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**Māori voices from within: A study of the
perspectives of former offenders and Probation
Officers in the criminal justice system**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of

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Abstract

This thesis examines Māori offending and rehabilitation from a Māori perspective using kaupapa Māori methodology. The research considers the perspectives of four Māori former offenders and the factors that contributed to their rehabilitation, whilst considering the perspectives on preventing recidivism from Probation Officers who identified as Māori and work in the Community Probation Service.

In order to provide a background for an informed analysis and discussion of the research findings, the thesis discusses the problem of Māori over-representation in prison and explanations of criminal offending from an international and local perspective. The thesis examines Māori traditional society and social control and the impact of colonisation, before considering criminal justice trends in offending and rehabilitation and the theory of desistance. The focus is on positive alternatives for Māori in the criminal justice system, and examines Māori views of the criminal justice system and strategies for recovery, using the *Strategies to recovery* framework postulated by Durie (2003).

Kaupapa Māori informs this research and uses qualitative methods of inquiry as they align with the principles of kaupapa Māori. In-depth interviews with former offenders and a focus group interview with Probation Officers, allows the participants to express their realities from their worldview.

The findings from the research participants advocate: a) Māori solutions to the discourse concerning Māori offending; b) a holistic approach; c) the value of involving whanau in rehabilitative interventions; and d) access to a secure identity and cultural affirmation.

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