

EPILOGUE

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A new dawn is rising in the Pacific. The sun has set. The Pacific leadership which guided us through and into the new millennium is changing.

Ki te Arikinui ka heke ngā tini roimata o te wā mōu. Moe mai i roto i ngā ringaringa o ngā atua me to tupuna. Moe mai rā. Tū mai Kingi Tuheitia, hei ārahi i to iwi. Tū mai rā.

Ki he 'ene afio, Taufā'ahau Tupou IV... Ha'ele atu aa ki he taloni 'o hotau Tamai, kou lava e maa'imoa 'a e lulu tahi 'oku ma'u mo'ui ai si'i fanau paea 'i muli 'o Vava'u mo Tonga lahi, pea 'inasi ai pe kimautolu e lau'one 'o e 'otu Ha'apai.

And with the emergence of a new dawn we welcome this special edition journal and the emergence of new writers as well as more experienced academics. From the beginning of contact, our Pacific ancestors recognised the opportunities and the risks that western civilisation offered. King Taufā'ahau Tupou I of Tonga seized on the wise mentoring ability of good missionaries to guide his nation through to the 20th century with heavy investments in western type education and the nurturing of Christianity. In the context of this journal, it is with gratefulness that I acknowledge the goodwill and supportive work of the experienced researchers and original members of the School of Education Pacific Research in Education Group, Jane Strachan, Nesta Devine, Margaret Paiti and Sandy Morrison and others who organised symposiums and mentored Pacific researchers and educators through to presenting their work, leading to the production of this journal. I also want to acknowledge the editors, Toni Bruce, Rosemary De Luca and Jane Strachan for their dedication and their generosity in preparing the papers for this journal.

As my colleague Jane Strachan rightfully noted, life for Pacific peoples abounds with a multitude of often competing obligations. Being of service to families and community for the wellbeing of the collective leaves little time to give attention to writing and the commitment of thoughts to paper. It is also important to be aware that works by Pacific researchers such as those included in this special issue, while popular amongst those who seek to understand and learn more about the "*Pacific peoples*", in fact only appeals to a very limited audience of Pacific peoples. As for the majority, their priorities are elsewhere. To sit and read through a collection of academic essays and to pontificate on the underlying causes and reasons for lower rates of achievement and participation in a New Zealand schooling and other systems is a privilege that few others enjoy. Rather, engaging with their communities through Talanoa and processes of collective sharing and where space is provided for participants to raise their own questions, is where the learning and insights become a true expression of shared wisdom. This totality of

experience cannot be captured in traditional research approaches and written academic works.

Western type education and research assume universality of understandings, yet it is vital that researchers and educators of Pacific participants understand Pacific cultures. There are protocols and knowing to be observed that are intrinsic and assumed by Pacific participants and are expected to make up the eventual findings of research, curriculum and pedagogies. If these are not recognised and added to the sum of the total, then the concerns of possible perpetuation of colonisation as raised by Jane Strachan's colleagues in her editorial (with regards to her work in Melanesia) may result.

Epeli Hau'ofa, in his usual poetic style, alludes to the assumed knowing that is often not spoken about in education or research in my conversation with him on 14 June 2004 about the following part of a poem he wrote in 1983:

... In the twilight we sit
 Drinking from kawa from the bowl between us.
 Who we are we know and need not say
 For the soul we share comes from the vaihi ...

Despite these previous comments, I do detect a change in the climate towards Pacific peoples. Through the realisations of the sacrifices of our parents and grandparents who migrated to our new home of Aotearoa, our new Pacific youth have made their positive marks in many facets of New Zealand life. Consequently, positive change is emerging which is more receptive to multiple practises and methodologies and a change which sees a growing inclusion of Pacific ways in mainstream systems. This is where the value of this special issue lies.

All these articles are reflective of pride in being either Maori or Pacific peoples. Their hopes, dreams and visions, overcoming the challenges which have prevented their successes from being even greater than what they are now, are epitomised in this special edition. In 2001, I wrote a paper [*'Our people left their islands, people and culture to educate their children in New Zealand'*] which spoke of the strong desire of Pacific peoples to give their children the best possible education. Despite the lack of knowledge about how the New Zealand schooling system worked, as Fran Cahill stated in her paper, they still wanted and wished only the best for their children. They still do! The articles reflect these wide ranging circumstances and how they have responded to the challenges they have faced. As our ancestors have done before us, we will continue to seek new lands in new ways, in this great ocean and with the support of our academic and research fanau, we are prepared to take risks like those who have gone before us.

I am humbled that Fred Kana and Karaitiana Tamatea have allowed their work to be published in this special issue not only for their depth of insight but also for the shared ancestry and the shared stories which join us as peoples of the Pacific. Without a doubt we have benefited and learnt from the Māori experience. Their sustained political actions and show of continued strength of character have been a beacon of light. Ki te tangata whenua, nōu koutou tēnei whenua, nōu koutou te mana. Tēnā koutou katoa.

In the sixth year of the new millennium we pay homage to those who prepared us to meet the challenges in this time and space. We know that we have been prepared well. Like our new leaders, King Tuheitia and King Siaosi Tupou V, we turn to the future satisfied in the knowledge that our cultures are very much intact, that our learnings, while challenging, are going to benefit those that follow us. We, and those whom we look to, to support us at different stages, all have our part to play in contributing to the ongoing learning and education of our people throughout the generations. This journal is testament to that.

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