā kaitautoko, ngā kaipūpuri o aua tikanga mō ngā whakatupuranga a heke mai nei.

Ngā mihi tuarua ki ōku kaumātua i awhi mai i te rangahau nei, ngā mihi mahana ki a kōrua. Ki ngā tokotoru, a Heni rātou ko Ripeka, ko Hana, he mihi aroha ki a koutou mō te kaha o koutou kōrero i puta mai i o koutou mahi hei tiaki tamariki i runga i te kaupapa o Mātua Whāngai i ngā tau kua hipa. Kei a koutou, te mana, te ihi o te rangahau i whai ake nei.

Ngā mihi hoki ki a Wheturangi Tapiata-Walsh, toku kaiwhakahaere kei te Whare Wananga o Massey me ōku whānau mō ō koutou tautoko, ō koutou manawanui ki ahau i te wā i mahi ai i te rangahau nei. Nā tō koutou wero, ka whakamāramatia ai ahau te nako e pā ana i te mahi nei.

No reira, tēnā anō koutou katoa.

## ABSTRACT

### *Why place Māori children with Māori caregivers?*

This qualitative study explores the concepts of customary care, recognising the Māori worldview and emphasising the value of placing Māori children with Māori caregivers. It examines the establishment of the Mātua Whāngai Programme in the context of the social/political issues of the 1980-1990s and the impact of legislation and reports on the placement of Māori children outside of whānau.

The participants in this study were three caregivers in the Mātua Whāngai Programme. They each had experience of customary care practice in their own whānau and who generalised this experience in the context of the Mātua Whāngai programme.

In this community, the Mātua Whāngai programme ran from 1985 to 1991. The study shows that when the programme was disestablished, not only did Māori children lose access to whānau whāngai (foster families), the community also lost tribal linkages, both locally and nationally, along with effective networks with other social and governmental agencies established by Mātua Whāngai within the Lower South Island.