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Hei Whenua Papatipu: Kaitiakitanga and the Politics of Enhancing the Mauri of Wetlands

A Thesis Presented for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

Māori Studies

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HE MIHI

*Ka papia mai ngā wai o Tukuaha
Ka rere atu ki Te Whakaki-ki-Runga
Ka rere atu ki te Whakaki-ki-Raro
Ka huihui ka wānanga ngā wai e rua
Ka puhake ngā wai o Whakaki-nui-a-Rua*

Ka mihi ake ki aku tīpuna mō koutou i tiaki i ēnei wāhi, nā koutou i whāngai tonu te wairua, te ngākau, te tinana o mātou ngā waihotanga o koutou mā e hikoi tonu ana i runga i te mata o te whenua. Nō reira rātou te hunga kua menemene ki te pō, kua whāia te ara a Tāne, moe mai, okioki mai.

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*Ma te tokomaha ka ka te ahi:
By the many the fire will be kept burning*

ABSTRACT

The intent of this doctoral study is to develop a better understanding of the dynamics and complexities of the contemporary practice of kaitiakitanga. There are two specific foci: Māori relationships with whenua, and; Māori-state resource management relations. Together these foci provide a platform to identify implications for the future development and practice of kaitiakitanga.

Two interrelated research questions were developed to explore the contemporary practice of kaitiakitanga: what factors shape kaitiakitanga of wetland ecosystems, and; what are the affects of legislating for culture on the practice of kaitiakitanga? A case study of kaitiakitanga of Whakaki Lake, qualitative interviews with active kaitiaki and an evaluation of state environmental policies and laws were used to address these questions and theorise the dynamics and complexities of contemporary kaitiakitanga.

This study begins by arguing that customary relationships between hapū and whenua and the ability of hapū to practice kaitiakitanga have been significantly influenced by the introduction of European notions of land tenure and land use. Although the ancestral landscape has changed considerably since annexation of Aotearoa New Zealand, landscapes generally and waterways specifically remain highly valued and continue to contribute significantly to the spiritual well-being and cultural identity of hapū. Transformation of the ancestral landscape, loss of native biodiversity and environmental degradation, however, continue to threaten customary relationships with whenua and the integrity of indigenous ecosystems. As a consequence, protecting the mauri of natural ecosystems has become a key priority for contemporary kaitiakitanga.

Protecting the mauri of natural ecosystems is an extension of social responsibilities that emerge from a customary understanding of the environment based on mauri and whakapapa. Therefore it is argued in this study that mauri tū: restoring the balance of fragmented and degraded ancestral landscapes is an imperative that has emerged from a whakapapa-based understanding of the environment and associated relationships with whenua. *In situ* real life experiences of active kaitiaki involved in this study confirmed the importance of mauri tū as a tribal imperative and provide exemplars of acts of kaitiaki that enhanced or restored wetlands, lakes, waterways and associated natural resources. This study demonstrates that hapū possess a strong sustainability

culture or *toitūtanga*, to ensure that the ancestral landscape continues to nurture the *hapū* and remains as a cultural and spiritual base for future generations.

Tikanga tiaki or guardianship customs that facilitated environmental protection were used by the participants in this study to realise *hapū* obligations and responsibilities to wetland ecosystems. This demonstrated that contemporary *kaitiakitanga* is fluid, adaptive and has evolved into highly organised and strategic activities. New derivations of *kaitiakitanga* such as ecological enhancement and restoration were able to contribute to improved environmental outcomes for fragmented and highly modified wetland and waterway ecosystems.

Exercising *kaitiakitanga* has become synonymous with participation in the state resource management system. Participation however, has only led to a limited range of opportunities for addressing Māori environmental interests. Therefore, this study argues that engagement with the state currently only provides for a limited expression of *tino rangatiratanga* and *kaitiakitanga*. The incorporation of the customary concept of *kaitiakitanga* into statute has resulted in the co-option of *kaitiakitanga* as state definitions and provisions for Māori relationships with *whenua* are inadequate for fully realising Māori environmental interests. Furthermore, the state controls the types of activities that can emerge, and by extension regulates Māori participation in resource management which includes the customary practice of *kaitiakitanga*. Therefore, by participating in the state resource management system, Māori energies are diverted away from *hapū* environmental priorities, obligations and responsibilities. Critical issues of ownership and addressing environmental degradation are subsumed by the state agenda.

The *hapū*-based restoration experiences explored in this doctorate indicate that it is possible to contest the limitations that exist within current local authority practice and transform the resource management system to provide for a fuller expression of *kaitiakitanga*. Engagement with the state, constant political pressure and critical reflection of the integrity of the practice of *kaitiakitanga* are vital if Māori are to transform existing practice. Change is essential if Māori environmental interests are to receive greater attention and to ensure that local authorities are more responsive to *hapū* understandings of what it means to be an active *kaitiaki*. Māori-state contests, therefore, are critical to transform state systems, processes and practices towards greater recognition and provisions for core Māori environmental interests and *kaitiakitanga*.

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GLOSSARY

This glossary provides definitions for the Māori words that are used throughout this doctorate. The meanings reflect the context in which the words have been used. Therefore caution must be exercised when using the words in a different context. Consult a Māori dictionary for a more comprehensive account of the multiple meanings that some words can have. Definitions of the Māori words have been sourced from Te Aka Māori-English, English-Māori Dictionary.¹

A definition of Māori words is provided the first time the word appears in the body of the thesis. When the definition is short it is provided in parentheses directly after the word. When the definition is long it is provided as a footnote so that the definition does not disrupt the flow of the sentence.

Kupu Māori	Definition
ahikā	Occupancy rights
aroha	Love
atua	Ancestor, gods, deity
aukati	In the context of rāhui refers to a border or boundary that marks a prohibited area.
awa	River
āwhina	Help, assistance
hāngī	Earth oven, food cooked in an earth oven.
hapū	Subtribe
haukāinga	Home base
Hineahuone	Earth maiden
inanga	Whitebait
ira atua	Supernatural being
ira tangata	Life principle, human element
iwi	Tribe
kai	Food
kaitiaki	Person, people, organisation or spiritual guardian (i.e. taniwha) responsible for exercising kaitiakitanga.
Kirituna	Eel skin tribe
Kurawaka	Place where female element was located by atua.
kaimoana	Seafood, shellfish
kāinga tipu	Ancestral home
kaitiakitanga	Customary practices associated with caring and looking after the environment.
kanohi-kitea	The face that is seen.
karakia	Prayer
karanga	Call
kauae raro	Exoteric knowledge or knowledge related to the physical world.
kauae runga	Esoteric knowledge or knowledge associated with the realms beyond this world.
kaumatua	Elder
kaupapa	Topic

¹ <http://maoridictionary.co.nz>.

kaupapa Māori	A research approach.
kaute	kitchen
kawa	Protocol
kete e toru	Three baskets of knowledge.
kōhanga	Māori preschool
mahinga kai	Garden, cultivations
mana	Prestige, authority, control, power, influence, status
mana tū	Maintaining tribal authority.
Manaaki/manaakitanga	To support, take care of, hospitality, kindness
mana whenua	Territorial rights, group that exercises authority over a specific area.
manuhiri	Visitor, guest
marae	Courtyard in front of the whareniui (meeting house).
māra kūmara	Kūmara garden
Mātauranga/ mātauranga Māori	Customary knowledge
mātua	Adult
maunga	Mountain
mauri	Life principle
mauri ora	A healthy state of mauri.
mauri tū	Restoring the balance
moana	Sea
ngākau	Heart
Ngāti Kahungunu	Tribe from lower East Coast of North Island.
noa	Free from tapu.
oha	Speech, last words
pā	Fortified village
pā tuna	Eel weir
Pākehā	Non-Māori, person of European descent.
papatipu	Ancestral land
Papatūānuku	Earth mother
pepeha	Tribal saying, proverb
pure	Ritual to remove or lift tapu.
rāhui	Temporary ritual prohibition.
Rangatiratanga/ tino rangatiratanga	Sovereignty, right to exercise authority.
Ranginui	Sky father
rohe	Area
rongo	Physical senses such as hearing, touch, smell and taste.
Rongomaiwahine	Tribe at Mahia Peninsula.
takiwā	District, area, territory
tamariki	Children
Tāne	God of forest.
tangata whenua	People of the land.
tangi	Funeral
taniwha	Water spirit
taonga tuku iho/taonga	Gifts handed down from the ancestors/treasures.
tapu	Sacred, restricted, set apart
taura	Rope
tautoko	Support
Tangaroa	God of sea and fish.
Tawhirimātea	God of wind and storms.
Te Aō Marama	Realm of being.
te ao wairua	Spiritual dimension
Te Arawa	Tribe from Rotorua region.
Te Kore	Realm of potential being
Te Pō	Realm of becoming

te reo Māori	Māori language
tiaki	To look after, care
tikanga	Correct procedure, custom, habit
tikanga tiaki	Guardianship customs
Tupuna	Ancestor
tohu	Signs
tohunga	Expert, priest
tohu mana	Signs of power from the spiritual dimension, te ao wairua.
tohumoana	Signs and manifestations through the sea.
tohuwhenua	Signs and manifestations through the land.
Tono	Request
tuakana	Elder
tuna	Eel
tūpāpaku	Corpse, deceased
tūrangawaewae	Place where one has rights of residence and belonging through kinship and whakapapa.
tū tangata	Stand together in solidarity.
uha	Female, femininity
ūkaipō	Mother
utu	Repay, pay, make a response, avenge
uri whakatipu	Future generations
waewaetakamiria	Footsteps that caress the land
wāhi tapu	Sacred site
waiata	Song
wairua	Spirit
waka	Canoe
wānanga	Debate, discussion
whaikairo	Carving
Whakatipuranga ruamano	Generation 2000. The Ngāti Raukawa tribal plan.
whānau	Family unit
whanaungatanga	Relationships, kinship, sense of family connection
whakapapa	Genealogy
whakatauki	Proverb, saying
whānau ora	Family health and wellbeing
whare wānanga	Higher school of learning
whenua	Land

ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

LGA	Local Government Act 2002
NIWA	National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PCE	Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment
RMLR	Resource Management Law Reform
RMA	Resource Management Act 1991
The Treaty	Treaty of Waitangi 1840
The Trust	Whakaki Lake Trust