



TE TIRITI FRAMEWORK FOR NEWS MEDIA





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INTRODUCTION



This document presents a te Tiriti framework for news media as a starting point for news producers to develop their own te Tiriti strategy in ways that suit their contexts.

While this framework is grounded in te Tiriti o Waitangi and mass media obligations to Māori as tangata whenua, it may be relevant for other groups who face racism in our society.

The framework is an overview with action areas and some critical questions that should be useful for the development of media strategies and practices.

Part one, **Te Tiriti o Waitangi news media framework**, includes a brief rationale and identifies four domains related to news organisations' commitment to te Tiriti, their societal accountabilities, their news practices, and questions for Māori-controlled news media. Accountability and responsibility are part of each domain. Mass news media organisations need to ask how they are operating within each domain, how this is evaluated, and what transformative actions they need to make.

Part two, **Evidence**, provides a glossary, additional background, research and analysis that supports the framework's domains, with more detailed examples of alternative practice.

PART 1: TE TIRITI O WAITANGI

NEWS MEDIA FRAMEWORK

Mass news media organisations need to consider, explore, build on and implement the framework in ways that show commitment to te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The framework is structured in five overlapping parts, beginning with a rationale. Its four domains highlight specific areas for consideration by mass media organisations in a colonial but decolonising context. The central ideas of the domains are summarised in a table on page 9. As the commitment of organisations to te Tiriti o Waitangi grows and their expertise develops, they will identify further areas for transformation.

Rationale

As tangata whenua o Aotearoa, Māori have never ceded sovereignty to Britain or any other State. He Whakaputanga/Declaration of Independence (1835) and te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840) asserted and continue to assert Māori sovereignty, and were signed by hapū and the Crown. Te Tiriti carries rights and obligations for both parties, with implications for social justice. Despite te Tiriti, colonial constitutional practices have entrenched Pākehā systems of governance that continue today. This means our society has a foundation of institutional racism, where organisations, agencies and institutions continue to benefit Pākehā, and routinely produce policies and practices that result in avoidable inequalities between Pākehā and Māori.

As a social institution, news media play a major role. News is much more than some truth out there waiting to be reported; news organisations often choose what counts as news and construct news through their cultural lenses of representations and silences. The results saturate our lives with messages and images on multiple platforms, shaping our day-to-day experiences. How news narratives and images are constructed influences the way we see ourselves and others, our place in society and social relations and norms more broadly. News narratives can perpetuate stereotypes and racism, or enhance mana, promoting positive societal relationships. The impacts on individuals and society cannot be underestimated.

Mass news media have a concerning history from the beginning of colonisation to the present, of reproducing and promoting negative media representations of Māori. Research over decades has identified the ways in which mass news media contribute to and help maintain the marginalisation of Māori, but such outcomes are not inevitable or wanted by most news media workers. On 30 November 2020, the national news organisation Stuff made a ground-breaking apology for its media constructions of Māori. It had evaluated its performance, referencing research on anti-Māori themes (see Evidence), found that it ranged from “blinkered to racist”, and acknowledged that Māori were not given an equitable voice. Stuff promised to improve its reporting on Māori and to make changes in the organisation that reflected a commitment to Māori audiences and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

News media organisations have an obligation to be accountable and responsible in the ways they represent Māori and decide what is newsworthy, as well as how they organise their own structures and processes to align with Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

NEWS MEDIA SYSTEMS' COMMITMENT TO TE TIRITI O WAITANGI

Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsibilities and accountabilities apply across the news media sector and extend into the community.

Commitment to te Tiriti needs to be evident at the highest levels of an organisation, and in all areas of its activity.

Media systems include the structures, culture, leadership, policy, practices, relationships, employment and training that determine the environments within which news is produced.

Action area: Organisational policies and practices

- ▶ How does the organisation recognise and act on its responsibilities under He Whakaputanga and te Tiriti o Waitangi, for example with a te Tiriti plan? The preamble and all articles apply; see the Evidence section.
- ▶ Who in the organisation is leading this work?
- ▶ How is the organisation taking responsibility for its culture and environment?
- ▶ How do news practices need to change to reflect te Tiriti?
- ▶ How does the organisation embed autonomy for Māori news into its work?
- ▶ How does the organisation evaluate its reporting on Māori and te Tiriti issues?
- ▶ How does it assess what stories are newsworthy in light of te Tiriti?
- ▶ What are the values that result in inequitable reporting of Māori and Māori issues?
- ▶ How is the organisation recognising Māori expertise and practices at all levels?


Action area: Relationships with Māori

- ▶ Who are the mana whenua in the organisation's news areas?
- ▶ How does the organisation decide when mana whenua voices are required in news items, and when more general Māori expertise is appropriate?
- ▶ When is it appropriate to seek advice from, and quote, mana whenua for news stories?
- ▶ What other relationships ensure that Māori have an equitable voice?
- ▶ Who is talking with Māori in the organisation's community, to explore what stories they would like to be told and how to tell them?

Action area: Staff recruitment, training and support

- ▶ How does journalism training need to change to teach and reflect on te Tiriti-based journalism practice?
- ▶ How does the media organisation recruit, train, support and actively promote Māori journalists and staff, for example, into management and decision-making positions?
- ▶ How does the organisation mitigate unrealistic expectations placed on Māori issues reporters by tauwiwi staff, particularly Pākehā?
- ▶ How are non-Māori staff trained so they can cover Māori stories responsibly in their everyday work? This includes te Tiriti o Waitangi history and interpretation, te reo Māori pronunciation, tikanga and understanding colonial history.

SOCIETAL ACCOUNTABILITIES



As a result of colonisation, we live in a society that perpetuates racism and inequities. In response, many Māori organisations and networks are decolonising, and Pākehā-led non-government organisations are restructuring themselves according to te Tiriti o Waitangi. For news media, it is not simply a matter of reporting ‘fairly’, but of constructively contributing to te Tiriti relations and social justice.

Media organisations need to consider the colonial context of living in Aotearoa New Zealand, and identify structural causes – institutional racism, colonisation, inequities and Pākehā advantage – that influence their reporting and the issues they report.

This domain focuses on how news media construct and present issues, particularly whether broader accountabilities and systems are considered, and how Māori are represented. Two pages of detailed examples of alternative practice are provided in the Evidence section.

Action area: Contributing to te Tiriti relations and social justice

- ▶ How does the organisation report mechanisms of redress such as the Waitangi Tribunal and its reports?
- ▶ How does the organisation cover the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and efforts to enact it such as *He Puapua*?
- ▶ How is the organisation providing context – whether about colonial history, te Tiriti articles, colonial confiscations, cultural destruction, structural causes of Māori social and health status, or institutional racism – related to the topic of the news item?
- ▶ How does the organisation move the focus from blaming Māori for such impacts?
- ▶ How does the organisation examine the news angle in stories through an understanding of colonisation?
- ▶ How does the organisation increase the proportion of debates around Māori issues where the “two sides” are expressed by Māori?
- ▶ How does the organisation explore nation-building nuances within te ao Māori rather than pitting Māori against non-Māori?
- ▶ How is the organisation transforming entrenched anti-Māori themes and narratives about Māori that perpetuate racism and cause harm?

NEWS MEDIA PRACTICES – WORLDVIEWS, VALUES AND NORMS

News organisations need to consider their practices when producing news. Despite the value that mass news media place on objectivity, the Evidence section shows that mass media stories predominantly reflect and promote the worldviews, values and language of the dominant Pākehā group. Using a standard practice in everyday Pākehā talk, Pākehā are routinely constructed as ordinary, the normal citizens and culture of New Zealand, and rarely named as a group. Māori and other racialised groups are often positioned outside the norm, and referred to as “they” and “them” rather than “we” or “us”. This is sometimes expressed by the use of Māori as an adjective, as in Māori activist and Māori MP. The use of such direct (and more subtle) labels position Māori as disrupting the norm, outside the central group, culture and experience. Three sets of alternative examples are provided in the Evidence section.

Action area: Changing news practices

- ▶ How does the organisation address the use of language and culture in news items? This could mean increasing everyday use of te reo Māori in news items; and including information about tikanga as context in news stories.
- ▶ How does the organisation question and broaden its interpretation of news values, by considering Māori-controlled news media interpretations, without putting an excess burden on Māori staff?
- ▶ What types of news stories does the organisation choose to tell, and how?
- ▶ Who do those stories benefit?
- ▶ Who does the organisation perceive as its audience and direct its news stories towards? How does it direct news stories to an inclusive audience?
- ▶ How does the organisation constructively report difficult news in ways that do not increase fear and distrust of Māori?
- ▶ How does the organisation include diverse sources equitably, for example by ethnicity and gender?
- ▶ Who does the organisation consider to be experts about Māori issues?
- ▶ How does the organisation decide whether or where Māori sources are quoted in news items?
- ▶ How does the organisation ensure that Māori are visible, not only as sources in news stories, but as tellers of news stories and commentators?
- ▶ How will mass news media organisations change the dominance of Pākehā male commentators and sources?
- ▶ What types of imagery are used in news items? Does imagery reinforce stereotypes and anti-Māori themes?
- ▶ How can imagery represent Māori equitably?
- ▶ How does the organisation find out / understand the correct ways to cover events at marae and tangihanga, and the use of whānau and tūpuna images?

CONSIDERATIONS FOR MĀORI-CONTROLLED MEDIA

This framework is fundamentally concerned with changing mass news media performance to better reflect te Tiriti. Māori news media provide important leadership in reporting Māori issues and broadening interpretations of news values. Specific considerations that Māori-controlled media may find useful include –

- ▶ How do media understand and represent the diversity of Māori identity, both in news items and staffing?
- ▶ Who do news media perceive as their audience for Māori news? Do media include marginalised Māori voices; for example, Māori with disabilities?
- ▶ What news content do news media provide for Māori who are not fluent speakers of te reo Māori but interested in Māori news nonetheless?
- ▶ How do news media manage important conversations about te ao Māori? For example; the nuance between mana whenua and hau kainga in land issues, or the political implications of increasing numbers of Pākehā te reo speakers.
- ▶ What topics might interest Māori audiences beyond customary interpretations of te ao Māori?

SUMMARY: Te Tiriti o Waitangi News Media Framework

Domain	Central ideas	Elements	Broad questions
	Accountability and responsibility		
Rationale	Māori never ceded sovereignty Mass media play a critical role in power relations in our society	Te Tiriti o Waitangi Rights Obligations	How do mass news media avoid negative and racist representations of Māori? Is reporting equitable?
Media systems	Mass media have responsibilities and accountabilities to Māori that apply across the sector	Policies, practices, systems, charters Leadership Monitoring Recruitment and training Relationships	How do organisations actively address their commitments and responsibilities to te Tiriti at all levels?
Societal accountabilities	Reporting on Māori and Māori issues reflects the ongoing colonial constitution of society	Inequities, institutional racism, Pākehā privilege Do no more harm	How do mass media frame and present issues? Colonisation, structural racism, harm prevention and Māori advancement?
Media practices	Mass media are not neutral. News stories reflect and promote the worldviews, values, stories and language of the dominant Pākehā group	Language, culture, Pākehā norms, practices, silences Construction of Māori and Māori stories	Whose language and culture is dominant? Whose voice is heard? Whose voice is central? What stories are told and how are they told?
Māori-controlled media	Māori-controlled media have different Treaty accountabilities from mass media	Māori diversity Assumed audience Te reo fluency Nuance around te ao Māori	How are diverse audiences represented? What news content is provided for Māori not fluent in te reo? How is nuance managed in particular issues?

PART 2: EVIDENCE

This collection of background information, research and analysis provides more detailed context for the framework, and includes additional potential action points. Content in each section overlaps. Some evidence cited here is from online news media items and the printed *NZ Herald* towards the end of 2021, since little recent research looks at changes in news media constructions of Māori and te Tiriti.

Glossary

The Crown – Originally the British Crown. This authority devolved to the New Zealand Government.

Decolonisation – “Recognition and effective exercise of iwi and hapū self-determination ... as the basis of constitutionally independent polities” in a new constitutional model based on Te Tiriti.¹

Institutional racism – The routine production of unequal and racist outcomes for Māori and other populations facing racism through organisational systems and procedures. Regardless of the intent of individual managers and staff, institutional racism disadvantages Māori and advantages Pākehā.

Kawanatanga – Governorship.

Mass news media/mass news – Government-owned and corporate, Pākehā-led legacy and digital news organisations that attract a mass audience.

Racialised, racialisation – Focusing inaccurately on the discredited concept of ‘race’ to explain the behaviour of individuals or groups.²

Racism – A pervasive ideology about ‘race’ that judges Pākehā or White people and systems as superior, and indigenous and people of colour as inferior. This ideology shapes how individuals, social groups and nations think, act, and understand their social world. In Aotearoa New Zealand, racism justifies Pākehā control.

Tauīwi – Non-Māori.

Tino rangatiratanga – Sovereignty, ultimate authority.

Whakamā – Shame, embarrassment.

A RATIONALE

He Whakaputanga/The Declaration of Independence

He Whakaputanga was a proactive Māori foreign policy initiative, directly linked to te Tiriti o Waitangi. He Whakaputanga was signed in 1835 by 52 leading chiefs of the north, as well as Waikato and Ngāti Kahungunu rangatira, as a declaration of the independence and sovereignty of our country. It was a creation of Te Wakaminenga, the Confederation of United Tribes, and was acknowledged by the British government.

¹ Moana Jackson, May 9 2021, *Decolonisation and the stories in the land, E-Tangata*.

² David Pearson, *Ethnic inequalities - Race, ethnicity and inequality, Te Ara*.



Te Tiriti o Waitangi

Five years later, Māori rangatira of hapū, including at least 20 who were signatories to He Whakaputanga, signed te Tiriti o Waitangi. Contrary to popular and settler government understanding, rangatira did not cede sovereignty in te Tiriti.³ Hapū accepted British involvement to control unruly British migrants, to enhance trade, and to protect against other foreign interests. This understanding was confirmed in the findings of WAI 1040 in 2014,⁴ and is slowly making its way into Crown and NGO policy and practice, despite the rejection of the tribunal finding by government ministers.⁵

Te Tiriti compliance entails the development of equitable relationships between the government, its agencies and all peoples of Aotearoa, and authentic efforts by all to transform society to meet the aspirations of te Tiriti, particularly those of Māori who have suffered many harms from te Tiriti breaches. Other than reporting the WAI 1040 decision and the government's rejection of it, mass news media still act as if Māori ceded sovereignty. In contrast, an increasing number of tauīwi-run NGOs have restructured themselves along te Tiriti lines.⁶

The Treaty 'principles'

Repeated references by the Government to the English version, in which Māori supposedly ceded sovereignty, have created systematic disinformation that protects the Government's assumption of sole parliamentary sovereignty. The Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 requires the Waitangi Tribunal, to investigate breaches of both te Tiriti and the Treaty, undermining the position of the Māori text as the treaty. A plethora of treaty 'principles' combining the two texts, developed unilaterally by Crown agencies, have reinterpreted te Tiriti in favour of Pākehā control.⁷ Because the substance of the Treaty relationship is clear in the Māori text, and because of the lack of Māori involvement in their development, none of these 'principles' have been endorsed by Māori.⁸

Systemic and institutional racism in government agencies

Colonisation aimed to transplant British culture to Aotearoa, to benefit settlers and the empire.⁹ Ignoring Māori, racism was baked into the systems of governance, law, business and society from the beginning, and has constantly been refined into the present.¹⁰ As a result, New Zealand society continues to reflect the interests of Pākehā.

Racism works at interpersonal, institutional and societal levels using discrimination, exclusion and domination. Barriers to Māori advancement

³ Te Kawariki & Network Waitangi Whangarei, 2012, *Ngāpuhi speaks*.

⁴ Waitangi Tribunal, 2014, *He Whakaputanga me te Tiriti / The Declaration and the Treaty: Report on stage 1 of the te paparahi o te raki inquiry*, WAI 1040.

⁵ E.g., *Radio NZ*, November 14, 2014, [Tribunal upholds sovereignty claim](#).

⁶ Council for International Development/Kaunihera mo te Whakapakari Ao Whanui, 2007, *Treaty journeys: International development agencies respond to the Treaty of Waitangi*, Treaty Resource Centre; Jen Margaret, 2016, *Ngā rerenga o te Tiriti: Community organisations engaging with the Treaty of Waitangi*.

⁷ Te Puni Kōkiri, 2002, *He tirohanga ō kawa ki te Tiriti o Waitangi: A guide to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi as expressed by the Courts and the Waitangi Tribunal*.

⁸ Mason Durie, 1994, *Whaiora: Māori health development*. Oxford University Press, Auckland, p. 85.

⁹ James Belich, 2007, *Making peoples: A history of the New Zealanders*, Penguin, Auckland.

¹⁰ Human Rights Commission, 2012, *A fair go for all? Rite tahi tātou katoa? Addressing structural discrimination in public services*.

include intergenerational asset-stripping and marginalisation, lack of resources, and under-investment.¹¹

Repeated research studies, commissions and enquiries have identified persistent institutional racism in multiple government agencies and systems. They include **adult and child welfare**,¹² **health**,¹³ **education**,¹⁴ **justice**,¹⁵ and the government **process for settling te Tiriti o Waitangi claims**.¹⁶ Major inequities arising from racist and colonial practices and policies are also obvious in **home ownership**,¹⁷ **sport**,¹⁸ **immigration**,¹⁹ the **arts**²⁰ and **environmental justice**.²¹ Such institutions and systems are unreliable sources about te Tiriti o Waitangi, about disparities between Māori and non-Māori, and about land, water and other resources.

Matike Mai, constitutional transformation and He Puapua

A working group, established by the Iwi Chairs Forum, published their *Matike Mai* report on constitutional transformation in 2016, summarising discussions with thousands of Māori at hundreds of hui.²² The report suggests new constitutional relations that support the rights and aspirations of all peoples of Aotearoa. Its vision for social justice sees colonisation as the problem, and a decolonising transformation of society as the solution.

The vision and timelines of *Matike Mai* were mirrored by *He Puapua*,

¹¹ John Reid, Karyn Taylor-Moore & Golda Varona, 2014, [Towards a social-structural model for understanding current disparities in Māori health and well-being](#), *Journal of Loss & Trauma*, 19(6), 514-536; Pete McKenzie, 2020, [It's time to talk about NZ's racial wealth gap](#), *Newsroom*.

¹² Waitangi Tribunal, 2021, [He Pāharakeke, He Rito, Whakakikīnga Whāruarua, Oranga Tamariki urgent inquiry](#), WAI 2915; Catherine Savage & others, 2021, [Hāhā-uri, hāhā-tea: Māori involvement in state care 1950-1999](#), Ihi Research; Welfare Expert Advisory Group, 2019, [Whakamana tāngata: Restoring dignity to social security in New Zealand](#); Women's Anti-Racism Action Group, 1985, [Institutional racism in the Department of Social Welfare, Tāmaki-Makau-Rau](#).

¹³ Waitangi Tribunal, 2021, [Haumarū: The COVID-19 priority report](#); Natalie Talamaivao and others, 2020, [Racism and health in Aotearoa New Zealand: A systematic review of quantitative studies](#), *NZMJ*, 133(1521), 55-68; Waitangi Tribunal, 2019, [Hauora: Report on stage one of the health services and outcomes kaupapa inquiry](#); Health Quality and Safety Commission, 2019; [He matapihi ki te kōunga o ngā manaakitanga ā hauora/A window on the quality of Aotearoa New Zealand's health care](#); Tim McCreanor & Raymond Nairn, 2002, [Tāuiwi general practitioners explanations of Māori health: Colonial relations in primary healthcare in Aotearoa/New Zealand?](#) *Journal of Health Psychology*, 7(5), 509-518.

¹⁴ Tara McAlister & others, 2020, [Glass ceilings in New Zealand universities](#), *Mai Journal*, 9(3); NZSTA, 2018, [Education matters to me: Key insights](#); Ann Milne, 2017, [Coloring in the White spaces: Reclaiming cultural identity in whitestream schools](#), Peter Lang, New York; Te Kotahitanga: Raising Māori student achievement, 2012, [Te Kotahitanga results and findings](#), Te Kete Ipurangi; Jan Hill & Kay Hawk, 1998, [Aiming for student achievement: How teachers can understand and better meet the needs of Pacific Island and Māori students](#), *Set*, 2.

¹⁵ Rosie Gordon, March 9, 2021, [Police accused of racism over use of tactical pain against Māori offenders](#), *Newshub*; JustSpeak, 2020, [A justice system for everyone](#); Meriana Johnsen, 2020, [Justice system called 'fundamentally racist' – new study shows Māori more likely to go to court](#), *Radio NZ*; Māori Council, 2019, [Racism within the NZ Police must be addressed](#), *Scoop*; Waitangi Tribunal, 2017, [Tū mai te rangi! Report on the Crown and disproportionate reoffending rates](#), WAI 2540; Moana Jackson, 1987, [The Māori and the criminal justice system: A new perspective](#), *He whaipanga hau*. Department of Justice.

¹⁶ Margaret Mutu, 2018, [Behind the smoke and mirrors of the Treaty of Waitangi claims settlement process in New Zealand: No prospect for justice and reconciliation for Māori without constitutional transformation](#), *Journal of Global Ethics*, 14(2), 208-221; Hone Harawira, 2006, [The Treaty settlement process](#), International Indigenous Nations Treaty Summit, Canada.

¹⁷ Stats NZ Tauranga Aotearoa, 2020, [Housing in Aotearoa: 2020](#).


¹⁸ Ashley Stanley, 2020, [Calling time on racism in sport](#), *Newsroom*.

¹⁹ Malatest International, 2021, [Ngā take o ngā wheako o te kaikiri ki ngā manene o Aotearoa, Drivers of migrant New Zealanders' experiences of racism](#), NZ Human Rights Commission.

²⁰ Ella Stewart & Te Aorewa Rolleston, January 19, 2021, [Auckland gallery Māori arts curator calls out colonial institutions after resigning](#), *RadioNZ*.

²¹ Claire Browning, 2017, [Finding ecological justice in New Zealand](#), NZ Law Society; Mihingarangi Forbes, 2016, [Iwi closely watches govt moves on water ownership](#), *RadioNZ*.

²² Working Group on Constitutional Transformation, 2016, [The report of Matike Mai Aotearoa](#).



a 2019 report by a New Zealand Working Group on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).²³ The government ratified UNDRIP in 2010, and the report aimed to enact the declaration in Aotearoa/New Zealand by 2040. For publicly funded news media, *He Puapua* recommends “increasing the number of Māori governors, te reo and Māori cultural content” to address the structure and content of news programming (p. 74). *He Puapua* recognises that mass news media need reform to contribute constructively to the transformations envisioned by UNDRIP.

Many journalists want to report Māori issues better

Tauiwi journalists in earlier research projects expressed unease at conventional mass news story angles about Māori. Some discussed the ignorance of news organisations about mana whenua who have lived for centuries in their news region. Many journalists did not have the experience of negotiating cultural differences, or thinking critically about how journalism practices may marginalise Māori. Some could see how difficult mass media newsrooms were for Māori journalists, understood why they left for jobs in Māori-controlled media, and were concerned at the resulting lack of Māori decision-makers in these newsrooms.²⁴

Many audiences want better reporting about Māori and te Tiriti

Identifying as Pākehā is becoming increasingly common. Increasingly, Pākehā see their future bound up with the fortunes of Māori, and are working towards a decolonised New Zealand.²⁵ Examples include the volunteer group Tauiwi Tautoko, which intervenes in online racist comments on news organisations’ Facebook pages,²⁶ and those organising events such as Te Tiriti-Based Futures and Anti-Racism 2020 and 2022.²⁷ Te Tiriti educators are fully booked to fill the strong demand among Pākehā and other tauiwi for workshops about te Tiriti, and how organisations can implement it in their structures and work. These audiences want mass news media to discuss decolonisation issues, provide te Tiriti context, and report Maori initiatives and aspirations.

Many of the one in four New Zealanders born in another country have their own experiences of colonisation in their countries of origin. For many migrants, understanding Māori worldviews and te Tiriti is part of belonging in Aotearoa New Zealand. This need to understand led to the establishment of a group running te Tiriti education for migrant and refugee communities,²⁸ and commitments to “a Treaty-based multicultural society in which Māori have particular status as Tangata Whenua” among migrant organisations.²⁹

²³ NZ Working Group on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, *He Puapua*, Te Puni Kōkiri.

²⁴ Don Matheson, 2007, *The interpretive resources of Aotearoa New Zealand journalists reporting on Māori*. *NZJMS*, 10(2), 91-105; Kupu Taea, 2010, *Summary of interviews with journalists*, unpublished; Carol Archie, 2008, ‘The Treaty is personal’, in Heather Came & Amy Zander (eds., 2015), *State of the Pākehā Nation: Collected Waitangi Day speeches and essays 2006-2015*, Network Waitangi Whangarei, 64-70.

²⁵ *NZ Herald*, 2013, ‘Pakeha’ not a dirty word – survey.

²⁶ Laura O’Connell Rapira & Ann Cloet, 2019, *How ActionStation trains an army of keyboard warriors to promote love over hate*. *Mobilisation Lab*.

²⁷ *Te Tiriti-based Futures + Anti-Racism*, 2022.

²⁸ *Tangata Tiriti – Treaty People*.

²⁹ E.g., *Multicultural New Zealand*, *Treaty Based Multicultural New Zealand*.

One study found that migrants who regularly watched Māori Television news and programmes, and who saw recently arrived friends pick up negative stereotypes about Māori from mass news media, encouraged them to watch Māori Television instead.³⁰

History and current role of mass news media

The first explorers and settlers in Aotearoa saw themselves as a superior people – civilised, technically advanced, and Christian – whose presence and control conferred benefits despite the “defects of the savage character”.³¹ What is less widely recognised is the continuity between colonial and contemporary Pākehā ways of talking about Māori and te Tiriti, including those that mass news media use and report.³² This is described in the section on Societal accountabilities.

B NEWS MEDIA SYSTEMS’ COMMITMENT TO TE TIRITI O WAITANGI

Responsibilities and obligations under te Tiriti

He Whakaputanga and Te Tiriti o Waitangi are political documents and so are about power. See a recent translation of these documents.³³

The preamble and te Tiriti articles each carry different responsibilities. The preamble expresses the Crown’s intention to recognise the “paramount authority” of rangatira and hapū, and its aim of controlling unruly British citizens in Aotearoa, and therefore has constitutional implications. Article 1 delegates kawanatanga (governorship) to the Crown for lands entrusted to tauiwi. Article 2 recognises the tino rangatiratanga (sovereignty) of hapū over their lands and everything else held precious. Many non-Māori organisations have yet to acknowledge this sovereignty and normalise Māori authority. Article 3 requires the Crown to ensure that Māori have the same access to the law – are treated equally – as English (Pākehā) people, and is an obligation for Pākehā-run news media organisations. Under what is often called the fourth article the governor (government) guarantees equal protection for all faiths, religions, tikanga and Maori beliefs. This protection for Māori spirituality also carries an obligation for tauiwi organisations.

As they consider these implications for their own processes, news media can also report on other organisations taking Te Tiriti and their relationships with Māori seriously.³⁴

Suggestions from other te Tiriti frameworks

A Te Tiriti framework for news reporting

The Kia Manawanui: Kaupapa Māori Film theoretical Framework (Kia

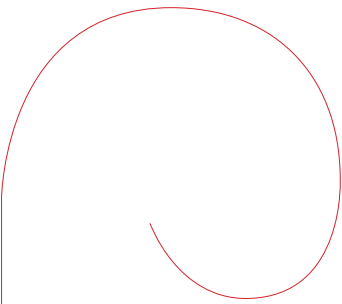
³⁰ Susan Nemeč, 2021, *Can an indigenous media model enrol wider non-Indigenous audiences in alternative perspectives to the ‘mainstream’*. *Ethnicities*, 1–31.

³¹ *Lord John Russell to Captain Hobson*, December 1840, *A compendium of official documents relative to native affairs in the South Island*, Vol 1, p. 33.

³² Tim McCreanor, 1997, *When racism stepped ashore: Antecedents of anti-Māori discourse in New Zealand*, *NZ Journal of Psychology*, 23, 43-57.

³³ Network Waitangi Otautahi, *Treaty poster with Declaration of Independence*.

³⁴ E.g., *NZ Herald*, December 1, 2021, *Infrastructure magazine*.



Manawanui) was developed to examine film texts in the context of colonisation, and has been extended to include media more generally.³⁵

It asks –

- ▶ Whose voice is heard?
- ▶ Whose languages are used?
- ▶ Whose worldviews are centred?
- ▶ Does the coverage challenge dominant colonial discourses?
- ▶ Are Māori equitably visible?
- ▶ How are Māori experiences, in their diversity, represented?

Resources about te Tiriti-based organisational change

Publications about te Tiriti-based change in Pākehā-run organisations stress the importance of embedding change at all levels, avoiding tokenism, not leaving such change to Māori staff, and transforming core policies and processes.³⁶ The Treaty Resource Centre framework includes useful documents about equity for Māori, including in business, auditing an organisation, working across difference, and developing Treaty relationships.³⁷

The Brown Book: Māori in screen production

Commissioned by Ngā Aho Whakaari, the Association of Māori in Screen Production, and written by Ella Henry and Melissa Wikaire, the Brown Book was launched in 2013. It outlines the history of the Māori screen industry, the role of Ngā Aho Whakaari in that evolution, and introduces Māori society and culture for those in film and television who may interact with Māori communities, or draw on Māori language and culture.³⁸

Te Tiriti frameworks from other sectors

The Health Research Council guidelines for research with Māori provide detailed information for tauwi researchers about how and when to consult with Māori in health research involving Māori.³⁹ The model of Māori-centred research run by tauwi researchers may be useful to mass news media managers (p. 8). The document also relies on Treaty ‘principles’ rather than the text of te Tiriti.

Unteach Racism may be useful for journalism training and in-service training.⁴⁰ This initiative from the Teaching Council compiles a broad range of teaching modules and online resources to support teachers in addressing racism for learners in classrooms.

Understanding Pākehās (available in libraries) may be useful in journalism training. It remains a rare description of Pākehā values, interests and norms, and the different ways in which Pākehā organise social and family life and political institutions, and use language, compared with Pasifika cultures. It was created in the 1970s by the Vocational Training Council to improve relations between newly migrated Pasifika workers and employers.

³⁵ Angela Moewaka Barnes, 2018, *Kia manawanui: Kaupapa Māori film theoretical framework*, *MAI Journal*, 7(1).

³⁶ Council for International Development/Kaunihera mo te Whakapakari Ao Whanui, 2007, *Treaty journeys: International development agencies respond to the Treaty of Waitangi*, Treaty Resource Centre; Jen Margaret, 2016, *Ngā rerenga o te Tiriti: Community organisations engaging with the Treaty of Waitangi*.

³⁷ Treaty Resource Centre framework.

³⁸ Ella Henry and Melissa Wikaire, 2013, *The Brown Book: Maori in screen production*, Ngā Aho Whakaari.

³⁹ Health Research Council, 2010, *Guidelines for researchers on health research involving Māori*.

⁴⁰ Teaching Council/Matatū Aotearoa, 2021, *Unteach racism*.

District health board tikanga best practice documents outline tikanga protocols for DHB staff.⁴¹ Most include advice about correct use of te reo Māori, respectful relationships, recording data, values relating to health, and dealing with death, body parts and Tūpāpaku (deceased persons).

Media self-monitoring

One year after its 2020 apology, Stuff recognised that while the organisation had made progress, there was much to be done. It created a charter that relates to te Tiriti (through recognising the “Treaty of Waitangi principles of partnership, participation and protection” rather than the Treaty articles) in business practices.⁴² This is supplemented by “restoration” (redressing wrongs and doing better in future) in its relations with Māori, and “equity” (fairness to all stakeholders). Other mass news organisations and media standards bodies have yet to carry out the same self-examination, or apologise to Māori for racist and colonial practices. To be truly effective organisational change needs to occur alongside systemic change including sustained leadership, transformation of dominant media practices and ongoing accountability and evaluation practices.

How te Tiriti-based news media could evaluate their reporting of Māori and te Tiriti

Te Tiriti-based news organisations could consider –

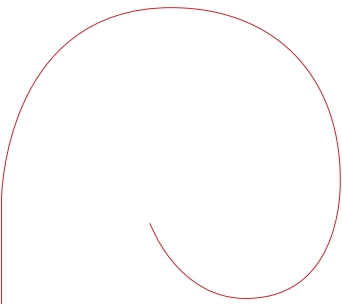
- ▶ Devoting personnel and resources to this evaluation as an ongoing activity.
- ▶ Contracting independent evaluators for this work.
- ▶ Monitoring their news items for language and use of anti-Māori themes.
- ▶ Counting and increasing the proportion of items about Māori and te Tiriti in the total number of articles.
- ▶ Counting and increasing the proportion of opinion, analysis and commentary by Māori as a proportion of total opinion.
- ▶ Checking that sources provide an alternative when others use anti-Māori themes.
- ▶ Checking their use of explicitly and covert ethnic labelling of Māori and other racialised peoples, particularly in crime and financial reporting.
- ▶ Checking their identification of Pākehā by ethnicity.
- ▶ Surveying their Māori and non-Māori audiences about coverage and perceptions of change.
- ▶ Checking and expanding their use of functional te reo.

Engagement with hapū and iwi

As te Tiriti specifically recognises hapū through their leadership, best practice for Tiriti o Waitangi partner organisations is to nurture reciprocal relationships with Māori at this level, wherever they are based or working. Maata waka organisations are among those who may represent Māori who are not mana whenua in an area.

⁴¹ E.g., Waitemata DHB, 2003, *Māori values and concepts (tikanga)*.

⁴² November 30, 2020, *Stuff's charter: A brave new era for NZ's largest media company*.



Te Puni Kōkiri provides a directory of Māori organisations;⁴³ iwi websites also list their hapū, marae and geographical areas. The Treaty Resource Centre has questions for organisations to ask themselves when preparing for Te Tiriti relationships with Māori or hapū.⁴⁴

Hapū representatives are leaders of their people and have many other accountabilities. Their trust in mass news media is likely to be hugely damaged, and mass news organisations may need to prove their good intentions to establish positive relationships with Māori communities. News organisations may need to consider how news organisations can contribute to the aspirations of hapū, iwi and other Māori organisations, to build reciprocal relationships.

Journalism workforce and training

Pākehā-run news media are a Pākehā responsibility under te Tiriti – they are not the responsibility of Māori staff. Many mass media newsrooms have placed unrealistic expectations on Māori affairs reporters to understand and interpret everything about te ao Māori. Māori staff should not be assumed to have the same knowledge, histories and connections with other iwi that they have with their own. Managers need to recognise that Māori staff may also experience racism in Pākehā-dominated newsrooms, and are under pressure from Māori communities to balance negative media representations, making Pākehā-dominated newsrooms difficult workplaces.⁴⁵ As good employers, media producers can consider the pressures and multiple accountabilities facing Māori staff (whether they are the Māori affairs reporter or not) and support them appropriately.

Journalists have said that Pākehā dominance of news production has meant that Māori and other non-Pākehā stories were often blocked: “So [new staff] got news being written about [ethnic affairs], but then they still came through the same group of Pākehā 50-year-old men ... So it didn’t really work because of the nature of the institution”.⁴⁶ News organisations need to examine the values behind such results if this is still the case.

Every journalist, no matter their ethnicity, should be sufficiently well trained and informed to cover Māori stories as part of their everyday work, whatever their round. While such skill levels have been advocated since *Pou kōrero*, they are still far from widespread.⁴⁷

In-service training for te Tiriti-based news organisations

In-service training could include –

- ▶ For all staff: Recognising and avoiding the Pākehā norm, understanding Māori values and tikanga; avoiding anti-Māori themes; avoiding over-labelling of Māori and other racialised communities and under-labelling of Pākehā; colonial history; institutional racism; te reo Māori.
- ▶ For Māori: Cultural supervision; te reo, tikanga Māori and colonial history as needed; maintaining Māori hapū and community connections.

⁴³ Te Puni Kōkiri, [Te kāhui māngai, a directory of iwi and Māori organisations](#).

⁴⁴ TRC, 2008, [Preparing ourselves for Treaty relationship/s, Step 4: moving towards a committed relationship](#).

⁴⁵ Carol Archie, 2008, [The Treaty is personal](#), in Heather Came and Amy Zander (eds., 2015), *State of the Pākehā Nation: Collected Waitangi Day speeches and essays 2006-2015*, Network Waitangi Whangarei, 64-70.

⁴⁶ Kupu Taea, 2010, summary of journalist interviews, unpublished.

⁴⁷ Carol Archie, 2007, *Pou kōrero: A journalist's guide to Māori and current affairs*, NZ Journalism Training Organisation.

Journalism training

Basic training in journalism and communications could include –

- ▶ He Whakaputanga and te Tiriti, *Matike Mai*, UNDRIP and *He Puapua*.
- ▶ Racism, particularly institutional racism and anti-Māori themes.
- ▶ Understanding Māori and Pasifika values and other cultural diversity.
- ▶ Reflecting on how their own cultural identity affects their practice.

Intentions do not determine outcomes

Good intentions of management and staff in many government agencies have yet to result in equitable outcomes for Māori. The policies and processes of Pākehā-run organisations may seem neutral or objective from the inside, and it is hard for Pākehā to see their own culture and systems. It may take some time to understand and change how they work in mass news media and other sectors.

C SOCIETAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

News context

Mass news media have rarely provided historical or structural context for news stories involving Māori. In contrast, Māori-controlled news media have been found consistently to provide social, political and historical context for news stories.⁴⁸ For example, mass news media stories related to te Tiriti rarely quote the relevant Treaty article, leaving their audiences wondering how or why it relates to the story. News items about land and other Māori resources that do not mention the role of colonisation favour Pākehā and reflect a monocultural practice. Only a few COVID-19 news items mentioned structural factors, such as the age-based vaccination rollout, that predictably produced a lower vaccination rate among Māori.⁴⁹

News angles: The disruption to the norm

Mass news media have regularly constructed Māori or te Tiriti stories around a perceived disruption to a Pākehā norm. The decision about what is disruptive is an ideological one, made by news managers. For example, an occupation of Kaitaia Airport, by the hapū on whose land it lies, challenged a te Tiriti settlement requiring the airport land to be sold to a neighbouring iwi if the hapū failed to settle with the Crown within three years. The dubious settlement terms were not questioned; news items focused on the disruption to flights and framed the occupation as an issue of public order.⁵⁰ Stuff said about its newspapers: “From the first editions to now, when the Crown and Māori, or settlers and Māori, were experiencing conflict, the newspapers and

⁴⁸ Atakohu Julie Middleton, 2020, *Kia hiwa rā! The influence of tikanga and the language revitalisation agenda on the practices and perspectives of Māori journalists working in reo-Māori news*, PhD thesis, AUT; Sue Abel, 1997, *Shaping the news: Waitangi Day on television*, Auckland University Press; Joanna TeAwa, 1996, *The Maori perspective of the news*, Master's thesis, Massey University, Palmerston North.

⁴⁹ E.g., Michael Neilson, November 5, 2021, *Polls show little faith in jab target reached by end of year*, *NZ Herald*, page A5.

⁵⁰ Paul Henry, September 9, 2015, *How should NZ police deal with the Māori activists who have occupied Kaitaia airport?* *RadioLive*.

their editors would often take a stance against or heavily criticise Māori”.⁵¹

Persistent anti-Māori themes

Thirteen anti-Māori themes, originating with early colonisers and common in everyday Pākehā talk, are also used in news items about Māori and te Tiriti, with earlier examples.⁵² Familiarity with these themes will enable media workers to choose text and images that do not trigger these interpretations. While these themes appear in a minority of news items about Māori and te Tiriti, any use in news encourages their persistence, with major impacts on Māori and tauwi audiences. Recent examples are below in footnotes, and pages 21-22 suggest ways to shape news stories differently.

The **‘Treaty of Waitangi’** theme includes language such as “Treaty/grievance industry”, “grievance mode”, “gravy train”, “the past is the past”, and “undermine democracy” to enable users to claim that the Treaty is divisive and of historical interest only. The theme encourages Pākehā to assume that they alone can determine the worth and meaning of Te Tiriti.⁵³

Another major theme is **‘Pākehā as the norm’**, marked mainly by absences and silences about Pākehā ethnicity. First-person pronouns refer to Pākehā, while third-person pronouns distance Māori and other racialised communities. Proxies for Pākehā include “New Zealanders”, “the public”, “taxpayers”, “citizens”, and “national interest”.⁵⁴

‘Good Māori/Bad Māori’ is common in Pākehā talk that divides Māori into those the speaker sees as fitting in – the “good” – and those seen to be resisting, demanding change, or not achieving – the “bad”, while erring Pākehā are always depicted as “bad apples”. “Bad Māori” characteristics include: poor, sick, lazy, young, criminal, aggressive, protesting, bludgers, stupid, greedy and dishonest. In 2021, news coverage of COVID and vaccination regularly triggered the ‘bad Māori’ theme for audiences by presenting Māori as deficient, without context.⁵⁵

The **‘Violence and crime’** theme enables speakers to argue that Māori are inherently – culturally or genetically – criminal and violent.⁵⁶ The theme has evolved to associate Māori with gangs, thugs, home invasion, terrorism, corruption, nepotism, fraud and general dishonesty, and child abuse.⁵⁷ In news, the theme encourages tauwi to interpret the behaviour of Māori and

⁵¹ Carmen Parahi, December 4, 2020, [Our Truth, Tā Mātou Pono: Newsrooms need to reflect the voices of society not the bias of their news bosses](#), *Stuff*.

⁵² Kupu Taea, 2014, [Alternatives to anti-Māori themes in news media](#), Treaty Resource Centre.

⁵³ “If they [Māori] take the state’s money they take the state’s oversight. That’s part of the partnership the Treaty tries to create”, a statement that ignores the sovereignty guaranteed to Māori in te Tiriti.” Andrew Dickens, May 1, 2021. [Are Māori breaking the Treaty?](#) *Newstalk ZB*.

⁵⁴ “We just think that the way Nanaia is doing this, particularly in removing or disenfranchising the New Zealanders that would get to have their say on the issue, is wrong,” in Tumamao Harawira, February 5, 2021, [Tau Henare criticises Taxpayers’ Union petition opposing Māori wards](#), *Te Ao*; “That certainly isn’t how most middle New Zealanders, or in this case the Redneck-branded New Plymouth citizens, see themselves”, in Matt Rilko, May 10, 2016, Editorial: [Daring to disagree and racism can look the same](#), *Taranaki Daily News*.

⁵⁵ “Only 70 percent of Māori have received both doses”, in Matthew Hobbs & Lukas Marek, December 8, 2021, [The uninvited Christmas guest: is New Zealand prepared for Omicron’s inevitable arrival?](#) *RadioNZ*.

⁵⁶ Tim McCreanor & others, 2014, [The association of crime stories and Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand print media](#), *SITES New Series*, 11(1), 121-144.

⁵⁷ Giles Dexter, December 7, 2021, [Coronavirus: Northland’s iwi-led checkpoints prompts racism row after David Seymour calls those manning borders ‘thugs’](#), *Newshub*; the article provided an alternative view in the eleventh paragraph.

other racialised individuals as typical of their ethnic group,⁵⁸ helps conceal Pākehā crime and violence by ignoring Pākehā ethnicity, and shapes public perceptions of government policies.⁵⁹

The '**Privilege**' theme portrays Māori as having advantages or benefits that are unavailable to others. It is identified by phrases like “special treatment” and “race-based”, and triggered by named allocations for Māori, including parliamentary seats, local body Māori wards, sports teams, admission schemes, scholarships, fishing rights, and broadcasting arrangements. The theme assumes that “equality” is undercut by any form of perceived advantage.⁶⁰

The '**Māori resources**' theme is used to assert that potential or actual Māori control of major resources is a threat to tauwiwi. The theme assumes that such assets are Crown property, and that Māori control unreasonably blocks economic gain or development in a way that Pākehā ownership does not.⁶¹

The '**Māori culture**' theme supports assertions that all aspects of Māori culture, including te reo, are primitive, irrelevant and inadequate in the modern world, because users freeze the culture as they think it was at first European contact. It includes terms such as (Western) “technology”, “sexist”, “undemocratic”, “should be grateful” and “taniwha” (as ‘imaginary’ blocks to development).⁶²

The '**Financial management**' theme enables Māori as a group to be represented as financially inexperienced, corrupt or incompetent with money. Language that cues this theme links Maori organisations with fraud, inappropriate use of money, financial incompetence, nepotism, and internal conflict. Factual headlines about Maori organisations trigger this theme because Pākehā-run organisations that defraud or inappropriately use money are rarely identified as such.⁶³ The theme contributes to greater financial scrutiny of Māori organisations than similar Pākehā ones.⁶⁴

Several other anti-Māori themes are currently less widely used: the self-explanatory '**One people**' and '**Stirrers**' themes; the '**Māori inheritance**' theme, which is most commonly used in crime stories; the paired theme of (Pākehā) '**Ignorance and (Māori) hypersensitivity**'; and the '**Rights**' theme, which represents Māori rights as a threat to non-Māori.⁶⁵

⁵⁸ Susan Nemec, 16 December, 2019, [Māori TV changes migrants' views on Māori](#), University of Auckland.

⁵⁹ John Pratt, 2008, [When penal populism stops: Legitimacy, scandal and the power to punish in New Zealand](#), *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 41(3), 364–383.

⁶⁰ Cate Broughton, August 12, 2021, [National MP brands text invite to young Māori for Covid-19 job race-based](#), *Stuff*; the MP's comments were not refuted until the end of the article; Martin Van Beynen, May 16, 2020, [Medical school: Who gets in and why](#), *Stuff*.

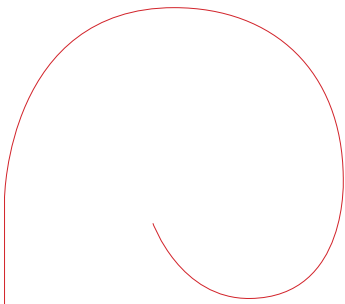
⁶¹ Zane Small, October 1, 2021, [Are councils being stripped of assets? Will Māori have veto? Three Waters explained](#), *Newshub*; Matthew Rosenberg, October 8, 2021, [Three waters: Minister Nanaia Mahuta defends Māori involvement after councillors criticise 'asset grab'](#), *NZ Herald*.

⁶² “National's leader Judith Collins suggested that her not being allowed to speak at the marae in Waitangi was sexist”, in *1News*, February 5, 2021, ['It was tikanga Māori' – political reporter says Judith Collins made a 'misstep' over Waitangi speaking rights claim](#); “You could hear the sniggering all around the globe”, in *NZ Herald*, 9 November, 2002, [Transit and the taniwha](#).

⁶³ Topa O'Brien, April 28, 2021, [Police refer Māori Party to Serious Fraud Office over donations](#), *Newshub*.

⁶⁴ Heather Came, 2013, [Beginning to address institutional racism within the public health sector: Insights from a provider survey](#), *Keeping up to date*, 38, Health Promotion Forum.

⁶⁵ Angela Moewaka Barnes & others, 2012, [Anti-Māori themes in New Zealand journalism: toward alternative practice](#), *Pacific Journalism Review*, 18(1), 195-216.



How te Tiriti-based news media could say it differently

Te Tiriti-based news workers could consider –

- ▶ Matching sources who use these themes with Māori sources familiar with te Tiriti, and quoting Māori sources in the first three paragraphs.
- ▶ Using language that challenges and avoids these themes.
- ▶ Talking inclusively, making it clear that Māori and other groups facing racism are included in “we”, “Kiwis”, “taxpayers” and “New Zealanders”.
- ▶ Providing relevant quotes from te Tiriti, and approaching it as a living agreement that recognises Māori rights as tangata whenua, including having an equal say in te Tiriti interpretation.
- ▶ Reporting on changes in government policy and community initiatives that respond to the understanding that Māori did not cede sovereignty.
- ▶ Quoting evidence of institutional racism in Pākehā systems involved in the topic.
- ▶ Putting more resources into investigating institutional racism.⁶⁶
- ▶ Approaching te Tiriti issues from the viewpoint of Māori and tauwiwi working together to decolonise Aotearoa/New Zealand.
- ▶ Investigating implementations of te Tiriti as a way to a just future for all New Zealanders.
- ▶ Identifying structural inequalities that could be changed to improve outcomes for Māori and others who face racism.
- ▶ Putting more resources into investigating insider trading, investor fraud, and other white collar crime.
- ▶ Monitoring their own crime and financial mismanagement stories to ensure that they do not misrepresent Māori.
- ▶ Acknowledging some Pākehā as having vested interests, rather than being universal or neutral (‘Pākehā MP’, ‘Pākehā lobby group’).
- ▶ Acknowledging that Māori are diverse, like any group, and that labels of ‘Good’ and ‘Bad’ reflect Pākehā vested interests.
- ▶ Routinely exploring Māori innovations in technology, IT, conservation, business and other fields.
- ▶ Providing contexts for named allocations for Māori; for example, the settler government established Māori seats to prevent Māori from democratically dominating Parliament.
- ▶ Reporting how kaitiakitanga, mauri and other Māori concepts of resource management are applied in Māori or jointly controlled resources and initiatives.
- ▶ Reporting the return of resources to their original guardians as a significant achievement that everyone can be proud of, enhancing social cohesion and stability.
- ▶ Routinely reporting activities of Māori-owned and iwi businesses.
- ▶ Reporting on the impact of Māori values in Māori organisations and businesses.
- ▶ Reporting stories arising from the Waitangi Tribunal.
- ▶ Reporting the multi-generational planning of Maori organisations.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ E.g., Eugene Bingham, Felipe Rodrigues & Chris McKeen, 2020, *Unwarranted*, *Stuff*.

⁶⁷ E.g., Maria Slade, 2012, *Aohanga Inc’s 100-year plan a valuable lesson*, *Stuff*.

- ▶ Monitoring stories about Māori for features that would not occur in a story about a Pākehā community organisation.
- ▶ Identifying Māori organisations by name, rather than using Māori as a catch-all adjective.
- ▶ Naming gangs, including identifying Pākehā gangs by ethnicity, rather than allowing audiences to assume that all gangs are Māori or Pasifika.
- ▶ Report on ways in which Maori culture is evolving and adapting, such as changes in tikanga, new words in te reo, and new applications of core concepts.

Imperative: Do no further harm

Mass media workers, media organisations and media law downplay the implications of negative constructions of Māori. For example, while the 2017 decision of the Human Rights Tribunal recognised controversial and stigmatising editorial cartoons by Nesbit as offensive, the impact on Māori of those depictions was irrelevant to media law.⁶⁸

Research indicates how deeply Māori are affected by such mass news representations. Repeated anti-Māori themes and labels trigger grief, shame, anger and sadness among Māori, affecting them individually and as a group.⁶⁹ Māori in this study said that everyday experiences of racism, such as pointed surveillance in shops and racist statements from workmates, were strongly linked to stigmatising depictions in mass news media.

A national survey of more than 2,000 Māori around the country in 2019 found that mention of high-profile news stories, such as negative events or court cases, triggered anxiety that they would be about Māori.⁷⁰ Most of those surveyed thought that mass news portrayed Māori negatively often or all the time, and more than 90 percent of participants felt angry, belittled, anxious or ashamed about such negative reporting.

Māori comments about such stories on news organisations' Facebook pages also indicate the distress and pain of negative depictions. These effects were illustrated by comments on racial stereotyping that led to a review of TVNZ programme *Police Ten 7*.⁷¹

The persistence of such depictions has led many Māori to internalise those stereotypes, "believing them to be true and justifiable and then acting on that internalisation".⁷² For some, such internalised stereotypes become self-fulfilling prophecies. Research participants also perceived that persistent undermining of Māori culture reinforced a sense of Māori inferiority, creating pain and shame.

Stigmatising representations of Māori and people of colour excite waves of contempt, hostility, abhorrence, and rejection of Māori collectively in comments on news organisations' Facebook pages. The most vicious and


⁶⁸ NZ Human Rights Review Tribunal, 2017, *Wall v Fairfax New Zealand Ltd* [2017] NZHRRT 17.

⁶⁹ Angela Moewaka Barnes & others, 2013, *Māori experiences and responses to racism in Aotearoa New Zealand*, *Mai Journal*, 2(2), 63-77.

⁷⁰ Cheryl Smith & others, 2021, *Whakatika: A survey of Māori experiences of racism*, Te Atawhai o Te Ao Charitable Trust, Whanganui.

⁷¹ Justin Latif, September 30, 2021, *How one tweet changed the future of Police Ten 7*, *The Spinoff*.

⁷² Angela Moewaka Barnes & others, 2013, *Māori experiences and responses to racism in Aotearoa New Zealand*, *MAI Journal*, 2(2), p. 67.



obscene of these are automatically blocked.⁷³ Research from the Tauīwi Tautoko programme, which challenges racism in news Facebook comments, indicated that such contemptuous comments were made about news items including crime and justice; te reo initiatives; the Christchurch mosque massacres; White supremacy; immigrants and refugees; and the education system.⁷⁴ News items quoting sources who used racist themes have incited similar online hostility.⁷⁵ This routine triggering of online hostility by news items enables Tauīwi Tautoko volunteers to predict which breaking news stories will require their intervention.

These harms have created deep distrust of mass news media among many Māori, which will not change quickly.

How te Tiriti-based news media could say it differently

Te Tiriti-based news workers could consider –

- ▶ Replacing the term ‘race’ (the concept of biologically distinct races has been scientifically discredited since 1950)⁷⁶ in news workers’ own writing, teasers and headlines, with ‘racism’,⁷⁷ ‘ethnicity’, ‘culture’ or ‘Treaty-based’, as use of ‘race’ fails to acknowledge the Treaty rights of Māori.
- ▶ Matching sources who use ‘race’ or ‘race-based’ with Māori sources knowledgeable about te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- ▶ Replacing the catch-all ‘Māori’ with the name of the hapū, iwi or organisation under discussion, because it depicts Māori as homogenous rather than as diverse.⁷⁸

D NEWS MEDIA PRACTICES - WORLDVIEWS, VALUES AND NORMS

Some of the standard processes of mass media journalism, such as definitions of newsworthiness, audiences, and use of sources and imagery in stories, can result in Māori being depicted in restricted or stigmatising ways that emphasise or support a colonial status quo.

Mass news media and objectivity

The ideology of objectivity plays a central role in journalism, separating news writing from features, editorials, commentary and analysis. This ideology assumes that experienced journalists can be disinterested or neutral, and step outside the network of relationships, obligations and understandings they have as people and news workers. However, it has become increasingly clear that neutrality is impossible. Mass media news items overwhelmingly

⁷³ Jenny Rankine, 2020, *Affective combat against online racism about Maori*, PhD thesis, University of Auckland; Claire Fitzpatrick, 2020, *Tauīwi Tautoko: Data analysis of August engagements*, ActionStation, Wellington.

⁷⁴ Judith Sligo, 2019, *Report on online racism: From ActionStation’s Tauīwi Tautoko project*. ActionStation, Wellington.

⁷⁵ Caren August & James Liu, 2015, *The medium shapes the message: McLuhan and Grice revisited in race talk online*, *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 25(3), 232-248; Clemence Due, 2011, *‘Aussie humour’ or racism? Hey Hey It’s Saturday and the denial of racism in online responses to news media articles*, *Platform*, 3(1), 36-53.

⁷⁶ UNESCO, 1951, *United Nations Economics and Security Council 1951 Statement by experts on problems of race*. *American Anthropologist*, 53(1), 142-45.

⁷⁷ E.g., Giles Dexter, December 7, 2021, *Coronavirus: Northland’s iwi-led checkpoints prompts racism row after David Seymour calls those manning borders ‘thugs’*, *Newshub*.

⁷⁸ Carol Archie, 2007, *Pou kōrerō: A journalist’s guide to Māori and current affairs*, NZ Journalism Training Organisation.

reproduce the worldview of the society's culture-defining group.⁷⁹ A different view is that there is no single truth and therefore no single 'bias' – there are merely competing accounts of our social worlds, with some advocated by more powerful groups than others.⁸⁰ As the Stuff apology reported, mass news media have a history of supporting colonial and Pākehā accounts, and trivialising or sidelining Māori accounts.⁸¹

Defining the audience

News is partly determined by news managers' perceptions of who makes up their audience. The contrast in construction between mass and Māori-controlled media shows that mass news media present Māori issues and te Tiriti to a Pākehā audience, rather than to one of Māori and tauwiwi. This does not seem to have changed since 2008 when journalist Carol Archie said that “mainstream news is ... dominated by Pākehā and rarely serves anyone else's needs”.⁸²

Māori Television uses the slogan “mā rātou, mā mātou, mā koutou, mā tātou” (for them, for us, for you, for everyone).⁸³ Māori filmmaker Barry Barclay's concept of indigenous cinema as a communications marae, where viewers see a diverse range of “our people talking in their own way to their own people”, applies to Māori Television.⁸⁴ The broadcaster's non-Māori audience has long been larger than its Māori audience, with 14 percent of tauwiwi viewing weekly in 2019.⁸⁵ This tauwiwi news audience values the broadcaster's lens and its “easily available window into te ao Māori”.⁸⁶

Defining news

News values have been found to be similar in Aotearoa New Zealand to those in 68 other countries.⁸⁷ Research with journalists has identified news values such as timeliness, consequence; relevance; proximity (cultural or geographic); conflict; human interest; novelty (rarity or oddity); celebrity or elite involvement; negativity (bad news); good news; and threshold (the number of people impacted).⁸⁸ The difference between mass and Māori-controlled news media is in how such news values are interpreted.⁸⁹ Relevance, good news about Māori, and threshold are important for Māori Television.⁹⁰

⁷⁹ Stuart Allan, 2004, *News Culture*, 3rd edn, Open University Press, UK.

⁸⁰ Cynthia Vinney, *Social constructionism definition and examples*, *ThoughtCo*.

⁸¹ Carmen Parahi, December 4, 2020, [Our Truth, Tā Mātou Pono: Newsrooms need to reflect the voices of society not the bias of their news bosses](#), *Stuff*.

⁸² Carol Archie, 2008, 'The Treaty is personal', in Heather Came and Amy Zander (eds., 2015), *State of the Pākehā Nation: Collected Waitangi Day speeches and essays 2006-2015*, Network Waitangi Whangarei, p. 66.

⁸³ [Māori Television on Twitter](#).

⁸⁴ Barry Barclay, 1990, *Our own image*. Longman Paul, p. 77.

⁸⁵ Kantar, 2019, *Audience survey 2019*, Te Māngai Pāho.

⁸⁶ Jo Smith, 2016, *Māori Television: The first ten years*, Auckland University Press, p. 108; Susan Nemeč, 2021, [Can an indigenous media model enrol wider non-Indigenous audiences in alternative perspectives to the 'mainstream'](#), *Ethnicities*, 1–31.

⁸⁷ Murray Masterton, 1990, *What makes news news? An international study of the criteria of newsworthiness*, PhD thesis, Flinders University, South Australia.

⁸⁸ Johan Galtung & Mari Ruge, 1965, [The structure of foreign news](#), *Journal of Peace Research*, 2(1), 64–90; Tony Harcup & Deirdre O'Neill, 2016, [What is news? News values revisited \(again\)](#), *Journalism Studies*, 18(12), 1470–1488.

⁸⁹ Atakohu Julie Middleton, 2020, [Kia hiwa rā! The influence of tikanga and the language revitalisation agenda on the practices and perspectives of Māori journalists working in reo-Māori news](#). PhD thesis, AUT.

⁹⁰ Middleton, above, & Elizabeth Burrows, 2018, [Indigenous media producers' perspectives on objectivity, balancing community responsibilities and journalistic obligations](#), *Media, Culture & Society*, 40(8) 1117–1134.



News value: Timeliness

Time is viewed very differently in Māori and Pākehā cultures. For Pākehā, time is behind them and the unwritten future is ahead of them; Māori “move into the future with past events, the dead, the living, legendary cultural heroes and the gods ever-present”.⁹¹ A reflection of this is a tikanga of Māori oratory, which acknowledges the dead before talking about the business of any hui; as a result, if someone notable has died, that item tends to lead Māori news bulletins.

News value: Conflict

Mass news items about Māori often focus on conflict – what *Stuff* called the “Western adversarial model, the if-it-bleeds-it-leads, sensationalist brand of news”.⁹² The routine representation of Māori as in conflict with non-Māori reinforces the picture of Māori as disruptive. Māori and other indigenous-controlled news media have consistently tended to produce a much lower proportion of stories about two-sided conflict, preferring a hui model where people talked to some consensus.⁹³ When Maori news did feature such conflict, they focussed on the dilemmas it posed for Māori, and often enabled sources to suggest solutions.⁹⁴

Sources and commentary

There is no recent research on the use of Māori sources in mass news media. However, earlier studies show a concerning dominance of government and MP sources compared with those from iwi and hapū.⁹⁵ In a long-running land occupation, researchers concluded that “it is virtually impossible for Māori interests to gain equal voice in the media according to their Treaty partner status”.⁹⁶ The number and proportion of Māori commentators in mass news media nationally is also low.

Government agencies as sources

Mass news media pride themselves on scrutinising and holding to account “the power blocs of society”.⁹⁷ However, the racism and colonialism of government systems is a major gap in this scrutiny. While mass news media report findings by others of racism in state agencies, their own investigations of such racism, such as *Stuff*’s investigation of police searches without warrants,⁹⁸ remain rare. News articles do not routinely show state agency responding to media questions about their inequities for Māori and other

⁹¹ Atakohu Julie Middleton, 2020, *Kia hiwa rā! The influence of tikanga and the language revitalisation agenda on the practices and perspectives of Māori journalists working in reo-Māori news*, PhD thesis, AUT, p. 44, summarising Ranginui Walker, September 24, 1983, A lot to learn about time, *NZ Listener*, 59-60.

⁹² Carmen Parahi, December 5, 2020, *Our truth, Tā mātou pono: Newsrooms need to reflect the voices of society not the bias of their news bosses*, *Stuff*.

⁹³ Carol Archie, 2007, *Pou kōrerō: A journalist’s guide to Māori and current affairs*, NZ Journalism Training Organisation; Judy McGregor & Margie Comrie, 1995, Balance and fairness in broadcasting news (1985-1994), Broadcasting Standards Authority & New Zealand on Air; Philip Tremewan, 1986, *Objectivity or Pakeha bias?* *Tu Tangata*, 33, p. 42.

⁹⁴ Middleton, above; Sue Abel, 1997, *Shaping the news: Waitangi Day on television*, Auckland University Press.

⁹⁵ Kupu Taea, 2005, *Media and Te Tiriti o Waitangi 2004*; Jenny Rankine & others, 2014, *Content and source analysis of newspaper items about Māori issues: Silencing the ‘natives’ in Aotearoa?* *Pacific Journalism Review*, 20(1), 213-233.

⁹⁶ Kelly Barclay & James Liu, 2003, *Who gets voice? (Re)presentation of bicultural relations in New Zealand print media*, *NZ Journal of Psychology*, 32, p. 9.

⁹⁷ Jim Tucker (ed.), 2001, *Intro: A beginner’s guide to professional news journalism*. NZ Journalists Training Organisation, p. 209.

⁹⁸ Eugene Bingham, Felipe Rodrigues & Chris McKeen, *Unwarranted*, *Stuff*.

communities facing racism, which indicates that such questions were not asked. They only rarely include evidence of racism by such agencies in news items about the agencies' work. As Stuff said of its articles about the police's so-called anti-terror raids in 2007: "It's one example of many where we failed to question the state on behalf of Māori, as we do for Pākehā".⁹⁹

Instead, journalists usually quote state agencies as if they were neutral, trustworthy and disinterested sources about their treatment of Māori and other racialised communities. For example, no Māori sources were quoted in a story about how a law giving police discretion in charging people for drug possession resulted in a higher proportion of Māori being charged, thus enabling a group of non-Māori to discuss Māori crime.¹⁰⁰ These sourcing practices, combined with other news practices listed above, mean that mass news media generally reinforce the institutional racism of monocultural, one-size-fits-all policies and procedures.¹⁰¹

How te Tiriti-based news media could say it differently

Te Tiriti-based news workers could consider –

- ▶ Expanding the set of regular sources to include authoritative Māori and tauwiwi decolonisation advocates.
- ▶ Expanding the set of Māori commentators and columnists to include those familiar with te Tiriti and decolonisation, as well as others able to express diverse Māori viewpoints
- ▶ Citing Māori viewpoints on Treaty or Māori issues in the first two paragraphs.

Ethnic labelling

Trainee journalists are explicitly discouraged from reporting the ethnicity of suspects or people charged with crime "unless it is relevant or to be used in a description".¹⁰² Similarly, journalism ethics require news media to avoid "unnecessary emphasis on ... race".¹⁰³ However, Tucker himself and earlier studies found that mass news media have persistently explicitly or implicitly identified the ethnicity of Māori or Pasifika people suspected or charged with an offence, while omitting the ethnicity of suspected or charged Pākehā.¹⁰⁴ Police have referred to 'part-Māori' suspects, but never 'part-Pākehā'.¹⁰⁵ There is no recent evidence about whether this labelling history has continued or changed.

⁹⁹ Carmen Parahi, December 5, 2020, [Our truth, Tā mātou pono: Newsrooms need to reflect the voices of society not the bias of their news bosses](#), *Stuff*.

¹⁰⁰ Derek Cheng, November 8, 2021, [Drug prosecutions: Police say prior offending, not race, main factor in decision to charge](#), *NZ Herald*.

¹⁰¹ Giovanni Tiso, 2017, [Speaking power to the truth: The political assassination of Metiria Turei](#), *Pantograph Punch*.

¹⁰² Jim Tucker, 2001, *Intro: A beginners' guide to professional news journalism*. NZ Journalists Training Organisation, p. 243.

¹⁰³ E tū Union, *Journalist Code of Ethics*, (b).

¹⁰⁴ Simone Bull, 2017, [Crime and Māori in the media](#), in Antje Deckert & Rick Sarre (eds), *The Palgrave handbook of Australian and New Zealand criminology, crime and justice*, Palgrave Macmillan, 737-48; Murray Riches, 2014, [Constructing and reconstructing criminality in Aotearoa/New Zealand: Dominant media discourses on crime and criminality and their impact on offenders' identities and rehabilitation efforts](#), Master's thesis, University of Waikato; Tim McCreanor & others, 2014, [The association of crime stories and Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand print media](#), *Sites*, 11(1), 121-144.

¹⁰⁵ Kupu Taea, 2008, [Submission to the review of crime and criminal justice statistics](#).



How te Tiriti-based news media could say it differently

Te Tiriti-based news workers could consider –

- ▶ Being consistent about ethnic identification in all stories about offenders sought by police.
- ▶ Identifying Pākehā, for example, after a death or a conviction.
- ▶ Replacing the use of “Caucasian” with Pākehā.
- ▶ Monitoring their organisation’s use of explicit or implicit (such as Māori job titles or organisational names) ethnic labels over time.

Accuracy, balance and fairness

Accuracy, balance and fairness are considered only for single news items, and are not applied to the construction of stories about an issue over time. It is such consistent patterns in representing Māori, Māori issues and te Tiriti that create inaccuracies, imbalance, unfairness and stigmatisation.

One example is mass news media’s reiteration of Māori and Pasifika ‘disadvantage’ (Pākehā advantage remains unmentioned) in social status and health, without mentioning structural causes, which creates ongoing inaccuracies. While understanding preventable inequities in poor health and social status is essential for creating a more equal society, such representations have constructed a public perception that Māori and Pasifika peoples make up the bulk of those who are unvaccinated, poor, smokers, suffering from particular diseases, or more likely to die of preventable causes.¹⁰⁶ This inaccuracy is also prominent in child abuse, which news media have so often associated with Māori whānau that it is now commonly seen as a Māori issue.¹⁰⁷

In almost all cases, this pattern of representation is inaccurate, because Pākehā make up the majority of people living in poverty; of people unvaccinated against COVID-19,¹⁰⁸ as well as those against vaccination; of smokers; of those suffering from diabetes and other diseases; and almost double those whose children are abused.¹⁰⁹

This pattern of reporting Māori and Pasifika disadvantage, without mentioning the systems which create the disadvantage, has two major impacts. Firstly, it unfairly shifts the responsibility for the poor health or poverty to the people who suffer it, which is stigmatising and creates pain and internalised shame for Māori and Pasifika peoples. Secondly, it hinders Pākehā attempts to combat issues, like child abuse, that are not seen as Pākehā problems.

Use of te reo

Mass news media, despite being major language users, have been slow to use te reo, resistant to using macrons in written te reo, and slower still to promote the normalisation of this threatened language in its homeland. They have often relied on the knowledge and energy of te reo-speaking Māori journalists

¹⁰⁶ Darrin Hodgetts, Brigette Masters-Awatere & Neville Roberston, 2004, [Media coverage of ‘Decades of Disparity’ in ethnic mortality in Aotearoa](#), *Journal of Community Applied Social Psychology*, 14(6), 455-472.

¹⁰⁷ Elena Maydell, 2018, [‘It just seemed like your normal domestic violence’: Ethnic stereotypes in print media coverage of child abuse in New Zealand](#), *Media, Culture & Society*, 40(5), 707-724.

¹⁰⁸ Maxine Jacobs, November 6, 2021, [Covid-19: More Pākehā are unvaccinated but Māori are being stigmatised](#), *Stuff*.

¹⁰⁹ Bénédicte Rouland & others, 2019, [Ethnic disparities in childhood prevalence of maltreatment: Evidence from a New Zealand birth cohort](#), *American Journal of Public Health*, 109(9), 1255-1257.

for events such as Māori Language Week, rather than developing a coherent plan and upskilling tauwi journalists.¹¹⁰

A brief skim of mass print, radio and television news in late 2021 indicated a more positive trend. Te reo kupu (words) are now more common in text and audio reporting than found in earlier research,¹¹¹ which is likely to create incremental growth in vocabulary among audiences rather than fluency in its use. For example, in the weather forecast on Newshub *Live at 6* some effort had gone into pronouncing Māori place names correctly, and our two main islands were named as Te Ika a Maui and Te Wai Pounamu.¹¹² However, weather terms such as rain, wind, snow, clouds, the compass points, and the dynamics of weather changes were all in English, and contrast sharply with equivalent slots on Māori Television. News bulletins on TV1 promoted more phrases that mixed te reo and English, such as ‘te whai ake nei...’ partnered with ‘next up...’, and ‘after the break...’ coupled with ‘muri whaka taenga...’.

The *Stuff* website section Pou Tiaki in late 2021 included explorations of te reo grammar for beginning speakers. The *NZ Herald* regularly listed iwi affiliations of Māori sources and writers, and the *Sunday Star-Times* used Māori names untranslated in features and columns, and macrons in headings. The *NZ Herald* also positively reported Vodafone New Zealand’s te reo farewell to a customer unhappy with its use of ‘Aotearoa’.¹¹³

How te Tiriti-based news media could increase use of te reo and respect for tikanga

News workers and organisations could consider –

- ▶ Always using macrons in printed te reo words and captions (now standard in some print media).
- ▶ Being aware of iwi dialects and differences in spelling, and using them as requested or after consultation.
- ▶ Regularly using common kupu in news writing, translating only those that are uncommon in Kiwi English.
- ▶ Routinely promoting functional te reo Māori – verbs, phrases, sentences, and usages such as whakatauki as well as nouns – which encourage audiences to increase everyday use of te reo, not only their vocabulary.
- ▶ Recognising that for Māori learning te reo is a right, and for tauwi it is a privilege.
- ▶ Supporting te reo language learning opportunities for Māori.
- ▶ Practising and advocating sensitivity to the whakamā felt by Māori whose whānau histories of colonisation have denied them use of their language.
- ▶ Promoting understanding of tikanga that arise in news stories – for example, kawa for marae, hui, and pōwhiri; concepts of tapu and noa;¹¹⁴ rāhui, mauri and other concepts supporting kaitiakitanga.

¹¹⁰ Kupu Taea, 2010, Summary of journalist interviews, unpublished.

¹¹¹ Jenny Rankine & others, 2009, *Intentional use of te reo Māori in New Zealand newspapers in 2007*, *Pacific Journalism Review*, 15(2), 174-190.

¹¹² E.g., Newshub Live, 6.45pm, December 2, 2021.

¹¹³ Damian Venuto, March 2, 2021, *Vodafone CEO’s three-word takedown of customer’s te reo Māori complaint*, *NZ Herald*.

¹¹⁴ See Ani Mikaere, 2017, *The balance destroyed*, Te Wānanga-o-Raukawa, about the impact of colonisation on meanings of tapu and noa.



Imagery

Imagery is powerful. It is not only a form of communication but influences how a media item is understood. The consistent use of limited and stereotypical Māori imagery relays specific meanings that can reinforce negative understandings of Māori. For example, the Māori male warrior image promotes Māori men, collectively, as inherently confrontational. Care is required when selecting images in news media, to move beyond narrow and simplistic depictions.

Final words

Māori-controlled media will continue their powerful role well into the future to meet Māori needs. The Stuff apology shows that mass news media can change and develop in line with the still current and aspirational vision of *Pou Kōrero* from 2007. “Our future media ... will be neither specifically Māori nor Pākehā in its approach, but take the best of both and create a new, more expansive form of journalism – one that includes and inspires everyone living in this country.”¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ Carol Archie, 2007, *Pou kōrero: A journalists' guide to Māori and current affairs*, NZ Journalists Training Organisation, p. 150.