

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

Kia Rauka I te Tūranga Memeitaki no te Iti tangata Ānuanua o te Kuki Airani
Towards attaining holistic wellbeing for the Rainbow community of the Cook Islands

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

Master

In

International Development

Massey University, New Zealand.

Valentino (Valery) Tefa'atau Wichman

2024

Tua Tapapa-Abstract:

Kia Vai to tatou piri'anga na roto I te papa'anga

May our connections live on through our shared genealogy

Kia Orana and welcome to this scholarly exploration of Tūranga Memeitaki, or Wellbeing, within the Ānuanua, or Rainbow, Community of the Cook Islands, guided by the principles of Akapapa'anga (genealogies) and Kai Vānanga (elevated conversations).

This thesis is a deliberate endeavor to shed light on the experiences of a unique and often marginalized community. It aims to address the question of what is Tūranga Memeitaki for the Ānuanua community?

Grounded in the Akapapa'anga methodology, which delves into the intricate web of relationships and connections among individuals and groups, this research employs Māori genealogical analysis to unearth the nuanced dimensions of Tūranga Memeitaki within the Ānuanua community. By drawing upon family trees, oral traditions, historical records, and diverse information sources, this approach offers a comprehensive understanding of the community's wellbeing dynamics.

To navigate the sensitive nature of discussions and the subject matter concerning the Ānuanua community, a novel method known as Kai Vānanga Vataavata has been developed. Inspired by other Pacific approaches, this method has been customized to accommodate the specific needs and concerns of marginalized communities, ensuring respectful and culturally appropriate data collection and interpretation.

Throughout the enquiry, the Kai Vānanga Vataavata method has undergone continuous refinement to optimize its efficacy in capturing the diverse perspectives and experiences within the Ānuanua community. Given the distinct challenges faced by LGBTQ+ communities worldwide, a nuanced understanding of Tūranga Memeitaki for the Ānuanua community holds significant implications for addressing these challenges effectively.

The research methodology incorporated interviews, focus groups, and literature analysis to explore the multifaceted dimensions of wellbeing and its impact on holistic human experience. By engaging directly with members of the Ānuanua community, this study aims to amplify their

voices, illuminate their narratives, and contribute to the development of tailored policy solutions and research recommendations aimed at enhancing their overall wellbeing.

The principal outcomes derived from the Kai Vānanga Vataavata highlight the imperative of conducting research that is culturally relevant and led by Ānuanua for Ānuanua. It underscores the urgency of ceasing the compartmentalization or 'othering' of the Ānuanua community, recognizing resilience and beyond both within this community and more broadly, and transitioning from a focus on wellbeing to an emphasis on wholebeing.

‘Akameitaki’anga –Acknowledgements

Tei na roto iaku te reo akameitaki’anga ki toku kopu tangata, toku ai teina, ai tuakana e te Pa Metua tei akono e tauturu mai iaku i roto i teia tuatau ranga pokai e te kimi maarama. Kia Akameitaki katoa te iti tangata Ānuanua , te au putuputu’anga Ānuanua i roto i te Basileia tei turu e aka’epa’epa i taku angaanga- meitaki ma’ata kia kotou katoatoa. Ki taku puapii tei tauturu iaku pera katoa toku ai taeake no to kotou akakoromaki. Ki toku kopu tangata no to kotou manakonako’anga iaku pera katoa toku tokorua tei tauturu e tiaki iaku i roto i teia tuatau tauta kia akaoti meitaki i taku api’ianga. Meitaki ma’ata.

The Ānuanua stories shared have opened my eyes to the struggles faced by many of our rainbow family members in the Cook Islands-your steadfast determination to overcome these challenges has profoundly moved me. I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the organizations and individuals who have connected me with the Ānuanua participants, enabling me to hear and learn from their invaluable experiences. The commendable support these advocates provide in amplifying Ānuanua voices is crucial in bringing about positive change. I am also grateful to the broader academic and research community for their guidance and mentorship throughout this journey. The expertise and wisdom shared by my supervisors and colleagues have played a pivotal role in shaping this thesis. Lastly, I want to convey my deepest appreciation to my family, friends, and loved ones for their constant support and encouragement during many long weekends and nights. Your love has been my steadfast source of strength.

All ethical approvals and research permits have been acquired for this research and are available in the appendices. This thesis contains one publishable paper for which I was the sole researcher and primary author. Parts of Chapter 2, Chapter 3 & 4 have been submitted in an altered form by the 11th Annual International Conference on Sustainable Development (ICSD) held from September 18 to September 20, 2023. The organizing committee of the International Conference on Sustainable Development has confirmed that it is fine to use the paper submitted to ICSD for this thesis.

‘Akakoro’anga-Table of Contents

Tua Tapapa-Abstract:.....	III
‘Akameitaki’anga –Acknowledgements	V
‘Akakoro’anga-Table of Contents	IV
List of Tables and Figures.....	VII
Te Au Kupu: -Glossary of Terms	VIII
Kupu Tāpoto-Abbreviations	XI
‘Akaepaepa’anga-Dedication.....	XII
Kapi 1: Te Akamata’anga – Te nga’i I kapua ia mai, ei au – from whence I sprung	1
1.1 Kaveinga e te au ui’anga-Research Aim, Research Question(s), Objectives.....	3
1.2 Ea’a te puaping o te reira? What is the importance of this?.....	4
1.3 Kupu pu’apinga-Key Terminology	5
Akapapa’anga Ara Tangata	5
Vānanga	5
Ānuanua	6
Tūranga Memeitaki	6
1.4 Structure and style.....	7
1.5 Murāngā Mata-Motivations	8
Kapi 2: Tatau’anga Nakirokiro – Critical Literature.....	10
2.1 Understanding Tūranga Memeitaki (Wellbeing) for the Ānuanua (Rainbow) community of the Cook Islands.....	10
2.1.1 Wellbeing as a contested concept	10
2.1.2 Western and Global North conceptions of well-being	11
2.1.3 Development and wellbeing	13
2.1.4 Criticisms of western conceptions of wellbeing	14
2.1.5 Indigenous understandings of Wellbeing	16
2.1.6 Towards a Cook Islands Māori approach to Tūranga Memeitaki (Wellbeing):.....	19
2.1.7 Community-centered approaches for LGBTQI+ communities.....	20
2.1.8 A word on Intersectionality:	21
2.1.9 Conclusion.....	23
Kapi 3: Te Ipukarea e Te Iti Tangata Ānuanua: Historical account of our homeland and the rainbow community.	24

3.1 Te Kuki Airani-The Cook Islands.....	24
3.1.1 Structure of traditional Cook Islands society:.....	26
3.1.2 Nga Mana e toru also known as Kuru Pou toru	27
3.2 The Ānuanua community.....	28
3.2.1 Size of the Anuanua community.....	29
3.2.2 Te au putuputu’anga Ānuanua – Rainbow Organizations in the Cook Islands.....	31
3.2.3 The Policy and Legislative space in the Cook Islands and the Ānuanua community.....	33
3.2.4 Tūranga Memeitaki (Wellbeing) and the LGBTQI+ (Ānuanua) community.....	40
3.3 Conclusion.....	41
Kapi 4: Akate’ate’amamao e te Kimikimi’anga- conceptualising the Akapapa’anga Framework and Kai Vānanga Vataavata Methodological approach	42
4.1 Akapapa’anga Framework	44
4.2 Atuitui kia Kai Vānanga Vataavata	48
4.2.1 Understanding the semantics -Vānanga to Kai Vānanga	49
4.2.2 Arriving at Kai Vānanga Vataavata:.....	55
4.3 Toku Tūranga-Positionality:	60
4.4 Ethics	62
4.4.1 Manako’anga paruru-Ethical considerations:	62
4.5 Conclusion:.....	64
Kapi 5: Ko’ianga e te Aka’iri’anga -Research findings and Analysis.....	66
5.1 What is Tūranga memeitaki for the Ānuanua community in the Cook Islands?	67
5.1.1. Tūranga Marū-Comfortable and Safe	67
5.1.2 Ora’anga Mātūtū- The trinity (physical, psychological, spiritual) of holistic health	73
5.1.3 Muraanga Mata: Inspiration and aspirational outlook and moving beyond wellbeing	76
5.2 Towards a Ānuanua definition of Tūranga Memeitaki	79
5.3 Conclusion:.....	80
Kapi 6: Akako’u anga e kia Akatinamou – bringing everything together.....	81
6.1 Preliminary findings for a Ānuanua wellbeing model.....	81
6.1.1Tūranga memeitaki is about a journey, not a destination.....	82
6.2 Ānuanua Wellbeing+ model.....	84
6.3 Other research findings- lessons learnt	85
6.3.1 Api’ianga 1: Ānuanua as Ta’unga in society.....	85
6.3.2 Api’ianga 2: Stop “othering” us.....	86

6.3.3 Api’ianga 3: Resilience and beyond	86
6.4 Contribution to Indigenous methodology and methods:	88
6.4.1 Culturally appropriate and meaningful Research by Ānuanua for Ānuanua	88
6.5 Ta’iku’anga Kaveinga- Policy considerations	90
6.5.1 Inclusive Policy Formulation	91
6.5.2 Comprehensive Health and Social Services	92
6.5.3 Anti-Discrimination Policy and Legislation.....	92
6.5.4 Education and Awareness.....	93
6.5.5 Reo Māori and Akono’anga Māori –Language and culture	93
6.5.6 Advocating for Social Justice.....	93
6.6 Conclusion:.....	94
Kapi 7: Akaoki te meitaki- Conclusions and giving back to the community	95
Reo akameitaki’anga e te akamaro’iro’i – words of thanks and encouragement.....	96
Bibliography	100
Appendix I: Cook Islands Crimes Amendment Bill 2023	116
Appendix II Cook Islands National Research Committee Permit	123
Appendix III Massey University Human Ethics Approval	124
Appendix IV: Consent forms	125

List of Tables and Figures

Table 1 Te Ara Akapapa’anga Nui 2020+ Definition of Wellbeing (CPPO, 2021a)	20
Table 2 Ānuanua Population Estimates.	31
Table 3 Ānuanua Organizations in the Cook Islands.....	32
Table 4 the Cook Islands Ānuanua Journey for Equality	35
Table 5 Cook Islands Legislation Analysis for Ānuanua Community Issues.....	37
Table 6 Cook Islands Policy Analysis for Ānuanua Community Issues	37
Table 7 Comparisons between NSDA 2020+ and Ānuanua definitions Of Tūranga Memeitaki.	80
Table 8 Ānuanua Wellbeing Model (Wichman, 2024)	82
Table 9 Ānuanua Wellbeing+ Model (Wichman, 2024).....	84
Figure 1 Cook Islands Maori Society structure, Wichman (2024).....	27
Figure 2 Nga Mana e Toru: three sources of power in Cook Islands Society (images taken from open internet source)	28
Figure 3 Percentage of students and their sexualities Futter-Puati (2017)	30
Figure 4 Te Tiare Inc Logo	32
Figure 5 TAOA and PRDE Cook Islands Logos	33
Figure 6 Second Parliamentary Select Committee meeting- L-R Tatoryanna Utanga, Lady Tuaine Marsters, Valery Wichman circa 2017	38
Figure 7 Valery Wichman addressing Te Tiare members after 2019 Chair of Select Committee announcement ..	38
Figure 8 Third Te Tiare Association submission to Parliamentary Select Committee 2019. Submissions made by Valery Wichman, Dr. Debi Futter-Puati and Janette Olliver.	39
Figure 9 Decriminalisation day- Cook Islands Parliament 14 April 2023 Prime Minister Mark Brown and Associate Minister Tingika Elikana with Te Tiare and PRIDE Cook Islands supporters. Photo credit: Daniel Fisher	40
Figure 10 Akapapa’anga framework (Wichman, 2024).....	47
Figure 11 Kai Vānanga Vatavata method (Wichman, 2024).....	49
Figure 12 Valery Wichman circa 2021	97

Te Au Kupu: -Glossary of Terms

The Cook Islands Māori definitions have been sourced from the author’s understandings and from the online Dictionary of Cook Islands Languages (2016) including A Dictionary of the Māori Language of Rarotonga by Stephen Savage (1962) and the Cook Islands Māori Dictionary by Buse and Taringa (1995). Words have been organised according to the Cook Islands Rarotonga Māori Alphabet – A, E, NG, I, K, M, N, O,P, R,T, U,V (Buse & Taringa, 1995, p. vi). Letters that are not part of this alphabet are put at the bottom of the list.

‘Akairo	Sign or omen
Akapapa’anga	Genealogy
Akamaro’iro’i	to encourage
Akameitaki	Make well, praise, give thanks
Akanoa	Make secular from sacred
Akapapa’anga/papa’anga	Genealogy, pedigree. It also means Founding, basing, layering, arranging in order.
Akatere	Chair or lead
Akatika	Approve or agree
Akavaine	To be a woman or Transwoman
Akatane	To be a man or Transman
Akono’anga Māori	Māori customs or Culture
Amu	Chant especially old war chant, or a love chant, or one reciting an epic tale
Ānuanua	a rainbow which is used in this thesis to mean the LGBTQI+ community of the Cook Islands and its diaspora.
Api’i’anga	Used in this thesis as lesson
Ara Tiroa	Cultural obligation of every Cook Islander to look after manuiri (guests) and provide appropriate food and/or gifts as acknowledgement and appreciation towards them
Are Vananga	Cultural obligation towards tribal title holders and traditionally was about helping in building their house
Au Vaine	Reign of women. Traditionally a powerful institution of women who

	Controlled village affairs.
Enua	Land
Ingoa	Name
Ipukarea	Homeland
Iti Tangata	A loosely defined kinship; one's 'own people' from the same tribe.
Kai Vananga	Elevated conversation with the spiritual realm
Kai Vananga Vataavata	Elevated conversation with the spiritual realm that is attentive. Used as a research method in this thesis.
Kama'atu	Wise, wisdom. Used in this thesis as words of wisdom.
Kapi	Chapter in this thesis.
Kaveinga	Direction or strategy
Kau Vaine	Group of women and this thesis refers to the sisterhood.
Kauono	Representative
Kite mārama	Māori Knowledge
Kopu tangata	Extended Family
Kuki Airani	Cook Islands
Manuiri	Guest or foreigner
Māori	Of native origin, Indigenous to the Polynesian race of the Cook Islands
Matakeinanga/Vaka	Tribe
Murāngā Mata	something for which one has great longing. Used in this thesis as motivation
Ngutuare Tangata	family that you live with or nuclear family.
Oire	Village
Ora	Time
Ora'anga Matūtū	Strong and healthy
Pae Tokerau	Northern group of the Cook Islands
Pae Tonga	Southern group of the Cook Islands
Pātireia	Kingdom or Nation
Pe'e	Rhythmic chant usually commemorating an event

Raerae (laelae)	A colloquial term used for an effeminate boy. It was also seen by participants in this research as a derogatory teasing term.
Reo Māori Kuki Airani	Cook Islands Māori language
Reo tupuna	Ancestral language
Taeake	Friends or cousins
Ta'iku'anga	to make a suggestion or consideration
Tangata tātā miniti	Secretary
Tao'anga	Tribal title
Tapere	Sub village
Tateni	Exaltations
Te Moana Nui o Kiva	Pacific Ocean
Te Rangi	The sky
Tiaki	Custodian or caretaker
Tuatua Aka'aravei	Introductions where the speaker connects to the audience through genealogical and historical links
Tupuna	Ancestor
Tumutevarovaro	Ancient name for Rarotonga.
Tu Mataora	Feel Happy
Tūranga	Location or site where one lives or occupies.
Tūranga Maru	Feel at ease or comfortable
Tūranga Memeitaki	Wellbeing
Tūtū Vaine	In the image of a woman.
Tūtū Tane	In the image of a man.
Vā	Space
Vānanga	Talk, converse
Vatavata	Be attentive, listen attentively

Kupu Tāpoto-Abbreviations

GDP	Gross national product
GNI	Gross national income
ICSD	International Conference on Sustainable Development
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and other identities
MIRAB	Migration, remittances, aid, and bureaucracy
MVPFAFF+	Pacific rainbow identities of Māhū, Vakasalewalewa, palopa, fa‘afafine, ‘akava‘ine, fakaleitī (leitī), and Fakafifine (Thomsen & Brown-Acton, 2021)
NSDA 2020+	Cook Islands National Sustainable Development Agenda 2020+
PROFITs	People, Resource management, overseas engagement, Finance and Transportation
SOGIESC	Sexual orientation, gender identities and expressions and sex characteristics
SIDS	United Nations classification of Small Island Developing States
SITES	Small Island tourist economies
WEIRD	Western, Educated, Industrialised, Rich, Democratic.

‘Akaepaepa’anga-Dedication

To my mother, Celestine Rose Poona, for all your gifts, struggles, and sacrifices for me to be here today. Though life has been challenging, it is through you that the foundations of education were planted in me, and which enabled me to progress on my journey through life.

To my father, Puai Tane Wichman, whose steadfast support and sponsorship has been my guiding light throughout this academic journey. Your love, wisdom, and relentless belief in my capabilities has shaped the person I am today.

May the Papa’anga tell our story for generations to come...

Kapi 1: Te Akamata'anga – Te nga'i I kapua ia mai, ei au – from whence I sprung

Ko au teia ko A'u ma Taurua

This is I, A'u with Taurua

Kavea te kura ki runga I te Marae ko Avarua

Bringing the sacred message onto Avarua

This is a Tateni invoked by A'u ma Taurua – two paramount Mataiapo tribal titles of Tangiia'u Mataiapo Tutara and Vaikai Mataiapo Tutara of Takitumu of Tumutevarovaro (Rarotonga). When it comes to the event of installing the Ariki on Tumutevarovaro, they are known by their teina Ariki titles of Au Puru Ariki and Taurua Ariki, or A'u ma Taurua. This tateni was invoked by Au ma Taurua at the installation of the first Tinomana Motoro Ariki of the Vaka Puaikura district on the Marae Avarua, and from that time on, they, together with the Kau Ta'unga, carried out the sacred rites of installing all Ariki on Tumutevarovaro (Rarotonga). I begin here because I am a direct descendant of Teariki-Nuku-A-Ki-Roto, the first Au Puru Ariki & Tangiiau Mataiapo Tutara holder, who was given the name by Tangiia Nui, the great warrior Ariki who delineated and allocated the land on Rarotonga with the help of Teariki-Nuku-A-Ki-Roto and introduced the current traditional tribal title system, with the exception of some tribal titles that were on Tumutevarovaro before Tangiia Nui. I also represent Tangiiau Mataiapo Tutara as the Kauono (representative) for the Ngati Au of Takitumu, a responsibility that I take with the utmost respect.

In order to know where I am going, it is important that I know where I come from, and it is at this juncture that I pay respect to Akapapa'anga, or genealogies, as a cultural paradigm and storytelling tradition that explains the Cook Islands Māori view and dictates that I must start any enquiry through tuatua akaaravei'anga or introductions to establish who I am and whence I sprung and further to guide how this research may proceed. My Akapapa'anga takes me across Te Moana Nui o Kiva and beyond. It traverses time (Ora), space (Vā) and connects us to people (tangata) and all other entities. It permeates our understandings and Values systems, and as Powell (2021) describes, is a process of narration that creates knowledge.

I am a product of a beautifully changing and ever-diverse world. Born in Auckland, New Zealand, to a mother who is part Cook Islander of the first generation born and raised in Grey Lynn, New Zealand My maternal grandmother is an only child; however, my mother was adopted by her

maternal grandparents and effectively became my grandmother's sibling. My mother's papa'anga links in the Cook Islands connect to Atiu, Aitutaki, and Rarotonga.

My father was born on Rarotonga and migrated to New Zealand when he was about 10 years old due to the health of my grandfather. The family set themselves up in Te Atatu, west Auckland—the stories of which illustrate the harsh realities of the migrant dream in Aotearoa for Pacific families in the late 1970s and early 80s. My father is the youngest of 12 children and the first in his family to graduate from university. My father's papa'anga links in the Cook Islands connect to Atiu and Rarotonga and to Raiatea, Borabora, Tahiti and Samoa.

Shortly after my parents married and my younger brother was born, they decided to move to Rarotonga. I grew up most of my childhood in the tapere (sub-village) of Akaoa in the village of Arorangi on Rarotonga with my younger brother and was raised by my parents and the wider family. We had intermittent visits to my family in Auckland, which was a highlight of the year for me, and these formed a connection that was never broken. When I finished Tereora College, I went to the University of Auckland and graduated with my Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws degrees. My younger brother went to the University of Otago and graduated with an applied science degree. Both of us moved back to Rarotonga and worked in government. I now work as Director of Central Policy and Planning at the Office of the Prime Minister and as a director of my family business. My brother now lives and works in Noumea, New Caledonia, as a fisheries scientist. My parents have since gone their separate ways and started new families. Such is the dynamic of the ever-changing landscape of families, and such is my story. What keeps us together in all of this is our connections through or shared Akapapa'anga.

As I sit here under the Patai tree on my tupuna Puai's (my father's name's sake) land called Atupare in the tapere of Kavera in the village of Arorangi, Rarotonga, I cannot help but think of the many blessings that my Tupuna have left me. As a tiaki (guardian or custodian) for my Enuā, Reo tupuna, and Akono'anga Māori I have been given the responsibility of ensuring that a legacy is left for te uki a muri mai (future generations). Hence the impetus to write about and protect the knowledge and understandings imparted to me. It is in this vein that I begin this enquiry within the tradition of Akapapa'anga by introducing myself and reflecting on my familial connections and relational aspects of my history that have brought me to this point.

1.1 Kaveinga e te au ui'anga-Research Aim, Research Question(s), Objectives.

Having established the foundational elements of tuatua aka'aravei, it is now time to delve into the enquiry by outlining the research aim, question, and objectives.

Te akapeea mai nei koe?

What are you doing?

This is a common query posed by Cook Islands Māori elders when observing someone engaged in an unfamiliar task. It encapsulates a deep-rooted cultural curiosity and desire for understanding. It is in this spirit that this research endeavors to address the following enquiries:

Research aim: Understanding Tūranga Memeitaki of the Ānuanua community for better policy making.

Research question: What is Tūranga Memeitaki in the Cook Islands for the Ānuanua community?

Objective 1: Describe the concept of Tūranga memeitaki within the Ānuanua community, providing a comprehensive description of its meaning and significance.

Objective 2: Understand the views and experiences within the Cook Islands Ānuanua community with regard to Tūranga memeitaki and policy making.

Objective 3: Identify the gaps between the NSDA 2020+ wellbeing definition and other definitions of wellbeing for the Anuanua community.

By exploring this question and objectives this study seeks to shed light on the complexities of wellbeing and policymaking within the Ānuanua community, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of their experiences and informing potential avenues for positive change.

1.2 Ea'a te puaping o te reira? What is the importance of this?

Papa mai koe kia 'atui atu au

Recite myself and I shall weave myself to you.

Pe'e mai kia tano, e ka o'ora ia atu au to taua marae

Chant correctly and the sacred ground will be revealed

If you know who you are then I will reveal my sacred secrets.

(Taru Moana, 1965 cited in Jonassen, 2005, p. 85)

By anchoring this research in the wisdom of kama'atu, and emphasizing the significant role of people in the Māori worldview and cosmology, the significance of focusing on the Ānuanua community becomes evident. This approach not only honors the ancestral wisdom passed down through generations but also addresses a significant gap in scholarly literature. The Ānuanua community, much like similar communities worldwide, has remained largely invisible in academic discourse. By delving into the wellbeing of this marginalized demographic, this research aims to shed light on overlooked areas of enquiry, thereby contributing Valuable insights to existing scholarship.

This enquiry holds promise for enriching our understanding of the Ānuanua community's experiences and challenges, thereby filling critical research gaps. Through meticulous examination and analysis, this study will provide a comprehensive exploration of factors influencing the wellbeing of the Ānuanua community. By uncovering and elucidating these dynamics, the research endeavors to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of community wellbeing, both within the Cook Islands context and potentially beyond.

Furthermore, this research has practical implications, extending beyond academia to inform policy and interventions aimed at improving the wellbeing of the Ānuanua community. By generating evidence-based insights, this study can guide the development of targeted policies and programs tailored to this community's unique needs. By amplifying the voices and experiences of the Ānuanua community, this research seeks to facilitate positive change and promote social equity and inclusion.

1.3 Kupu pu'apinga-Key Terminology

As I will be discussing and elaborating on various aspects of the Cook Islands world view while also traversing other world views, it is important that the use of terminology is understood. This research delves into the Māori cultural paradigm of Akapapa'anga and Vānanga, but to fully explore this topic and understand the terminology, I must go beyond critical literature, Māori records, and cultural legacy. This is due to the limited academic research on 'Akapapa'anga and Vānanga, the scarcity of theoretical work based on Māori-specific intellectual traditions. Therefore, the choice to use these terms has emerged as part of the research process

Akapapa'anga Ara Tangata or a person's genealogical chart, will be expressed in this research as Akapapa'anga, as there are different meanings in Cook Islands Māori attached to this word. The Māori people of the Cook Islands use the term 'akapapa'anga ara tangata to describe the act of sharing and documenting their firsthand experiences and genealogies (Powell, 2021). The word 'akapapa'anga' originates from the Cook Islands Māori language, where 'papa' can have various meanings such as base, foundation, rock, layer, arrangement, or list depending on the context (Powell, 2021, p. 5). The prefix 'aka' transforms 'papa' into a transitive verb, indicating an action done to something else, such as layering, arranging, or preparing (Powell, 2021, p. 5). The suffix 'anga' then nominalizes the verb, creating a noun that represents the act of layering, arranging, or preparing (Powell, 2021, p. 5). In my understanding, 'akapapa'anga' is used to describe the continuous process of organizing and arranging a list of contents or items in their correct order. For this research, Akapapa'anga will serve as the foundation or methodology.

Vānanga means to talk or converse (Buse & Taringa, 1995) and is an ancient institution and cultural practice. Are Vānanga was traditionally a physical house of knowledge and oratory (Kauraka, 1991). It is also a cultural obligation on all Cook Islanders to help in building the traditional tribal leaders house, which is now interpreted as an individual's obligation to community service (Crocombe & Crocombe, 2003a). This goes in hand with the cultural obligation of Ara Tiroa, which is to look after your guests or anyone that comes to your home (Crocombe & Crocombe, 2003b). Vānanga in this research has been expanded to include Vataavata, or attentive understandings, around sensitive topics, and diverse communities. Hence, Vānanga Vataavata will be used as a method and will be further elaborated in another chapter.

Ānuanua means rainbow (Buse and Taringa, 1995) and has increasingly been used as a collective term for the LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and others) community in the Cook Islands since the emergence of the advocacy and campaign around equity and the Cook Islands Crimes Bill. Michael Tavioni (2018) explains that Ānuanua is an ‘Akairo derived from Te Rangi and cosmology and that it is a physical representation of the ‘the belt of Tangaroa’ – a sign of success (p. 11) The term has gained more usage over the years especially from November 2019 with the establishment of the PRIDE campaign, possibly as a means to unite the various identities into one term for a stronger movement or ease of explanations for policy and legislative drafters and politicians¹.

Cook Islands Māori language and people will be expressed as Māori, with other Māori people of the Pacific being identified by their location, i.e., Aotearoa Māori, Ta’ata Maohi of French Polynesia or Kanaka Maoli of Hawaii and Mao’i of Samoa.

Tūranga Memeitaki is a term that will be used throughout the research – which translates in English to wellbeing broadly. Tūranga means a site or a place where someone situates themselves ((Buse & Taringa, 1995) and has been interpreted more recently as being at a certain standard, while

¹ Language shapes our understanding of the world, facilitates social interactions, and conveys ideas, and influences thoughts and behaviors. Language can be used to convey power dynamics, assert authority, persuade others, negotiate, and communicate identity, among other things As such, this study acknowledges the existence of varying critical perspectives on diversity management and inclusion strategies. These perspectives highlight the tendency for non-normative minority identities, such as those encompassed within the LGBTQ+ community such as ‘Rainbow,’ to be commodified and relegated to corporate frameworks, often overseen, and directed by majority groups within organizations (Calvard et al., 2020). In a conversation between the researcher and Phylesha Brown-Acton a prominent Pacific Fakafifine of Niuean descent and MVPFAFF+ advocate, Brown-Acton -noted the term rainbow was not a good one and advocated moving away from this. As such, the use of Ānuanua in the Cook Islands is a way of contextualizing and taking power back through language and terms, as it enables communication, expression, and influence. Over time the debate on the usage of the word Ānuanua will evolve but for now it is a term that will be used in this research to represent the Cook Islands LGBTQI+ community.

meitaki means good, nice, satisfactory or well (Buse & Taringa, 1995) and so when the word meitaki is changed to memeitaki then it pluralises the word and causes it to become more than good or better or well. When the words are brought together, Tūranga memeitaki means to be at a place or situation where you are more than good or well. Tūranga memeitaki is the term that was defined and used in the Cook Islands by Te Ara Akapapa'anga Nui 2020+ or National Sustainable Development Agenda 2020+ a 100-year generational vision towards Tūranga Memeitaki (CPPO, 2021a). This definition goes beyond the contested english interpretation of wellbeing which this research and this research continues this endeavor for knowledge through the narrative (Vānanga) of Akapapa'anga whereby Kama'atu (words of wisdom) handed down to me while growing up will open and close chapters to center the research in Akapapa'anga and the Māori world view. It helps in anchoring and expressing Akapapa'anga as a narrative told through lived experiences and academic literature.

1.4 Structure and style

“Ka akamarama mai au ko'ai au, na roto I te akapapa'anga. Na reira ka aere taua”

I will enlighten you through my genealogy and from thence we shall explore.

In terms of structure and narrative approach, I intend to weave my personal journey through the lens of akapapa'anga, drawing upon traditional sayings as metaphors or Māori guiding principles to elucidate the trajectory of my enquiry. Each chapter will commence with these traditional sayings, serving not only as reference points but also as symbolic markers of the journey through the Māori world, intertwining both poetic and theoretical realms. This approach not only sets the stage for the ensuing discourse but also underscores the enduring significance of genealogies throughout this exploration.

Akapapa'anga transcends mere genetic lineage; it traverses geographical boundaries and cultural realms, functioning as a repository of knowledge and a vehicle for the reevaluation of prevailing discourses surrounding Māori identity and biases. Moreover, it possesses the inherent capacity to reaffirm sovereign histories, nationhood, and future trajectories. It is my aspiration to channel these dimensions of akapapa'anga in some capacity throughout this enquiry, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of Māori identity and heritage.

The thesis will commence with Te Akamata'anga, (Kapi 1) signifying the beginning—a fitting introduction to this narrative journey. This will segue into Tatau'anga Nakirokiro (Kapi 2) an exploration of critical literature, laying the groundwork for subsequent discussions. Following this, the focus will shift to Te Ipukarea e te Iti Tangata Ānuanua (Kapi 3) – Our Homeland and the Rainbow Community, delving into the historical intricacies of the Cook Islands and the Ānuanua community.

Within this historical framework, attention will then turn to (Kapi 4) akate'ate'amamao e te kimikimi'anga—the methodology and method chapter—wherein the nuances of Akapapa'anga as a methodology and Kai Vānanga-Vatavata as the preferred research method will be expounded upon. This methodological exploration will serve as the cornerstone for the subsequent phases of enquiry.

Subsequently, ko'ianga e te aka'iri'anga (Kapi 5) will present the research findings and analysis, fostering discussions on key themes and insights gleaned from the investigation. Finally, the thesis will culminate with akako'uanga e te akatinamou (Kapi 6)—my conclusions on various matters, accompanied by reflections on potential avenues for future research and policy considerations. Finally, I provide a brief reflection on the research process and giving back to the community in Akaoki te meitaki (Kapi 7).

Through this structured narrative approach, grounded in the rich cultural heritage of akapapa'anga, I aim to offer a nuanced and multifaceted exploration of Māori identity and community dynamics, thereby contributing to broader conversations within academia and beyond.

1.5 Murāngā Mata-Motivations

My journey through education, from my familial influences on my undergraduate studies in law and arts, has instilled within me a critical approach to academia, steeped in theoretical foundations and guided by the wisdom of my tupuna and family. My immersion in Indigenous Pacific studies provided me with solace, affirming the presence of ancestral knowledge within academic spaces (Hau'ofa, 1994; Smith, 2013; Trask, 1999).

Subsequently, my pursuit of a master's in international development at Massey University expanded my intellectual horizons, exposing me to diverse theories that have profoundly shaped

my perspectives, particularly in areas such as rights-based approaches, alternative development, and post-development paradigms (Escobar, 1995; Friedmann, 1992; Gready, 2008).

Simultaneously, my role as the Director of the Central Policy and Planning Office at the Cook Islands Office of the Prime Minister has afforded me invaluable opportunities. I had the privilege of spearheading the creation of the Cook Islands Te Ara Akapapa'anga Nui 2020+ (CPPO, 2021a), a landmark initiative propelled by the visionary leadership of our political leaders in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic repercussions, including the significant loss of tourism revenue, which constituted up to two-thirds of our nation's GDP in 2019/2020 (*Cook Islands Economic Development Strategy 2030*, 2021, pp. 8-9).

This pivotal moment, characterized by upheaval and uncertainty, echoed the sentiments described by Naomi Klein (2007) as a moment of shock, prompting transformative decisions. Fortunately, amidst these challenges, the Cook Islands chose to reevaluate its approach to development, centering on sustainable development tailored to our unique context. This process prioritized people-centric approaches, transcending conventional economic metrics that often dictate development narratives globally.

Drawing from my firsthand experiences as an Akavaine, navigating the intersections of Māori and Akavaine identities, I am empowered to persevere and shed light on the obstacles faced by the Ānuanua and indigenous communities in the Cook Islands and beyond. Through this research endeavor, I am committed to breaking barriers, challenging norms, and authentically portraying our collective narrative.

Kapi 2: Tatau'anga Nakirokiro – Critical Literature

Tei te Takaroa

In the pursuit of knowledge

(Jonassen, 2005, p. 123)

In line with this kama'atu, the capacity to push the boundaries of understanding and knowing is only limited by how much we allow ourselves to think. It is within this ambit that I start this chapter of critical literature to first understand what has been theorised regarding wellbeing.

2.1 Understanding Tūranga Memeitaki (Wellbeing) for the Ānuanua (Rainbow) community of the Cook Islands

Our ancestors recognized the power of knowledge and the wisdom required to wield it as a safeguard for future generations. This chapter aims to situate the research within the existing discourse on wellbeing within the Ānuanua community, serving as a foundational platform for subsequent analysis and deliberation. The Cook Islands Ānuanua community has remained overlooked in academic investigations and literature, thereby presenting both challenges and opportunities in comprehending the Tūranga Memeitaki of this significant demographic. Delving into wellbeing through the lens of the Ānuanua perspective is posited to offer a more nuanced definition and potentially influence potential policy outcomes tailored to the needs of this community. Accordingly, this review will provide some background into the literature and theory regarding wellbeing before delving into existing research and policy within the Pacific region and Cook Island Specifically.

2.1.1 Wellbeing as a contested concept

The concept of wellbeing is present throughout the records of human history and philosophical enquiry, with roots extending back thousands of years. Ancient Greek luminaries like Aristotle and Epicurus deliberated extensively on the significance of wellbeing (Kenny, 2016; Leddy & Lifschitz, 2009), and diverse cultures across epochs have contributed to its exploration and refinement, resulting in a lack of consensus on a universal definition (Diener & Suh, 1997). This lack of consensus renders wellbeing a contested concept, subject to Varying interpretations and

measurements contingent upon the perspectives, contexts, and Values of stakeholders involved (Kashdan et al., 2008).

Academically, wellbeing has been approached diversely across disciplines such as psychology, sociology, economics, and philosophy. Disciplinary perspectives diverge in their conceptualizations: some may prioritize physical health, while others underscore mental health or social connectedness (Adler & Fleurbaey, 2016; Estes & Sirgy, 2017). Amidst this diversity, however, a burgeoning consensus acknowledges wellbeing as a multidimensional construct encompassing various facets of individuals' lives, including physical health, mental wellness, social relationships, and existential purpose, or meaning (Marks & Shah, 2004). Moreover, an expanding understanding of wellbeing incorporates relational dynamics, cultural contexts, and the necessity of contextualizing wellbeing assessments within local realities (Wichman, 2023b).

The multidimensionality of wellbeing necessitates an integrated approach that acknowledges its complex interplay with individual experiences, societal structures, and cultural frameworks. Scholars and practitioners alike increasingly recognize the importance of embracing diverse perspectives and contextual nuances in conceptualizing and promoting wellbeing (Scheyvens et al., 2023). Hence, as scholarly discourse continues to evolve, it is imperative to foster dialogue and interdisciplinary collaboration to navigate the contested terrain of wellbeing effectively.

2.1.2 Western and Global North conceptions of well-being

The concept of wellbeing is a topic of extensive discussion and interpretation across scholarly domains. Scholars have characterized it as a state of equilibrium or harmony (Dodge et al., 2012), a degree of life satisfaction (Kim-Prieto et al., 2005), or a composite of various dimensions crucial for a fulfilling existence (Rath et al., 2010). Although the notion of wellbeing has historical roots, it has garnered considerable scholarly scrutiny in recent decades. Ryff's (1995) definition from within Psychology delineates it as the predominance of positives over negatives, or elements contributing to a person's feeling of wellness. Psychologists often categorize aspects of wellness into hedonic (associated with happiness and pleasure) or eudemonic (related to self-actualization) dimensions (Scheyvens et al., 2023, p. 60). Social scientists have also developed models examining dimensions and facets of both hedonic and eudemonic wellbeing (Marshall et al., 2014; Strelhow et al., 2020; Vanhoutte, 2014), although as Scheyvens et al. (2023) assert, many

wellbeing frameworks have been formulated in WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, Democratic) nations.

A closer examination of wellbeing frameworks in WEIRD contexts reveals various perspectives. Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory (SDT) posits that both hedonic and eudemonic wellbeing are vital for psychological health, with eudemonic wellbeing deemed more enduring and sustainable, rooted in meaningful goal pursuit and self-fulfillment (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT underscores autonomy, relatedness, and competence as contributors to overall wellbeing, suggesting that individuals experiencing autonomy, connectedness, and competence are more likely to achieve both hedonic and eudemonic wellbeing (Deci et al., 2017). However, this model focuses on the individual, lacks clarity in defining eudemonia, and overlooks the role of negative emotions in overall wellbeing (Baumeister et al., 2013).

Martin Seligman's (2011) PERMA model identifies five essential components of wellbeing: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment, positing that these elements are crucial for fostering overall wellbeing and resilience. Critiques, however, highlight the model's lack of empirical evidence and its overemphasis on positive emotions, suggesting the necessity for a more nuanced understanding encompassing both positive and negative experiences (Morgan & Simmons, 2021, p. 4; Lomas & Ivtzan, 2016).

Estes and Sirgy (2017) posit that wellbeing encompasses a profound sense of inner peace, personal satisfaction, and happiness, reflecting a dynamic Western/Global North perspective where wellbeing is viewed as a central process in human development. Nonetheless, as with many of the frameworks originating in WEIRD contexts, this perspective emphasizes the individual.

McNaught's definitional framework of wellbeing expands the concept to a macro level, incorporating both objective and subjective assessments of wellbeing as a desirable human state. However, it understates the relational and spiritual dimensions crucial to holistic wellbeing (La Placa et al., 2013, p. 120). This framework broadens wellbeing to encompass various domains beyond individual subjectivity, delinking it from conventional associations with health to encompass family, community, society, and diverse environmental, geographic, socio-economic, and political influences (La Placa et al., 2013, p. 118). This shift represents a departure from the traditionally individual-focused understanding of wellbeing, signaling a progression towards a more expansive conceptualization.

Over time, the concept of wellbeing has evolved under the influence of Western academic traditions, shaping perceptions around individual dynamics and human development. While efforts have gradually been made to broaden the definition towards a more macroscopic understanding, exemplified by McNaught's definitional framework. However, most of these frameworks is an assumption of their universality (Scheyvens et al., 2023, p. 61) and they often overlook the cultural embeddedness of wellbeing by prioritizing the individual over the collective, a perspective significant in numerous Indigenous cultures and communities (Schulz et al., 2018).

2.1.3 Development and wellbeing

Within the realm of international development, there is a growing fascination with wellbeing, yet a conspicuous shortage of clarity exists regarding its practical implementation within programs and projects (White, 2009). The mainstream development discourse began to recognize the significance of "human well-being" only in the 1990s, notably articulated in the 1990 Human Development Report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1990, p. 10). This acknowledgment spurred heightened attention to human wellbeing as a fundamental facet of development. The Capability Approach, pioneered by economist and philosopher Amartya Sen (1990) and further refined by Martha Nussbaum (1997) and others, offers a theoretical framework for evaluating wellbeing and social justice. This approach contends that development efforts should not solely prioritize material wealth but also focus on expanding people's capabilities – their freedoms and opportunities to lead lives of Value. Ingrid Robeyns (2005) contributed significantly to this framework by stressing the identification and prioritization of central capabilities essential for individuals to lead dignified and fulfilling lives. She advocates for a nuanced consideration of power dynamics and social arrangements shaping capabilities, alongside addressing inequalities limiting freedoms and opportunities. Robeyns (2005) further explores the practical implications of the Capability Approach for policymaking and development interventions, advocating policies aimed at enhancing capabilities rather than merely boosting material wealth or income.

By 2011, the pursuit of happiness was officially recognized by the United Nations as a fundamental human goal for development, alongside sustainable development, poverty reduction, and inclusiveness (UN General Assembly, 2011, pp. 2-3). This recognition underscores a pivotal shift

in global thinking, where development is not solely driven by economic metrics but also encompasses the wellbeing of individuals (UN General Assembly, 2011, p. 3).

The term "wellbeing turn" denotes a shift in development discourse and practice towards prioritizing human wellbeing as a central objective, diverging from the sole focus on economic growth or material wealth. This concept, articulated by Séverine Deneulin (2014), a prominent scholar in development ethics, critiques traditional measures like Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita for their failure to capture the multidimensional nature of human wellbeing. Deneulin advocates for a comprehensive approach considering various aspects of individuals' lives, including health, education, social relationships, autonomy, and cultural identity. The 'wellbeing turn' emphasizes understanding and addressing the underlying determinants of wellbeing, spanning social, economic, political, and environmental factors. It also calls for participatory and inclusive development approaches involving local communities in defining and pursuing their visions of wellbeing.

2.1.4 Criticisms of western conceptions of wellbeing

Criticism of Western conceptions of wellbeing often revolves around their perceived limitations and biases including the fact that wellbeing is subjective, meaning that what may be considered 'wellbeing' for one person may not be the same for another and that this subjectivity can make it difficult to measure or define wellbeing accurately (Deci & Ryan, 2001; Wichman, 2023b). Some critics argue that the current focus on measuring wellbeing through quantitative metrics oversimplifies the complex and multi-dimensional nature of wellbeing (Stiglitz et al., 2010). For example, Diener et al. (2013) call for more holistic and nuanced approaches to measuring and promoting well-being that consider a wide range of factors. There is also a concern that wellbeing initiatives may overlook or neglect systemic factors such as poverty, inequality, and discrimination, which are major contributors to poor wellbeing (Wilkinson et al., 2009) and that to truly promote wellbeing, interventions must address the root causes of poor wellbeing. There is critical literature arguing that the current focus on individual wellbeing (global north perspective) ignores the broader societal and environmental factors that affect collective wellbeing, such as climate change, social justice, and political stability. Graham (2017) argues that traditional economic models focusing on individual wellbeing do not consider the broader factors that affect collective wellbeing, such as income inequality, environmental degradation, and social unrest.

Claxton (2019) argues that while individual wellbeing is important, it cannot drive social change on its own. Instead, there is a need to focus on addressing systemic issues that affect collective wellbeing, such as poverty, inequality, and climate change. Ryan and Deci (2001) add that, while individual happiness is important, it is not sufficient for human flourishing. Instead, we need to focus on developing our potential and pursuing meaningful goals, which can contribute to both individual and collective wellbeing.

In other areas, critics have also contended that the concept of wellbeing has been co-opted by commercial interests, transforming it into a commodity that can be bought and sold in the marketplace. This commodification of wellbeing has led to the proliferation of products and services marketed as enhancing wellbeing, often without sufficient evidence to support their efficacy or claims (Lomas, 2018; Kasser, 2018; Warburton, 2019). Academic critics argue that this commercialization not only obscures the true meaning of wellbeing but also perpetuates consumerist values and reinforces inequalities, as access to these products and services may be limited by socioeconomic status.

Furthermore, this trend underscores the broader dominance of capitalism and its propensity to exploit and commodify aspects of human life, including fundamental concepts like wellbeing. Scholars such as Kasser (2018) have highlighted how capitalism encourages the relentless pursuit of material wealth and consumption, which can undermine genuine wellbeing by fostering insecurity, anxiety, and dissatisfaction.

In addition to the commercialization of wellbeing, there is a growing concern about the commercialization of public research and development (R&D) and its implications for societal welfare. Critics argue that the privatization of R&D activities, driven by profit motives, can lead to the prioritization of commercial interests over public good and scientific integrity (Mirowski, 2011; Mazzucato, 2013). This trend may divert resources away from research that could address pressing societal challenges, including those related to health, education, and environmental sustainability, thus exacerbating inequalities, and hindering overall wellbeing.

Overall, these academic criticisms highlight the complex interplay between capitalism, commercialization, and wellbeing, underscoring the need for greater scrutiny and accountability in how wellbeing is conceptualized, promoted, and pursued within contemporary societies.

2.1.5 Indigenous understandings of Wellbeing

As noted above, a key criticism of wellbeing frameworks originating in WEIRD contexts is the lack of attention to cultural and indigenous knowledge, and collective cultures. Within the development discourse, indigenous-influenced perspectives offer profound insights transcending the Pacific region. One such concept, 'buen vivir' or living well, has garnered widespread recognition in development circles, embodying a philosophy centered on balance and interconnectedness among individuals, communities, and the natural environment (Mero-Figueroa et al., 2020). Operating within a holistic framework, buen vivir prioritizes community wellbeing over individual pursuits, thereby presenting an alternative to the prevailing capitalist ideology, which often prioritizes market forces and individualism. It acknowledges culture as a pivotal force in shaping history, advocating for interculturality, diversity, and the preservation of traditional indigenous knowledge (Mero-Figueroa et al., 2020, p. 268). While certain discourses of buen vivir may have been assimilated into the Western development paradigm, it remains a potent force challenging conventional ideologies, revitalizing indigenous methodologies, and fostering decolonial approaches to innovation (Jimenez et al., 2022; Merino, 2016).

Moreover, buen vivir's influence extends beyond its immediate context, facilitating the exploration and development of other indigenous concepts while serving as a platform for articulating new political imaginaries (Merino, 2016). Its emphasis on diversity underscores its significance in defining wellbeing for diverse communities, highlighting its potential resonance with Pacific conceptualizations of wellbeing. Nevertheless, while it offers valuable insights, buen vivir does not specifically address the nuances of Pacific cultures, and for the Ānuanua community in the Cook Islands.

Another influential indigenous/spiritual approach to wellbeing originates outside the Pacific is articulated in the teachings of the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism. The Dalai Lama posits that genuine happiness stems from internal sources rather than external circumstances, emphasizing the cultivation of kindness and a warm-hearted attitude towards others as foundational to happiness (Lama, 2009). Central to this perspective is the Sanskrit term 'Sukha,' denoting a state of flourishing grounded in mental equilibrium and profound insight into existence (Ricard, 2011, p. 273). Sukha transcends transient emotions, emanating from a state of mental stability and an unmediated awareness of reality (Ricard, 2011, p. 274). However, this

interpretation of happiness is primarily individualistic, focusing solely on internal states and neglecting communal or social dimensions of wellbeing.

While these frameworks have much to offer global understandings of wellbeing, Pacific scholars have begun articulating unique perspectives on wellbeing, diverging from the individualistic focus prevalent in Western discourse. Concepts such as the Solomon Islands Kwara'ae philosophy of gwamauri'anga, the Fijian Sautu, and bula taucoko, emphasize wellbeing within indigenous knowledge systems, communal obligations, and collective welfare (Meo-Sewabu, 2014, p. 4; Nabobo-Baba, 2006; Richardson et al., 2019). Polynesian wellbeing models, including the Tokelauan Te Vaka Atafaga and the Aotearoa Whare Tapa Wha health model, prioritize collective, spiritual, and environmental dimensions, in contrast to Western conceptions that often neglect or downplay these aspects (Durie, 1985; Kupa, 2009; Rochford, 2004; Wichman, 2023b). These indigenous perspectives offer invaluable contributions to the discourse on wellbeing, enriching our understanding and challenging the dominance of Western paradigms.

Table 5: Different Wellbeing Concepts in the Pacific

Wellbeing concept	Country	Similarities	Focus	Scholars
Gwamauri'anga	Solomon Islands	Indigenous knowledge base	The good life	David Gegeo
Sautu and Bula Taucoko	Fiji	Indigenous knowledge base	The good life-ethos of sharing and helping	Unaisi Nabobo-Baba Litea Meo-Sewabu
Te Vaka Atafaga	Tokelau	Indigenous knowledge base	Pacific mental health	Kupa
Whare Tapa Wha	Aotearoa	Indigenous knowledge base	Māori Health and wellbeing model	Mason Durie

Advanced Frangipani model	Aotearoa, Massey University	Mix of Indigenous and academic	Tourism- dependent communities wellbeing	Scheyvens, Movono & Auckram
------------------------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---	-----------------------------------

Richardson et al. (2019) elucidate the local conception of a 'good life' as pivotal in advancing the notion of meaningful development, underscoring disparities between development agendas and indigenous wellbeing outcomes. While wellbeing may encompass diverse interpretations, it commonly integrates dimensions of happiness and other elements conducive to a 'good life,' with Scheyvens et al. (2021) accentuating the imperative of acknowledging and honoring indigenous cultures, Values, and rights while avoiding cultural appropriation, commodification, and stereotyping. In contrast to Western paradigms where wellbeing typically constitutes an individual pursuit, indigenous philosophies conceive of wellbeing as a communal, collective, and relational construct extending beyond the individual (Richardson et al., 2019, p. 3).

Notably, spiritual wellbeing assumes a fundamental role in Pacific models, a facet often marginalized in Western frameworks (Scheyvens et al., 2023). In the Pacific setting, spirituality is deeply interwoven into daily life, integral to holistic health and wellbeing. This spiritual dimension is regarded as a cornerstone of an individual's overall health and wellbeing, underpinning physical, emotional, and mental wellness (Chirico, 2016). Beyond religious practices, spiritual wellbeing encompasses a broader sense of connection to the universe, embracing nature, ancestors, and spiritual entities (Neville et al., 2023). Maintaining a profound connection to these entities is believed to foster balance and harmony in life, fostering enhanced overall health and wellbeing (Neville et al., 2023). These indigenous/spiritual frameworks incorporate psychological and spiritual bonds, environmental considerations, and relational dynamics often overlooked or minimized in Western/global north wellbeing paradigms (Wichman, 2023b). Nonetheless, elucidating the specific context and intricacies of diverse communities remains imperative for comprehensive understanding and explanation.

2.1.6 Towards a Cook Islands Māori approach to Tūranga Memeitaki (Wellbeing):

The foundational principles of Tūranga Memeitaki embody individual elements while accentuating the collective dynamics interwoven through Akapapa'anga, a cultural paradigm, practice, and methodology intrinsic to Cook Islands Māori worldviews (Wichman, 2023b). Akapapa'anga serves as a methodological framework rooted in Cook Islands Māori traditions, primarily centered around genealogies intricately intertwined with the cultural, historical, and experiential dimensions of Cook Islanders (Powell, 2021). Shaped by the unique worldviews, Values, and epistemological perspectives of the Māori people, it functions as a fundamental construct for comprehending the world, facilitating the interlinking of vital concepts and narratives defining identity, culture, political structure, language, and spiritual beliefs (Central Policy and Planning Office, 2021).

Although Tūranga Memeitaki in the Cook Islands was not explicitly delineated as wellbeing until the inception of the Te Ara Akapapa'anga Nui 2020+ - National Sustainable Development Agenda 2020+,² its significance extends beyond a mere state of wellness or goodness in the Māori worldview. While 'Tūranga' denotes reputation, standard, or state, and 'memeitaki' conveys goodness or betterment (Buse & Taringa, 1995), its English translation as wellbeing encapsulates only part of its depth. Tūranga Memeitaki transcends a strict definition of wellness, embodying aspirational and inspirational concepts integral to its essence (CPPO, 2021a, p. 6). The impetus to incorporate Tūranga Memeitaki into national policy planning arose from mounting concerns about prioritizing economic growth amidst increasing tourist influx, which began to manifest adverse effects on the environment and social fabric of the nation (CPPO, 2021d).

In 2021, the Cook Islands launched Te Ara Akapapa'anga Nui 2020+ - NSDA 2020+, a culturally Values-based and people-centered agenda that delineates the nation's aspirational sustainable development vision over a century, aiming for Tūranga Memeitaki for all (Brown, 2021). Defined as Tu Mataora (happiness), Ora'anga Maru (comfort), and Ora'anga Matūtū (physical, psychological, and spiritual health), Tūranga Memeitaki encompasses all three states of wellbeing,

² As Director of Central Policy and Planning Office at the Cook Islands Office of the Prime Minister I was the lead author in the design and development of the National Sustainable Development Agenda 2020+.

with specific areas outlined to cater to various societal levels and cultural institutions (CPPO, 2021a, p. 6).

Tūranga Maru Comfortable	Ora’anga MaTūtū Healthy	Tu Mataora Happy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety • Live able income • Home • Debt management • Secure at retirement • Safe communities • Education and knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical health • Psychological health • spirituality vital for good health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment • Healthy relationships • Family and Community vitality • Reo Māori and identity • Work/life balance • Freedoms • Vibrant living language and identity.

Table 1 Te Ara Akapapa’anga Nui 2020+ Definition of Wellbeing (CPPO, 2021a)

2.1.7 Community-centered approaches for LGBTQI+ communities

Following the development of Te Ara Akapapa’anga Nui 2020+ (CPPO, 2021a) it became increasingly apparent that there was a notable scarcity of information regarding the wellbeing and community-centered approaches tailored to the Ānuanua community. However, there is a growing body of literature exploring various facets of rainbow wellbeing globally (Fa’alogo & Lilo, 2012; Fraser, 2020; Stevens, 2013; Thomsen et al., 2021). In Aotearoa, Kevin Hague, a former member of the New Zealand Parliament from 2008-2016, underscored in a 2013 Policy recommendation document that "Rainbow communities are not so easy to see, and this may be one of the reasons our particular health needs have so often been overlooked, for so long" (Stevens, 2013, p. 4), a sentiment that likely propelled advancements for the LGBTQI community in New Zealand, particularly with robust political backing.

An illustrative instance of an approach centered on wellbeing within Pacific communities, employing an Indigenous framework, is the Manalagi project, unveiled in 2020 to address the wellbeing of the MVPFAFF+1 (Māhu Vakasalewalewa Palopa Fa’afafine Akavaine Fakafifine Fakaleiti/Leiti) community in Aotearoa (Thomsen & Brown-Acton, 2021, p. 465). This acronym encapsulates Indigenous terminologies representing what the Western world identifies as

LGBTQI+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and others). The project adopted Talanoa³ as a framework in a bid to bridge a crucial gap in understanding the determinants of positive health and wellbeing outcomes in Aotearoa (Thomsen & Brown-Acton, 2021, p. 466), emphasizing the significance of relationality in Pacific research. Relationality posits that the self exists within a web of genealogical and social connections (Hau'ofa, 1994), and the implementation of this concept through the Manalagi project unfolded in two primary ways. Firstly, by engaging communities in ways that acknowledge their relational realities, necessitating a comprehensive examination of social determinants, and secondly, by mobilizing a research team suitably positioned to conduct the research (Thomsen & Brown-Acton, 2021, pp. 467-468). The Manalagi project shares similarities with this enquiry, albeit focusing on health access within the context of NZ Pacific migration and underscores the imperative of utilising Talanoa as a practical tool for research in marginalised communities (Thomsen & Brown-Acton, 2021, pp. 465-466).

2.1.8 A word on Intersectionality:

In scholarly discourse, there exists a recurrent dialogue surrounding the concept of intersectionality, warranting an examination of its relevance and potential implications. Intersectionality, coined by African American feminist scholar Kimberlee Crenshaw (2013), initially focused on the intersections of race and sex. However, subsequent scholarship has expanded its scope to encompass a broader array of factors, including class, ethnicity, gender,

³ Talanoa has emerged as a methodological framework in both research and formal negotiation settings, initially conceptualized by Sitiveni Halapua and Timote Vāioleti (Fa'avae et al., 2016, p. 141; Thomsen & Brown-Acton, 2021). As a Pasifika approach, Talanoa has gained prominence as a research methodology, particularly in interview settings. It is described as an informal, open dialogue where individuals share their narratives, thoughts, and emotions (Vaiioleti, 2006). Talanoa encompasses not only a practical method but also the theoretical underpinnings guiding its application, along with the subsequent analysis of gathered information (Fa'avae et al., 2016, p. 141). A hallmark of Talanoa is its potentiality, fostering social discourse that may lead to profound discussions or knowledge co-creation, yielding nuanced and interconnected insights through collaborative storytelling (Leali'ie'e et al., 2023; Vāioleti, 2006, p. 24). Philosophically, Talanoa is rooted in collectivism, aiming to define and honor Pacific aspirations while establishing Pacific-centric theoretical and methodological preferences in research (Brown, 2018; Vaiioleti, 2006, p. 25). Typically conducted in group settings, Talanoa encourages participants to challenge and validate each other's narratives and shared experiences (Vāioleti, 2006, p. 25).

sexuality, and other characteristics, all of which contribute to experiences of marginalization, social identity formation, and overall wellbeing (Roy et al., 2021; Seng et al., 2012).

An intersectional approach diverges from traditional perspectives by recognizing the intertwined nature of social positions and identities, acknowledging that individuals may experience multiple, intersecting forms of inequality simultaneously (Huang et al., 2020; Roy et al., 2021). In the Aotearoa, New Zealand context, the concept of intersectionality assumes particular importance, shedding light on the nuanced challenges faced by individuals within Rainbow and Pacific communities. These groups often encounter compounded layers of marginalization stemming from the intersectional impact of various forms of stigma (Thomsen et al., 2021, p. 453).

Historical trauma from colonisation and its legacy and epistemicide of Cook Islands Māori knowledge systems provide a backdrop and an intersection for the Ānuanua community, which becomes further stigmatised by these realities. Marginalization and discrimination against the Ānuanua community has taken many forms in the Cook Islands and at various levels, from inherited colonial legislation where same-sex relations were criminal crimes from 1969-2023 down to deeply rooted Christian religious interpretations of morality that have influenced cultural norms and understandings (Uhlmann, 2022, p. 36).

While recognizing the potential applicability of intersectionality to understanding the situation of the Cook Islands Ānuanua community, it is essential to acknowledge the inherent global North-centric bias in its language and interpretation. Thus, to ensure relevance and effectiveness within diverse Pacific communities, intersectionality must be contextualized accordingly. Future research endeavors should aim to deepen our understanding of how intersectionality manifests within specific contexts, such as the Cook Islands, by examining intersecting forms of inequality and their implications.

Expanding upon this discourse requires a multifaceted approach, involving nuanced analyses of intersecting social identities, power dynamics, and structural inequalities within the Cook Islands Ānuanua community. Such investigations could illuminate the unique challenges faced by individuals navigating intersecting axes of marginalization, informing more inclusive and equitable policies and interventions tailored to their needs. Therefore, further enquiry into the application of intersectionality within the Cook Islands context is warranted, offering valuable

insights into the complex interplay of social forces shaping the wellbeing of marginalized communities.

2.1.9 Conclusion

This comprehensive review of the literature on wellbeing reveals a multifaceted and evolving field of study. Central to this discourse is the acknowledgment that wellbeing extends beyond mere physical health to encompass psychological, emotional, social, and environmental dimensions. Scholars have increasingly emphasized the importance of holistic approaches, recognizing that individual wellbeing is intrinsically linked to wider community and societal factors. The literature underscores the dynamic nature of wellbeing, advocating for adaptive and resilient frameworks that can accommodate the diversity of human experience and the complexities of life. Moreover, the discourse highlights the critical role of cultural sensitivity and the need for culturally inclusive methodologies that respect and reflect the varied understandings of wellbeing across diverse cultural contexts. This review points towards a growing consensus on the necessity for interdisciplinary approaches that bridge gaps between theoretical knowledge and practical application, aiming to foster environments that support the wellbeing of all individuals, families, and communities. As this field continues to evolve, future research must strive to address the gaps identified and warrants the need to delve deeper into the history of the Cook Islands and knowledge systems and the Ānuanua community which will be covered in the next chapter.

Kapi 3: Te Ipukarea e Te Iti Tangata Ānuanua: Historical account of our homeland and the rainbow community.

“Me e piri’anga to’ou na roto I te papa’anga, e tika’anga to’ou!”

If you have a connection through your genealogy, then you have a right!

These are words of wisdom that my vuvou Tiare Poona, who is my maternal grandfather, imparted to me as a child. Although I was young at the time, I understood the importance of papa’anga in understanding my position, power, and rights. As an adult who is Akavaine, this is more important to me now than ever, as it provides empowerment for me to understand that, despite not being recognized and equal in certain spaces – my culture and my papa’anga always has and always will recognize me as part of it. This ensures that no one in the tribe is left out or behind and gives a sense of liberation to a space that sometimes feels lonely and daunting.

3.1 Te Kuki Airani-The Cook Islands

The Cook Islands is a large ocean state and a self-governing territory in free association with New Zealand, located in Te Moana Nui o Kiva, the Pacific Ocean. It comprises 15 islands (three uninhabited) with a land area of about 240 square kilometers spread over about 2.2 million square kilometers of exclusive economic zone (Cook Islands Economic Development Strategy 2030, 2021, p. 5). The islands are divided into two main groups: Te Pae Tokerau (Northern Cook Islands) and Te Pae Tonga (Southern Cook Islands). The capital is Avarua, located on the island of Rarotonga (*Cook Islands Economic Development Strategy 2030*, 2021, p. 5). The country is a member of many UN bodies and is classified under that system as a small island developing state (Dickson et al., 2018). Despite this viewpoint of scarcity and smallness, there has been a school of thought by Pacific scholars that seeks to empower and change the narrative to one of abundance. It is within this mindset that this thesis reflects Epeli Hau’ofa’s (1994) perspective of the Pacific as large, growing, and full of opportunity. Similarly, there has been a movement to change international development country classifications to be recognized as large ocean states rather than small island states (Chan, 2018, p. 2). This enquiry aligns with this school of thought and, as such, will refer to the Cook Islands as a large ocean state.

As a self-governing territory in free association with New Zealand, the Cook Islands maintains a close relationship with New Zealand, including shared citizenship and currency (*Cook Islands Economic Development Strategy 2030*, 2021, p. 5). However, the Cook Islands has its own parliament, judicial system, and executive arm and handles its foreign affairs with the opportunity for New Zealand to be involved in certain foreign affairs matters as requested by the Cook Islands.

In 1971, the Cook Islands reached its highest recorded population of 21,300 (Hayes, 2022, p. 3). Since then, the population has declined with stabilization of the resident population seen between the years 2001-2021. Starting in 1976, there was a divergence between the total population and the resident population due to an increase in visitors, but this trend reversed in 2021 as border closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic caused the non-resident population to decrease significantly (Hayes, 2022, p. 3). Despite this, the resident population has remained steady since 2001, with around 15,000 (+/- 500) residents (Hayes, 2022, p. 13). The results of the 2021 census show that the Covid-19 pandemic did not result in a significant outflow of Cook Islands residents as expected but instead caused a decline in the non-resident or "visitor" population (Hayes, 2022, p. 13).

The Cook Islands has a comparatively small open economy whose economic growth is heavily reliant on the export of services to several key partner countries, New Zealand, Australia, and the United States of America in particular (*Cook Islands Economic Development Strategy 2030*, 2021, p. 8). As of January 2020, the Cook Islands was officially classified as a “high income” country on account of its GDP/GNI per capita of \$US19, 300, which is one of the highest in the Pacific (Hayes, 2022, p. 56). According to Bertram and Watters (1985), the Cook Islands have long been labeled as MIRAB⁴ states, but a more recent examination by Bertram and Poirine (2007, p. 336) has reclassified them as PROFIT-SITE⁵. This reclassification is supported by evidence indicating that the Cook Islands have successfully transitioned away from MIRAB status, as approximately one-third of the labor force is now employed in the tourism industry (Hayes, 2022, pp. 40-41)

⁴ Migration, remittances, aid, and bureaucracy.

⁵ People, Resource management, overseas engagement, Finance and Transportation-Small Island tourist economies.

The tourism industry dominates, with the tertiary or services sector accounting for three quarters of the total economy in 2019/20 (Hayes, 2022, p. 42). The two largest tertiary industries, trade, and accommodation services, accounted for a quarter of total economic output. The industries that play a key role in the Cook Islands economy (*Cook Islands Economic Development Strategy 2030*, 2021, pp. 8-9):

- i. Tourism –is the major economic driver, accounting for about three quarters of the economic activity in the Cook Islands;
- ii. Construction – a key enabling industry for the entire economy, focusing on essential infrastructure through housing and resort construction;
- iii. Agriculture, forestry, and fishing – primary industries—play a key role in the Pa Enuu;
- iv. Government administration and state-owned enterprises – the public sector employs a quarter of the Cook Islands labour force, and government operating, and personnel expenditure is about 30 percent of GDP; and
- v. International financial services – though relatively small, this industry contributes to the diversification of the economy and employs highly skilled and well-paid staff.

3.1.1 Structure of traditional Cook Islands society:

Traditional Cook Islands Maori society was structured around familial, communal, and traditional connections deeply rooted in Akono’anga Maori (Crocombe & Crocombe, 2003a). At its core was the family unit, which served as the foundation of social organization. Extended families often live close by sharing resources and responsibilities. Communities within the Cook Islands are typically organized around kinship ties, with a strong emphasis on collective well-being and cooperation. Traditional chiefs and elders hold considerable influence, guiding community affairs and resolving disputes through customary practices. Cultural events, such as dances, ceremonies, and feasts, play a crucial role in maintaining social cohesion and reinforcing shared values. Additionally, religious institutions, particularly Christianity, hold sway in many aspects of community life (Uhlman, 2022). While modernization and globalization have brought changes to Cook Islands society, traditional structures and values remain but are quickly being eroded by global forces, contributing to the unique social fabric of the nation.

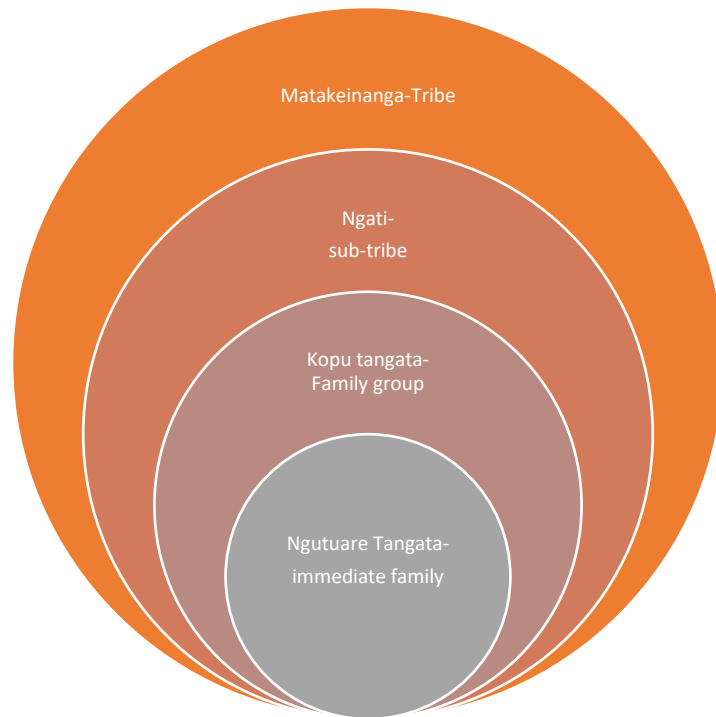


Figure 1 Cook Islands Maori Society structure, Wichman (2024)

3.1.2 Nga Mana e toru also known as Kuru Pou toru

To understand power within the Cook Islands there must be an understanding on the concept of Kuru Pou Toru as elaborated by Makiuti Tongia (2003) and which encapsulates the intricate power dynamics within Cook Islands society (Crocombe & Crocombe, 2003b). Literally meaning "three breadfruit posts," it symbolizes the equilibrium between the government, traditional tribal leaders, and the church. The government, represented by elected officials, holds administrative power, while traditional leaders, embodying cultural heritage, influence decisions through customary practices and religion or the Christian church which provides religious advice on issues. This delicate balance fosters harmony and resilience, ensuring governance aligns with cultural Values and religious needs. However, shifts in this equilibrium can occur, necessitating constant dialogue and cooperation between the pillars.

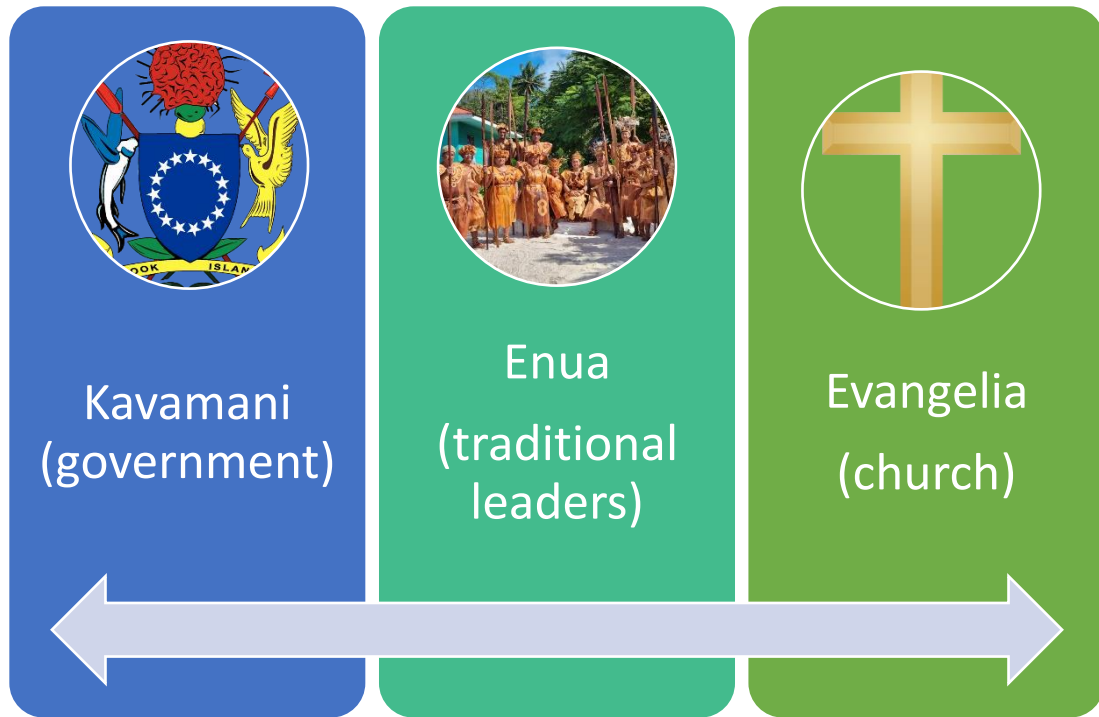


Figure 2 Nga Mana e Toru: three sources of power in Cook Islands Society (images taken from open internet source)

It is pivotal that the concept of Kuru Pou Toru is understood at the outset as it will help in explaining the power dynamics and its intricacies of Cook Islands society that will be weaved through akapapa'anga and Kai Vananga Vataavata.

3.2 The Ānuanua community

The Ānuanua community of the Cook Islands has existed since the beginning of time, and its members have been an integral part of Cook Islands life and culture (Crocombe, 2007). There is extremely limited literature on this community with Beaglehole & Beaglehole (1938) providing some of the earliest albeit limited accounts on aspects of the Ānuanua community. The influence of western colonization and christianization brought significant changes to traditional beliefs and practices (Uhlmann, 2022), leaving oral traditions as a primary source of information (Pigliasco, 2007). These traditions include tales of gender-fluid or non-conforming individuals with supernatural abilities, though they may have been influenced by colonization (Futter-Puati, 2017).

Historically, the traditional Cook Islands culture has embraced identities such as 'akava'ine' and 'akatane,' denoting individuals who, though assigned a particular gender at birth, identify and present as another (Uhlmann, 2022). Akava'ine, born male but identifying as female, and akatane,

born female but identifying as male, have played significant roles in Cook Islands society, serving as advisors to tribal leaders and contributing culturally to ceremonies and events (Crocombe & Crocombe, 2003a, p. 59). Revered for their talents in dance, song, and storytelling, akava'ine were historically regarded as possessing special abilities (Crocombe & Crocombe, 2003a). While akava'ine and akatane have historically played important roles, other Ānuanua identities are absent in literature, suggesting a need for further exploration through in-depth research and analysis of traditional narratives. While attitudes towards akava'ine have evolved due to Christian missionary influence and Western cultural impact, these Ānuanua individuals remain recognized and celebrated in various segments of Cook Islands society. However, their identity has defied simple classification, with labels like transgender, gender-liminal, transvestite, or gay failing to fully encapsulate their nuanced experiences (Futter-Puati, 2017). Ānuanua individuals straddle both inclusion and marginalization within their communities, embodying a synthesis of tradition and modernity influenced by global currents (Alexeyeff, 2009). Yet, their existence exists within a complex legal landscape shaped by colonial legacies and ongoing neo-colonial dynamics, exposing them to the tensions between progressive gender discourse and persistent repression (Futter-Puati, 2017, p. 204). Thus, Ānuanua individuals navigate a delicate balance between cultural heritage and contemporary pressures, emblematic of the intersectionality inherent in their lived experiences.

3.2.1 Size of the Anuanua community

The Cook Islands Ānuanua community's size, shape, and experience have not been purposefully captured and defined within Tūranga Memeitaki, and the community is currently unaccounted for in the Cook Islands Census. One study that attempted to capture this was Futter-Puati's (2017) dissertation on college student sexuality education. In this study the sample consisted of n= 674 Cook Islanders who were aged between 15 and 24 years who answered 35 questions and 97 young people who participated in six focus groups. Participants were drawn from all population settlements throughout the Cook Islands and encompassed more than 20% of the youth population at that time. As shown in Figure 3, 9% of study participants identified as Ānuanua, noting that a significant percentage, 23%, stated they did not know.

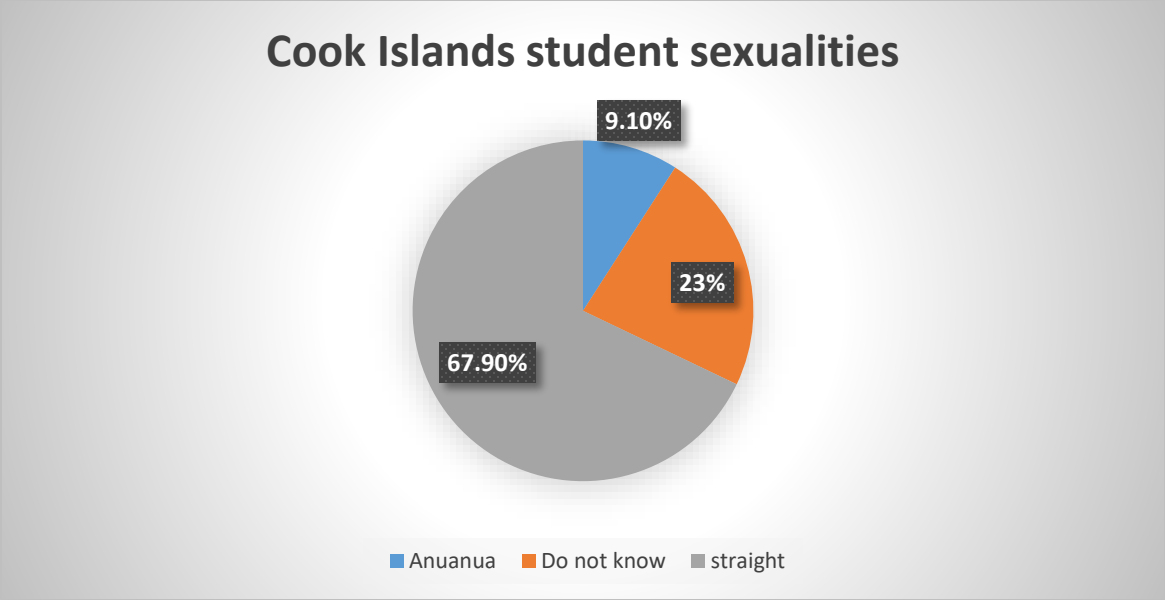


Figure 3 Percentage of students and their sexualities Futter-Puati (2017)

However, this is based on a snapshot of students and may not be representative of the general population. This was preceded by the Pacific Mapping and Behavioural Study: HIV and STI Risk Vulnerability among Key Populations study (Worth et al., 2016) of transgender men who have sex with men (MSM) and women who exchanged sex (WWE) in the Cook Islands, which estimated the MSM population to be between a low of 800 and a high of 1500 (Worth et al., 2016, p. 15).

The latest survey on any size estimate of the Ānuanua population of the Cook Islands was Tē 'ākirāta mārama: Cook Islands mental health prevalence study (Verma et al., 2023). Preliminary results were presented at the 5th Pacific Islands University Regional Network Conference on Rarotonga, Cook Islands in July 2023, however the results have not been published yet. Further analysis on the quantitative aspects of this study will need to be done for correlations with this research to provide further insights once published.

The current published estimates are thus comparable with Samoa which has a LGBTQI+ population estimate of around 12-15% of the total population (Worth et al., 2016, p. 8) and with Aotearoa which has an estimate for the rainbow community at 6% to 15% of the general population (Thomsen et al., 2021, p. 450) with Statistics NZ giving the percentage at 4.2% for the 18+ population (Stats NZ, 2019). In contrast, Tonga has an estimate of 1% of the total population (Worth et al., 2016, p. 20), although this could be underestimated due to different factors.

Study	Low	High	Mean	Numbers	Sample size
Api'iangā Tupu'angā Kopapa (Futter-Puati, 2017)	9%	20%	14.5	60-134	674 Cook Islanders who were aged between 15 and 24 years.
Pacific surveillance study (Worth et al., 2016)	5.3%	10%	7.65	800-1500	men who have Sex with men size estimation

Table 2 Ānuanua Population Estimates.

This population size estimate is crucial for looking into policy and legislative reform, which is an area of ongoing concern for the Ānuanua organisations. Since this is the first attempt to bring distinct size estimates and come to some conclusions on the matter, it is also an advocacy tool that could be used by Ānuanua organisations going forward in being counted in the Census and other areas of policy that need to be reformed and redefined as appropriate.

3.2.2 Te au putuputu'anga Ānuanua – Rainbow Organizations in the Cook Islands

An important facet of the Ānuanua community are the Ānuanua organisations of the Cook Islands, particularly Te Tiare Association Inc. (“TTA”), who were formally organised in 2008 and are the oldest formal organization specifically for Ānuanua people, followed by PRIDE Cook Islands, which was initially set up as a campaign towards decriminalization in November 2019 and Te Ānuanua o Aitutaki (TAOA) who came onto the scene in November 2020 respectively.

Organisation	Year organised	President 2023- 2024	Focus
Te Tiare Association Inc.	November 2007 Launched June 2008	Tatryanna Utanga- current Valery Wichman- 2017-2023-	Human Rights Health Education and empowerment

PRIDE Cook Islands	November 2019	Karla Eggleton-inaugural and current	Equality campaign
Te Ānuanua o Aitutaki (TAOA)	November 2020	Regina Potini-inaugural and current	Supports the Ānuanua community of Aitutaki

Table 3 Ānuanua Organizations in the Cook Islands



Figure 4 Te Tiare Inc Logo

TTA was set up to bring together Ānuanua people in the Cook Islands to help nurture, strengthen, and educate this important sector of the Ānuanua community. TTA is one of three Ānuanua community groups in the Cook Islands, and its overarching vision is “To Lead our own Destinies” with the slogan ko au, ko au, ko tatou (you, me, all of us) which was developed by Florence Syme-Buchanan (Aunty Flo) – one of the founding members of the organisation. TTA was founded with the primary goal of uniting 'akava'ine individuals in the Cook Islands to promote education and advocacy. The Te Tiare Association was officially inaugurated on June 21, 2008, as part of a collaborative effort with the Pacific Islands AIDS Foundation (PSGDN, 2022). The vision of TTA is to lead our destinies peacefully and with dignity, to embrace our culture with pride and joy, and to respect our differences and celebrate our similarities. Since its establishment, TTA has actively championed a focus on empowerment through education, holistic health, and human rights. Additionally, fostering a sense of community has remained a central element of its mission, given that certain members of its communities experience familial estrangement due to their unique identities and sexual orientations. PRIDE Cook Islands and TAOA are relatively new, but they

have been integral to the advancement of Ānuanua rights in the Cook Islands and will continue to do so going into the future.

These local organisations provide space for Ānuanua Cook Islanders to connect, share their experiences, and advocate for greater acceptance and inclusion in their communities. However, there is still much work to be done to promote greater understanding and acceptance of Ānuanua issues in the Cook Islands with many Cook Islanders who are supportive of the Ānuanua community and who are working towards greater equality and acceptance for all (“Cook-Islands-Parliament-decriminalises-homosexuality,” 2023).



Figure 5 TAOA and PRIDE Cook Islands Logos

3.2.3 The Policy and Legislative space in the Cook Islands and the Ānuanua community

While the Cook Islands government has expressed its commitment to upholding the human rights of all Cook Islanders, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity (Cook Islands Government, 2019, p. 9), legislation and policy has often stigmatized and criminalised the Ānuanua community. This began to change in 2010, when the Cook Islands identified its first registered case of HIV, which led to huge issues regarding stigma and discrimination and the safety of people who may have HIV (“Global Aids Progress Report Cook Islands,” 201, p. 16). This led to the various NGOs outlined above mobilizing and helping to look at discriminatory legislation and policies in the country (“Global Aids Progress Report Cook Islands,” 2015, pp. 16-17). One of those discriminatory laws identified was the Crimes Act 1969 (“The Act”) an archaic piece of

legislation that was inherited from the Cook Islands colonial past. The Act criminalised two consenting adults regarding sodomy and indecency between two males.

The historic decision by the Cook Islands Parliament to legalize same-sex relations in April 2023 marked a significant milestone after 13 years of persistent advocacy for legislative amendments (“Cook-Islands-Parliament-decriminalises-homosexuality,” 2023). This pivotal discourse stirred considerable debate and presented a profound test of both the resilience of the Ānuanua community and the fabric of Cook Islands society (“Cook-Islands-Parliament-decriminalises-homosexuality,” 2023). What distinguished this moment as transformative was not only the public discourse it engendered but also the delineation of parliamentary obligations in upholding both constitutional rights and religious moral codes (“Cook-Islands-Parliament-decriminalises-homosexuality,” 2023).

The journey toward amending the legislation to decriminalise same-sex relationships in the Cook Islands was characterised by numerous challenges that scrutinised the bonds of Akapapa’anga and the interconnectedness between the Ānuanua community and their families, both locally and globally. The following overview outlines the sequence of events that unfolded over the course of the 13-year advocacy campaign for equality led by the Ānuanua community organisations.

Date	Event
2010	Stigma and discrimination seen from various communities in wanting to expel an individual diagnosed with HIV from the country.
2011	HIV Bill drafted which lists the discriminative legislation and policies. One of them is the Crimes Act 1969.
2011-2012	Valery Wichman as lead advocate with Te Tiare starts the Campaign on advocating for a Crimes Bill to remove the discriminative provisions. Cook Islands Family Welfare Association and Cook Islands Ministry of Health support the campaign.
2014	Cook Islands Crown Law Office drafts a Crimes Bill which removes the discriminative provisions and the Cook Islands Parliament constitute the first Crimes Bill Select Committee who start consultations.

2015-2016	Submissions and campaign ramp up as Crimes Bill Select Committee consults on the matters. Clear divide between religious moral codes and rights and freedoms guaranteed under the Cook Islands Constitution.
2016-2018	Campaign intensified as major opposition to the Crimes Bill for removing the discriminatory provisions.
2017	Oral submissions to Crimes Bill Select Committee given – speakers were Valery Wichman, Lady Tuaine Marsters and Tatoryanna Utanga.
2018	Cook Islands General elections and Crimes Bill Select Committee is reconstituted
2019	Te Tiare makes oral submissions to the Select Committee – speakers were Valery Wichman, Dr. Debi Futter-Puati, and Janette Olliver. This was followed by an announcement by Chair of the Crimes Bill Select Committee in the Cook Islands Newspaper that the discriminatory provisions will be put back in and will extend to women to be fair (Kumar, 2020)
Nov 2019	PRIDE Campaign is launched which acted as a catalyst for the creation of PRIDE Cook Islands.
2019-2022	Crime Bill Select Committee delays giving recommendations on the Bill due to huge campaign and pressure from both sides of the argument.
2022-2023	Crime Bill is redrafted (refer to Appendix I) to focus on the sexual offenses and to leave other contentious issues for future debate.
April 2023	Parliament Passes the Crimes (sexual offenses) Bill which came into force 1 June 2023.

Table 4 the Cook Islands Ānuanua Journey for Equality

Although a full in-depth analysis is not given in this thesis⁶, however this snapshot provides a broad understanding of why the participants spoke admirably about this chapter in Ānuanua history.

As part of the human rights and equality emphasis of Te Tiare, the organisation has put a lot of emphasis on making submissions on various policies and advocating for legislative amendments,

⁶ See Wichman (forthcoming) book.

which have been met with various responses. Below are a list of TTA submissions on various aspects of policy and legislation over the years:

Legislation	Section	TTA submission	Outcome
Cook Islands Constitution	Article 64 guarantees Fundamental Human Rights and Freedoms	Related to Crimes Bill	Enacted
Marriage Amendment Act 2007	Extended marriage to be illegal to not only same sex couples but also to couples where transgender individuals have undergone gender reassignment surgery.	Ongoing work	Enacted albeit discriminatory to same sex couples
Disability Act 2008	10 prohibits discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation.	n/a	Enacted
Employment Act 2012	55 prohibits discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation.	2011-Submitted to include non-discrimination Clause	Amendments incorporated
The Crimes (Sexual Offences) Amendment Act 2023	Removed all discriminative provisions in April 2023 and effective June 2023.	Advocacy from 2011 to amend discriminatory provisions of the Crimes Act 1969	Amendments incorporated

Cook Islands Family
Law and Protection
Act 2017

Regarding Section 5 Amendments not
Definition of de facto incorporated
relationship:
Expanded to include
same-sex couples

Table 5 Cook Islands Legislation Analysis for Ānuanua Community Issues

The following are the policy submissions that were made during the public consultations of the respective documents:

Policy	TTA proposal	Outcome	Year submitted
<i>Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Action Plan 2019 - 2024</i>	To include gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics (SOGIESC) into the Policy	Gender definition expanded	2018
<i>Te Ara Akapapa’anga Nui 2020+ (CPPO, 2021a)</i>	To have inclusive language	Inclusive aspects included	2020

Table 6 Cook Islands Policy Analysis for Ānuanua Community Issues

The legislative and policy journey depicted through these snippets below unveils a profound narrative of societal evolution. Each image crystallizes pivotal moments, tracing the arc from the inception of groundbreaking legislation to the fervent debates that sculpted a more inclusive future. These snapshots encapsulate the fervor of advocacy, the rigors of negotiation, and the triumphs of compromise. They narrate a saga of collective aspiration and resilience against entrenched paradigms. Within these frames lie the echoes of impassioned voices, the tensions of ideological divergence, and the triumphs of collaborative action. Together, they compose a mosaic illustrating the dynamic interplay between policy, politics, and progress.



Figure 6 Second Parliamentary Select Committee meeting- L-R Tatryanna Utanga, Lady Tuaine Marsters, Valery Wichman circa 2017



Figure 7 Valery Wichman addressing Te Tiare members after 2019 Chair of Select Committee announcement



Figure 8 Third Te Tiare Association submission to Parliamentary Select Committee 2019. Submissions made by Valery Wichman, Dr. Debi Futter-Puati and Janette Olliver.

Part of the TTA and later PRIDE Cook Islands advocacy and the most publicly prevalent campaign in Cook Islands history was the campaign for “Our Equality” a campaign that advocated to remove the discriminatory provisions of the Crimes Act 1969. The message that went out from TTA and PRIDE Cook Islands was succinct and effective (Wichman, 2023a):

- We are integral members of Cook Islands society who have a place according to Akapapa’anga and Akono’anga Māori.
- Love and acceptance: -Freedom of religion is compatible with LGBTQI equality. All the major religions emphasize the importance of love and acceptance.
- Human rights are universal. Everyone is entitled to the same rights. Discrimination against Ānuanua people is unacceptable and illegal under international human rights law.
- It is about equality not marriage.

This campaign would start in 2011 and continue until April 2023 when the Cook Islands Parliament approved by a majority to remove the discriminatory provisions as they were deemed unconstitutional and against human rights. The Ānuanua organisations have shown determination through their advocacy and awareness around policy and legislative challenges that have seen a major shift in Cook Islands society to be more inclusive and to also decolonize their minds from an inherited colonial past that has left remnants of religious morality, which is not conducive in

this age. It just shows how small organisations can make positive change in nations and leave an amazing legacy for generations to come.



Figure 9 Decriminalisation day- Cook Islands Parliament 14 April 2023 Prime Minister Mark Brown and Associate Minister Tingika Elikana with Te Tiare and PRIDE Cook Islands supporters. Photo credit: Daniel Fisher

3.2.4 Tūranga Memeitaki (Wellbeing) and the LGBTQI+ (Ānuanua) community

Historically, research on wellbeing in the LGBTQI+ community of the Cook Islands has primarily focused on health aspects, particularly in relation to HIV/AIDS (Worth et al., 2016), thus presenting a limited perspective on overall wellbeing. Despite the absence of a specific description for the Ānuanua community within the NSDA 2020+, the shared values and inclusive policy language outlined therein offer a basis for addressing their unique challenges (CPPO, 2021a). However, specific nuances tailored to the Ānuanua community are essential to ensure their meaningful inclusion and prevent their marginalization within broader societal frameworks. This necessitates a re-evaluation of policy language and a commitment to respecting human dignity and fundamental rights, as enshrined in the Cook Islands Constitution, while striving towards a more inclusive society, as articulated in the NSDA 2020+ framework. Nonetheless, the absence of explicit mention or provisions for the Ānuanua community underscores the imperative for more research and targeted interventions to address their distinct needs and challenges.

3.3 Conclusion

While Tūranga Memeitaki within the Ānuanua community of the Cook Islands lacks specific studies, scholars such as Futter-Puati (2017) and Worth et al. (2016) have endeavored to quantify the community's size. Additionally, preliminary investigations by Verma et al. (2023) have started to delve into mental health and wellbeing aspects of the Ānuanua community- the outcome of which is still to be published as I write this. These explorations, although not directly addressing Tūranga Memeitaki, provide foundational insights for future research endeavors. The absence of dedicated studies underscores the necessity for in-depth investigations into Tūranga Memeitaki within the Ānuanua community, offering an opportunity to understand its significance, impacts, and potential implications for the community's social fabric, cultural practices, and wellbeing.

Kapi 4: Akate'ate'amamao e te Kimikimi'anga- conceptualising the Akapapa'anga Framework and Kai Vānanga Vataavata Methodological approach

*Akapapa'anga Ara Tangata na roto I te Vānanga - Kai Vānanga-Kai Vānanga
Vataavata*

Genealogising through attentive and considerate conversations

Ko 'ai koe? Who are you?

No 'ea mai koe? Where are you from?

As Māori of the Cook Islands, these are questions that are posed when first meeting someone to verify who you are and where you sit within 'Akapapa'anga ara tangata (the genealogical chart) which will be expressed in this research as 'Akapapa'anga. Tuatua aka'aravei'anga (introductions) enables you to understand each other's place and relationships and what perspectives, interests, and power they are bringing to any meeting or collective problem-solving exercise.

Ka aere koe ki 'ea? Where are you going?

Ka aere koe na 'ea? How will you get there?

Akapapa'anga helps you understand where you come from through your genealogy and helps direct you to where you are going. It also helps in determining the best way to get there by explaining your connections to everything around you.

Scholars from the Cook Islands have introduced diverse metaphorical frameworks to elucidate a unique methodological approach among Cook Islanders, encapsulating their distinct methods of conducting research, generating knowledge, and upholding cultural traditions (Futter-Puati & Maua-Hodges, 2019). Akapapa'anga, as a quintessential Cook Islands Māori methodology, finds its roots in the profound significance of genealogies within Cook Islands culture, history, and lived experiences. It reflects the worldview, Values, and epistemological orientations of Cook Islanders, serving as a foundational framework through which Māori individuals interpret and navigate various aspects of their identity, culture, politics, language, and spirituality (Inano Taripo-Walter, 2023, p. 28). The principles inherent in Akapapa'anga have guided numerous Cook Islands scholars, placing emphasis on relational dynamics, community-centered knowledge production,

reciprocal engagement, environmental stewardship, spiritual insights, and holistic conceptions of health and well-being (Te Ara Akapapa'anga Nui- National Sustainable Development Agenda, 2021). By embracing the core values of Akapapa'anga, researchers have gained a deeper and more contextually nuanced understanding of Cook Islands communities and their multifaceted experiences.

Cook Islands scholars such as Futter-Puati & Maua-Hodges (2019); Herman (2013); Newport (2019) & Te Ava (2020) have looked at different Maori methodological approaches and have underscored several shared features of the Maori world view, which is important for Akapapa'anga, in guiding its application in research endeavors:

- i. **Community Engagement:** Embedded within Cook Islands Māori understanding is a profound emphasis on community engagement and consultation throughout the research process. Researchers are encouraged to collaborate closely with community members, including elders and leaders, ensuring that research endeavors are respectful, culturally appropriate, and aligned with community needs.
- ii. **Oral Tradition:** A central tenet of Akapapa'anga methodology is its reverence for oral tradition, encompassing storytelling and genealogies as vehicles for preserving cultural knowledge and historical narratives. Researchers are tasked with honoring these traditions, integrating them into research design and analysis where pertinent.
- iii. **Respect for Cultural Values and Practices:** Tapu, or cultural taboos, hold significant sway in Cook Islands culture, touching upon spirituality, gender dynamics, and social hierarchies. Researchers are enjoined to exhibit profound respect for tapu and to collaborate with community members to ensure that research endeavors uphold cultural norms and Values.
- iv. **Reciprocity and Respect:** Cook Islands research methodologies place a premium on reciprocity and respect within research relationships. Researchers are urged to cultivate trust, foster positive relationships with community stakeholders, and reciprocate by sharing research findings and contributing to community development.

Given a thorough examination of these various Cook Islands research approaches, this enquiry explores Akapapa'anga as the primary research framework, complemented by the adoption of Kai Vānanga Vataavata as an appropriate research method. Through this methodological lens, the

research endeavors to uphold cultural integrity while shedding light on critical issues impacting the community's well-being.

4.1 Akapapa'anga Framework

The use of genealogies, or Akapapa'anga, as a research methodology has become increasingly common within Cook Islands research in the disciplines of anthropology, sociology, and other social sciences. This approach facilitates a deeper understanding of a given community's historical and cultural practices (Crowley, 2009; Graham, 2009; Powell, 2021). Although literature specifically addressing Akapapa'anga as a methodology is scarce, the work of Emma Powell (2021) has emerged as a pivotal reference point, serving as one of the foundations for the conceptualization of this study, as discussed in my paper presented at the International Conference on Sustainable Development in September 2023 (Wichman, 2023b). Powell (2021) contends that attempting to dissect Akapapa'anga into distinct, linear components would undermine its efficacy, as it is inherently intertwined with cultural paradigms, practices, and research methodologies. Instead, Powell elucidates Akapapa'anga as a multifaceted construct encompassing cultural norms, practices, and research methodologies (Powell, 2021, pp. 71-73).

In the context of Aotearoa, the semantic equivalent of Akapapa'anga is whakapapa. Mahuika (2019) describes this as a process of layering one element over another (Ngata, 1972, p. 6). Barlow (1991) further explicates whakapapa as the genealogical lineage tracing back from the gods to the present era (Reid, 2010, pp. 8-9). Whakapapa thus serves as a foundational framework for Māori knowledge and history, regarded as the skeletal structure that underpins Māori understanding (Roberts, 2015; Sharp & McHugh, 2015). It is revered as one of the most esteemed forms of knowledge, with significant efforts dedicated to its preservation (Graham, 2009, p. 1). While Akapapa'anga of the Cook Islands Māori is semantically equivalent to whakapapa in Aotearoa, the divergent historical trajectories and colonial legacies have shaped distinct lived realities for these siblings, potentially resulting in divergent narratives. Nonetheless, the fundamental values and cultural essence remain consistent. Within Akapapa'anga, the Māori of Aotearoa are regarded as the teina (younger siblings) in relation to the Cook Islands Māori, who are considered the tuakana (elder siblings), a relational dynamic validated through oral traditions and genealogical narratives (Mahuika, 2019, p. 6).

Powell (2021) challenges the notion of 'Akapapa'anga' as merely a fusion of genealogy, arguing that it extends beyond the confines of genetic relations alone within the Māori worldview (Powell, 2021, p. 42). This expansion of genealogical concepts to encompass broader Indigenous perspectives has found support among other scholars (Royal, 1998; Teaiwa, 2014). In the Māori perspective, Mahuika (2019, p.3) explains that genealogies intertwine with supernatural and spiritual realms. Powell (2021) further elaborates on these nuances by exploring three distinct narrative centers within 'Akapapa'anga, each shaped by temporal and spatial dimensions, illustrating epistemological insights into Māori reality. Key cultural practices associated with 'Akapapa'anga are delineated to demonstrate how they form a cultural paradigm, influencing enquiry, relational dynamics, and the generation of new knowledge (Powell, 2021, p. 74).

'Akapapa'anga holds significance as it offers a lens into the cultural, social, and political fabric of a community. It facilitates understanding of interpersonal dynamics, societal roles, and the transmission of cultural traditions across generations. Tracing genealogies entails thorough research and analysis of family trees, oral traditions, historical records, and other sources to delineate connections between individuals, entities, and groups (Mahuika, 2019; Powell, 2021). This process unveils patterns, trends, and cultural norms specific to a particular community, such as the Ānuanua community in the Cook Islands. Effective utilization of 'Akapapa'anga necessitates an understanding of the cultural customs and traditions of the studied community (Powell, 2021, p. 24), with researchers navigating the complexities of cultural identity and acknowledge the pivotal role of genealogy in shaping individual and collective identities (Mahuika, 2019, p. 9).

I concur with Powell (2021) that it would detract from its effectiveness to make 'Akapapa'anga more linear and that it is hard to separate into various parts; however, it is worth looking at key aspects of 'Akapapa'anga or the concept of genealogy as a research methodology from a Māori perspective. Below, I will expand on these key aspects captured by Wichman (2023b, pp. 3-4) showing that 'Akapapa'anga connects to four broad areas:

i. Piri'anga

- An explanation of the relation between time, space, and people: It helps in explaining the concepts of Ora (time), Vā (space) and Tangata (people) through genealogy and the relationship between the concepts.

- Need for community engagement: As with many other aspects of Cook Islands culture, ‘Akapapa’anga emphasizes the importance of community engagement and collaboration.
 - Family and community focus: ‘Akapapa’anga is centred on family and community relationships and history. It emphasizes the importance of understanding one’s place in the community and the connections between different individuals and groups.
 - Cultural continuity and preservation: ‘Akapapa’anga is a valuable tool for preserving and transmitting cultural knowledge and practices from one generation to the next. It helps to maintain continuity and connection with cultural heritage and identity. It is often used in community events and celebrations and involves the participation of many individuals.
- ii. Akono’anga Maori
- Oral tradition: ‘Akapapa’anga is based on oral tradition and storytelling. It is often passed down through generations and can be performed through song, dance, and other forms of artistic expression.
 - World view: It provides a more comprehensive and holistic perspective on the world and human existence. It ‘genealogises’ from the atua and beginnings of time to now and into the future. It also coalesces with the supernatural and spiritual spheres to go beyond strictly being about genetic or genealogical pedigrees.
- iii. Vaerua
- This entails a collective framework of spiritual beliefs, Values, and customs that define the worldview and interactions of Cook Islands Māori with their environment. It encapsulates prevailing cultural norms and anticipations that mold individuals' and collectives' cognition, emotions, and actions. This incorporates notions of power dynamics, tapu or cultural prohibitions, and the imperative of inclusivity within the Matakeinanga (tribal) structure to safeguard against marginalization
- iv. Peu Maori
- An explanation of cultural roles and responsibilities: in designating cultural roles and responsibilities according to where you are born in the Papa’anga, for

example, first-born children are afforded not only entitlements (as mataiapo) but also responsibilities. Also, tribal, and cultural titles are allocated according to genealogy and family consensus.

- Respect for elders and ancestors: ‘Akapapa’anga places a strong emphasis on respecting and honouring the knowledge and experiences of elders and ancestors. It is often through these individuals that genealogical information is passed down.

These aspects of ‘Akapapa’anga do not totally encapsulate all its nuances. However, it demonstrates its importance and place within the Cook Islands world view and explains it as a cultural paradigm, a cultural practice, and, by its own merits, a research methodology (Wichman, 2023b, p. 4).



Figure 10 Akapapa'anga framework (Wichman, 2024)

In seeking a Cook Islands Maori research method to complement Akapapa'anga, attention turns to

the rich cultural tapestry of the islands and Maori oral knowledge systems. One oral tradition that encapsulates and perpetuates Akapapa'anga is "Kai Vānanga" a concept that represents a deep-seated notion awaiting exploration. Rooted in Cook Islands culture, it embodies the essence of communal creation and knowledge-sharing. Delving into Kai Vānanga unveils the interconnectedness of traditions, values, and aspirations within Cook Islands communities. It serves as a gateway to understanding and preserving cultural heritage while fostering creativity and resilience as shall be seen in the ensuing chapter.

4.2 Atuitui kia Kai Vānanga Vataavata

Akaronga mai to pu kai taringa, Vataavata mai to pu kai taringa!

Lend me your ears and listen. Listen attentively with your ears and minds open!

(Makiuti Tongia)

This is a tateni that has resonated with me, often heard on the radio during performances surrounding Te Maeva Nui, the annual celebration of Cook Islands nationhood. However, the true essence of Vataavata eluded me until I embarked on this research journey, seeking a culturally resonant method to gather necessary information. It was a term I explored with the esteemed Makiuti Tongia, a Taunga Korero (language expert) and member of the Te Kopapa Reo Māori (Cook Islands Māori Language Commission). Initially, Kai Vānanga was proposed as the primary method, deemed suitable for research purposes; however, the depth of understanding required an incorporation of not only the physical but also the spiritual dimensions in which it converges. Contemplation ensued on whether to integrate Vataavata, synonymous with attentive listening, into the concept of Kai Vānanga to enhance its applicability to delicate issues and specific communities or individuals.

The inclusion of Vataavata in this conceptual framework has been a transformative odyssey, traversing traditional pe'e (chants) and tateni (exaltations), into contemporary dialogues on its relevance today. It has expanded the scope of Kai Vānanga to foster more meaningful conversations on sensitive and often tapu matters—a safe and non-judgmental space conducive to such discourse, contrary to the perspectives of Nietzsche (Small, 2017) and Foucault, who might argue against the existence of such spaces.

Below I conceptualise the Kai Vānanga Vataavata method and logically go through the iterations of understanding it from the base words of Vānanga to Kai Vānanga and then the bespoke method of Kai Vānanga Vataavata which is presented as the appropriate method for undertaking this enquiry.

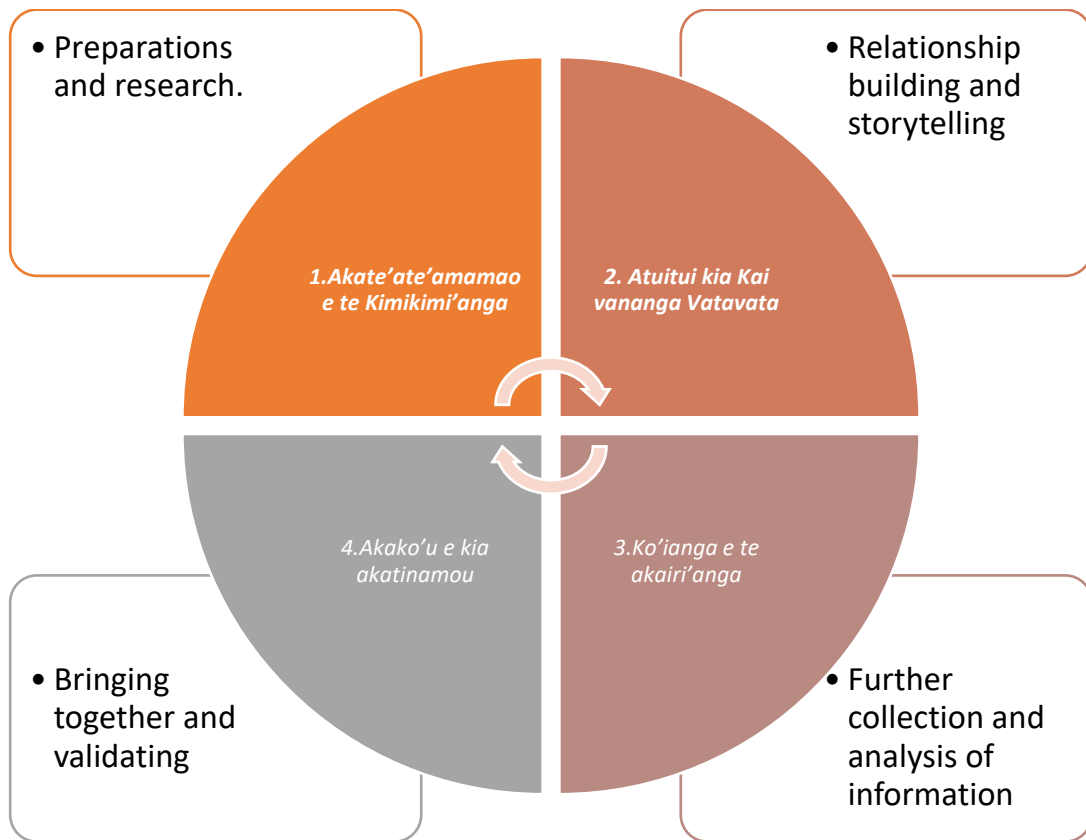


Figure 11 Kai Vānanga Vataavata method (Wichman, 2024)

4.2.1 Understanding the semantics -Vānanga to Kai Vānanga

In order to understand Kai Vānanga we must start from the base word Vānanga, originating from Cook Islands Māori, holds the literal meaning of "to talk or converse" (Buse & Taringa, 1995), as exemplified in expressions such as Vānanga mai e te tupua Tangaroa, denoting "speak, O guardian spirit Tangaroa." Presently, the usage of this term remains prevalent among the sister islands of Rakahanga and Manihiki in the northern group of the Cook Islands, where it finds integration into

daily discourse. Conversely, among the Rarotongan populace, Vānanga has transitioned from common vernacular to a term reserved for formal events and ceremonial occasions. Despite its cultural significance, academic exploration of Vānanga as a concept within Cook Islands Māori tradition has been limited, with Tanner (2018) being one of the few to offer theoretical insights.

Tanner (2018) advanced a Vānanga research model, visually illustrating how practical engagement, when approached as research, yielded more robust data collection during Vānanga sessions with practitioners from Rarotonga. This conceptual framework facilitated discussions on issues pertaining to Pacific representations and cultural ownership within group settings, acting as a catalyst for intellectual discourse (Tanner, 2018). However, Tanner did not delineate the specific methodology or procedural steps involved in the Vānanga process, leaving room for further exploration and refinement.

The amalgamation of the term Kai with Vānanga, as in Kai Vānanga, imbues it with a heightened significance, extending into spiritual, philosophical, and epistemological realms. While Kai typically denotes "physical food" as a noun or "to eat" as a verb, its juxtaposition with Vānanga infuses the conversation with a sacred essence. In the Rarotongan context, Kai is commonly associated with physical sustenance, whereas mānga more aptly describes earthly sustenance. Meaning that Kai Vānanga transcends mundane dialogue, elevating it to a sacred discourse imbued with mana (power and prestige) and tapu (sacredness). This transformation underscores the inherent connection between spiritual elevation and sacred conversation, a concept deeply rooted in Cook Islands Māori tradition.

Kai Vānanga is thus spiritual food for conversation. It feeds our spirit and elevates participants to a higher mental – spiritual stage or plane. And if we are lucky, we might find ourselves in conversation with the gods (Māori and Christian) and ancestors, pleading for their 'sacred help' as benign or kind spirits. We all have taken this trip to the realm of the gods and have had our conversations with them in dreams, and some who are lucky have had one-on-one conversations, talks, and speeches in real life. We have done it also in prayer – many prayers. But it may not have been known then that we were and are conversing with the gods and tupuna. Kai Vānanga is thus a holistic method that incorporates cultural, social, and spiritual dimensions of Māori knowledge and experience (Mahuika & Mahuika, 2020).

Kai Vānanga is rooted in Māori culture and serves as a distinctive and valuable methodological approach for fostering open and meaningful dialogue. In this research's context, it has been used as a method to carry out the enquiry in a culturally sensitive manner. It has played a pivotal role in establishing rapport and engaging with the participants, particularly when exploring topics such as the Ānua communities and their wellbeing. Within the research framework, the Kai Vānanga involved individuals and groups of people coming together to engage in dialogue, not just as participants but as active contributors to the research process. It embodied a spirit of inclusivity, reciprocity, and respect, aligning perfectly with the principles of Akono'anga Māori.

Kai Vānanga is an important method for Māori researchers and scholars, as it allows them to engage with their cultural heritage and knowledge systems in a meaningful and respectful way. When “are” is inserted before Vānanga it becomes a cultural obligation on all Cook Islanders to traditionally help in building the traditional tribal title holders house, which is now interpreted as an obligation to community service (Crocombe & Crocombe, 2003b). This goes hand in hand with the cultural obligation of Ara Tiroa, which is to look after your guests or anyone that comes to your home (Crocombe & Crocombe, 2003b).

As a research method, Vānanga has many similarities with the concept of Wananga in Aotearoa (Mahuika & Mahuika, 2020; Smith et al., 2019) and the concept of Talanoa in Samoa and Tonga (Fa'avae et al., 2016; Vaioleti, 2006). All come from a Polynesian oral tradition; however, there are differences in language and cultural nuances specific to the Cook Islands maori people with multi-level and multi-layered critical dimensions that can include free or more formal conversations within the uipa'anga (meetings), hence Kai Vānanga instead of just Vānanga being used in this research.

Establishing trust, care, and empathy lies at the heart of this methodology, underpinned by the provision of secure environments conducive to open engagement. Farrelly & Nabobo-Baba (2014) elucidate how empathy can serve to challenge the inherent power dynamics between researcher and participant. However, the Talanoa approach is often silent on the significance of safe physical spaces for certain communities. This is remedied by the concept of Vā (space and relationship), which delineates a tangible or abstract space where dialogues can unfold; it represents the space between entities, embodying a sense of interconnectedness rather than mere spatial separation (Reynolds, 2017, p. 64; Tuagalu, 2008; Tuitupou et al., 2020, p.14). Furthermore, Powell contends

that when the space is inverted, it becomes replete with meaning, possessing the capacity to encapsulate the essence of all that it connects (Powell, 2021, p. 47).

It is with this relational concept and perspective shift in seeing what connects us that Kai Vānanga will be situated. In the realm of academic discourse, Kai Vānanga similarly underscores the importance of possessing cultural understanding, particularly in language and cultural protocols, mirroring the prerequisites of Talanoa. This requisite may pose challenges for researchers who lack an immersive understanding of the culture under study (Fa'avae et al., 2016).

This is a consideration that will be further refined and explained so it can be applied across the board, especially using the values and principles that underpin Kai Vānanga. These underpinnings include Māori cultural protocols and practices, such as Peu Māori (customs and practices), Akono'anga Māori (rituals and protocols), and 'Akapapa'anga ara Tangata (genealogy and relationships). Some of the central principles of Kai Vānanga include the following:

- i. Mana and Tapu (power and sacredness) – when elevated to a state of spirituality, Kai Vānanga incorporates the concepts of Mana and Tapu to control the conversation with boundaries and respect.
- ii. Tu Ta'aka'aka (Respect): The method of Kai Vānanga requires respect for each other's opinions, ideas, and perspectives.
- iii. Akarongo matatio (Listening): Active listening is crucial in Kai Vānanga. It involves hearing and understanding the perspectives of others without interrupting or dismissing them.
- iv. Manako Taokota'i (Consensus building): The goal of Kai Vānanga is to reach a consensus, or an agreement that is acceptable to everyone involved. It requires everyone to work together towards a common goal.
- v. Anga'anga Kapiti (Collaboration): Collaboration is a key aspect of Kai Vānanga. It involves working together as a team to achieve a common objective.
- vi. Manako Ariki (Flexibility): Kai Vānanga requires flexibility and openness to innovative ideas and perspectives. It involves being adaptable and willing to adjust one's views based on current information or feedback.

- vii. Akakoromaki (Patience): Kai Vānanga requires patience, as reaching a consensus may take time. It involves allowing everyone to express their ideas and working through any disagreements or challenges that arise.
- viii. Atui'anga (Application): Finally, Kai Vānanga involves the application of the group's ideas and decisions to the problem or situation at hand. It requires action and the implementation of the agreed-upon solution.

The Kai Vānanga method shares key principles with participatory action research, a methodology that prioritizes the engagement of research participants across every phase of the research endeavor (Cammock et al., 2021; Vaioleti, 2006). This collaborative approach seeks to empower participants, enhance the significance and applicability of research outcomes, and catalyze societal transformation and communal advancement.

Both the Kai Vānanga method and participatory action research emphasize the active involvement of those directly affected by the research topic or issue. By integrating the perspectives, experiences, and insights of participants into the research process, these methodologies foster a sense of ownership and agency among individuals and communities involved. This inclusive approach not only ensures that research outcomes resonate with the realities and aspirations of participants but also promotes equity, social justice, and sustainable development.

Moreover, the emphasis on collaboration and co-creation inherent in participatory research methodologies like the Kai Vānanga method facilitates the generation of contextually relevant knowledge and actionable insights. Through meaningful engagement with diverse stakeholders, researchers can uncover nuanced understandings of complex issues, identify innovative solutions, and cultivate collective capacities for problem-solving and decision-making (Vaioleti, 2006). As a result, participatory research becomes a powerful tool for addressing systemic inequalities, fostering community resilience, and fostering transformative change at both local and global levels.

The Kai Vānanga method and participatory action research share a commitment to democratizing knowledge production and advancing social justice agendas (Smith, 2021). By centering the voices and experiences of marginalized groups, these methodologies not only enrich the quality of

research outcomes but also contribute to the empowerment, emancipation, and well-being of communities worldwide.

One of the key advantages of the Kai Vānanga method is its ability to generate rich, contextualized data that is grounded in the perspectives and experiences of research participants. This method is particularly useful in research contexts where the Western academic tradition may not fully capture the nuances of local knowledge and cultural practices. However, the Kai Vānanga method also presents certain challenges, including the need for researchers to establish trust and build strong relationships with research participants and the potential for power imbalances to arise in collaborative research relationships. Using the Kai Vānanga method, this research must be mindful of these challenges and work to address them through ongoing communication and reflexivity.

Derived from the Pacific Island nation of Samoa, the concept of Manalagi-talanoa signifies a specific style of dialogue emphasizing deep listening, empathy, and mutual respect (Tiatia-Seath et al., 2018). "Manalagi" denotes a state of complete presence, attentiveness, and awareness. In the context of talanoa, this principle extends to listening, where individuals strive to be fully present and attentive, demonstrating genuine interest in others' perspectives and experiences (Tiatia-Seath et al., 2018). Manalagi – Talanoa fosters open and respectful dialogue, prioritizing relationship-building and mutual understanding (Sanga & Tavola, 2016). Characterized by active listening, participants take turns sharing their viewpoints while the other party listens attentively, displaying empathy.

In Aotearoa, talanoa-based wellbeing research is exemplified by the Manalagi – Talanoa approach, emphasizing the significance of positive health and wellbeing outcomes for Pacific rainbow communities (Thomsen et al., 2021). The Manalagi project addresses critical knowledge gaps regarding health determinants for rainbow communities in Aotearoa, employing Manalagi-Talanoa as its cornerstone (Thomsen et al., 2021, p. 466). While akin to this enquiry, which also adopts a community-centered approach, the Cook Islands' Ānuanua context differs, necessitating adaptations using Cook Islands specific methods such as kai vānanga to accommodate the unique cultural landscape

Upon contemplation of methodologies such as Manalagi-Talanoa (Thomsen & Brown-Acton, 2021) within the context of Aotearoa Pasifika and rainbow communities, I will now enrich the concept of Kai Vānanga by integrating the Cook Islands' tradition of attentive listening and

profound comprehension, known as Vataavata. This enhancement aims to tailor Kai Vānanga to better suit the nuanced discussions anticipated in this research, recognizing that traditional Kai Vānanga settings, typically conducted in groups, might constrain individual contributions. Therefore, the term "Kai Vānanga Vataavata" will be introduced to acknowledge the intricacies of addressing sensitive topics, understanding diverse communities, and navigating between collective and individual dynamics.

4.2.2 Arriving at Kai Vānanga Vataavata:

<i>Iri taa taa, Iri taa taa</i>	<i>Weave and write</i>
<i>Vataavata mai to pu kai taringa</i>	<i>Lend me your ears and listen attentively</i>
<i>Iri taa taa, Iri taa taa</i>	<i>Weave and write</i>

(George Paniani, Guy Morgan, Makiuti Tongia)

This is part of a Purua (Poem) that was imparted to me by Makiuti Tongia to call a person to be attentive and not only take note of the conversations happening but understand the nuances within them. Makiuti Tongia gave me this Purua which was a collaborative effort between himself, the late George Paniani who helped in translation and publicized it on radio and Guy Morgan. Makitui said that this was “appropriate and that I was on the right path towards realizing the mana and tapu of Kai Vānanga and the world within which our tupuna and iti tangata lived and continue to do so.” As Vānanga and Kai Vānanga has been elaborated on previously, it is important to understand the meaning and use of the word Vataavata in this context. According to Savage (1962) Vataavata means to be attentive or listen attentively, hence the impetus to link attentive understanding to Kai Vānanga so that it can consider and encourage a space for sensitive subjects to be discussed and understood in this respect.

4.3.2.1 *Akate’ate’amamao’anga e te Kimikimi’anga– preparations and background research.*

Māori cultural protocols and practices, such as Akono’anga Māori (customs and practices), Peu Māori (rituals and protocols), and papa’anga (genealogy and relationships) must be followed when carrying out Kai Vānanga Vataavata. Additionally, with Kai Vānanga Vataavata, the sensitivities of diverse communities and individuals can be factored in at all stages.

[Te Akamata'anga \(the beginning\)](#) - a research plan was developed according to the values of Akono'anga Māori and set within 'Akapapa'anga. The enquiry then started to develop the research's genealogy and the scope of what needed to be achieved. For this research ten individuals and two groups Kai Vānanga Vataavata were carried out – one at the beginning to contribute to the design of the research and at the end to validate the conclusions.

[Iki'anga tangata \(electing participants\)](#) - Participants were selected randomly by utilising the Ānua organisation platforms so as to ensure randomness and non-relationality between the researcher and the participants. However, in small communities (such as the Cook Islands), relationality can be a challenge, and so Kai Vānanga Vataavata and the protocols involved must ensure the Vā (space) is safe and open to ensure any biases, conflicts, or misunderstandings are cleared by those involved.

[Akateateamamao uipa'anga \(preparing the meeting\)](#)-In every instance, I was prepared according to the subject matter. Location and agenda were set, and background research was done beforehand to inform all parties who must be addressed appropriately (Akapapa'anga, gender markers and identifiers must be included as appropriate). Research that was done beforehand included a literature review and the gathering of records and publications to assist. Since Kai Vānanga Vataavata comes from an oral tradition, it is also important to incorporate oral histories into the research.

[Manako ke no te Uipa'anga \(other aspects of the meeting\)](#)-Timely notice was given to those who wanted to participate setting the akakoro'anga (agenda) and nga'i uipa'anga (location) usually with an independent party to akatere (chair/researcher) the meeting and a tangata tātā miniti (note taker) of the discussions. However, in this instance, as the researcher I become the akatere (lead) and the tangata tātā miniti (secretary). I did give the participants the opportunity to make changes to the agenda and location (due to security or discomfort by the participant). By giving this information and giving the participant the opportunity to add or amend, it shows akatika'anga (consent) to progress with the Kai Vānanga Vataavata.

[Ara Tiroa](#) is an important aspect that was followed, this is the cultural obligation of every Cook Islander to look after manui (guests) and provide appropriate food and/or gifts as acknowledgement and appreciation towards them (Tongia, 2003, p. 291).

Are Vānanga is the cultural obligation towards tribal title holders and traditionally was about helping in building their house. It is now interpreted as our service to title holders and the community. Kai Vānanga Vataavata extends this concept to those in need or who have been left behind (Tongia, 2003, p. 292).

Ora (time) and *Vā* (space) appropriate time and space was given so that there were fruitful discussions. If there were sensitivities and matters that take time, this was respected, and time given utilising the *vā*. The utilisation of the *vā* in the Vānanga becomes especially important in not only providing a safe and encouraging space but also one of healing and breaking down power dynamics between people.

4.3.2.2 Atuitui kia Kai Vānanga Vataavata– Relationship building and storytelling

As elaborated above, ten individuals and two group Kai Vānanga Vataavata were carried out – one at the beginning to contribute to the design of the research and at the end to validate the conclusions, with the opportunity for those participants to have another Kai Vānanga if they wished to do so. The steps followed for the Kai Vānanga Vataavata included the following:

Tuatua aka’aravei’anga (introductions): Cultural introductions and salutations were made according to the audience or individual-

- i. All meetings started with the pure akamata (starting prayer) and ended with the pure akaoti (ending prayer). Before Christianity came to the Cook Islands, Karakia (traditional chant) would have been used. There is a growing practice now to use Karakia, especially in the traditional customary space. Time was set at the start of the uipa’anga but was dictated by how the participant chose to utilize the *Vā* (space).
- ii. In group settings, it started by acknowledging Nga Pou E Toru (three sources of power in Cook Islands society) - Te Enuā (traditional leaders), Te evangelia (Church) and Akatere Basileia (Government) and then tuatua aka’aravei’anga to introduce myself and connect to the audience through my papa’anga.

- iii. In one-on-one Kai Vānanga-Vatavata it started by introducing myself through papa'anga and this enquiry followed by the other person to atuitui to'ou piri'anga (connect through genealogy) and to set the Vā (space) as one that is safe and healing. The atui'anga included our connections through kopu tangata (family), Ta'onga (tribal title) Matakeinanga/Vaka (tribe), Enuā (land), tapere (sub village), oire (village), and ingoa (names). Consideration of gender and identity markers were also acknowledged at this point. A special note was made on the sensitive nature and information on dealing with potential trauma or relived experiences. Supporting services information was also made available. It was important that I had contacts for help and assistance if the need arose. The nga'i uipa'anga (meeting place) was private, safe, and secure. Since the Ānuānua community still has stigma attached due to certain religious interpretations in the Cook Islands, it was important that I worked with the Ānuānua associations to establish safe places to conduct the Kai Vānanga Vatavata but also to have people on hand if things got out of control. In this instance, it was important to have people on call with a security firm on dial just in case. Thankfully, this was not needed.
- iv. Items were discussed and deliberated in the Vā (safe space) with areas for further research, clarification, and follow-up in the future. Depending on how the Vā was set according to Akapapa'anga, usually in group settings, the most senior person or representative will speak on behalf of their group or family. This limited individuals from expressing their point of view, so the use of Kai Vānanga Vatavata was essential for individual conversations. In instances where traumatic experiences caused discomfort to anyone, the Vā (space) was given time to reflect and think, and information and reassurance from the researcher to the participant ensured that carrying on was okay for the participant.
- v. All meetings ended with the pure akaoti (Christian prayer) to akanoa (free the space from sanction). Karakia (traditional incantation) was also used.

4.3.2.3 Ko'ianga e te Akairi'anga - Further collection and analysis of information

According to Kai Vānanga Vataavata it requires that well-informed decisions be made according to consensus. After the uipa'anga all information was transcribed and then arranged into thematic areas which were emerging. Noting that the emerging areas would be presented at a group Kai Vānanga for validation. Further analysis was done, specifically looking at the literature review and research on the emerging areas not covered in the review. There were instances where more information was required to akatinamou (confirm) aspects brought up in the meeting or to kimi marama (finding knowledge) on action points. Researching widely was expected at this stage through document analysis and especially the literature review that was done on the enquiry. This stage was also about bringing everything together and analyzing the data or information that was acquired. Akairi'anga was crucial as there were vast amounts of information collected, and it needed to be made easy for consumption by the participants.

4.3.2.4 Akako'u e kia akatinamou-bringing together and validating

After the koi'anga and akairi'anga and some additional follow ups with participants- all individual participants were sent a selective transcript of salient points according to the questions asked and they were given time to comment if they agreed to the summary or if they had any amendments. No amendments were received, however three participants requested that their traumatic experiences were not included in the thesis findings- requests which have been respected. Akako'u'anga was imperative to unveil comprehensive insights. The synthesis phase entailed amalgamating disparate data points, distilling complex concepts, and reconciling divergent perspectives. Through this integrative approach, it sought to harmonize disparate strands of knowledge, revealing emergent patterns and nuanced understandings, and bringing together these diverse elements to construct a coherent narrative, illuminating the interconnectedness of ideas and advancing this scholarly discourse.

An important aspect of the Kai Vānanga Vataavata method is akatinamou'anga, or to come back to the community and reflect on what the preliminary research findings are saying to make sure that they are valid and to make sure that there is consensus on finalising these aspects. It is about giving back by informing and keeping the community updated and involved. It was vital to report back on the preliminary findings for verification or validation of the results, and it was also an opportunity for the participants to see how they had contributed to the final design and analysis

that was conducted. The reason for validating research findings through a group Kai Vānanga includes providing different perspectives; group meetings bring together individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints. This diversity enriches the research process by offering multiple angles through which to analyze and understand wellbeing findings. It helps ensure that the research is comprehensive and inclusive. For the group Kai Vānanga Vataavata points from the first group and aspects of the individual Kai Vānanga were presented and the whole group were invited to comment and to verify whether the findings were accurate or needed to be amended. One concept that needed a bit more time to understand was the move from wellbeing to wholebeing which will be elaborated in the findings chapter.

4.3.2.5 Aka'oki te meitaki (giving back)

It is imperative that the findings or outcomes of the dialogues are communicated back to the individuals who participated and that their contributions are recognized and valued throughout the process including during the validation process but also when the research is published.

4.3 Toku Tūranga-Positionality:

There are culturally ascribed levels of inherent hierarchies in the Cook Islands Māori world view, according to your 'Akapapa'anga. 'Akapapa'anga legitimizes and ranks a person in the social hierarchy accordingly. The person with a Taoanga (tribal title) usually sits at the apex within a family, with lesser tribal titles under it to help with certain obligations. The Pa Metua are the most senior generation and highest in rank in anyone's Akapapa'anga as such, certain acknowledgements must be made to them and the tribal title holders during Kai Vānanga Vataavata and a level of respect is afforded when they speak and make decisions.

The Vā Tapu (sacred space) between people and objects of different generations and title holders when speaking is important, as there is a respectful way of speaking and order of speaking. In circumstances where there is a major disagreement or a person has broken protocol, the tribal title holder or Pa Metua (elder) would intervene and decide to stop the Kai Vānanga as the tapu has been broken (Kauraka et al., 1991). 'Akapapa'anga does not discriminate according to gender – if you are the mataiapo (first born) you are afforded certain entitlements but also obligations.

Understanding the inherent hierarchy of ‘Akapapa’anga and applying it to myself as the President of TTA and as the researcher who is Akava’ine (transwoman) there are relational aspects or power dynamics to take into consideration when undertaking Kai Vānanga. In my professional capacity, I am the Director of Central Policy and Planning at the Office of the Prime Minister. Understanding and using Kai Vānanga Vataavata is essential to deconstructing power dynamics between myself and the participants. The vā within our Kai Vānanga Vataavata enabled the participants time and space to reflect and articulate their thoughts. I had to ensure that respect was observed and that the vā was one that was supportive and neutral. Luckily, no one broke the tapu and so there was no need for a forced break to mediate or to call off the Kai Vānanga Vataavata. Other crucial factors for consideration were:

- i. Listening and being impartial;
- ii. No coercion;
- iii. Encouraging participants to be frank and open, noting that the tapu sets the boundaries agreed; and
- iv. What I expressed, and my views were not final and that it was an open dialogue.

My position as the lead advocate for the decriminalization campaign on the Cook Islands Crimes Bill, which I started in 2011 and worked with TTA, PRIDE Cook Islands, and Te Ānuaŋua O Aitutaki organizations, is also important here. This journey, which is discussed in Kapi 3 (Ipukarea e te iti tangata Ānuaŋua), concerns the evolution of the Ānuaŋua community in the Cook Islands and the policy and legal status of this segment of society. As such, I had to be cognizant of my position and the power dynamics or mana that come from being in this position and in relation to the research participants. After completing the Kai Vānanga Vataavata and reflecting on the power dynamics and the importance of the relational aspects, it was clear that trust between me as the researcher (and a part of the community) and the participants was an especially crucial factor in capturing meaningful information from participants. At first, most Kai Vānanga Vataavata were slow and quiet but after going through the process for about 30 minutes the conversations became very candid and open with most participants saying that it was nice to see ‘one of us’ doing the research.

4.4 Ethics

This research was guided by Akapapa'anga and the protocols of Kai Vānanga Vataavata. There is no specific word that explains ethics in the Cook Islands Māori language, but the word akakino which means to mistreat, harm, or injure, is a term that captures the essence of ensuring that no harm is done to anyone or anything. We, as Cook Islands Māori, are Tiaki (guardians or custodians) for the future and must ensure that to akakino does not happen or is minimised as best possible. When this is coupled with the Akono'anga (protocols) of Kai Vānanga Vataavata, it provides a safe framework to work within, ensuring that boundaries are set through tapu and that the vā in vānanga is safe and neutral.

4.4.1 Manako'anga paruru-Ethical considerations:

The institutional ethics processes for this research were thorough. This began with an internal Massey University Institute of Development Studies (IDS) process, which was followed by Massey University Human Ethics Committee Approval (see Appendix III), then Cook Islands Ethics Approval, and the Cook Islands National Research Council issuing a research permit to conduct research in the Cook Islands (Appendix II for ethics approvals). The process was very thorough, and it enabled the enquiry to make sure that all ethical considerations were implemented as appropriate, including following the Massey University Ethics Guidelines (2017) and Massey University Pacific Research Guidelines and Protocol (Meo-Sewabu et al., 2013). Here are some ethical considerations to note:

Akono'anga Māori-Māori way of life: It is important to build relationships with community members and seek their permission and informed consent before conducting research. This was addressed using 'Akapapa'anga as the framework and Kai Vānanga as a method that incorporates cultural Values and notions of understanding. I also speak Cook Islands Māori and have good relationships with PRIDE Cook Islands and Te Tiare Association Inc., who are the two primary Ānuanua organisations of the Cook Islands. On Pa Enuā, there is Te Ānuanua o Aitutaki, and on all other islands, there are representatives of the Te Tiare Association. I requested to utilise their membership email lists to try and get research participants, where information about the research and consent forms (In English and Cook Islands Māori) to seek permission and ensure that they understand what this research is about was shared.

Tiika'anga Tangata: Free and Informed Consent: To obtain free and informed consent from all participants, ensuring that they fully understand the research project's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits. Information about the research and consent forms were provided in English and Cook Islands Māori (Appendix IV) to seek permission and ensure participants understood what this research was about. There were no issues with language as the Kai Vānanga Vataavata was done in both languages with much of the conversations going between languages. By carrying out Kai Vānanga Vataavata using Akono'anga Māori the different protocols give participants the opportunity to give free and informed consent at the beginning when they were approached and during the process. If protocols are broken, i.e., the Vā (space) is compromised, then the participant can take the opportunity to not consent or pull out of the Kai Vānanga Vataavata. As stated above, three participants wanted certain aspects of their Kai Vānanga Vataavata to not be included in the final thesis.

Mana-Power Dynamics: Understanding and using Kai Vānanga Vataavata was essential in deconstructing the power dynamics between myself as researcher and the participants. The Vā (space) within our Kai Vānanga enables the participant time and space to reflect and articulate their thoughts. Respect is essential in the Vā (space) which changes the power dynamic to be one that is supportive and neutral. In Kai Vānanga the use of Karakia or Pure to make the space tapu sets boundaries that cannot be crossed, including influencing, and giving opportunity to the participant within the Vā (space). This breaks the power dynamic and makes it safe for everyone to talk freely. The information also made clear that it was up to them if they want to participate and that they can remove themselves from the research at any time and choose not to have their information published.

Ownership and control of data: In Akono'anga Māori, ownership is communal, and data or knowledge is kept by the ta'unga for the benefit of the community. This research will respect the rights of communities and individuals to own and control their data by advising them and getting their informed permission on how I will use the data and information through the forms that will be supplied in both Māori and English. It will also be mentioned in the Kai Vānanga on how the data will be used and shared only with their consent.

Anga'anga Kapipiti-Collaborative Approach: As a member of the Ānuanua community, this is my first attempt at authoring an academic thesis and designing such research proposals. However, I

did ask the participants if they wanted to add to the design of the research process. Kai Vānanga Vataavata required that the participants be involved from start to finish and that their thoughts were incorporated in a positive way.

Tuatua Muna-Privacy and confidentiality: keeping information private and confidential was incorporated as the conversations with participants were said within the Vā tapu (sacred space) and so giving any information out of the Vā tapu breaks Akono'anga (protocol). It can only be done with the participants' consent. Points to note included the following:

- i. The research used direct identifiers and removed any personal information that directly identified the participants, such as names, addresses, phone numbers, or email addresses from the data set.
- ii. Gave no real names-All participants' real names were replaced with alternative names or codes to ensure anonymity.
- iii. Aggregated data: Combined data from multiple participants to present group-level data rather than individual data.
- iv. Reduced the level of detail: I did not use any information that could potentially identify the participant, such as specific details about their occupation, medical history, or lifestyle.

Kai Vānanga Vataavata ensured the protection of identity sensitivities by employing pseudonyms and implementing stringent measures to safeguard anonymity, particularly considering the delicate nature of the information shared. It was essential for the research methodology to remain firmly grounded in the values of 'Akapapa'anga. By placing ethical considerations at the forefront, this research endeavor guaranteed that its endeavors are conducted with respect, significance, and utility for the communities under study.

4.5 Conclusion:

At the outset of this chapter, I introduced Akapapa'anga as a methodology and Kai Vānanga as a method, both of which have received limited scholarly attention. The endeavor of devising a research project based on these oral traditions and concepts has yielded profound insights into the history and knowledge systems of Cook Islands Māori. It has compelled me to articulate and document my understanding of these concepts, leading me on a journey of exploration within my

own Akapapa'anga. This experience serves as a reminder of the vast and evolving nature of our Indigenous knowledge, which holds a rightful place within the realm of scientific academia. As articulated by Epele Hau'ofa (1994) in "Our Sea of Islands," Oceania is continuously expanding, teeming with potential and opportunities, and solutions to developmental challenges can stem from within local communities. While initially rooted in Kai Vānanga, it became evident that the complexities and sensitivities surrounding issues pertinent to the Ānuanua or diverse communities were not fully addressed. Thus, the methodology evolved into Kai Vānanga Vataavata, offering a dynamic approach to engaging with diverse communities and individuals, particularly in handling sensitive matters with due respect and appropriateness.

Kapi 5: Ko’ianga e te Aka’iri’anga -Research findings and Analysis

Ko’ianga means to pick and bring together and aka’iri means to sort out. As such, this chapter delves into the Kai Vānanga Vataavata findings, which were analysed thematically and refined through the group validation process outlined in Kapi 4. This method enabled participants to reflect on their experiences as well as contributing to the research process, as indicated by Manava:

This is the first time someone has asked me how I am really doing and helped me to reflect and think about my life and wellbeing in a cultural way. This is so refreshing and daunting in the sense that I have had to work through my experiences through aspects of life and confront the sometimes-uncomfortable things. – this is what I have needed to overcome and focus all of these things – I just needed to Kai Vānanga (what is it) Vataavata (Manava)

This enquiry's intent was to understand the well-being of the Ānuanua community in the Cook Islands and how it can be improved. This has been explored through the research question, What is Tūranga memeitaki in the Cook Islands for the Ānuanua community?

At the start of the Kai Vānanga Vataavata and after all protocols were observed to ensure an open and safe space for the conversation, a brief explanation was given of how Tūranga memeitaki has been interpreted and defined in the Cook Islands context, including the NSDA 2020+ definition, which gives a sustainable development lens on wellbeing for all with a vision over the next 100 years towards holistic wellbeing.

The participants were given the space and time to digest, reflect, and then provide their thoughts on Tūranga memeitaki and how it could be done better for themselves, their families, and the Ānuanua community. Some Kai Vānanga were free flowing with ideas, while others needed a bit more encouragement for the participants to speak their thoughts. Below are the results of these Kai Vananga Vataavata. This chapter addresses the research question using three pillars, which give the top four or five thematic areas under the pillars that came out strongly which I used to categorise the information and see how it evolved into a distinct Ānuanua Wellbeing model. I used the NSDA 2020+ thematic areas as a starting point, and as I analysed the data from the Kai Vānanga Vataavata, these were expanded or changed accordingly.

5.1 What is Tūranga memeitaki for the Ānuanua community in the Cook Islands?

When posed with this question, all participants had mixed initial thoughts and answers. However, this quote broadly captures the thinking behind what Tūranga memeitaki means to Ānuanua individuals as elucidated through the Kai Vānanga Vataavata participants.

“Tūranga memeitaki for me is quite simply living a journey towards a fulfilled life...it is the result of everything in my life coming into balance and enabling me to be a flourishing and amazing Ānuanua human being, which in turn helps not only myself but my family, my community and my nation...It is not fleeting like an emotion but is the realisation of all the connections that our tupuna taught us – connections to each other, to the land, to the sea, to the living environment—all of which need to be looked after.” (Naynay)

About half of the participants agreed that living a fulfilled and purposeful life was important and understood that life has many nuances that may be out of their control. By focusing on the journey, the emphasis moved away from a static focus on a destination, status, or standard of wellbeing to one that goes beyond understanding the complexities of life and how one must navigate with different skillsets (both internal and external). As some participants noted, *“this process is helped by understanding your Value system that comes from our ui tupuna (ancestors)”* (Juicy), and in this case, *“Akapapa'anga, as a glue that helps in providing a pathway for this journey towards Tūranga Memeitaki”* (Naynay).

As discussed in Chapter 2, wellbeing is a multifaceted and contested concept that encompasses various dimensions, including physical, emotional, social, and psychological aspects of an individual's life. The Kai Vānanga Vataavata showed that wellbeing for an individual enabled family and community wellbeing; there were areas of commonality that were shared by all. Below are the three thematic areas that came out of the Kai Vānanga Vataavata

5.1.1. Tūranga Marū-Comfortable and Safe

One crucial aspect of wellbeing that came up in the Kai Vānanga Vataavata was the state (and beyond) of being comfortable, which in the Ānuanua world is synonymous with being safe and having safe connections. This was influenced by factors such as personal/community safety and

the support of one's social network, be it through blood relations or chosen family, with one participant saying that:

“Being comfortable and safe wherever I am enables me to be better and to do better, As an Ānuanua person, I have always had to be careful with how I look and act and sometimes had to watch my back, It is crucial for me to be comfortable and safe so that I can aspire and achieve what I put my mind to; without it, I could never attain Tūranga memeitaki” (Barbie)

Key aspects that contributed to a feeling of comfort and safety that participants defined were physical safety, financial, education, legal and policy and, most importantly, family – either blood or chosen.

Safety was seen as a fundamental element of well-being. It encompassed both physical safety and emotional security. Physical safety involved protection from harm, danger, and violence, with the notion that *“Many of us live our lives growing up being mocked and abused-we must feel safe and secure in our environments, whether at home, work, or in public spaces”* (Nini) and that without a sense of physical safety, it is challenging to achieve comfort and peace of mind. Emotional safety, on the other hand, is related to one's ability to express their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment or retribution *“I feel so much more comfortable when I’m around the sisters; it’s like we share an unspoken language or understanding of our experiences through life, which makes me feel free”* (Taj). This leads to a supportive and non-judgmental social environment that fosters emotional safety, allowing individuals to comfortably seek help or share their concerns and wellbeing.

Unfortunately, the experiences of most participants were not ones of comfort or safety. As Kioro noted, *“I think all of us have gone through bad things in life maybe more in our community than others because we are seen as different or not normal and maybe people see that as unnatural or as a threat in some way.”* Perceived weakness and being ridiculed or bullied were explained by most participants as a normal aspect of life when growing up. Participants faced unique challenges and experiences related to their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression that contributed to trauma, including discrimination and prejudicial experiences of verbal or physical harassment, micro aggressions, and social exclusion.

The process of coming out to family, friends, and colleagues for many individuals was fraught with anxiety and fear of potential rejection, which sometimes led to social isolation. This is where the chosen family and the sisterhood featured most prominently in the stories shared. Some participants faced rejection from their families when they came out, which led to profound emotional trauma and difficulties with self-acceptance and self-esteem. Others did not have any coming-out stories – and their families were very protective and understanding. Two participants talked about hate crimes perpetrated against community members and how “*Police or Doctors and maybe families are not properly identifying and/or reporting them as hate crimes*” (Naynay). This is an area that needs further analysis and support. They also saw Ānuanua individuals as having an increased risk of becoming victims of hate crimes due to their sexual orientation or gender identity, with a few cases from the Pa Enea brought up. For one participant, there was a discussion on struggling with internalized homophobia or transphobia, which developed because of societal stigma and led to “*self-esteem issues and emotional distress for me as I was always taught that being a certain way...the gay way was wrong*” (Nini). There was also clear agreement that individuals often face higher rates of mental health challenges, such as depression, anxiety, and substance abuse, which were linked to the stressors and discrimination they experienced and the lack of safety they faced.

Most participants experienced bullying and harassment at school or in their communities. These experiences have resulted in trauma and possible long-term psychological effects: “*All the laelae were bullied and ridiculed at school...some of us became numb to the taunts whilst others couldn't handle it and left school...some of us are still affected by that time*” (Juicy). As noted above, healthcare disparities were a common conversation point, with the participants talking about the community being disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS “*Our community has been put into this stigmatised space which is not fair...our community is more than HIV/aids...and it's not a gay disease*” (Nini). Despite all of this, it is important to acknowledge the strength and resilience of many Ānuanua individuals who have been a source of strength and support to family or friends and who have helped create safe spaces for different individuals to progress and move forward.

Financial aspects, or money, were seen as key to safety and comfort and an enabler towards Tūranga memeitaki although the central aspect of it. “*It cannot be just about money...money comes and goes but your support network is always there for you*” (Lady). While money itself was

expressed by all as not being the central aspect of wellbeing, it undoubtedly serves as a powerful enabler:

Financial stability was seen as providing individuals with access to necessities like food, shelter, and healthcare, which were seen as essential for comfort and overall wellbeing. However, it was also seen as offering opportunities for leisure, personal growth, and experiences that can enhance one's quality of life. The relationship between money and wellbeing was acknowledged as complex, with participants noting that an excessive focus on money could lead to stress and diminish one's overall happiness.

“I have lived a poor life according to the papa’a definitions, but I was very happy living a simple life. I am now considered upper middle class and I am stressed out by work and other responsibilities. I have come to understand that money is only one enabler of my wellbeing or whole being and not the centre of it” (Juicy) Therefore, achieving a balance between financial security and the idea that wealth is more than money, together with dimensions of wellbeing such as relationships and personal growth, was crucial.

Legal and policy recognitions were very prominent for an empowering environment to be safe and comfortable – this aspect was in the heads of many participants as the Cook Islands decriminalised same-sex relations in April 2023, which was a source of pride by the community in being legally recognised.

“The law is a funny thing in that it can be against you even though you may have not done anything wrong. Being criminalised because I am part of the Ānuanua community has been so demeaning to me to the extent that I chose to move overseas to a place where I was recognised and celebrated. Now that these provisions have been removed, I will now make the journey back home after 35 years.” (Manava)

An integral part of the discussions on safety was the need for conducive legal and policy frameworks, which play a crucial role in creating an empowering environment for individuals and communities and their constitutional freedoms. Laws and policies that recognize and protect individuals' rights contribute significantly to their wellbeing. Legal recognition of diverse identities, such as gender, race, and sexual orientation, is vital to promoting a society where

everyone feels comfortable, safe, and respected and ensuring that individuals have access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and social support. It creates a safety net, knowing that there are rights and protections provided.

Education and knowledge were expressed as essential components of wellbeing. It was seen that access to quality education or training equips individuals with the skills and knowledge necessary to make informed decisions about their lives. *“...because I was bullied and abused at school for being a laelae (feminine male) I was determined to get out of there and become somebody – I tried my best at school and then went to University and came back home where I established a professional career for myself- I promised myself that the very people that admonished me during my school days will either work for me or eat their words in awe of my achievements- I am proud to say that education has helped me achieve this...”* (Taj)

It also opened doors for better employment opportunities and personal development to thrive. Barriers to education, such as lack of access, financial constraints, or discrimination, were seen to hinder an individual's wellbeing, and addressing these barriers was critical in ensuring that everyone can pursue education and training, thereby contributing to their families and community and fulfilling personal growth. There was also an acknowledgement of the power of knowledge both traditional and western/global, as important in progressing towards enabling wellbeing noting that knowledge is power: *“knowledge is power and so whoever controls knowledge has power...however with power there is responsibility to protect”* (Kioro). Integral to this was the need for the Ānuanua community to be involved and acknowledged for new knowledge creation, as well as valuing traditional knowledge in general.

“After being disowned by my father I wondered for years longing for that connection – the connection for me came through the sisters who took me in and protected me from the ugly world- they provided a place I could call home and for that I am very grateful” (Diva)

However, at the heart of peoples Kai Vānanga Vataavata was ngutuare tangata or kopu tangata or family who were either blood or chosen as their support network through life: *“ko toku kiko, ko toku ivi, ko toku toto ko toku ia papa- my flesh, my bones and my blood are my support and foundation through life”* (Manava). In many cultures and societies, the concept of "Kopu Tangata"

is deeply ingrained. It refers to the importance of both blood relatives and chosen family in an individual's life 'it takes a village to raise a child' being the spirit in which we live. These relational-social connections play a significant role in shaping one's well-being. Good relatives provided a sense of belonging and often formed the core support network for individuals in most instances. They offered emotional support, advice, and a sense of identity. However, participants experienced various forms and severities of discrimination and trauma. Both blood and chosen families were seen as contributing to an individual's emotional and social wellbeing by offering (to varying degrees) comfort, love, and a sense of security that enhanced the overall quality of life.

“I always felt like an ‘other’ in certain spaces growing up—I was not boy enough, I did not like sports and I acted differently, after finishing school, I made a group of friends who became my sisters or kau Vaine as I term it – like minded individuals, some related to me and some not. We sought refuge in each other and encouraged each other to be authentically ourselves and to always strive to be better by serving our community...after a while, we became known for our skills as taunga rakei (traditional costume experts) and became in demand and were respected for it” (Barbie)

Chosen families were more pronounced in the Kai Vānanga Vataavata for Ānuanua participants who talked about chosen families that accepted and understood who they were and supported them more than their blood families, who in some instances had excluded or shunned them. Chosen family definitions consisted of friends, close associates, or long-distance kin who provided support and companionship. The sisterhood, or Kau Vaine, was a term used by some Akavaine participants as a support network that helped each other through life. This kau Vaine concept needs to be researched more; however, it could be seen as the akavaine equivalent of the au Vaine, which is a traditional institution of women in the village who controlled the affairs of the village and exerted influence and power over it as appropriate. The concept of the sisterhood, or Kau Vaine Toa, represented the close bonds between Ānuanua individuals in a loving and supportive community, which is a safe space to be who you are. These relationships often provided a dedicated support network, fostered a sense of belonging and identity, and transcended age, social class, and ethnicity. In many cultures, the sisterhood extends beyond biological sisters to include close female friends and community members. It embodies the idea that women can lean on each other for

emotional support, guidance, and empowerment. This sense of unity and solidarity contributes to the overall vitality of families and communities. In the Ānuanua community, all Ānuanua members are classified as belonging to the sisterhood, a metaphysical term that unites all Ānuanua to support each other no matter what differences you may have. Strong family and community ties provide a safety net during times of need and create a sense of shared responsibility. They also played a crucial role in passing down cultural Values, traditions, and knowledge from one generation to the next.

5.1.2 Ora'anga Mātūtū- The trinity (physical, psychological, spiritual) of holistic health

“Ora'anga matūtū or health is not only about sickness that we see, it also includes the maki manako (mental) and also irinaki'anga Vaerua (spirituality) If these are not in balance, then you are not healthy” (Naynay)

Inclusive health is a comprehensive approach to wellbeing that considers all aspects of an individual's life, recognizing the interconnectedness of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health (Herman, 2013; Puna & Tiatia-Seath, 2017). Achieving holistic health involves nurturing all these dimensions to create a sense of balance and harmony. In the Cook Islands, Māori people also share this concept of holistic health, which encapsulates the physical, psychological, and spiritual aspects of a better whole being. Physical health encompasses practices such as exercise, nutrition, and preventive healthcare. Psychological health involves managing stress, anxiety, and depression while fostering resilience. Spiritual health connects individuals and families with their sense of purpose and meaning in life. This inclusive approach to health recognises that neglecting any of these aspects can impact overall wellbeing.

“My whole life, the government and the world have been talking about leaving no one behind and making sure that our health system is accessible to all but we haven't taken steps to translate that into action- I don't like going to the hospital because they always misgender me and make me feel uncomfortable calling me these terms, which I am not...this is why some of our sisters end up passing away because they refuse to be shamed by going to see the doctor or nurse...our health system can do better for us” (Taj)

This was the resounding message that came out of the Kai Vānanga Vataavata. Awareness and education were seen as critical in ensuring that health and social services are equitable and sensitive to the needs of all individuals, including those who may be marginalized or misgendered. Transgender and non-binary individuals, for example, often faced discrimination and mistreatment within healthcare systems, with many opting not to see a doctor or health care professional. One of the participants stated that she *“pays to go to New Zealand to have health checks instead of facing a discriminatory and stigmatised healthcare space and environment”* (Naynay) this was also shared by akavaine and akatane participants and less by the other Ānuanua identities. Education was seen as another space that needed to be better. Better awareness and education on these issues was seen to help education and healthcare providers better understand the unique healthcare and educational needs of transgender individuals and create more inclusive and respectful environments. This awareness could lead to improved access to appropriate medical care and support, promoting holistic health for all.

“Sometimes it’s like I’m alone and on the edge of a cliff, deciding whether to jump” (Manava).

Psychological health plays a pivotal role in overall wellbeing but more so for Ānuanua individuals. Many participants said that they had experienced "dark spaces" or periods of trauma or emotional distress in their lives. These moments have led to feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression. All participants had experienced a moment where they felt alone or isolated and needed help. But when asked about what helped them to a more positive space the majority explained the notion of having purpose in life and being a Valued member of their relational and familial ties *“I have been put on this earth for a purpose and in my family it is to carry on the practises that have been handed down from my tupuna”* (Juicy) Thus the importance of blood and chosen families and the sisterhood or Kau Vaine for better wholebeing. Trauma is a prevalent factor that significantly impacts an individual's holistic health and the community *“Bad things have happened to me, but I take it day by day”* (Kioro). Traumatic experiences, such as physical or emotional abuse, accidents, or natural disasters, can have lasting effects on physical and mental health. Addressing trauma requires a multifaceted approach, including therapy, support groups, and self-care aspects. Recognizing the presence of trauma and providing appropriate interventions is essential for promoting holistic health.

“I smoke, I drink, sometimes do drugs... I do all of it....I want to stop but I just do not know how too...I am doing it because of my social circles and the work that I do” (Barbie).

This quote is an interesting one in the sense that it showed that some participants were influenced by certain social circles and thus had a greater propensity to partake in drinking alcohol and smoking and thus social determinants of health were seen as an area that needed more attention and investment. Social determinants are external factors that influence an individual's or community's wellbeing, such as socioeconomic status, education, access to healthcare, and the physical environment (reference). The Kai Vānanga identified that Ānuanua participants were affected by certain intersectionalities, with further analysis needed in this area to fully grasp how it is affecting Ānuanua communities. These determinants can either support or hinder an individual's ability to achieve holistic health. Addressing the social determinants of health is seen by the Ānuanua community as being crucial for creating equitable opportunities for all individuals to lead healthy lives. It involves ensuring policies and interventions are aimed at reducing disparities and improving access to essential resources and services.

Many participants elaborated on how spirituality gives hope and purpose, or akakoro'anga:

“ko to tatou Vaerua e mea pu'apinga te reira ki iaku. Me kare o'ou irinaki'anga kare o'ou pu'apinga I roto I to'ou ora'anga – Spirituality is very important to my being. If you do not have faith, then you do not have hope, and thus there is no purpose in life” (Lady).

Spirituality is often connected to religion or personal beliefs and is seen as a significant dimension of holistic health for many participants. Positive spirituality provides a sense of purpose, meaning, community, and connection to something greater than oneself. *“It serves as a source of comfort, hope, and resilience during challenging times”* (Naynay). For some, spirituality involved practices like meditation, prayer, or mindfulness that contributed to mental and emotional wellbeing. Others found strength and solace in their faith communities and church-going communities, while others did not share the same views. For the Ānuanua community, there was a certain apprehension by some participants regarding organised religion, as their experience was one of moral bashing and negative connotations attached by these institutions towards the Ānuanua community. As such,

when dealing with the Ānuanua community, it is vital to acknowledge and respect religion while emphasizing spirituality as a concept that unites and does not divide.

As can be seen, Ora'anga MaTūtū, or holistic health, encompasses a broad spectrum of factors that influence the Ānuanua community's overall wellbeing. It recognizes the importance of physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual health, as well as the role of positive social connections, awareness, education, and resilience. Addressing the diverse aspects of holistic health, including trauma and social determinants of health, is essential for promoting equitable and inclusive opportunities for individuals to achieve and maintain good health throughout their lives. Positive spirituality can also be a vital component of holistic health, providing a source of meaning and strength for those who embrace it.

5.1.3 Muraanga Mata: Inspiration and aspirational outlook and moving beyond wellbeing

This aspect stood out for Ānuanua participants, who said that aspiration and inspiration were particularly important to them and crucial for theirs and their community's wellbeing.

“When I was at school, I promised myself that I would be respected by those who bullied and abused me... and today I am...I have used my experiences as a tool of empowerment to push me to be better, not as revenge but as positive affirmation and development for me and my family. We must aspire and be inspired if we are to adapt and be resilient. It is this strength that contributes to me attaining Tūranga memeitaki” (Juicy).

The Ānuanua participants explained this as a sense of hope in progressing in life, with one participant saying a happy outlook on life is a profound and desirable aspect of wellbeing that encompasses an individual's overall sense of joy, contentment, and satisfaction

“E piri'anga to tatou ki te ao natura na roto I te papa'anga e te tua tapapa, me kare tatou e ngaki e tiaki I te Aorangi natura ka paruparu te reira e ka mate. Me mate te aorangi natura ka mate tatou katoatoa- we have an important genealogical and historical connection to nature and the environment, if we do not rear and look after her, she will become weak and ultimately die. If she dies, we all die too” (Nini)

All participants saw the importance of the living environment as a living entity that needed to be looked after like a crucial member of the family and thus a source of inspiration and responsibility for future generations. They also talked about the human-built environment, which needed to consider the living environment. The environment in which an individual lives has a profound impact on their overall well-being as noted through the majority of participants with one saying *“Te Ao natura – mother nature is so integral to my wellbeing- it's like im connected to it and it gives me a feeling that I cannot explain...but I know it's so important to me and my community”* (Barbie). This encompasses both the natural environment and our akapapa’anga to it, including air and water quality, access to green spaces, and exposure to pollution, as well as the built environment, including housing conditions, transportation options, and access to essential services.

“Ea’a te mea nui I roto I teia nei ao, e tangata, e tangata, e tangata – me ngaki e utu’utu koe I te piri’anga tangata ka Vai ruperupe koe e ka tauturu ia koe I roto I to’ou ora’anga kia rauka I te Tūranga memeitaki— what is the most important thing in the world? If you nurture these connections, you will have a fruitful life, which will help you on your journey to wellbeing” (Manava)

Healthy relationships are seen by all participants as a cornerstone of enabling a person’s journey towards wellbeing. They encompass various forms of interpersonal connections, including friendships, romantic partnerships, family bonds, and professional relationships. Healthy relationships were characterized by most participants as mutual respect, trust, open communication, and support for each other, especially when individuals were on the edge. These connections offered emotional support during challenging times and provided a sense of belonging and social connectedness. Healthy relationships were seen as vital for mental and emotional wellbeing, as they contributed to reduced stress and anxiety, increased happiness, and improved self-esteem. Building and maintaining healthy relationships required effort and nurturing, as the participants said. Individuals who invested in cultivating and nurturing these connections often reaped the rewards in terms of enhanced wellbeing. Positive social connections and trusting relationships are foundational to holistic health. Human beings are inherently social creatures, and meaningful connections with others provide emotional support, reduce loneliness, and foster a sense of belonging. Trusting relationships offered a safe space for individuals to share their thoughts and feelings, enhancing their mental and emotional wellbeing. These connections extend

beyond family and friends to include professional relationships, such as those with healthcare providers and church leaders. Trust in these relationships was seen as essential for effective healthcare and therapeutic outcomes.

“Our reo tupuna connects us to our akono’anga Māori which is connected to our Akapapa’anga and ultimately to our Values and outlook on life – we as akavaine or Tūtū tane, have existed as an integral part of our cultural world and so reo Māori and akono’anga Māori are more important for us even though many of us may not know it yet, because it provides a place of security in our identity as taunga and Ānuanua - we can never be cut out of the Akapapa’anga for that would be a cultural sin and there are supernatural consequences for that.” (Naynay)

Language and cultural identity are deeply intertwined foundations of wellbeing. "Reo" refers to language, and "Akono'anga" pertains to cultural practices and customs. Together, they ground individuals in their identity and Values, serving as a source of strength and connection to their heritage. Language was seen as more than just a means of communication; it reflects one's culture and worldview. Preserving and revitalizing native languages was seen as essential for maintaining cultural identity and fostering a sense of belonging. The Ānuanua community are also at the forefront of language adaptation with a nuanced set of words spoken by the community which is now becoming mainstream. Akono’anga Māori encompasses cultural practices, rituals, and customs that celebrate traditions and Values. Ānuanua gatherings were seen as an integral part, not only a means of passing down ancestral knowledge but also a way of reinforcing a sense of community and belonging.

Another very interesting concept that arose out of the conversations was the fact that the majority of the participants talked about the Ānuanua community as being more likely to be in the realm of taunga, or traditional knowledge holders, and were at the forefront of their respective cultural fields – from Reo Tupuna and Akapapa’anga to Rakei and Kapa, Tua Tapapa, and family knowledge holders as taunga korero. As one participant put it, *“There is a special cultural place for our Ānuanua community as we are the ones that look after the children and elderly and because we have time for our families we are the knowledge holders that adapt and create culture”* (Nini) In many communities throughout the Cook Islands, ta’unga, or experts in traditional knowledge, are

the glue that plays a crucial role in preserving and transmitting cultural practices and Values. “*They serve as repositories of wisdom, ensuring that cultural heritage is preserved and passed down to future generations*” (Barbie) as such this is an area that needs further analysis through future research.

5.2 Towards a Ānuanua definition of Tūranga Memeitaki

Recognizing and nurturing these aspects of wellbeing is essential for creating a society where individuals and families can thrive and lead balanced, purposeful lives rooted in their cultural heritage and connected to their communities. As such, the table below tries to summarise the Kai Vānanga Vataavata and what the Ānuanua definition of wellbeing looks like. It is also noted that participants said that their world is connected through our Akapapa’anga but that the definition of Akapapa’anga needs to be understood beyond just genetics and pedigree charts; it must include aspects that we cannot see or touch. “*We need to refocus the emphasis on the individual and look at the whole picture and understand that we are all connected in ways we may not even understand*” (Barbie). The following table gives a comparison between the NSDA 2020+ wellbeing definition and the Ānuanua wellbeing definition and beyond, which have come out so far.

NSDA 2020+ definition of Tūranga Memeitaki	Ānuanua definition of Tūranga Memeitaki A journey not a destination.
Tūranga Marū –comfortable	Tūranga Marū e te piri’anga mou – comfortable/Safe.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety • Liveable income • Home • Debt management • Secure at retirement • Safe communities • Education and knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfort and Safety • legal and policy language and recognitions-empowering environment • Money not central aspect of wellbeing but an enabler • Education and knowledge but barriers. • Kopu tangata (blood and chosen).

Ora’anga Mātūtū –holistic Health

- Physical health
- Psychological health
- spirituality vital for good health

Ora’anga Mātūtū – triad of holistic Health

- Better health and social services through awareness and education (misgendered or mistreated)
- Positive connections and trusting relationships
- Psychological health key – dark spaces and being on the edge-emotional intelligence
- Aspects of trauma prevalent
- Social determinants of health
- Positive spirituality vital for good health

Tu Mataora: Happiness

- Environment
- Healthy relationships
- Family and Community vitality
- Reo Māori and identity
- Work/life balance
- Freedoms
- Vibrant living language and identity

Muraanga Mata- Aspirational and happy outlook

- Environment
- Healthy relationships
- Family and Community vitality
- the sisterhood
- Freedoms-policy and legal
- Reo Māori and Akono'anga Māori⁷
- Resilience and beyond

Table 7 Comparisons between NSDA 2020+ and Ānuanua definitions Of Tūranga Memeitaki.

5.3 Conclusion:

After delving into the history and the current academic literature and understanding Akapapa’anga and Kai Vānanga Vataavata as the preferred methodological approach to this enquiry-we start to see the shaping of a Ānuanua definition of wellbeing in contrast to the NSDA 2020+ wellbeing definitions. As noted, there are similarities but also clear differences between the NSDA 2020+ general definition of Tūranga memeitaki and the Ānuanua definition. The next chapter will delve into these differences and start to conceptualise a Ānuanua wellbeing model an iteration that would lead to the Ānuanua wellbeing+ model

⁷ Seen as grounding and centering identity and Values and creating a safe space for the community to become ta’unga in society.

Kapi 6: Akako’u anga e kia Akatinamou – bringing everything together.

Continued discourse and thorough analysis were imperative to transcend the limitations and understandings of the definitions of wellbeing as elaborated in the previous chapter. Bringing all the evidence together and verifying it was warranted to delve into the complexities of societal, environmental, and cultural factors influencing overall wellbeing and the nuances as enunciated by the Ānuanua community through this enquiry. Such discussions paved the way for a more inclusive understanding, acknowledging diverse perspectives and experiences. By following the Kai Vānanga Vataavata process, this research cultivated a nuanced model or approach that better reflected the intricacies of Ānuanua existence and hopefully will pave the path towards better understandings for this community into the future.

6.1 Preliminary findings for a Ānuanua wellbeing model

Following on from the discussions and as part of individual Kai Vānanga Vataavata, the conversations allowed for understandings, refinement, and clarification of key concepts, with the participants providing input on the definitions, dimensions, and relationships of wellbeing factors, ensuring that the research accurately represented the various perspectives but also community understandings. What eventuated from the preliminary findings are summarised below:

Ānuanua Wellbeing Model		
<i>Muraanga Mata- Aspirations and inspiration</i>	<i>Ora’anga MaTūtū- Triad of Holistic Health</i>	<i>To Tatou Ao Natura- Our living world</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akakoro’anga/purpose in life • Comfortable and Safe legal and policy protections • Money to enable • Kopu tangata (blood and chosen). • Education as empowerment, all knowledge as power for good change • Family and Community vitality – 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical health • Psychological health key – emotional intelligence • Social determinants of health • Positive spirituality contributes to purpose in life. Religion viewed with caution by some. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment as a living force that must be nurtured. • We are tiaki for our environment • AkamaTūtū- not only replacing but making our environment thrive. • Our connections to everything must be in balance.

-
- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the sisterhood or kau Vaine toa • Resilience and beyond as aspects of trauma prevalent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy relationships and balance key |
|---|---|
-

Akapapa’anga e to tatou Piri’anga: the anchor and glues that binds us together

- Reo Māori and Akono'anga Māori ground's identity. If not connected by culture, then the sisterhood connects us together (More pronounced for members of the diaspora).
 - Identity and pride to flourish
 - Values in society of love, kindness, and respect for all
 - Importance of Ta’unga in society
-

Table 8 Ānuanua Wellbeing Model (Wichman, 2024)

6.1.1 Tūranga memeitaki is about a journey, not a destination.

Following on from the conceptualisation of this Ānuanua Wellbeing Model – it was presented at the group Kai Vānanga Vataavata for validation and to see if there were any amendments that were needed. The conclusion of which saw a few refinements including the shift from wellbeing to wholebeing and understanding the journey through life rather than focusing on a particular destination. And after considering the Kai Vānanga Vataavata and other evidence sources, the following words by a participant provides a good summary:

“We come from a strong line of navigators and warriors. We have survived and continue to not only survive but thrive in the most barren of environments...slowly but surely, we are beginning to realise the good things after generations of struggle...a journey that we will continue to traverse.... but why are we now here? I believe it has to do with our strength as a community, which has been grounded in reo tupuna and akono’anga Māori and the Values of love, kindness, and respect for all through our Akapapa’anga thus setting a strong foundation. Our experience has made us resilient and adaptable but there is more we can do to not only pave the way for future generations but to inspire the leaders of tomorrow and our people to flourish and thrive in an ever-changing world... Ko au, ko koe, ko tatou (me, you, all of us)...we all have an important place in this journey towards our Tūranga memeitaki” (Nini)

This enquiry has brought better understandings of wellbeing or whole being for the Ānuanua community. The biggest difference between the concept of Tūranga memeitaki from NSDA 2020+ and the Ānuanua perspective through the Kai Vānanga Vataavata group sessions was the notion that Tūranga memeitaki is about a journey, not a destination. Being well was fleeting, and it was more appropriate to say whole being instead of wellbeing – this would account for the nuances, dynamics, and fact that it is not about arriving at a certain point in your life but striving and being supported on the journey to maintain and do better for your whole being.

This transition from wellbeing to "wholebeing" signifies a pivotal shift towards a more holistic understanding of human flourishing for the Anuanua community an evolution which necessitates further investigation and conceptual refinement, acknowledging the interconnectedness of physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual dimensions of wellbeing. By embracing the concept of "wholebeing," this enquiry advances towards a more inclusive and comprehensive framework that captures the richness and complexity of the Anuanua human experience and the promotion of holistic thriving.

Another key point was that Akapapa'anga and our connections was seen by the participants as the anchor or glue that bound everything together and provided the foundation, with one participant saying that "*Akapapa'anga is the concept that we are connected at all levels and that we must do certain things to ensure that we are in harmony with everything, for it is this balance that enables Tūranga memeitaki and anything beyond*" (Lady). What can be seen are certain aspects that are more pronounced or nuanced in the Ānuanua community, such as certain enablers, the definition of Tūranga memeitaki changing, and the thinking beyond the English definition or perspectives of wellbeing and the concept of Akapapa'anga taking a central or 'anchor' position within the framework.

After incorporating these aspects from the group validation Kai Vānanga Vataavata the following is the refined Ānuanua Wellbeing+ model. I use the term wellbeing+ because although the Kai Vānanga Vataavata saw a shift in understanding by the participants from one that was about wellbeing to one that was about whole being, I am not comfortable yet with totally dropping the word wellbeing for the Ānuanua model, as there were participants who did not have strong views on this point. This will need further Kai Vānanga Vataavata with Ānuanua individuals and organisations to unite as one voice in saying that wellbeing for the Ānuanua community needs to

be changed to whole being. The basic premise was that being well is fleeting and that tomorrow you can become unwell, so the emphasis should be on understanding the journey and the resilience needed to work towards whole being. I will thus note this explanation and use wellbeing + to include these conversations as an expanded understanding by the Ānua community.

6.2 Ānua Wellbeing+ model

Ānua Wellbeing+ model		
A journey through life towards whole being		
<i>Muraanga Mata- Aspirations and inspiration</i>	<i>Ora'anga Matūtū- Triad of Holistic Health</i>	<i>To Tatou Ao Natura- Our living world</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Akakoro'anga/purpose in life • Comfortable and Safe • legal and policy protections • Money to enable • Kopu tangata (blood and chosen). • Education as empowerment, • all knowledge as power for good change • Family and Community vitality • the sisterhood or kau Vaine toa • Resilience and beyond as aspects of trauma prevalent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical health • Psychological health key • emotional intelligence • Social determinants of health • Positive spirituality contributes to purpose in life. Religion viewed with caution by some. • Healthy relationships and balance key 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment as a living force that must be nurtured. • We are tiaki for our environment • Akamatūtū- not only replacing but making our environment thrive. • Our connections to everything must be in balance.
Akapapa'anga e to tatou Piri'anga: the anchor and glues that binds us together		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reo Māori and Akono'anga Māori ground's identity. If not connected by culture, then the sisterhood connects us together (More pronounced for members of the diaspora). • Identity and pride to flourish • Values in society of love, kindness, and respect for all • Importance of Ta'unga in society 		

Table 9 Ānua Wellbeing+ Model (Wichman, 2024)

The journey towards answering the question of what is Tūranga Memeitaki in the Cook Islands for the Ānuanua community? and understanding and theorising a Ānuanua wellbeing + model from a Māori world view has been both a blessing and a challenge worth traversing. The Ānuanua Wellbeing+ model proposed thus represents a snapshot of what Tūranga Memeitaki may look like after consideration is given to both the Kai Vānanga Vataavata and the evidence base of this enquiry.

6.3 Other research findings- lessons learnt

Reflecting on the Kai Vānanga Vataavata, I cannot help but admire the strength of the stories told and how honest the participants were about life. For one thing, the Ānuanua community need to be given more space and opportunity to express their thoughts and reflections. Many participants thought it surprising that a piece of research would be interested in their story and wellbeing thoughts, with one participant saying, *“I am so surprised that you want to know about my experiences of life and my wellbeing- I feel special”* (Lulu Bell). As a researcher, I thus have the obligation to ensure that I safely keep this knowledge and give it the status that it deserves for the good of the community. Beyond the development of the model, and throughout the process, I have been on a journey of my own awakening, both personally and academically, and I have learned many lessons, which I share below:

6.3.1 Api’ianga 1: Ānuanua as Ta’unga in society

Something that came through strongly out of the Kai Vānanga Vataavata was this notion of Ānuanua individuals being gifted individuals who were recognised as taunga in various respective areas, and thus a certain respect was afforded to them. This is an area that needs further enquiry to understand it better, as there is an interesting dichotomy in the sense that, on the one hand, the Ānuanua community is respected and celebrated culturally, and in another aspect, they are ridiculed and designated to a stigmatised space by religious teachings and policy/legislative documents. Kauraka (1991) talks about the taunga as being the priestly class who were imbued with the Karakia and knowledge to communicate with the old gods, while Gill (1979) described the taunga as artisan-priests or more like experts in various fields within which they were celebrated. Tavioni (2018) also expresses taunga as experts when he looks at the role of Akairo or signs in Cook Islands art. It seems from the Kai Vānanga that a taunga can be anyone, but the

Ānuanua community has sought refuge in this space and flourished to the point that cultural skills, language, genealogies, and traditional knowledge are being kept and maintained by this community, thus making them an integral and important part of Cook Islands society. This is a remarkably interesting area that needs more research and attention.

6.3.2 Api'ianga 2: Stop "othering" us

In the words of one participant, "stop labelling us as anything different – we are Cook Islands Māori period. We are labelled by whoever, as marginalised, as vulnerable, and as others, like we do not belong. I appreciate that we do have a unique identity as Ānuanua in the Cook Islands, but we are an integral part of this community—always have been and always will...so the use of language needs to support this notion and must be empowering" (Diva). I agree with this to a certain extent – when someone is called other their whole lives, they start to believe that they are different or less than someone else. Language, or the use of it, is immensely powerful as it constructs a narrative that is used by society and sometimes not for the good. The challenge then becomes: what is a term that is most appropriate to address the community? This was not a question that was asked during the enquiry; however, I have used the word Ānuanua as an umbrella term for LGBTQI+ throughout this thesis. Ānuanua is a term that I started to use in our spaces and have discussed with the Te Tiare members as a better term to address our community, which was agreed to by consensus and will thus be the first time that it will be captured as such in an academic enquiry. It is a term that was not challenged by any of the participants. However, as the community evolves, there may be terms that become more prevalent, especially with various Ānuanua identities, such as akavaine, who have been very prominent in the Ānuanua space throughout time.

6.3.3 Api'ianga 3: Resilience and beyond

There is no universally accepted definition of resilience (Aburn et al., 2016). However, resilience was seen by some participants as the ability to "*bounce back from an event and grow stronger through life's challenges*" (Nini). While others saw resilience as the strength gained from being challenged through life, "*I have been knocked down so many times through life...all of our community has been knocked down...but we just get back up stronger and more determined*" (Manava). This concept of resilience, which is built up through adversity or being different as a source of strength, is also elaborated by Dr. Jioji Ravulo (2021) who posits that exploring Pacific

sexualities serves as a way to recognize, champion, and celebrate the resilience derived from viewing our unique identities as integral to a larger endeavor aimed at fostering social inclusion in today's diverse landscapes. Meaning that through experiences of a person's sexuality or difference, it is a source of strength and thus resilience. Participants also talked about “bouncing back and doing better or thriving and determination to pursue personal growth and fulfilment in all aspects of life” (Taj), which is much like the anti-fragility concept proposed by Nassim Taleb (2014) which characterizes systems that enhance their capacity to flourish in response to stressors, shocks, volatility, noise, mistakes, faults, attacks, or failures. Aven (2015) positions this as a guide for navigating a black swan world, characterized by the possibility of unforeseen extreme events, the essence lies in embracing a certain level of variation, uncertainty, and, consequently, errors as an integral part of existence. To this point, the Ānuanua community has been affected so much through history and through life that individuals and the community have built this type of resilience and adaptation to unforeseen events, as they have had to do for a long time for their survival.

When I was having the Kai Vānanga Vataavata with the participants, all said that they aimed for more than bouncing back, which is succinctly described in the following comment:

“We are survivors, but we do not have a survivor’s mentality in the sense that we don’t dwell on the negative aspects of the past – we persevere, adapt, and continue to strive to flourish. We are innovative, and a lot of us are entrepreneurial. Despite the odds being against us, we are here, and I guarantee you that if we look back at the progress made by our community and what we have contributed to the nation, we will know that we are beyond resilient” (Lala).

This is a lesson I see as important to note for not only Ānuanua but for the Cook Islands as a nation. A concept that needs to be further developed.

While the development of the Wellbeing framework was key outcome of the research, and directly addresses the research aim and question, this research has had deeper implications in terms of its contribution to Indigenous research and methodologies, and specifically for Cook Island researchers and communities including the Anuanua community. A frequent question posed by participants was: what were the practical implications of the research findings? Participants were

eager to discuss how the findings may be applied in policy development, program design, or community initiatives, thereby bridging the gap between research and practical action. In this section I outline the research contributions, and then give some research considerations for individuals, institutions, and governments for further analysis and application:

6.4 Contribution to Indigenous methodology and methods:

A big part of Kai Vānanga Vataavata is giving back, and so a big part of this thesis has been the chapter on akapapa'anga as a methodology and Kai Vānanga Vataavata as a method for undertaking it. From the literature review, it is the first time that Kai Vānanga or the expanded Kai Vānanga Vataavata, has been theorized in the academic space. It is my hope that this contribution to Cook Islands Māori or Indigenous research methodology will significantly advance the understanding and practice of respectful and culturally sensitive enquiry. By integrating traditional knowledge systems with contemporary research methods, we created a comprehensive approach that honors the unique perspectives of our Cook Islands Māori communities. The work emphasizes the importance of community engagement, fostering reciprocal relationships, and ensuring that research benefits are shared equitably. Through Akapapa'anga and Kai Vānanga Vataavata, I hope to empower Indigenous voices by challenging and providing an alternative view from western research frameworks. I never thought that Kai Vānanga would become something so transformative, but the commitment to Value my ancestor's knowledge and research was a calling that I could not deny. It is my hope that it has not only enriched academic discourse but has also fostered a more inclusive and ethical approach to knowledge generation, inspiring a new generation of Cook Islands Māori and other researchers to follow me through the papa'anga.

6.4.1 Culturally appropriate and meaningful Research by Ānuanua for Ānuanua

An interesting point that was commonly brought was how research could do well for the Ānuanua community if only they understood it and it was done by Ānuanua, hence the need for understandings that came from them, and which is graciously summed up by one participant:

“This is the first time that I have experienced academic research from a Māori perspective using Reo Māori and Akono'anga Māori...it was so nice to understand what was going on in the academic space especially by a researcher who I know understands me and where I am coming from... because a lot of the time I'm not sure if they

understand me or what happens after they interview me...I mean we sisters have our own language and if you are on the outside you would probably think I'm crazy speaking this kuluku lingo (crazy language) " (Nini).

As an insider who is the researcher, I have seen both sides of the coin and appreciate this comment more now than at any other time in my life. This was further bolstered using Akapapa'anga and theorising of Kai Vānanga Vataavata, which made the process so much more meaningful and understandable for both the participants and me. I am also proud to be a role model in a space that does not see many akavaine as academic researchers who are Cook Islands Māori and researching a subject that is so close to our community and has not been researched before. Understanding this community is vital especially when it comes to language and the interpretations around jargon or slang that the Ānuanua community uses to communicate with each other. The challenge thus becomes – how do we empower or enable more Ānuanua individuals from the community to get into research and start authoring our stories. I do not know the answer, but I hope that this thesis will spark or lead the way for future Ānuanua individuals to traverse our cultural and academic worlds for generations to come so that we shape our narrative using our voice and writing.

Other key considerations and discussed in the Kai Vānanga Vataavata were:

Kite Mārama-Māori Knowledge systems and research:

There has been a spark that has been ignited in participants, and in the Kai Vānanga Vataavata I also spoke about the value of Māori knowledge and being able to conduct research in this space. Going forward, they suggested that there needs to be more emphasis on reclaiming our knowledge and using it for the good of our people. The use of Akapapa'anga and Kai Vānanga Vataavata is but one aspect of kite Mārama, and so there is opportunity to theorise these other aspects in the academic and other spaces of Māori knowledge.

Akaono'anga Māori e to tatou Reo

Participants were very curious and adamant that there needed to be more research on the cultural aspects and dynamics of the Ānuanua community, especially on the high propensity for individuals in the community to find themselves in spaces where they become ta'unga for various cultural activities. The use of language and definitions was also an area that participants thought needed more analysis, particularly around the words used by mainstream for the Ānuanua community:

“we need to use our good words to capture and describe our community...not other or vulnerable...maybe Ānuanua or important (laughter)” (Lady) and also the use of language between Ānuanua members, with one participant saying, *“We speak Maorag...it’s a mixture of Māori, English, and drag...like do people know what gack it or tibwiti and what mincing or katarang means?”* (Nini) a sort of creole as such that has evolved with its own lexicon and expressions now being used in mainstream society and thus language and culture.

Kopu Tangata-Our families

At the heart of any change is our families and their mindsets and Values, and so trying to ensure that families are enabling, safe, and loving is a key area that needs to be focused on and emphasised. The Ānuanua participants said that we must understand that *“both our blood and chosen families matter for our wellbeing...however our families sometimes need help to understand us”* (Naynay), As wellbeing+ is about the journey and resilience along that journey to whole being, *“it is important that we support from when someone gets pregnant all the way till they pass away...they say it takes a village to raise a child – but that village must be enabling and loving”* (Juicy).

Te au Putuputu’anga -Civil Society, Institutions, and its role

For Ānuanua participants community organisations have become safe havens or bastions of encouragement to do and be better. A place to be themselves whilst contributing to the general wellbeing of the community and nation. There is more research needed on how community organisations support wellbeing for communities- this is also the case for churches and sports clubs *“wherever there is an institution there needs to be Values of love kindness and respect projected and also we must understand how these places contribute to our wellbeing”* (Barbie) and that *“We probably need to do an analysis of where our Ānuanua people are involved and see what can be done to support not only them but all who need help”* (Taj). Though not an exhaustive list, this gives a few areas that were expressed during the Kai Vānanga Vataavata as needing more research and enquiry. It also gives that budding academic child or adult a spark to dream and research in the future.

6.5 Ta’iku’anga Kaveinga- Policy considerations

Although the purpose of this research was critical analysis and understanding of the concept of well-being rather than providing policy advice, the research – in particular, the objective to

understand Anuanua experiences of policymaking regarding wellbeing, provided some insights that may be useful. Indeed, the-, the application of this research to policy and practical spaces was brought up through the research, especially at the validation Kai Vānanga Vataavata. It also contributes to how we can make Tūranga memeitaki better for the Ānuanua community. As such, I felt the need to provide some of the information from the analysis that may guide future policymaking in the Cook Islands for the Ānuanua community. It was clear that the Ānuanua community does not want to be treated as ‘other’ or singled out and relegated to other spaces. It was clear that the Ānuanua members consulted wanted empowering language used when referring to the Ānuanua community and their experiences, so policy development and consultations should consider these. Government or organisational policymaking plays a pivotal role in shaping the wellbeing and quality of life of all individuals within a society, including those belonging to the Ānuanua community, - encompasses lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, and other non-heteronormative sexual orientations, and gender identities. In the Cook Islands, where traditional Values and cultural norms often intersect with the rights and needs of Ānuanua individuals, it is crucial to explore how government policy-making can be enhanced to better support the wellbeing of the Ānuanua community through a set of recommendations of sorts, thus creating a more inclusive, equitable, and supportive environment for Ānuanua individuals in the Cook Islands. The following are a few points that could be utilised in the policy space:

6.5.1 Inclusive Policy Formulation

Participants stressed the need to adopt a more gender-neutral and inclusive approach during policy formulation. This is not just about having Ānuanua representation at the table, it is about meaningful, honest conversations that turn into tangible results. Inclusivity in policymaking is vital for addressing the specific needs, concerns, and challenges faced by this community.

The Cook Islands government could look to establish an advisory board or work with established groups focused on Ānuanua issues, where representatives from the Ānuanua community actively participate in policy discussions. This board can provide Valuable insights, experiences, and recommendations and help with community consultations that can inform the development of policies that truly address the unique issues faced by the Ānuanua community.

6.5.2 Comprehensive Health and Social Services

What we have seen through this enquiry is that health and social services can be done better to cater for our key populations, including Ānuanua. As discussed in Kapi 5, health services have often failed Anuanua, and as a result, participants argued that government policies should prioritize creating a healthcare system that is inclusive, non-discriminatory, and Ānuanua competent. This entails training healthcare providers on Ānuanua health concerns, cultural competency, and respectful care. Policies can also promote the inclusion of Ānuanua health issues in public health campaigns and programs, emphasizing the importance of regular check-ups and early intervention. Understanding the social determinants of health for the Ānuanua community came out strongly and is an area identified as a research gap.

Mental health services should be expanded to better serve the Ānuanua community. Ānuanua individuals, especially youth, often face higher rates of mental health challenges due to stigma and discrimination. Government policies can support the establishment of Ānuanua youth-friendly mental health services, where individuals can access confidential and non-judgmental counseling services. There was also a lot of concern about support for Ānuanua children, as most participants expressed bullying and discrimination while growing up with many times of desperation for support, and so the linkage with education needs to be strengthened to support our tamariki.

6.5.3 Anti-Discrimination Policy and Legislation

A pivotal aspect of improving government policymaking for the wellbeing of the Ānuanua community is the enactment of comprehensive anti-discrimination policies and legislation. As previously discussed, changes to the Crimes Act occurred at the time of the research and were a significant focus of conversations. As such, we have seen the start of this change, but there is more to be done, as a change to one law does not solve everything. Participants noted that there needs to be a thorough analysis of current legislation and then a plan for making it right. Laws and policies should prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and expressions. Such legislation sends a clear message that discrimination will not be tolerated in any way or form and fosters a more inclusive and accepting society. Government and organisation policies could establish clear and accessible mechanisms for reporting discrimination incidents. This will ensure that individuals who experience discrimination can seek justice and redress through legal channels. Awareness campaigns can further educate the public about these mechanisms, encouraging individuals to report discrimination and promoting accountability.

6.5.4 Education and Awareness

Education is a powerful tool for creating a more inclusive and accepting society. Government policies can be improved to integrate inclusive education and awareness programs into schools and other educational institutions where skillsets for the future, including emotional skills, are taught. Such programs can include teaching Ānuanua history, promoting tolerance and acceptance, and addressing issues related to bullying and discrimination. This will require a concerted effort with qualified counsellors and health professionals. Additionally, these educational efforts should extend to the broader public through awareness campaigns, workshops, and community engagement. By fostering informed and empathetic individuals, the Cook Islands can work towards a more tolerant and inclusive society where all Cook Islanders can live without fear of discrimination or prejudice.

6.5.5 Reo Māori and Akono'anga Māori –Language and culture

Looking at the importance of language and culture and understanding the cultural role that the Ānuanua community plays within our society The participants talked about the Ānuanua community being Ta'unga and the knowledge keepers for families, as they were the ones that looked after children and the elderly and thus were gifted this knowledge for future generations. This has seen the prominence of the Ānuanua community in cultural events. This gives empowerment and purpose to what they are doing in life and makes members feel Valued in their communities.

6.5.6 Advocating for Social Justice

Government policymaking should not stop at mere tolerance but should actively advocate for social justice. Policymakers must acknowledge the historical and systemic discrimination faced by key populations, including the Ānuanua community, and work towards rectifying these injustices through affirmative action, economic support, and increased representation. Participants suggested affirmative action policies such as measures such as quotas for Ānuanua individuals in public and private sector employment and educational institutions. These initiatives can help reduce the economic disparities that Ānuanua individuals often face. The government could advocate for better representation of the Ānuanua community in various sectors, including politics and the media. This representation can help dispel stereotypes, raise awareness, and empower Ānuanua individuals to be more active contributors to the nation's development.

Enhancing government policymaking for the wellbeing of the Ānuanua community in the Cook Islands is not only a matter of equity and human rights but also essential for the overall progress and wellbeing of the nation. By adopting inclusive practices, focusing on comprehensive healthcare and social services and research, enacting anti-discrimination legislation, promoting inclusive education and awareness, and advocating for social justice, the Cook Islands can become a regional or global leader in the support and acceptance of Ānuanua individuals. We are working towards a future where the Ānuanua community enjoys the same rights, opportunities, and quality of life as the rest of the population. A society that Values and respects diversity and works to create an inclusive and equitable environment is not only constitutionally and morally right but also economically and socially beneficial. The Cook Islands can lead by example in the Pacific region and inspire positive change across the globe.

6.6 Conclusion:

The Ānuanua community has shown remarkable resilience and courage in navigating a world where acceptance and inclusion are often elusive. The love and openness of participants in discussing wellbeing or the whole being, both its triumphs and tribulations, have illuminated the path to a more inclusive, resilient, and beyond society. Through their stories, I have gained a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by Ānuanua individuals in the Cook Islands and have been inspired by the sheer determination to overcome these obstacles. This chapter took a lot of time for me to complete as it required me to listen to sometimes incredibly sad stories and also to try and understand everything and bring it all together into a succinct framework. The enquiry brought out a preliminary Ānuanua Wellbeing model which then morphed into the Ānuanua Wellbeing+ Model. There were definitely lessons learnt through the Kai Vānanga Vataavata with contributions to indigenous methods and methodology touched upon. This then culminated in policy considerations as participants wanted to know how this research could progress their stories of triumph and strife. Though it may not capture everything the Ānuanua Wellbeing+ Model sets a foundation for future researchers to springboard their enquiries which will hopefully help in understand more about the journey towards wholebeing and the resilience of this incredibly special community. Te iti tangata Ānuanua o te Kuki Airani- the rainbow community of the Cook Islands.

Kapi 7: Akaoki te meitaki- Conclusions and giving back to the community

In this chapter, I start with a kama'atu around closing a meeting or deliberation that has been ongoing for some time and has come to some sort of consensus and a close for now.

Kua Pa te manako kua tika te ka'a.

We have reached consensus we can now proceed in agreement with this research.

(CPPO, 2021b, p. 8)

As I sit here writing my concluding remarks and as I reflect on my tupuna Tumupu keas land called Urimatua on the island of Atiu, I cannot help but think of the many blessings that my ui tupuna (ancestors) have left me. As a Tiaki(custodian) for my Enuu(land), Reo tupuna(language) and Akono'anga Māori (culture) as well as my kopu tangata (family) and Ānuanua community, I have been given the responsibility of ensuring that a legacy is left for te uki a muri mai (future generations). My tupuna Tumupu Kea was a missionary who went first to Orokolo and Arahaua, then took charge of the mission station at Urika in the Gulf region of Papua New Guinea in 1917 to spread the gospel of the Lord. He went with his wife, Vaine Moeroa Ki Piura, and had my paternal grandmother, Teau Matangaro Tumupu Kea, along with her siblings. I reflect on the courage of the 'native' missionaries to push the boundaries, go into the unknown, and do what others could not—a fighting spirit that lives on within me and which I have applied to this enquiry today. Although the church that my tupuna tane went to evangelise for has not been so receptive and understanding of the Ānuanua community as expressed through the Kai Vānanga Vataavata, I have always been taught the values of love, kindness, and respect, and it is with this Vaerua that I have progressed in life and over the last few years to complete this research aptly named Tūranga Memeitaki and the Ānuanua community of the Cook Islands.

This work and subject matter can be very heavy at times and yet invigorating when trying to solve a challenge, especially when people start to understand, constructively critique, and add to the practical solutions and narratives. What I have found on this journey has been one of a reawakening and realisation that we must truly value our past and that we are all connected human beings who all yearn for the same basic things, albeit at different measurements and at various times. It is the things we do not see or touch that make well-being and sensitive issues around the Ānuanua

community so fascinating and challenging. This is part of my story and my Kai Vānanga Vataavata, which has shed light on what Tūranga Memeitaki potentially looks like for the Ānuanua community of the Cook Islands using our own knowledge systems. If I had more time, I would have loved to extend more into the Pa Enuā and capture the Kai Vānanga Vataavata from our community on the various islands. Someone will take on this challenge, or it is the basis of a future PhD thesis. I now come back to Akapapa'anga as the methodology and base of this research, but also as the cultural concept that connects all our people and entities in the Cook Islands and beyond. Akapapa'anga empowers the Ānuanua community because despite the varied challenges that they may have with their families and others they can never be cut off from the papa'anga and so they can take solace in knowing that under Akono'anga Māori, the Ānuanua community and individuals are a valued part of their genealogies.

Kia Akameitaki ia te iti tangata Kuki Airani e te iti tangata Ānuanua for opening their hearts, minds, and spirits to expressing their aspirations and ideas around Tūranga memeitaki and how it could be done better for them and all of us. In completing this academic thesis, I am profoundly grateful to the members of the Ānuanua community in the Cook Islands who have generously shared their experiences and insights on life. This research would not have been possible without their willingness to engage in open and candid conversations, providing valuable perspectives that have enriched the depth and quality of this work.

Reo akameitaki'anga e te akamaro'iro'i – words of thanks and encouragement

With, and as I conclude, I reflect on the journey that I have been on in my life and how this chapter is only the beginning of greater things to come. During this thesis journey, I have reached many personal life milestones. In April 2023, the Cook Islands decriminalized same-sex relations, a journey that I started in 2011 as the lead advocate, and in September 2023 I stepped down as president of Te Tiare after serving for seven years as its president and 12 years on its executive. An organisation that provided a haven, became a part of my family, and where I built lifelong relationships that will endure into the future. It was an emotional time that gave me space to reflect but also admire the Ānuanua community and its resilience against all odds. I thus end this thesis with the akameitaki'anga speech that I delivered when I stepped down in September 2023.



Figure 12 Valery Wichman circa 2021

Kia Orana te iti tangata Ānuanua e te au taeake-Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed members, and friends of Te Tiare.

To lead our destinies—that is the vision of Te Tiare, a direction that has guided us on our journey over the years and which has given us a sense of hope. In looking towards the future, it is fundamental that we look to our past and present. We must never forget where we come from, and we must honour our Ai tupuna and Pa metua, for it is through their mana that I stand here today as a product of generations of knowledge, love, kindness, and respect.

Today, I come before you with a heart filled with gratitude and a sense of immense pride as I bid farewell to my role as the President of Te Tiare. It has been an incredible seven-year journey as president and 14 years serving on the Te Tiare Executive, and I am deeply humbled by the privilege to have served this remarkable association.

When I embarked on this journey as president (by default) seven years ago, I never could have imagined the profound impact it would have on my life. Te Tiare is not just an organization; it is a family, a community, and a force for change. And it is because of all of you that we have achieved so much together.

During my tenure as president, we have witnessed remarkable growth and progress. Together, we have shattered barriers and worked tirelessly to promote diversity, inclusion, and equality. We have seen our organization expand its reach, influence, and ability to make a difference in the lives

of countless individuals. It has been an honor to be part of this transformative journey. Especially with the passing of the Crimes Bill in April 2023 which was the culmination of 14 years of advocacy and arduous work by all.

I want to express my deepest gratitude to every member of Te Tiare, both past and present. Your dedication, passion, and unwavering support have been the driving force behind our success. It is your commitment to our vision that has made all the difference. Together, we have created a culture of unity, respect, and empowerment that will continue to thrive long after my departure.

I am also grateful for the countless friendships I have forged during my time as president. The bonds we have formed transcend mere titles and positions. I have learned from each of you, been inspired by your stories, and been enriched by your perspectives. I am leaving this role with a heart full of cherished memories and profound connections.

To the new executive under the leadership of Tatoryanna Utanga, we will always be there to support you. Go forth and inspire the leaders of tomorrow—te uki a muri mai. For it is that little boy or girl who sees your faces and hears your voices and who is given the courage to be themselves to enrich this world full of diversity.

PRIDE Cook Islands and Te Ānuanua o Aitutaki (TAOA) the two Ānuanua organisations that have been organised along this journey, Meitaki ma'ata for being amazing and enriching our Ānuanua community. This is a testament to the maturation of our Ānuanua community and our nation to have such diverse representation.

As I step down from my position, I want to assure you that my commitment to Te Tiare remains steadfast. While I may no longer serve as president, I will continue to support and champion our cause as our chief advisor. Our work is far from over, and I have every confidence that Te Tiare will continue to thrive and make a lasting impact under new leadership.

In closing, I want to thank you all for your unwavering support and dedication. E Akameitaki 'anga teia kia kotou katoatoa. I leave us with a kama'atu, which speaks to the fact that each and every one of us has a role and purpose in our communities and our nation for the greater good of all. We must understand it, nurture it, and be empowered to thrive!

E Rangatira Vaka kua kite e kua aru I te akairo etu

*E Orama kua akamou ki runga I te tango, E kua marama tikai tatou I te tu'anga ta
tatou ka rave.*

A canoe navigator knows and follows the signs of a star

*A vision fundamentally founded upon a precise understanding of the role each of us
plays*

KO AU, KO KOE, KO TATOU,

ME, YOU, AND ALL OF US—TOGETHER

Otira ua,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Valery Wichman', written in a cursive style.

Valery Wichman

Maine Akatereau - Te Tiare 2017-2023

Bibliography

- Acosta, A. (2012). *Buen vivir Sumak Kawsay: una oportunidad para imaginar otros mundos*. Editorial Abya-Yala.
- Aburn, G., Gott, M., & Hoare, K. (2016). What is resilience? An integrative review of the empirical literature. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 72(5), 980-1000.
- Adler, M. D., & Fleurbaey, M. (Eds.). (2016). *The Oxford handbook of well-being and public policy*. Oxford University Press.
- Alcoreza, R. P. (2013). Buen Vivir as a model for state and economy. *Beyond Development*, 145.
- Alexeyeff, K. (2009). *Dancing from the Heart: Movement, Gender, and Sociality in the Cook Islands*. University of Hawaii Press.
- Allen, J. S. (1994). Te Rangi Hiroa's physical anthropology *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 103(1), 11-27.
- Al-Wattary, N., & Wyness, M. (2023). The impact of a universal social emotional intervention on students' mental wellbeing in a secondary public school in Qatar. *Cogent Psychology*, 10(1), 2200349.
- Andersen, J. C. (1995). *Myths and Legends of the Polynesians* Courier Corporation.
- Ataera-Minster, J., & Trowland, H. (2018). Te Kaveinga: Mental health and wellbeing of Pacific people. Results from the New Zealand Mental Health Monitor & Health and Lifestyles Survey. *Health Promotion Agency*.
- Aven, T. (2015). The concept of antifragility and its implications for the practice of risk analysis. *Risk analysis*, 35(3), 476-483.
- Barlow, C. (1991). *Tikanga whakaaro: Key concepts in Māori culture*. Oxford University Press.
- Baskaran, A., & Boden, R. (2007). Commodified science and social wellbeing. *AI & society*, 21, 267-285.
- Baumeister, R. F., Vohs, K. D., Aaker, J. L., & Garbinsky, E. N. (2013). Some key differences between a happy life and a meaningful life. *The journal of positive psychology*, 8(6), 505-516.
- Beaglehole, E., & Beaglehole, P. (1938). *Ethnology of Pukapuka*. Honolulu: Bernice P. Bishop

- Museum Bulletin*, 150.
- Ben-Shahar, T. (2007). *Happier: Learn the secrets to daily joy and lasting fulfillment* (Vol. 1). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Ben-Shahar, T. (2009). *The Pursuit of Perfect*.
- Ben-Shahar, T., & Ben-Shahar, T. (2021). The SPIRE of Happiness. *Happiness Studies: An Introduction*, 19-29.
- Bertram, G., & Poirine, B. (2007). Island political economy. *A world of islands, an island studies reader*, 325-373.
- Bertram, I. G., & Watters, R. F. (1985). The MIRAB economy in South Pacific microstates. *Pacific viewpoint*, 26(3), 497-519.
- Besnier, N., & Alexeyeff, K. (Eds.). (2014). *Gender on the edge: Transgender, gay, and other Pacific Islanders*. University of Hawaii Press.
- Bevir, M. (2008). What is genealogy? *Journal of the Philosophy of History*, 2(3), 263-275.
- Bradberry, T., & Greaves, J. (2009). *Emotional Intelligence 2.0*. Talent Smart.
- Brown, R. M. (2018). *Surviving the system: Māori and Pacific whānau coping strategies to overcome health system barriers* (Doctoral dissertation, Auckland University of Technology).
- Brown, M. (2021, July 31). *National Sustainable Development Agenda 2020+ Consultation launch*. National Sustainable Development Agenda 2020+ Consultation Launch, Avarua, Rarotonga, Cook Islands. <https://www.pmooffice.gov.ck/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Speech-by-the-Deputy-Prime-Minister-Mark-Brown-at-the-launch-of-the-Consultation-Phase-of-the-NSDA2020-31-July-2020.pdf>
- Buettner, D., & Skemp, S. (2016). Blue zones: lessons from the world's longest Lived *American journal of lifestyle medicine*, 10(5), 318-321.
- Burrows, M. A. (2022). *LGBTQ Community Belonging and Involvement as Predictors of Sexual Minorities' Well-Being* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park).
- Buse, J., & Taringa, R. (1995). *Cook Islands Maori dictionary* (Vol. 123). editorips@usp.ac.fj.
- Calvard, T., O'Toole, M., & Hardwick, H. (2020). Rainbow lanyards: Bisexuality, queering and the corporatisation of LGBT inclusion. *Work, Employment and Society*, 34(2), 356-368.
- Cammock, R., Conn, C., & Nayar, S. (2021). Strengthening Pacific voices through Talanoa

- participatory action research. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 17(1), 120-129.
- Chan, N. (2018). “Large ocean states”: sovereignty, small islands, and marine protected areas in global oceans governance. *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, 24(4), 537-555.
- Cherry, K. (5). Components of emotional intelligence. *Very Well Mind*.
- Chirico, F. (2016). Spiritual well-being in the 21st century: It’s time to review the current WHO’s health definition. *Journal of Health and Social Sciences*, 1(1), 11-16.
- Claxton, G. (2019). Why well-being alone cannot drive social change. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, 17(1), 32-37.
- Crimes Act 1969 (Cook Islands).
- Cook Islands Policy on Gender and Equality and Women’s Empowerment and Action Plan 2019 - 2024*. (2019). Cook Islands Ministry of Internal Affairs (INTAFF). Retrieved March 24, 2024, from <https://www.intaff.gov.ck/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/NPGEWE-Policy-booklet-4.pdf>
- Cook Islands Economic Development Strategy 2030*. (2021, January). Cook Islands Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MFEM). Retrieved March 24, 2024, from https://www.mfem.gov.ck/files/ugd/dbdf40_b12184621f3049a18e9a522e36e60b86.pdf
- Cook Islands Parliament decriminalises homosexuality. (2023, April 15). *Radio New Zealand*. Retrieved October 5, 2023, from <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/488019/cook-islands-parliament-decriminalises-homosexuality>.
- CPPO (2021a). Te Ara Akapapa’anga Nui National Sustainable Development Agenda (NSDA) 2020+ 2021–2121. In *Cook Islands Office of the Prime Minister*. Cook Islands Office of the Prime Minister. Retrieved October 5, 2023, from <https://www.pmooffice.gov.ck/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Tūranga-Meitaki-100-mataiti-Digital.pdf>
- CPPO (2021b). Te Akapapa’anga Uki one generation -25 years. In *Cook Islands Office of the Prime Minister*. Cook Islands Office of the Prime Minister. Retrieved October 5, 2023, from https://www.pmooffice.gov.ck/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Te-Uki-Akapapa_anga-25-Mataiti-Digital.pdf
- CPPO (2021c). Te Kaveinga Iti 5 Year Score Card. In *Cook Islands Office of the Prime Minister*.

- Cook Islands Office of the Prime Minister. Retrieved October 5, 2023, from <https://www.pmooffice.gov.ck/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Te-Kaveinga-Iti-5-Mataiti-Digital.pdf>
- CPPO (2021d). Our Evidence Report 2021. In *Cook Islands Office of the Prime Minister*. Cook Islands Office of the Prime Minister. Retrieved September 8, 2023, from <https://www.pmooffice.gov.ck/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Our-Evidence-Base-Report-2021.pdf>
- CPPO (2023). NSDA 2020+ Annual Indicator Report. In *Cook Islands Office of the Prime Minister*. Cook Islands Office of the Prime Minister. Retrieved October 5, 2023, from <https://www.pmooffice.gov.ck/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/NSDA2020-Indicator-Report-Final-Digital.pdf>
- Crenshaw, K. (2013). Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics. In *Feminist legal theories* (pp. 23-51). Routledge.
- Crocombe, R. G., & Crocombe, M. T. (Eds.). (2003a). *Cook Islands culture*. Institute of Pacific Studies.
- Crocombe, R. G., & Crocombe, M. T. (2003b). *Akono'anga Māori : Cook Islands Culture*.
- Crocombe, M. E. (2007). *Cook Islands Society and Culture* Institute of Pacific Studies, University of the South Pacific.
- Crowley, U. (2009). Genealogy, method.
- Cummins, R. A., Eckersley, R., Pallant, J., Van Vugt, J., & Misajon, R. (2003). Developing a national index of subjective wellbeing: The Australian Unity Wellbeing Index. *Social indicators research*, 64, 159-190.
- Cummins, R. A., Lau, A. L., Davey, G., & McGillivray, J. (2011). Measuring subjective wellbeing: The personal wellbeing index–Intellectual disability. *Enhancing the quality of life of people with intellectual disabilities: From theory to practice*, 33-46.
- Cummins, R. A. (2020). Australia, personal wellbeing index. In *Encyclopedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research* (pp. 1-9). Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). The general causality orientations scale: Self-determination in personality. *Journal of research in personality*, 19(2), 109-134.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The " what" and" why" of goal pursuits: Human needs and the

- self-determination of behavior. *Psychological inquiry*, 11(4), 227-268.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2012). Self-determination theory. *Handbook of theories of social psychology*, 1(20), 416-436.
- Deci, E. L., Olafsen, A. H., & Ryan, R. M. (2017). Self-determination theory in work organizations: The state of a science. *Annual review of organizational psychology and organizational behavior*, 4, 19-43.
- Deneulin, S. (2014). *Wellbeing, justice, and development ethics*. Routledge.
- Dickson, G., Milne, S., & Werner, K. (2018). Collaborative capacity to develop an events portfolio within a small island development state: the Cook Islands. *Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, 10(1), 69-89.
- Dictionary of Cook Islands Languages*. (2016). <http://cookislandsdictionary.com/search?>
- Diener, E., & Suh, E. (1997). Measuring quality of life: Economic, social, and subjective indicators. *Social indicators research*, 40, 189-216.
- Diener, E., Oishi, S., & Lucas, R. E. (2015). National accounts of subjective well-being. *American psychologist*, 70(3), 234.
- Dodge, R., Daly, A., Huyton, J., & Sanders, L. (2012). The challenge of defining wellbeing. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 2(3), 222–235. <https://doi.org/10.5502/ijw.v2i3.4>
- Durie, M. H. (1985). A Māori perspective of health. *Social science & medicine*, 20(5), 483-486.
- Ehlen, L. C. (2021). *Professional Māori and Pasifika Rugby League Players' Perspectives of Mental Well-being* (Doctoral dissertation, Auckland University of Technology).
- Escobar, A. (2011). *Encountering development: The making and unmaking of the Third World* (Vol. 1). Princeton University Press.
- Estes, R. J., & Sirgy, M. J. (Eds.). (2017). *The pursuit of human well-being: The untold global history*. Springer.
- Fa'avae, D., Jones, A., & Manu'atu, L. (2016). Talanoa'i 'A e Talanoa—Talking about Talanoa: Some dilemmas of a novice researcher. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 12(2), 138-150.
- Farrelly, T., & Nabobo-Baba, U. (2014). Talanoa as empathic apprenticeship. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 55(3), 319-330.
- Fa'alogo Lilo, C. (2012). *Barriers and supports Pacific people experience in using mental health*

- services* (Doctoral dissertation, ResearchSpace@ Auckland).
- Foucault, M. (1990). *The history of sexuality: An introduction* (Vol. 1). Vintage.
- Foucault, M. (1979). My body, this paper, this fire. *Oxford Literary Review*, 4(1), 9-28.
- Fraser, G. (2020). *Rainbow experiences of accessing mental health support in Aotearoa New Zealand: A community-based mixed methods study* (Doctoral dissertation, Open Access Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington).
- Friedmann, J. (1992). *Empowerment: The politics of alternative development*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Futter-Puati, D. (2017). *Api'iangā tupuanga kopapa: Sexuality education in the Cook Islands* (Doctoral dissertation, RMIT University).
- Futter-Puati, D., & Maua-Hodges, T. (2019). Stitching tivaevae: a Cook Islands research method. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 15(2), 140-149.
- Gegeo, D. W. (1998). Indigenous knowledge and empowerment: Rural development examined from within. *The contemporary pacific*, 289-315.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. (2007). Surplus possibilities: Post-development and community economies. In *Exploring post-development* (pp. 145-162). Routledge.
- Gill, W. W. (1979). *Cook Islands Custom*. editorips@ usp. ac. fj.
- Global Aids Progress Report Cook Islands. (2015). In *UNAIDS*. UNAIDS. Retrieved October 9, 2023, from https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/country/documents/COK_narrative_report_2016.pdf
- Gómez-Barris, M. (2017). *The extractive zone: social ecologies and decolonial perspectives* Duke University Press.
- Gudynas, E. (2011). Buen Vivir: today's tomorrow. *Development*, 54(4), 441-447.
- Graham, J. (2009). Nā Rangī tāua, nā Tūānuku e takoto nei: Research methodology framed by whakapapa. *Mai Review*, 1(3), 9.
- Graham, C. (2017). *Happiness for all? Unequal hopes and lives in pursuit of the American dream*. Princeton University Press.
- Gready, P. (2008). Rights-based approaches to development: what is the Value? added?. *Development in practice*, 18(6), 735-747.
- Greaves, L. M., Le Grice, J., Schwencke, A., Crengle, S., Lewycka, S., Hamley, L., & Clark, T.

- C. (2021). Measuring whanaungatanga and identity for wellbeing in rangatahi Māori. *MAI Journal*, 10(2), 93-105.
- Gushiken, G. P. I. (2021). The Past before Us: Mo'okū'auhau as Methodology, ed. by Nālani Wilson-Hokowhitu. *The contemporary Pacific*, 33(1), 280-282.
- Hau'ofa, E. (1985). The future of our past.
- Hau'ofa, E. (1994). Our sea of islands *The Contemporary Pacific*, 148-161.
- Hayes, G. (2022). *Population Dynamics and Trends in the Cook Islands 1902-2021*. Cook Islands Office of the Prime Minister. Retrieved March 24, 2024, from <https://www.pmooffice.gov.ck/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Situation-Analysis-Population-dynamics-and-trends-in-the-Cook-Islands-1902-2021.pdf>
- Helliwell, J. F., Layard, R., & Sachs, J. D. (2019). Happiness and community: An overview. *World Happiness Report 2019*.
- Herman, N. O. T. (2013). Investing in our young people: Akaupokotuanga i ta tatou mapu no te au tuatau ki mua.
- Heintzman, P. (2022). Empirical research on leisure and spiritual well-being: conceptualisation, measurement and findings. *Leisure and Wellbeing*, 146-155.
- Huang, Y., Tung, Y., Craig, S. L., Wong, D. F. K., & Forth, M. W. (2020). How intersectional are mental health interventions for sexual minority people? A Systematic review. *LGBT Health*, 7(5), 220–236. <https://doi.org/10.1089/lgbt.2019.0328>
- Hussi, T. (2003). *Intellectual capital and maintenance of work ability: The wellbeing perspective* (No. 858). ETLA Discussion Papers.
- Inano Taripo-Walter. (2023). Tracing the intersections of wāhine Māori, whakapapa, and mana in the Native Land Court, 19th century Aotearoa 2. *MAI Journal*, 12(1), 25–35. <https://doi.org/10.20507/maijournal.2023.12.1.3>
- Jimenez, A., Delgado, D., Merino, R., & Argumedo, A. (2022). A decolonial approach to innovation? Building paths towards Buen Vivir. *The Journal of Development Studies*, 58(9), 1633-1650.
- Jonassen, J. (2005). *Kama'atu*. editorips@usp.ac.fj.
- Kashdan, T. B., Biswas-Diener, R., & King, L. A. (2008). Reconsidering happiness: The costs of distinguishing between hedonics and eudaimonia. *The journal of positive psychology*, 3(4), 219-233.

- Kauraka, K. (1991). Thinking about Cook Islands native religion *Pacific Arts*, 17-20.
- Kauraka, K., Tongia, M., & Jonassen, J. (1991). *Atui-'akaou'anga: Reconnection*. Ministry of Cultural Development.
- Kasser, T. (2018). Materialism and living well. *Handbook of well-being*, 860-871.
- Kenny, A. (2016). *The Aristotelian Ethics: A study of the relationship between the Eudemean and Nicomachean ethics of Aristotle*. Oxford University Press.
- King-Finau, T., Archer, D., Fenaughty, J., Sutcliffe, K., Clark, T., & Fleming, T. (2022). The health and wellbeing of takatāpui and rainbow young people who have been involved with Oranga Tamariki. *University of Auckland: Auckland, New Zealand*.
- Kim-Prieto, C., Diener, E., Tamir, M., Scollon, C. N., & Diener, M. (2005). Integrating the diverse definitions of happiness: a Time-Sequential framework of Subjective Well-Being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 6(3), 261–300. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-005-7226-8>.
- Klein, N. (2007). *The shock doctrine: the rise of disaster capitalism*. Macmillan.
- Kumar, R. (2020, October 22). *Editorial: Time for MPs to justify their pay rises*. Cook Islands News. <https://www.cookislandsnews.com/editorials/editorial-time-for-mps-to-justify-their-pay-rises/>
- Kupa, K. (2009). Te Vaka Atafaga: A Tokelau assessment model for supporting holistic mental health practice with Tokelau people in Aotearoa, New Zealand. *Pacific health dialog*, 15(1), 156-163.
- Leali'ie'e, T. Aukuso, S. Te One, S. Albon, A, and McKenzie, R. (2023). *Soso'o le fau ma le fau Connect the fibre with another fibre Research Report Supporting successful transitions of Pacific tamaiti from early childhood education to school*. Rata Foundation.
- Leddy, N., & Lifschitz, A. (Eds.). (2009). *Epicurus in the Enlightenment* (No. 12). Oxford: Voltaire Foundation.
- Lama, D., & Cutler, H. C. (2004). *The art of happiness at work*. Penguin.
- Lama, D. (2009). *The art of happiness: A handbook for living*. Penguin.
- Lomas, T., & Ivztan, I. (2016). Second wave positive psychology: Exploring the positive–negative dialectics of wellbeing. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 17, 1753-1768.
- Lomas, T. (2018). The commercialization of well-being. *The Lancet Public Health*, 3(1), e4-e5.

- La Placa, V., McNaught, A., & Knight, A. (2013). Discourse on wellbeing in research and practice. *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 3(1).[https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667\(17\)30235-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2468-2667(17)30235-9).
- Mahon, M. (1992). *Foucault's Nietzschean genealogy: truth, power, and the subject*. Suny Press.
- Manuela, S., & Sibley, C. G. (2013). The Pacific Identity and Wellbeing Scale (PIWBS): A culturally appropriate self-report measure for Pacific peoples in New Zealand. *Social indicators research*, 112, 83-103.
- Manuela, S., & Sibley, C. G. (2015). The Pacific Identity and Wellbeing Scale-Revised (PIWBS-R). *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 21(1), 146.
- Mahuika, N. (2019). A brief history of whakapapa: Māori approaches to genealogy. *Genealogy*, 3(2), 32.
- Mahuika, N., & Mahuika, R. (2020). Wānanga as a research methodology. *ALTERNATIVE: An International journal of Indigenous peoples*, 16(4), 369-377.
- Malsbary, C. (2008). Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples by Tuhiwai Smith. *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies*, 4(2).
- Marks, N., & Shah, H. (2004). A well-being manifesto for a flourishing society. *Journal of Public Mental Health*, 3(4), 9-15.
- Marmot, M. (2013). Fair society, healthy lives. *Fair society, healthy lives*, 1-74.
- Marshall, K., Thieme, A., Wallace, J., Vines, J., Wood, G., & Balaam, M. (2014, June). Making wellbeing: a process of user-centered design. In *Proceedings of the 2014 conference on Designing interactive systems* (pp. 755-764).
- Marshall, D. S. (1971). Sexual behavior on Mangaia. *Human sexual behavior: Variations in the ethnographic spectrum*, 103-162.
- Massey University. (2017). *Code of Ethical Conduct for Research, Teaching and Evaluations Involving Human Participants*. Retrieved October 5, 2023, from https://www.massey.ac.nz/documents/423/MUHEC_Code.pdf
- Mazzucato, M. (2013). Financing innovation: creative destruction vs. destructive creation. *Industrial and Corporate Change*, 22(4), 851-867.
- McMullin, D. T. (2016). Gender on the Edge: Transgender, Gay, and Other Pacific Islanders, ed. by Niko Besnier and Kalissa Alexeyeff. *The Contemporary Pacific*, 28(1), 259-260.

- Meo-Sewabu, L. (2014). Cultural discernment as an ethics framework: An Indigenous Fijian approach. *Asia Pacific Viewpoint*, 55(3), 345-354.
- Meo-Sewabu, L., Hughes, E., & Stewart-Withers, R. (2017). Pacific research guidelines and protocols. *Pacific research Guidelines and protocols*.
- Merino, R. (2016). An alternative to 'alternative development': Buen vivir and human development in Andean countries. *Oxford Development Studies*, 44(3), 271-286.
- Merino, R. (2021). Buen vivir and the Making of Indigenous Territories in the Peruvian Amazon. *Latin American Perspectives*, 48(3), 136-151.
- Mero-Figueroa, M., Galdeano-Gómez, E., Piedra-Muñoz, L., & Obaco, M. (2020). Measuring well-being: A buen vivir (living well) indicator for Ecuador. *Social Indicators Research*, 152, 265-287.
- Mirowski, P. (2011). *Science-mart: privatizing American science*. Harvard University Press.
- Morgan, B., & Simmons, L. (2021, May). A 'PERMA' response to the pandemic: an online positive education programme to promote wellbeing in university students. In *Frontiers in Education* (Vol. 6, p. 642632). Frontiers Media SA.
- Nabobo-Baba, U. (2006). *Knowing and learning: An indigenous Fijian approach*. editorips@usp.ac.fj.
- Nabobo-Baba, U. (2008). Decolonising framings in Pacific research: Indigenous Fijian Vanua research framework as an organic response. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples*, 4(2), 140-154.
- Neville, S., Napier, S., Silulu, F. M. L., Wong Soon, H. N., & Tautolo, E. S. (2023). The influence of spirituality and religion on health and well-being for older Pacific People. *Journal of Religion, Spirituality & Aging*, 1-16.
- Ngata, S. A. (1972). *The Porourangi Maori Cultural School Rauru-nui-a-toi Course: Lectures 1-7*. HK Ngata.
- Newport, C. (2019). *Vaka Moana as policy space: Navigating the Cook Islands case of climate change mobility* (Doctoral dissertation, ResearchSpace@ Auckland).
- Nussbaum, M. C. (1997). *Cultivating humanity*. Harvard University Press.
- Oberst, A., & McElroy, J. L. (2007). Contrasting socio-economic and demographic profiles of two, small island, economic species: MIRAB versus PROFIT/SITE. *Island Studies Journal*, 2(2), 163-176.

- Oldehaver, J. L. (2021). *Talanoa as a framework to develop more effective dialogic pedagogy with Pasifika students* (Doctoral dissertation, ResearchSpace@ Auckland).
- Pigliasco, G. C. (2007). Return to culture: Oral tradition and society in the southern Cook Islands. *Marvels & Tales*, 21(2), 291-293.
- Powell, E. (2021). *'Akapapa'anga Ara Tangata: Genealogising the (Cook Islands) Māori imaginary* (Doctoral dissertation, Open Access Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington).
- Puna, E. P., & Tiatia-Seath, S. (2017). Defining positive mental wellbeing for New Zealand-born Cook Islands youth.
- PSGDN. (2022). *Cook Islands*. Pacific Sexual & Gender Diversity Network. Retrieved August 7, 2023, from <https://www.psgdn.org/cookislands>
- Ravulo, J. (2021). Exploring the role of sexuality and identity across the Pacific: Navigating traditional and contemporary meanings and practices. In *The Routledge International Handbook of Indigenous Resilience* (pp. 108-120). Routledge.
- Rath, T., & Harter, J. K. (2010). *Wellbeing: The five essential elements*. Simon and Schuster.
- Reid, L. A. (2010). *Understanding how cultural values influence career processes for Māori* (Doctoral dissertation, Auckland University of Technology).
- Reynolds, M. (2017). *Together as brothers: A catalytic examination of Pasifika success as Pasifika to teu le va in boys' secondary education in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Doctoral dissertation, Open Access Te Herenga Waka-Victoria University of Wellington).
- Ricard, M. (2011). The Dalai Lama: Happiness through wisdom and compassion *International Journal of Wellbeing*, 1(2).
- Richardson, E., Hughes, E., McLennan, S., & Meo-Sewabu, L. (2019). Indigenous Well-Being and Development: Connections to Large-Scale Mining and Tourism in the Pacific. *The Contemporary Pacific*, 31(1), 1–34. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26776180>
- Riggle, E. D., & Rostosky, S. S. (2011). *A positive view of LGBTQ: Embracing identity and cultivating well-being*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Roberts, Mere. (2015). Ways of Seeing: Whakapapa. *Sites* 10: 93–120.
- Robeyns, I. (2005). The capability approach: a theoretical survey. *Journal of human development*, 6(1), 93-117.
- Rochford, T. (2004). Whare Tapa Wha: A Māori model of a unified theory of health *Journal of*

- primary prevention*, 25(1), 41-57.
- Roy, R., Greaves, L. M., Peiris-John, R., Clark, T., Fenaughty, J., Sutcliffe, K., & Fleming, T. (2021). Negotiating multiple identities: Intersecting identities among Māori, Pacific, Rainbow, and Disabled young people.
- Royal, T. A. C. (2013). Te ao marama-a research paradigm. *He Pukenga Korero*, 4(1).
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2001). On happiness and human potentials: A review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. *Annual review of psychology*, 52(1), 141-166.
- Ryff, C. D. (1995). Psychological Wellbeing in Adult Life. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 4(4), 99–104
- Ryff, C. D., & Singer, B. H. (2008). Know thyself and become what you are: an eudaimonic approach to psychological well-being. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 9(1), 13-39.
- Salmond, A. J. (2019). Comparing Relations. *The Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 128(1), 107-130.
- Savage, S. (1962). A dictionary of the Māori language of Rarotonga (*No Title*).
- Scheyvens, R., Carr, A., Movono, A., Hughes, E., Higgins-Desbiolles, F., & Mika, J. P. (2021). Indigenous tourism and the sustainable development goals. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 90, 103260.
- Scheyvens, R. A., Movono, A., & Auckram, S. (2023). Pacific peoples and the pandemic: exploring multiple well-beings of people in tourism-dependent communities. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 31(1), 111-130.
- Schulz, J. F., Barahmi-Rad, D., Beauchamp, J., & Henrich, J. (2018). The Origins of WEIRD Psychology [Preprint]. PsyArXiv. <https://doi.org/10.31234/osf.io/d6qhu>.
- Seligman, M. E. (2002). Positive psychology, positive prevention, and positive therapy. *Handbook of Positive Psychology*, 2(2002), 3-12.
- Seligman, M. E. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. Simon and Schuster.
- Sen, A. (1990). Development as capability expansion. *The community development reader*, 41, 58.
- Seng, J. S., Lopez, W. D., Sperlich, M., Hamama, L., & Meldrum, C. D. R. (2012). Marginalized

- identities, discrimination burden, and mental health: Empirical exploration of an interpersonal-level approach to modeling intersectionality. *Social science & medicine*, 75(12), 2437-2445.
- Sharp, A., & McHugh, P. G. (Eds.). (2015). *Histories, power and loss: Uses of the past—a New Zealand commentary*. Bridget Williams Books.
- Small, R. (2017). *Nietzsche in context*. Routledge.
- Smith, L. T. (2013). Social justice, transformation and Indigenous methodologies. In *Ethnographic worldviews: Transformations and social justice* (pp. 15-20). Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands.
- Smith, L., Pihama, L., Cameron, N., Mataki, T., Morgan, H., & Te Nana, R. (2019). Thought space Wānanga—a Kaupapa Māori decolonizing approach to research translation. *Genealogy*, 3(4), 74.
- Smith, L. T. (2021). *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and Indigenous peoples*. Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Stats NZ: New sexual identity wellbeing data reflects diversity of New Zealanders*. (2019, June 26). Statistics New Zealand. Retrieved July 7, 2023, from <https://www.stats.govt.nz/news/new-sexual-identity-wellbeing-data-reflects-diversity-of-new-zealanders>
- Stevens, M. W. (2013). *Rainbow health: The public health needs of LGBTTI communities in Aotearoa New Zealand with policy recommendations*. Affinity Services.
- Stiglitz, J. E., Sen, A., & Fitoussi, J. P. (2010). *Mismeasuring our lives: Why GDP doesn't add up*. The New Press.
- Strelhow, M. R. W., Sarriera, J. C., & Casas, F. (2020). Evaluation of well-being in adolescence: Proposal of an integrative model with hedonic and eudemonic aspects. *Child Indicators Research*, 13, 1439-1452.
- Summer school - the Embassy of Ireland in New Zealand* (2024). Retrieved February 12, 2024, from <https://www.friendsofireland.co.nz/summer-school>
- Taleb, N. N. (2014). *Antifragile: Things that gain from disorder* (Vol. 3). Random House Trade Paperbacks.
- Tanner, P. (2018). New Pacific standard: Using tivaevae to inform a new strategic business model for Pacific art and design.

- Tavioni, M. (2018). *Tāura ki te Atua: The role of akairo in Cook Islands Art* (Doctoral dissertation, Auckland University of Technology).
- Te Ava, A., & Page, A. (2020). How the TiVaeVae Model can be used as an Indigenous methodology in Cook Islands education settings. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 49(1), 70-76.
- Teaiwa, T. (2014). The ancestors we get to choose: White influences I won't deny. *Theorizing native studies*, 43-55.
- Te Rangi Hiroa, T. (1930). The Legends of Rarotonga Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bulletin, No. 77.
- Thomsen, S., Tavita, J., & Levi-Teu, Z. (2018). *A Pacific perspective on the living standards framework and wellbeing* (No. 18/09). New Zealand Treasury Discussion Paper.
- Thomsen, P., & Brown-Acton, P. (2021). Manalagi Talanoa: A Community-Centered Approach to Research on the Health and Wellbeing of Pacific Rainbow LGBTIQ+ MVPFAFF Communities in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Pacific Health Dialog*, 21(7), 474-480.
- Thomsen, P., & Talanoa, B. A. P. M. (2021). A community-centred approach to research on the health and wellbeing of Pacific rainbow LGBTIQ+ MVPFAFF communities in Aotearoa, New Zealand. *Pacific Health Dialog*, 21(7), 465-471.
- Thomsen, P., Mclean-Osborn, S., Ainea, H., & Verner-Pula, A. (2021). Examining the State of Health Research on Pacific Rainbow Communities in New Zealand; Literature Review. *Pacific Health Dialog*, 21(7), 449-457.
- Tongia, M. (2003). Te Neke'anga Māori I Porirua. *Akono'anga Māori: Cook Islands Culture*, 289-302.
- Trask, H. K. (1999). *From a native daughter: Colonialism and sovereignty in Hawaii (Revised edition)*. University of Hawaii Press.
- Tuagalu, I. u. (2008). Heuristics of the Va. *AlterNative (Special Issue)*, 108-126.
- Tu'itupou, G., O'Donnell, K., & Robertson, J. (2020). *Making connections with Pacific ideas in health education: A resource to support teaching and learning in the New Zealand Curriculum*. New Zealand Health Education Association (NZHEA).
- Uhlmann, A. H. (2022). *Within, Between and Around: Genders, Relationships and Sexualities in Contemporary Rarotonga* (Doctoral dissertation, ResearchSpace@ Auckland).
- UNDP. (1990). *Human development report, 1990*. United Nations Digital Library

- System. <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/92382?ln=en&v=pdf>
- UN General Assembly (2011). Resolution adopted by the General Assembly: 65/309. United Nations. <https://undocs.org/A/RES/65/309>.
- Vaioleti, T. M. (2006). Talanoa research methodology: A developing position on Pacific research. *Waikato journal of education*, 12.
- Vaioleti, T. (2013). Talanoa: Differentiating the talanoa research methodology from phenomenology, narrative, Kaupapa Maori and feminist methodologies. *Reo, Te*, 56, 191-212.
- Vanhoutte, B. (2014). The multidimensional structure of subjective well-being in later life. *Journal of Population Ageing*, 7(1), 1-20.
- Verma, P., Manuela, S., Daniela-Wong, E., & Kokaua, J. (2023). Session 18: Special Session: Mental Health in the Cook Islands: Mental Health and Wellbeing of Cook Islands LGBTQIA+ Akava'ine Communities. In <https://piurn2023.sciencesconf.org/> [Conference presentation]. The 5th Pacific Islands University Research Network Conference: Exploring This Sea of Islands-Kimikimi'anga Matatio Na Roto I to Tatou Pa Enuu, Avarua, Pacific, Cook Islands. <https://piurn2023.sciencesconf.org/>
- Warburton, E. C. (2019). The commodification of well-being: A critical examination of the transformation of the well-being concept. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 20(2), 475-493. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-017-9945-6>
- Wendt, A. (1999). Afterword: Tatauing the post-colonial body. *Inside out: Literature, cultural politics, and identity in the new Pacific*, 399-412.
- Wichman, V. (2023a). *Advancing laws for LGBTQIA+ equality in Asia-Pacific* [Slide show]. Sydney World PRIDE. <https://www.apcom.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/APCOM-Sydney-WorldPride-Shareback-Deck-s.pdf>
- Wichman, V. (2023b). *Kia rauka I te Tūranga memeitaki no te katoatoa: Towards defining and improving Tūranga memeitaki (wellbeing) for all through our 'Akapapa'anga (genealogical world view)*. https://ic-sd.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/2023-submission_258.pdf
- White, S. C. (2009). Bringing wellbeing into development practice.
- Wilkinson, R., Pickett, K., & Cato, M. S. (2009). The spirit level. Why more equal societies almost always do better.

Worth, H., Rawstorne, P., McMillan, K., O'Connor, M., Jose, H., & McGill, S. (2016). Pacific multi- country mapping and behavioural study: HIV and STI risk vulnerability among key populations-Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga.



PARLIAMENT OF THE COOK ISLANDS

CRIMES (SEXUAL OFFENCES) AMENDMENT BILL 2023

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This Bill amends the Crimes Act 1969 to remove and amend some sexual offences and add new sexual offences, make minor and consequential amendments, and update language. The background to the removal and amendment of offences is that the language of the Crimes Act 1969 no longer reflects accepted standards for sexual offences. For example, there is inadequate protection for victims of rape in that a defendant can be acquitted under the current language of s. 141 if they believe that there is consent, even if that belief is an unreasonable one. Another example is that married women can only be raped by their husbands if they are separated, which is based on the dated idea that marriage amounts to consent to sexual intercourse at any time rather than that all sexual contact should be consensual. In addition, growing acceptance of the need for states to respect privacy and not discriminate means that the state should not criminalise consensual anal intercourse, whether in a heterosexual or homosexual context, or other forms of consensual homosexual behaviour. This Bill allows several aspects of the Crimes Act 1969 to be brought up to date; other minor and consequential amendments are made, and some language is updated.

Clause 1 is the title clause.

Clause 2 is the commencement clause, which provides for the Act to come into force on June 1, 2023, to allow time for implementation measures.

Clause 3 states that the Crimes Act 1969 is the principal Act amended.

Clause 4 replaces section 140 (sexual intercourse defined) and inserts the new section 140A (circumstances that do not amount to consent). Sections 140 and 140A are definitional sections only and are to be read together with the relevant offences.

The term sexual connection replaces the use of the term sexual intercourse throughout the Principal Act and is used across multiple clauses of this Bill. Sexual connection covers various forms of sexual activity and is wider than sexual intercourse. The term covers anal intercourse, which was previously covered by a separate offence, as well as the use of other body parts and objects and significant oral sexual conduct, which was previously covered by indecent assault if non-consensual. This Bill combines the definitions from the New Zealand Crimes Act 1961 of sexual connection as well as a separate definition that clarifies the point at which sexual connection is affected (when there has been penetration to the slightest degree). The definition of sexual connection includes that there is no presumption of law that a person is incapable of sexual connection by reason of their age, which was also in the Principal Act in relation to sexual intercourse. The offence specifies that acts done by the defendant, as well as those the defendant causes to be done to them, are equally covered, which adds protection to victims who are induced to do things.

The *new section 140A* is inserted to set out circumstances that do not amount to consent for the offences of sexual violation, attempted sexual violation, sexual connection, or attempted sexual connection with a child between 12 and 16, and indecent assault of, or indecency with, a child between 12 and 16, which all involve a defense of consent. The *new section 140A* consolidates existing consent provisions in the Principal Act and expands on those provisions. The *new section 140A* does not limit the circumstances in which a person does not consent to sexual activity, so that an absence of consent may be found in other situations not specified in section 140A.

Clauses 5 to 12: Sexual Crimes

Clause 5 replaces section 141 to section 149.

Section 141 (rape) is replaced with the new offence of sexual violation, which includes both rape and unlawful sexual connection. The offence of rape is retained, but it is joined by other forms of non-consensual sexual connection, known collectively as sexual violation. Individuals of any gender are equally protected under this offence, and the offence includes non-consensual oral connections, digital connections, and connections involving objects. Mistaken belief in consent is no longer a defense to this offence if the belief is unreasonable, therefore giving further protection to victims of this offence. Spouses are also protected further with the removal of the marital defense to rape.

Section 142 (attempt to commit rape) is replaced with the offence of attempted sexual violation or assault with intent to commit sexual violation. These two offences involve a failure to complete the offence of sexual violation but also the taking of actions towards that offence. Although the steps that amount to the attempt or the assault must be intentional, the *mens rea* towards sexual violation of belief in consent on reasonable grounds is to be read across to Section 142. This is because a person who has attempted sexual violation or assaulted another with intent to commit sexual violation is intending to commit the offence of sexual violation, which is defined with that *mens rea* element in relation to the question of the victim's consent.

Section 143 (incest) is replaced to include minor changes. The new term sexual connection is used, and language that restricts individuals by gender is replaced. The consideration of whether or not the family relationships identified within the offence result from lawful wedlock is also removed, though the offence continues to include any family relationships identified, whether or not they result from lawful wedlock.

Section 144 (sexual intercourse with girl under care or protection) is replaced with a sexual connection with a dependent family member. The new offence is not restricted by gender, removes

language that would allow the offense within a marriage, and uses the new term of dependent family member, which is defined in the new section 144A inserted by this clause. Section 144 states that the dependent family member cannot be charged as a party to the offence.

A new section 144A is inserted to provide the definition of dependent family member, which takes guidance from the equivalent New Zealand definition but retains the core elements of the old provision that the dependent family member is 21 years old and is living with the person charged and that the offence is restricted to only sexual connection. The new definition expands the nature of family relationships considered under the new offence.

Section 145 (sexual intercourse with girls under twelve) is replaced with sexual connection or attempted sexual connection with a child under 12. The new offence is no longer restricted by gender and uses the new term sexual connection. There is no defense of consent or belief that the child is 12 or over, as is the case currently in the Principal Act; it is added that a belief in consent is also not a defense. This ensures that children under 12 are protected from those who engage in conduct covered by the offence.

Section 146 (indecenty with girl under twelve) is replaced with indecent assault of, or indecenty with, a child under 12. The new offence is not restricted by gender. The position relating to consent, a belief in consent, or a mistaken belief as to age is the same for this offence as arising under Section 145.

Section 147 (sexual intercourse or indecenty with girls between twelve and sixteen) is replaced with sexual connection or attempted sexual connection with a child between 12 and 16. The new offence is no longer restricted by gender, uses the new term sexual connection, and removes old language that would allow the offense to occur within marriage. Minor amendments are made to the defense arising under this section, including that the defense is no longer restricted by the age of the defendant, that the defendant must have taken steps to check the age of the child, that the child must have consented, and that the defendant must have had a reasonable belief that the child

was of or over the age of 16, and consented. The indecency offences in the former section 147 are now covered by the new section 147A.

The new section 147A is inserted to address the offence of indecent assault of, or indecency with, a child between the ages of 12 and 16, in a separate provision. The new offence is not restricted by gender and provides a defense that is not restricted by the age of the defendant.

Section 148 (indecent assault on woman or girl) is replaced with indecent assault of, or indecency with, a person of or over 16. The new offence is not restricted by gender and includes language so that circumstances where the defendant causes another person to do anything indecent on or with the defendant are also covered by the offence. The new offence retains existing language, which addresses when apparent consent is not Valid, but also includes that there may be other circumstances that invalidate apparent consent.

Section 149 is replaced to include minor changes. The term sexual connection is used, the offence is not restricted by gender, and language that allows the offense to occur within marriage is removed.

Clause 6 repeals Section 150 (inducing sexual intercourse under pretence of marriage). The activity covered by Section 150 is covered by the new offence of sexual violation.

Clause 7 replaces Section 151 (sexual intercourse with idiot or imbecile woman or girl) to update the language used. The new offence uses the term sexual connection and refers to a person with a significant intellectual impairment, which means they do not understand the nature and quality of the act.

Clause 8 repeals sections 152 to 155 which contained offences for consensual anal intercourse and consensual sexual activity between members of the same sex. Any part of these offences that covers non-consensual activity is covered by the other offences in this bill.

Clause 9 amends Section 160 (brothel-keeping) to replace “woman” with “person” so that the offence is no longer restricted by gender.

Clause 10 replaces Section 162 (procuring sexual connection) so that the offence is no longer restricted by gender, uses the term sexual connection, and removes language that relates to marriage.

Clause 11 replaces Section 230 (abduction of woman or girl) so that the offence is no longer restricted by gender, uses the term sexual connection, and includes that circumstances other than those expressly included may occur where consent is not Valid.

Clause 12 replaces Section 232(1) so that it is not restricted by gender, to update language, and to use the term sexual connection.

Sexual conduct with children outside Cook Islands

Clause 13 amends Section 157A, which relates to sexual conduct with children outside the Cook Islands. References to offences are updated to reflect the changes made by the bill.


Repeal of section 159

Clause 14 repeals Section 159 (keeping a place of resort for homosexual acts).

Transitional Provision

Clause 15 inserts a new transitional provision into the principal act. This is new section 419A. The transitional provision allows offences that are repealed by the Bill to continue to be prosecuted if the date of the act constituting the offence occurred before the Act came into force or cannot be established with sufficient certainty to know whether it occurred before or after the Act came into force. In those circumstances, a prosecution can be taken under the repealed section or under the replacement section and the replacement section as alternatives. Defendants will be able to use defenses that would have been available immediately before the Act came into force. However, this section does not allow offences under repealed sections 154 and 155 to continue to be prosecuted unless the offence was against a child under 16.

Appendix II Cook Islands National Research Committee Permit



COOK ISLANDS NATIONAL RESEARCH COMMITTEE
Office of the Prime Minister
Rarotonga, Cook Islands

PERMIT TO UNDERTAKE

This is to certify that: **Ms. Valentino Wichman**

Has permission from the Cook Islands National Research Committee to conduct research in the Cook Islands from: **August 2023-January 2024.**

On the islands of: Rarotonga & Aitutaki

The topic of research is: **"Turanga Memeitaki (Wellbeing) and the Anuanua (Rainbow) community of the Cook Islands."**

The following special conditions apply to this research:

- The researcher complies with Cook Islands Immigration, Sea Bed Minerals Authority (SBMA), OPM (Marae Moana), Ministry of Transport(MOT), Ministry of Marine Resources(MMR) and National Environment Services(NES) requirements.
- The researcher provides a preliminary report to the Office of the Prime Minister at the earliest:
- The researcher provides three (3) hard copies + one (1) e-copy of the final output generated from this research to the Office of the Prime Minister by July 2024.

Permit Issued on: **17 August 2023** Issued by: **Ben Ponia**
CHAIRPERSON

Receipt Number: **WAIVERED**

Reference Number: **19-23** Signed: _____

For enquiries concerning this permit, please quote the Name of the Researcher and the Reference Number to the Secretariat of the National Research Committee at the Office of the Prime Minister, Rarotonga, Cook Islands. Phone (682) 25 494, or Email: research.secretariat@cookislands.gov.ck Website: www.pmooffice.gov.ck

Appendix III Massey University Human Ethics Approval





MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGĀ TANGATA

Tūranga Memeitaki (Wellbeing) and the Anuanua (Rainbow) community of the Cook Islands.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM - INDIVIDUAL

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I agree/do not agree to the interview being sound recorded. Note that there will be selective transcripts available after the Kai Vānanga Vatavata for participants to review and you will have two weeks to give any comments on it. If no comments come back within two weeks, then it will be presumed that the participant consents to it. Audio recordings will be destroyed once the selective transcripts are consented to by the participants.

I would like to be referred to in this study in the following way (fill in your preference):

- My alias name and gender marker:
 - e.g., Sasha Fierce, she/her

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

I understand that I will be given up to two weeks from my Kai Vānanga Vatavata session to make comment/amendments on the meeting minutes.

I would/would not like a summary report of the findings sent to me on completion of this research.

Signature:

Date:

.....

Full Name - printed

.....

Email address:

.....



MASSEY UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
TE KURA PŪKENGĀ TANGATA

Tūranga Meitaki e te Iti Tangata Anuanua o te Kuki Airani

KAPI AKATIKA NO TE PIRI KI ROTO - TANGATA OKOTA'I

Kua tatau au i te Kapi Akakitekite e kua akamarama ia mai ki aku te au akataka'anga no teia ranga'anga. Kua mareka au e kua pa'u'ia mai taku au ui'anga, e kua marama au e ka rauka iaku i te ui atu i tetai au ui'anga i tetai uatu taime.

Te ariki nei au/kare au e ariki ana kia rekoti'ia te tangi o te uiui ui'anga. Me kare e au manako e oki mai ko te tamanako'anga i reira e kua akatika te au tangata i piri ki roto i te reira. Ka takore'ia te tangi o tei rekoti'ia me tuku te au tangata i piri ki roto i ta ratou tika no runga i te au tata'anga tei iki'ia.

Ka inangaro au kia kapiki'ia au e ko teia i roto i teia ranga'anga (akaki i taau i inangaro):

- Ko te ingoa tei matau'ia au i te kapiki e te akairo tu tangata:
- (akara'anga - Sasha Fierce, she/her)

Te ariki nei au i te piri ki roto i teia ranga'anga i raro ake i teia au akaue'anga i akataka'ia i roto i te Kapi Akakitekite.

Kua marama au e ka oronga ia mai kiaku e rua epetoma mei te tuatau o taku Vananga no te tuku i toku manako/e te au tau'anga no runga i te au miniti o te uipa'anga.

Ka inangaro au/kare au e inangaro i tetai ripoti akakou'anga no runga i tei kitea mai kia tuku'ia mai kiaku me oti teia ranga'anga.

Akairo Ingoa:

Ra:

.....

Ingoa Katoa - nenei'ia

.....

Imere:
