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The Tensions Facing a Board of Trustee Model Within
the Cultural Framework of *Kura Kaupapa Maaori*

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ABSTRACT

The Tensions Facing a Board of Trustee Model Within the Cultural Framework of *Kura* *Kaupapa Maaori*

This study originated from personal experience, as a member of a Board of Trustee (BOT) within *Kura Kaupapa Maaori (KKM)*. The workload required for *Kura* compliance with government regulation and legislation, was phenomenal. The BOT model seemed to be structured on a corporate model of governance with accountability to the Ministry of Education. This contradicted with the needs of *Kura whaanau* to be involved in *Kura* decision-making. The BOT model unintentionally created a separation and tension between *whaanau* and BOT members.

This research set out to explore the BOT model of governance within our *Kura*, from a cultural perspective, rather, than researching problems identified by ERO. The research undertook a review of the literature that placed the BOT model within the 1984 -1990 Economic Reforms. It highlighted the impact of past government policies, and administration, on the *Maaori* language and culture to illuminate the cultural, economic, political and social context of the establishment of *Kura Kaupapa Maaori* and the doctrine of *Te Aho Matua (TAM)*.

The BOT model, and *KKM/TAM*, are founded on differing values. The study was approached from a *Kaupapa Maaori* perspective; not wishing to reaffirm the negative stigma of past research undertaken of *Maaori*. The objectives of the study were to gain an understanding of *whaanau* cultural capacity, perceptions and understanding of *KKM* and *TAM*; and also, *whaanau* understanding of the BOT model. The research design consisted of a case study. This involved a questionnaire to all *whaanau*; and in-depth discussions with a sample of twelve *whaanau*. Appropriate ethical considerations were given to the process, which addressed both academic and cultural needs.

Findings clearly identify the structure, and nature of the BOT model, being problematic within the cultural framework of a *KKM* underpinned by *Te Aho Matua*. The values and principles between the model and *TAM* fundamentally conflict. Findings also identify key factors, that both government and *Kura whaanau* can utilise, in advancing *whaanau* governance.

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“ E tipu e rea moo ngaa ra oo to’u ao

Ko ou ringaringa ki ngaa raakau a te Paakehaa hei oranga moo too tinana

Ko too ngaakau ki ngaa taonga a oo tipuna hei tikitiki moo too maahunga

Ko too wairua ki te Atua naana nei ngaa mea katoa”.

“Grow tender shoot for the days of your world

Turn your hands to the tools of the Paakehaa

for the well-being of your body

Turn your heart to the treasures of your ancestors

as a crown for your head

Give your soul unto God the author of all things”

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