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**Different Coloured Tears:  
Bicultural Bereavement Perspectives**

A thesis  
submitted in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree  
of  
**Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology**  
at  
**The University of Waikato**  
by  
**KIRI EDGE**



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*Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato*

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## **Abstract**

The research explored the pathways that Māori and Pākehā bicultural whānau follow in mourning, grieving and moving on through life, in response to the death of a significant loved one. Of specific interest were sites of conflict, processes of negotiation and pathways to resolution occurring across cultural worlds whilst deciding on, organising and enacting tangi/funeral rituals for the deceased. These explorations were founded on the Pou Toko Manawa of the framework offered by Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi and related principles. The research was conducted across two distinct yet inter-related studies. The first study explored the bereavement experiences of individuals belonging to Māori and Pākehā bicultural families, offering insights related to the emergence of conflict, negotiation and pathways to resolution. The insights gathered gave rise to further explorations concerned with the perspectives of experts who facilitate, mediate and enact bereavement processes. As the second study, the expert perspectives revealed supports, constraints and legalities that emerge in bicultural bereavement processes. The culmination of the two studies engender a multi-faceted understanding of key concepts, issues and processes in bicultural bereavement, and the cultural and socio-political landscapes within which these events are located. In considering the research findings within the theoretical framework of Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi, the research offers a unique bicultural and New Zealand specific understanding of conflict and resolution.

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## Māori Glossary

The translations in this glossary were sought from a number of sources, including the contributor, online and hard copy dictionaries. Many of these are complex and warrant much deeper reading to fully appreciate their meaning and usage. The words and meanings are presented specific to the context and usage as they appear within the research. This includes words, dialects and meanings used by the contributors, which represent their whānau, hapū and Iwi context(s). Although *Iwi* is commonly presented in lowercase, I have opted for capitalisation throughout which is more reflective of their status as significant collectives of people.

Āe	To agree, give assent, “Yes”
Aotearoa	New Zealand, “Land of the Long White Cloud”
Ahi kaa/kā	Burning fires of occupation, strong relationships to tribal homelands
Ahi mātao	Cooling fires of dwindling occupation, absence of relationships to tribal homelands
Ahi tahutahu	Intermittent fires of occupation, rekindling of relationships to tribal homelands
Aroha	Love, concern, compassion
Arona	Name used as symbolic reference to the full moon
E tū	Stand up, engage, fight
Haere Mai	Greeting, welcome, come here
Haka	Rhythmic dance chanted with actions; posture dance
Hākari	Feast, banquet, celebration
Hapū	Sub-tribe(s) that share common ancestor; Pregnant
Harirū	To shake hands, transliteration “How do you do?”



Hau kāinga	Winds of home, home people, those still in residence in tribal homelands
Hawaiki	The legendary home place from which the Māori peoples migrated to Aotearoa/New Zealand
Hoa	Friend
Hongi	The ceremonial pressing of noses and forehead (signifying unity in the mingling of one another's breath)
Hui	To gather, congregate, assemble, meet
Hura kōhatu	Ritual unveiling of gravesite headstone, often held on the anniversary of the death
Iwi	Confederation of sub-tribes, often refers to group of people who descend from a common ancestor and occupy a specific territory
Kākahu	Traditional garment, cloak
Kai hākari	Final ceremonial feast
Kaikaranga	Caller, the woman who has the role of making the ceremonial welcoming call, also “reo karanga”
Kaimoana	Shellfish, seafood
Kaitiaki	Caretaker, guardian
Kapa haka	Māori cultural performance or performing group
Karakia	Incantation, prayer
Karanga	Ceremonial chant of summons, welcome or introduction performed by women
Kaumātua	Cultural elder, person of status
Kaupapa	Topic, policy, plan, issue

Kaupapa Māori	Māori approach, topic, philosophy, ideology, strategy
Kawa	Marae protocol – customs specific to each marae
Kāwanatanga	Governance, governorship
Kawe mate	Ceremonial carrying of the deceased's spirit to significant location(s)
Kēhua	Ghost, spirit
Kīngitanga	King Movement
Kirimate	The near relative of a deceased person
Koha	Present, gift, donation, contribution
Kōiwi	Bones
Kōpū	Womb
Kōrero	Tell, say, address, speak, talk, conversation
Korero Māori	Speaking in Māori language
Koretake	Incompetent, worthless
Koroua; Koro	Adult male, elder, grandfather, granduncle
Korowai	Traditional cloak woven with decorative tassels
Kotahitanga	Expression/realisation of unity
Kotiate	Cleaver type weapon of whale bone or wood, distinctive violin shape
Ko wai koe	From whose waters do you come? Who are you?
Kuia	Adult female, elder
Mamae	Ache, pain, wound, suffering
Mahi tahi tātou	Working together for the benefit of all
Maioha	Speech from the heart

Mai rano	From long ago
Mana	Essence, life force, status and prestige. Mana is a supernatural force in a person, place or object
Manaaki	Blessing, hospitality, care
Manaakitanga	Hospitality, kindness, generosity, support, care
Mana whenua	Physical and spiritual authority of an tribe over land
Māngere	Idle, lazy
Manuwhiri; Manuhiri	Visitors, guests
Māori	The indigenous peoples of Aotearoa/New Zealand
Marae	Tribal meeting grounds, often used to include the complex of buildings around the <i>Marae atea</i>
Marae atea	Courtyard, open area in front of wharenuī, where formal gatherings and discussions often take place
Marae urupā	Burial ground related to marae
Matakite	Clairvoyant, seer, visionary, prophet
Mātauranga	Knowledge, wisdom, understanding, skill, education
Mātauranga Māori	The body of knowledge originating from Māori ancestors, including Māori world view and perspectives, Māori creativity and cultural practices
Mate	Death, dead, deceased, sickness, ill, unwell, misfortune
Mauri	Spiritual essence, special nature, the essential quality and vitality of a being or entity. Also used for a physical object, individual, ecosystem or social group in which this essence is located

Mauri tau	Composed, calm, serene, deliberate, without panic, settled
Mihi	Greeting, speech, acknowledgement
Moana	Extensive body of water, ocean, lake
Mōkai	Slave, captive, pet
Mokemoke	Loneliness, sadness, desolate
Mokopuna; Moko	Grandchildren
Nehu	Bury, burial ceremony
Ngahere	Bush, forest
Ngāti Kahu	Tribe affiliated with the Far North region
Ngāti Maniapoto	Tribe affiliated with the South Waikato/King Country region
Ngāti Porou	Tribe affiliated with the East Coast region
Ngāti Whakaue	Tribe affiliated with Rotorua
Ngāwari	Flexible, facilitating, easy, gentle
Noa	Safe, mundane, ordinary, free from <i>Tapu</i>
Noho marae	Overnight stay on marae
Paepae; Pae	Orators bench, threshold
Pai marire	Old Testament faith merged with traditional beliefs and rituals. Founded by Te Ua Haumēne in Taranaki and still practiced by Waikato and Taranaki Māori. Also known as Hau Hau
Pākehā	New Zealander of British/European descent
Papatūānuku	Earth, Earth mother, Wife of Ranginui
Pēpi	Baby, babies, toddler, youngest child

Pōhiri; Pōwhiri	Welcome, Invitation, Welcome ceremony on <i>marae</i>
Pōhutukawa tree	<i>Metrosideros excelsa</i> . New Zealand coastal tree
Pō mihi	Night of greetings
Ponga	<i>Cyathea dealbata</i> . Native tree fern
Poroporoaki	Farewell
Pō whakamutunga	Final night
Pou	Pole, pillar, strength
Poukai	King Movement gatherings held throughout the year to honour the monarch, feed the people lavishly, and discuss salient themes
Pou Toko Manawa	The beating heart/central person of the family
Pouaru	Widow, widower
Rangatira	Chief, person of status, status of a person
Rangatiratanga	Chieftainship, right to exercise authority
Ringatū	Old Testament faith merged with traditional beliefs and rituals. Founded by Te Kooti in the 1860s and still practiced by Māori from the Bay of Plenty, Te Urewera and East Coast tribes
Ringawera	‘Hot hands’, volunteer/helper on marae, kitchen workers
Roopu	Group
Rotorua	City on the western shore of Lake Rotorua, in the volcanic central plateau of Aotearoa/New Zealand
Ruru	<i>Ninox novaeseelandiae</i> . Morepork, Owl native to New Zealand
Taha Māori	Side, portion, aspect related to Māori/being Māori

Taihoa	Wait, pause, slow down
Takapou wharanui	The birth mat, birth place, placenta burial place and where one's spirit became viable. Place of conception
Take	Cause, reason, subject
Takahi	Trample, stamp, diminish
Takahi whare	Ritual performed following burial where home of deceased is 'stamped' in order to release/expel their spirit
Tangi	To cry, to weep, Māori death rituals
Tangihanga	Māori death ritual, plural of <i>tangi</i>
Tangata whenua	People of the land, local people
Taonga	Item of value, treasure, anything prized, applied to anything considered to be of value including socially or culturally valuable objects, resources, phenomenon, ideas and techniques
Tapu	A condition making an object, person or site restricted to common human contact; prohibited and out of bonds. Also a framework for defining particular behaviours, to ensure a specific response
Tatou	We, us all you (two or more) and I, inclusive pronoun
Tautoko	Support, assist
Tāwhiao	The second Māori king and leader of Waikato Tribes 1860-1894
Te Ao Māori	The Māori world
Te Ao Mārama	The natural world, the realm of light
Te Ao Pākehā	The British/European world

Te Ao Wairua	The spiritual world
Te Arawa	Confederation of tribes descended from the crew of the Te Arawa canoe occupying Bay of Plenty-Central plateau region
Te Reo Māori	Māori language
Tēnā koe	Greeting, hello to one person
Tikanga	Correct procedure, code, convention, custom, method of practice
Tikanga Māori	<i>Tikanga</i> specific to Māori and their cultural customs
Tino Rangatiratanga	Unqualified chieftainship, sovereignty
Tipuna; Tūpuna	Ancestors, grandparents
Tohunga	Ritual expert, skilled person, healer
Tono	To request, demand, challenge
Tuakana	Older sibling or person
Tūhoe	Tribe affiliated with Te Urewera and the Eastern Bay of Plenty region
Tūpāpaku	Deceased body
Tūrangawaewae	The place where one can stand, birth place, placenta burial place. Also refers to <i>Tūrangawaewae Marae</i> , located in the Waikato, home of Māori King Movement
Ture	Law
Tūturu	Definite, true, actual, confirmed, authentic
Ūkaipō	Birthplace, burial place of placenta, origin, source of sustenance
Ūkaipōtanga	The process of observing the birthplace, origin, source of sustenance

Ure	Penis
Urupā	Burial ground or cemetery
Wāhi tapu	Sacred place or site
Wahine	Woman, female, wife
Wahangū	Maintaining silence in public
Waiata	Song, singing
Waikato-Tainui	Tribe affiliated with the Waikato region in the western central region of New Zealand
Wairua	Life, spirit, soul
Wairuatanga	Spiritual belongingness
Waka	Canoe, transportation, vehicle
Wānanga	To meet and discuss, deliberate, educational seminar or institution
Whaikōrero	Oration, formal speeches
Whakaaro	Attitude, cognition, thought, opinion, understanding
Whakahīhi	Arrogance, conceit, smugness
Whakaiti	Belittle, debase, reduce
Whakamā	Embarrassment, shame
Whakamana	Self-determination, empower, validate
Whakapapa	Genealogical lines of descent
Whakatau	Formal welcome, settle in
Whakataukī	Proverb, significant saying, formulaic saying, cryptic saying, aphorism
Whānau	Kinship group; extended family



Whānau pani	Immediate bereaved family
Whānau tikanga	Family conventions, customs
Whānau urupā	Family cemetery
Whanaunga	Kin, relative, cousin
Whanaungatanga	Relationship, kinship, sense of family connection - a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging
Whangai	To feed, nourish, nurture, foster, adopt
Whangai whānau	Adoptive family
Whangaroa	Small settlement on the East Coast of the Far North
Whare	Home, house
Wharekai	Designated area/building for eating
Whare mate	House of mourning - the <i>wharemate</i> may be a special separate structure, or the place where the body lies in the veranda or inside the meeting house, depending on the traditional practice of the particular <i>marae</i>
Wharenui	Meeting house on marae
Whare tangata	House of humanity, Female as the builder of nations within her womb, womb uterus
Whenua	Land, country, territory, ground
Whenua pito	Birth placenta
Whikoi; Hikoi	Journey, walk, march, stride, hike

# **Chapter 1: Introduction**

This research offers a contribution towards understandings that can inform processes, practice and policy, ultimately supporting bicultural whānau, or families, through bereavement and beyond. While most death rituals are relatively private and well-negotiated affairs, sometimes conflict does arise. High profile cases of bicultural bereavement conflict have been thrust into the public arena, notably that of the iconic entertainer, Billy T James (The Evening Post, 1997), and more recently James Takamore (NZPA, 2008c). Media coverage of such cases and associated topic experts have called for some form of intervention to address these situations (NZPA, 2008a). However, because of the dearth of understanding currently available, some caution needs to be applied. The development of strategies needs to be appropriately informed and supported. Through the gathering of knowledge, perspectives and experience from those communities affected lies the potential for appropriate and effective change. The challenge, however, is for such a process to ensure equitable inclusion and status in engaging the voices of distinct and diverse cultural worlds. Against the backdrop of these issues, the research endeavours to understand a topic that has been largely unexplored, with a clear, social, cultural and judicial need to do so.

## **Chapter Overview**

This introduction chapter outlines the background against which to consider bicultural bereavement. The chapter begins with both historical and contemporary accounts of the blending of cultural worlds through bicultural whānau, particularly as these emerge within concepts and responses to death and grief. Consideration is given to the broader canon of literature and theoretical approaches to understanding grief and bereavement. In the final section of the chapter, I outline bereavement conflict, negotiation and resolution. Emphasised here is the use of a New Zealand specific bicultural framework for conflict resolution.

## **Blending Worlds: Blended Families**

Intermarriage between Māori, as the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa/New Zealand, and people of other ethnicities has been on-going from the arrival of the first vessels of exploration and trade in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Salmond, 1991). As accomplished ocean voyagers (Belich, 1996; Walker, 1990), Māori settled in New Zealand about 800AD, with linguistic and cultural traditions indicating Eastern Polynesian origins (Te Awekōtuku, Nikora, Rua, & Karapu, 2007). As the British Empire stretched its colonial fingers into Australia through the 1800's, New Zealand attracted promise as a means for meeting resource demands, such as timber and animal products, and further potential as colony. This was marketed by private British investors, who established the 'New Zealand Company' (Belich, 1996). The first Pākehā, people of British/European descent, were received in various ways by Māori, some were killed (and perhaps cannibalised), some became slaves, whilst others became mōkai, or 'pets', as very useful assets in trade with voyagers (Bentley, 1999). Those who had desirable competencies, like weapons expertise, and demonstrated cultural fluency acquired acceptance, affirmed through marriage to Māori (Bentley, 1999). Known as Pākehā-Māori, these were a unique group of settlers who seemingly embraced Māori culture and to varying degrees lived within it (Bentley, 1999). Subsequent Pākehā arrivals were often aloof from Māori, but their harsh living conditions often required contact with nearby tribal communities for survival (Belich, 1996). Such engagement created opportunities for intimate encounters between Māori and Pākehā and bicultural kinships emerged.

Te Ao Māori, the Māori world, was neither unfamiliar nor adverse to notions of blended families, having experience with relationships that negotiated across diverse and distinct Iwi [tribes] and hapū [sub tribe] backgrounds. Intimate liaisons with Pākehā were mostly accepted, at least initially, by Māori. The Pākehā world primarily constructed intercultural relationships as mere modes of 'trade and exchange' (Wanhalla, 2013). These constructions were dismissive of the diverse totality of Māori and Pākehā intimacies and served Eurocentric discourse more comfortable with explaining away intercultural relations with the equivalent modern phrase,

*“It was just sex; it didn’t mean anything”*. Pākehā were explicit about the perceived distinction between their own ‘civilised’ and ‘superior’ race and that of the ‘primitive’ and ‘savage’ Māori (Bell, 2004). Negative and prejudiced portrayals of Māori were commonplace, including letters published in district newspapers warning Pākehā against intercultural relationships, due to the ‘contaminating’ affect upon Pākehā superiority (Wanhalla, 2013).

## **The Ties That Bind: Te Tiriti o Waitangi & the Treaty of Waitangi**

Colonial Britain came under pressure to intervene in problems festering between the settler population and Māori (Belich, 1996). In 1839, William Hobson crown representative was despatched to acquire British sovereignty, in entirety or parts thereof depending on negotiations with the indigenous peoples (Orange, 1987). During 1840, the Treaty of Waitangi was presented by the Crown and signed by some, but not all, Māori leaders (Belich, 1996). There were two language versions of the Treaty, presented in both Māori and English. Significant differences between these versions and the Crown enactment of only one, the English version, created significant and on-going issues. These are considered and applied in more depth in the final section of this chapter.

The Treaty expressed British intent to secure sovereignty over Aotearoa/New Zealand, but it also recognised certain indigenous rights of Māori, and an additional promise of acquiring the status of British subjects (Orange, 1987). Māori were now subject to British law, and subsequently British dominance and life ways. Private and Crown interests in land created tensions between Māori and Pākehā, which eventually erupted into the New Zealand Land Wars in the 1860’s (Belich, 1996). As punishment for Māori rebellion, mass confiscation of tribal lands was enacted, despite directly contravening Treaty promises (Walker, 1990). The costs to Māori were immense and they were left bereft of physical, cultural and spiritual home places. King (2008) recounted what this meant for Waikato Māori, who *“...lost all the places that gave them a sense of history, continuity; and they*

*had lost them to people who neither knew nor cared about the history of the land and who appeared to desecrate it as further punishment” (p. 22).* These injustices became enshrined in Māori histories and identities, with little that could be forgiven and much that would never be forgotten.

### **The State of Play: Bicultural Nation (or is it?)**

The colonisation of Aotearoa/New Zealand and assimilation of Māori was founded upon Pākehā notions of the supposed superiority of their cultural world (Belich, 1996). In appearances at least, Pākehā subscribed to the ideology of racial harmony within New Zealand, minimising or ignoring anything to the contrary (Belich, 1996). However, the alleged racial harmony did not translate to any measure of equality, nor was it contingent upon fulfilment of Treaty promises. Unlike other nations who were intolerant or even abhorred intercultural relationships, (including the U.S.A, where marriage between whites and ‘negroes’ was prohibited in legislation up until the 1840’s (Kennedy, 2004)) the Crown displayed some tolerance towards Māori and Pākehā intimacies, viewed as supportive of the endeavour to create ‘one people-one-nation’ (Wanhalla, 2013). The State insinuated control over marriages between Māori and Pākehā, casting aside the authority of tribal communities to legitimise unions (Wanhalla, 2013). Māori and Pākehā intimacies were constructed as symbolic proof of cultural harmony within New Zealand, an ideology that held immense and enduring charm.

The children of Māori and Pākehā relationships blurred boundaries of people and property, threatening colonial notions of race and their aspirations (Wanhalla, 2013). Solace was found in the erroneous Pākehā belief that the Māori were facing imminent extinction and racial mixing was a fleeting ‘stain’ that would fade generationally (Meredith, 2000). Policy makers measured the extent of ‘cultural staining’ according to blood quantum, employing calculative terms such as ‘Half-caste’ and ‘Three-quarter-caste’ to bicultural children. Bicultural children constituted a challenge for a New Zealand judicial system that enacted differential law between Māori and Pākehā (Salesa, 2000). Those who could lay claim to both cultural worlds underwent legal interpretation of their ethnic identity,

which scrutinised social ethnic markers including their 'cultural lifestyle' (Salesa, 2000). There is little to suggest that Māori were concerned with quantifying bicultural children (Colvin-McCluskey, 2008). However, Māori remained acutely aware of their indigenous blood and ancestry (Meredith, 2000); and probably held at least some interest in retaining it.

Histories marked with injustices, colonisation and assimilation left an indelible legacy to contemporary New Zealand and undoubtedly marred relationships between Māori and Pākehā. Notably from the end of World War II, Māori migration to urban centres would provide opportunities for Māori and Pākehā to live and work in close proximity (Durie, 2005). Although very little research has focussed on Māori and Pākehā bicultural families, Harré's (1966) seminal study provides insightful analysis of Māori and Pākehā intercultural relationships. The participants engaged in Harré's study noted a range of socio-cultural dynamics and cultural differences. Adverse kin reactions to intercultural relationships were a common experience, including prejudicial attitudes of Pākehā towards Māori. Māori kin often voiced the preference for members to marry within culture, expressing distrust of Pākehā generally, but the want to secure the continuation of Māori people and culture. Encountering cultural differences was another common theme, including those related to language and food preferences. Less tangible but equally important distinctions related to Māori traditional values related to kinship solidarity and obligations, particularly evident in Māori responses to death and accompanying rituals, through tangihanga.

The various ways in which the contributing couples negotiated different cultural worlds played out in the cultural patterning of their relationships. Harré offers a theoretical framework through which to understand these negotiations and patterns, suggestive of those that might similarly follow in the responses to death and grief. The framework encompasses a triad of analyses, which considers the ethnic and cultural orientations of individuals and the cultural patterns of their bicultural relationships. The interaction between these and broader kin, community and society are also considered. Harré employs a typology that categorises whether these relationships were

racially mixed- by virtue of ethnicity alone, or full mixed-where individuals affiliated ethnically and culturally in the observance of customs and values associated with that group. The categorisation of Māori was complicated as many demonstrated considerable fluency with Pākehā culture and the ability to navigate across both cultural worlds. Cultural differences and negative prejudicial attitudes prompted the need for adjustments and sometimes conflict resolution, for partners and affiliated groups.

Where intercultural relationships were both ethnically and culturally mixed, the need for adjustment and emergence of conflict often related to the extent of engagement with the partner's cultural world and the individual perceptions held by the same. The degree of adjustment required and extent of conflict were enhanced where individuals held strong commitments to their own cultural group. Greater degrees of adjustment and conflict were more commonly experienced by Pākehā, with Māori already well versed and fluent in Pākehā culture. The expectation of some Pākehā that their Māori partner would wholeheartedly adopt Pākehā life ways was cited as a common cause of marriage dissolution. Similarly, Harré comments on the frequent error made by Pākehā in assuming that Māori adoption of Pākehā lifestyles extended unequivocally across values, beliefs and practices.

In any case, one or both partners undertook some form of adaption and/or acculturation. The outcome of these processes was displayed in the differing cultural patterns indicated in their bicultural relationship. Some partners remained culturally distinct within unions, whilst other relationships displayed one primary cultural orientation, which was often Pākehā. Other intercultural unions integrated degrees of both cultural orientations in relationship and life together. However, prejudice and prevalent negative stereotyping of Māori was a significant site of adjustment that would require strategic and creative configuration of relationships and family units. These included what Harré described as an 'outrigger family', where as individuals and as a couple, they maintained relationships with kinship and social groups and enjoyed at least some degree of acceptance therein. However, these groups affiliated to by the outrigger family did not engage directly with other groups.

More contemporary research amongst the progeny of Māori and Pākehā intermarriage indicates that for some, their values and perceptions are influenced by two cultural identities that do not always sit comfortably together (Moeke-Maxwell, 2003). Archie (2005) offers further insights into bicultural whānau through a compilation of personal narratives, the significant contributions of which are described below. Broader socio-cultural factors, including assumed cultural superiority of Pākehā and racist and prejudicial attitudes towards Māori impacted relationships. These played out within kin reactions to bicultural relationships including distress and refusal to attend wedding celebrations. Some Māori kin voiced general distrust and dislike of Pākehā and concerns that such intimacies would 'dilute' whakapapa [genealogical] bloodlines. Common across these narratives was significant negotiations of different cultural worlds through their lives. These brought challenges but also considerable interest and richness to their lives together. Choices were displayed in the cultural orientations of their lives, predominately Māori or Pākehā, or a 'fusion' of both worlds. Where some rejected or avoided their partner's cultural world, others sought engagement and understanding.

Significant cultural differences were encountered, particularly in responses to death and grief. Pākehā contributors recalled first experiences of tangi, encountering a deceased body for the first time, overwhelming numbers of attendees and confusion at the range of emotions expressed. These initial experiences provoked confusion, distress and offense for some, while another was inspired by the therapeutic nature of tangi and sought similar enactments in a subsequent bereavement. Decisions related to burial locations were significant in some of the narratives, one noted discussions in their bicultural family that reiterated a desire to exhume and return a deceased loved one to their tribal burial ground. Another described preparatory discussions with their partner, warning that in the event of death, their whānau were certain to present a challenge for return and burial in their tribal lands. These discussions underline the importance of such decisions and the long-term implications that may result.



The contributors in Archie's (2005) compendium offered strategies and approaches that supported cultural negotiations in their relationships. Some described benefits accrued from being open-minded and willing to engage and develop understandings of other cultural worlds. Respect for differences was important, as was acknowledgement of commonalities. The negotiating and resolution of differences could also benefit from finding ways to talk through issues, flexibility, accommodating differences, willingness to adapt to other ways, developing compromises and sometimes just agreeing to disagree. One contributor suggests that Pākehā face more need for adaption in intercultural relationships. Māori are already well versed in living across multiple cultural realities.

Although kinship groups configured in some way by both Māori and Pākehā identities are significant in New Zealand, there has been little scholarly attention paid to the ways in which these identities and relationships influence bereavement processes (Edge, 2013). Māori and Pākehā bicultural kinships are a continuing and significant feature of New Zealand's population. Although data is not routinely collected on rates of Māori and Pākehā intermarriage, almost half (48.9 percent or 292,938 people) of Māori also identify with at least one European ethnicity (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). Steady increases in those that identify in this way suggest that Māori and Pākehā bicultural kinships are an enduring feature of our cultural landscape. Within bicultural whānau, different life ways bring new meaning to daily life. These include intimate relationships, familial relationships and those that extend into work, recreation and friendship networks. Bicultural kinship groups are located within a complex, pluralistic and diverse contemporary context. Māori and Pākehā bicultural families have a range of opportunities and options variously available to them. The challenge may then reside more in the processes they use to decide, negotiate and enact the pathways through which bereavement mourning will proceed.

## **Death and Bereavement in Aotearoa/New Zealand**

The interaction between death, grief and culture has drawn attention internationally, but has been relatively unexplored within the context of

New Zealand. The various ways in which we understand and respond to death and grief are as complex, dynamic and fluid as the realities in which we reside. Schwass's (2005) seminal and rare text about death approaches in New Zealand depicts a diverse nation of people, cultures and faiths. The anthology describes the spectrum of cultural and spiritual groups which have a significant presence in New Zealand, and offers accounts of concepts and practices held in relation to death, dying and bereavement. Although individuals assign particular meanings to death, these are often shaped by culture, religion and spirituality. Meanings associated with death may be expressed through familiar patterns of ritual and incantation, support of kin and community networks and ceremonies symbolising the spiritual and physical departure of the deceased. Schwass (2005) reminds us that diversity manifests both within and across cultural and faith-based groups, influenced by the dynamic and unique nature of individuals, their relationships and families. Exploring cultural pathways through death and grief inevitably demands some traversal of the histories of cultural worlds.

Death intrudes upon and disrupts life and those left behind will call upon culturally embedded systems of knowledge in the search for meaning and order. Through rituals and practices, culture responds to some of the 'big' questions prompted by death. How do we treat the dead? Who should be mourned? How do we deal with emotions? How should mourners behave? (Walter, 2010). Death may be defined solely as the absence of life or conversely as a transitional state, incumbent with the need to support the deceased's journey onto a spiritual realm (Murray Parkes, Laungani, & Young, 1997). Social patterns and relationships find expression within mourning processes, where some may focus on individual or nuclear family units; others embrace collective and extended kinship relationships. Some bereaved communities may anticipate and accept demonstrative emotional expressions, while others aspire to minimal displays or none at all (Murray Parkes et al., 1997). Rituals may play out over various times, from singular services held over a matter of hours, through to cycles of rituals spanning days, months or even years. In considering bereavement within New Zealand, two cultural groups are of particular significance, Pākehā (immigrants of British and European descent) and Māori (the first and

indigenous peoples of New Zealand). These groups have distinct ways of responding to death and grief. While death rituals enacted by either will be unique and complex, stepping back from the detail of specific accounts enables some general patterns to form.

### **Māori Death Ways: Tangihanga**

The Māori world answers the rupturing and disruption caused by death through the processes of tangihanga, described by Nikora and Te Awekotuku (2013) as “... *the complex of culturally defined mourning practices and rituals through which Māori respond to death*” (p.170). Tangihanga enact emotional, practical and spiritual responses to death and grief, but they also have a political role in contemporary Māori realities (McIntosh, 2001). Against the backdrop of colonisation and assimilation enforced upon Māori by British colonial settlers, tangihanga are a significant and persistent expression of cultural resilience and solidarity, providing refuge within a society dominated by Pākehā values, beliefs, language and socio-political structures (Sinclair, 1990). Tangihanga express Māori philosophies, language and social organisation, affirming and supporting positive cultural identity, ultimately enhancing the emotional, cultural and spiritual significance of tangihanga (Durie, 2001). These aspects increase the salience of tangihanga, a point of cultural difference between Māori and Pākehā (Edwards, McCreanor, Ormsby, Tuwhangai, & Tipene-Leach, 2009; Mead, 2003).

Tangihanga constitute a range of procedural mourning rituals, which as an enculturated pattern affords a lifeline of comfort, security and confidence about how and when to respond to death (Nikora & Masters-Awatere, 2012). Tangihanga present, “...*a therapeutic, symbolic and ritualised process for grieving and healing*” (McRae, 2010, p. 28). Subsequent to death, whānau, or extended family, face critical decisions that must be accounted for, particularly when and how the deceased will be interred and where they will lie in state (Nikora & Masters-Awatere, 2012). The bereaved community, an extended network of kin, friends, colleagues and others, await these determinations, which will dictate the arrangements necessary to

participate in and support the mourning processes (Nikora & Masters-Awatere, 2012).

Te Ao Māori has two distinct but inter-related systems of understanding, tikanga and mana whenua, which are pivotal within responses to death and grief. Tikanga consists of a belief system that guides encounters to create balance between people, spirit and environment (Roa & Paki, 2015). Roa & Paki (2015) affirm, *“Sometimes, in order to restore balance, a word is all that is needed. Sometimes it is necessary to fight, even to the extent of there being a spilling of blood, a possible loss of life”* (p. 114). Intrinsic within tikanga are the concepts of tapu and mana, which are multi-layered and complex, resisting easy or definitive explanation. The concept of tapu refers to that which is prohibited, restricted or sacred and usually inaccessible to human contact (Te Awekōtuku, 1996). The concept is balanced by the notion of noa, which refers to aspects or objects that are safe, mundane and ordinary (Te Awekōtuku, 1996). Concepts of tapu and noa feature prominently throughout tangihanga, framing processes that position the tūpāpaku as a sacred vessel, from which the departing wairua, or spirit, is guided onto the next world (Nikora, Te Awekōtuku, & Tamanui, 2013).

Mana whenua, encompasses a land tenure system recognising rights of particular groups within specific locales (Durie, 2005). Tribal lands emphasise place-based identities and continuity of relationships, across both living and dead, Māori *“... identify with land in a personalised interconnected way over generations and whose very personal identity is linked to tūrangawaewae [place to stand] and the land which shelters the bones of their ancestors”* (Toataua & Stuart, 1991, p. 12). Māori distinguished and identified themselves with reference to the various waka, or voyaging canoes, from which their ancestors had originally disembarked upon first arrival in New Zealand (Te Awekōtuku, 1996). Māori social structures express a relational three-tiered kinship system, encompassing Iwi, hapū and whānau groups and the vesting of mana whenua over specific locations. Waka groups would divide into Iwi, or tribes, which form the largest political unit in Te Ao Māori (Barlow, 1991). Inter-tribal warfare often solidified symbolic and geographical boundaries of Iwi, some of which

were continually contested (and still are). Iwi groups are a conglomeration of allied hapū, or sub tribes, which primarily function autonomously (Te Awekōtuku, 1996). Whānau, or extended family, constitute the smallest social unit (Te Awekōtuku, 1996).

Community occasions and rituals usually occur upon marae, an ancestral meeting place situated within tribal homelands (Dansey, 1995; Nikora & Te Awekōtuku, 2013). Marae are layered with spirit and memory, expressed through customary practices, rituals, symbols and language, housed within a complex of purpose-built and sometimes ornately carved buildings (Nikora & Te Awekōtuku, 2013). It is to these tribal lands and culturally imbued environments, layered with spirit and memory that Māori return to mourn and inter their dead (Nikora et al., 2013). As Nikora et al. (2013) affirm, “*Death rituals are at their most poignant, symbolic and powerful when enacted against the back drop of a kin group’s ancestral marae, tribal landscape and relational community*” (p.2). The enactment of tangihanga within tribal lands strengthen relationships between people, place and shared histories, but also allows the bereaved to support the spirit of the deceased onto the afterlife (Nikora et al., 2013). Tribal homelands and relationships provide what Edwards et al. (2009) describe as a “*...emotionally powerful support framework for grief expression and reconciliation*” (p.134).

The tangihanga framework includes practical support, with marae networks rapidly mobilising resource demands for food, accommodation, rituals, different types of spaces (for mourning, food preparation) and the like (Mead, 2003; Sinclair, 1990). This is no small feat. The cycle of rituals, usually take place over the course of 3 days and may involve considerable numbers of attendees. Throughout tangihanga, the tūpāpaku, or deceased, are regarded as sacred taonga, or a treasured gift, over which a constant and collective vigil is kept (Schwass, 2005). The tūpāpaku is not only acknowledged, but addressed directly as they would be in life (Dansey, 1995). Such is regarded as respectful and appropriate treatment, supporting the deceased’s lingering spirit onto the spirit world (Nikora et al., 2013). Integral to this journey is the spiritual responsibility upheld by the whānau,

hapū and Iwi of the deceased, in returning the tūpāpaku to tribal homelands for mourning and interment amongst ancestral kin (Nikora et al., 2013).

Within tangihanga, it is understood that the death is shared with a broader mourning community, rather than just the immediate family (Nikora & Masters-Awatere, 2012). Provision of support for the whānau pani, or immediately bereaved, is a priority (Barrett-Aranui, 1999); their role is solely to grieve and public and demonstrative lamentation is not only anticipated, but expected (Nikora & Te Awekōtuku, 2013). The shared expression of grief ultimately seeks to attain mauri tau; described as “...*a state of being at ease, being at peace, a calmness of spirit, body, and mind*” (Edwards et al., 2009, p. 134). The pō whakamutunga/poroporoaki, or last night before burial, or increasingly cremation, is an important part of the tangi sequence. The bereaved gather to share stories, memories, connections and singing within an informal space that is infused with humour and honest recalling of the deceased, including triumphs and short comings (Schwass, 2005).

Contemporary realities and challenges have prompted adaptations to traditional patterns within tangi to accommodate the changing, urbanised and increasingly global circumstances of the bereaved. Human patterns of movement and the establishment of lives outside of tribal homelands present a range of challenges to the institution of tangi. Many prefer to prioritise places and relationships enjoyed in life, but not connected to tribal homelands (Nikora et al., 2013). Distance, work and education commitments, care of children and other family members, the cost of tangi and repatriating the deceased to tribal homelands, are all factored into decision-making about tangi and how death rituals are enacted. Cremation, a more recent choice among Māori is now a common and often pragmatic option that mediates expenses, aids in transportability and enables death rituals to be deferred beyond a 3-day period. In our contemporary world, the institution of tangihanga has changed and adapted yet continues to call to hearts during times of grief and distress. It is a familiar and comforting institution, one that has undoubtedly contributed to mourning processes in the Pākehā world (Nikora & Te Awekōtuku, 2013).

## **Pākehā Death Ways: Funerals**

Although predominately of British/European descent, immigrants to Aotearoa brought with them a range of ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds. Many continue to identify with their originating 'homelands' and upholding these political ideals, language systems, rituals, and lifestyle preferences (Bell, 1996). Pākehā identity is largely a colonial one, which juxtaposed against Māori, can appear insecure and indeterminate (Bell, 2004) and creates some difficulties in ascertaining specific responses to death within the Pākehā world. There is a relative scarcity of literature specifically focussed on Pākehā responses to death and grief. Schwass's (2005) compilation of approaches to death in New Zealand is indicative of this point, being devoid of any specific commentary on Pākehā death ways. McIntosh (2001) describes the prevalent attitude towards death within New Zealand as characterised by the 'invisible death', where acknowledgement of death is quarantined out of public spheres into private domains. Such attitudes correlate with the relinquishment of belief in religious power and increasing reliance on the power of medicine (McIntosh, 2001).

Located within the private domain, communicating news of a death may be shared with only close friends and family or others including medical professionals, funerary professionals and religious ministers (Schwass, 2005). Funerary professionals may receive the first contact, uplifting the body thereafter for funerary preparations. Whereas previous generations undertook the preparation and interment of deceased loved ones themselves, the medicalised approach to death has seen such tasks increasingly delegated to funerary professionals (Schafer, 2007a; Schwass, 2005). Once appointed, funerary professionals exert considerable influence over the organisation of funeral services, custodial care of the deceased and liaison with related agencies (Howarth, 1996). Communicating the news of death to the broader bereaved community may occur through local or national newspaper notices or social media platforms like 'Facebook'. It is not uncommon for the deceased to remain in a closed coffin within the premises of funerary professionals until the service and interment (Ritchie, Morrison, Vaioleti, & Ritchie, 2013; Selket, 2010). However, others report

the increasing practise of returning the deceased to a domestic home in an open coffin and engaged with more directly (Schwass, 2005).

Schwass (2005) suggests some elements common to funeral services, which include the welcoming of attendees, readings, songs or music are performed and an address of the deceased's life and achievements delivered. As Schafer (2007a) notes, Pākehā death rituals are commonly enacted within a singular service encompassing both funerary rites and final committal. Although grief is invariably acknowledged as a normal part of bereavement, expectations of emotional restraint remain (Ritchie et al., 2013) and overt expressions may be met with embarrassment and awkwardness (Hendery, 2014). Schafer (2007b), in his study of the funeral industry, asserts that the 'invisible death' approach has been superseded by personalization of Pākehā funerary processes. Hendery (2014) describes contemporary Pākehā funerals as prioritising choice, emphasising diversity and individualism and keenly focused upon a celebration of the deceased's life and support for the bereaved. Pākehā death rituals also reflect increasing secularity in New Zealand (Schafer, 2007a; Schwass, 2005), with an estimated 60% of funerals conducted by celebrants (Schwass, 2005). Schafer (2007a) describes celebrants as offering a personalised and life-centred approach to funeral services and rituals. Religious ministries similarly report a dramatic decline in requests for facilitation of funeral ceremonies, causing some to reflect upon how they might better respond to societal changes (Hendery, 2014). Some have sought to revise religious funeral liturgies, partly in acknowledgement of criticisms of religious based funerals, perceived by some as "*...impersonal, irrelevant or inappropriate*" (Hendery, 2014, p. 13).

From the 1950's, Pākehā have used cremation as the preferred means of disposal (Schafer, 2007a), with a current estimate of about 70% of all bodies being cremated (New Zealand Law Commission, 2013). Other alternatives are also being considered, including eco-burials, biodegradable coffins, and families assuming more tasks themselves within funerary processes (New Zealand Law Commission, 2013). Issues have arisen with the disposal of cremains, particularly when these are not uplifted by family, leaving



funerary professionals obligated for their storage (NZPA, 2009). In some instances, funerary professionals have undertaken the disposal of ashes, sometimes within mass interment (Leask, 2014). However, bereaved members are increasingly undertaking this task themselves, with some including ceremonial enactments by funerary professionals or celebrants (Schafer, 2007a).

## **Death Modes**

The grief that accompanies the death of a significant loved one is experienced by people around the world; it is a human experience. The death of a loved friend, family member or significant other is a major, critical event which causes profound and lasting disruption for those left behind (Valentine, 2006). Bereavement is a tumultuous time and a range of emotions may come to the fore, like sadness, anger, depression and guilt amongst others faced by the bereaved (Walter, 1996). These emotional states and experiences may overlay complexity as the bereaved gather, decide, negotiate and enact mourning practices and processes. Despite the universality of death, grief and its expression are vastly different, amongst both individuals and cultural groups (Hayslip & Peveto, 2005; Kalish & Reynolds, 1981; Laurie & Neimeyer, 2008). Research in this domain has conceptualised grief as socially constructed (Laurie & Neimeyer, 2008). Death and bereavement do not occur in a vacuum, but are located in specific societal and cultural contexts (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2008). Culture is particularly influential, informing the assignment of meaning and providing a guide for what constitutes appropriate responses to such critical events (Hayslip & Peveto, 2005).

Given the diversity of concepts and responses to death amongst both individuals and cultural groups and the interest of this research, how can we make sense of both commonality and difference in bereavement processes negotiated across cultural worlds? Kastenbaum's (2012) concept of a death system provides a useful framework, described as "*the interpersonal, sociophysical, and symbolic network through which an individual's relationship to mortality is mediated by society*" (Kastenbaum, 2012, p. 102). Death systems encompass people, places, spaces, time, objects and

symbols that carry social and cultural meanings concerned with death and grief. Death systems serve varied functions, like the protection against or prevention of death, caring for the dying and disposing of the deceased. Other functions include social consolidation and affirming our ability to survive the challenged posed by death and the reinstatement of meaning and purpose. Elaborating further on Kastenbaum's framework, McIntosh (2001) emphasises that within any given context, multiple death systems may exist and offer distinct and sometimes competing explanations of how death is mediated through society. Threaded throughout unique cultural approaches to death are core understandings, dominant values, spiritual beliefs, social structures and social expectations (Murray Parkes et al., 1997). Death rituals may express primary cultural features including shared histories, language systems and connections to places and spaces (Murray Parkes et al., 1997). Attempts to understand cultural death systems will inevitably demand exploration of cultures past, present and future landscapes.

### **Treating with Death: Traditional Pathways**

Western understandings of death and grief have dominated the theorisation of grief (Laurie & Neimeyer, 2008). Within this context, adherence to secular values and individualistic orientations has rejected relationships between living and dead and relinquishment of beliefs and rituals that supported such connections (Walter, 1996). Arising from within this paradigm were attitudes characterised by denial and avoidance of death. Death and grief would be sequestered from the public sphere, designated as a private and personal matter in the process (Howarth, 2007). Academic endeavours to understand grief and bereavement have been largely subsumed by the interests of psychology. The foundations laid by the works of Freud, Lindemann and Bowlby towards psychological understandings of grief have been well attested to (Walter, 1996). Congruent with such approaches, the attempts of Western psychology to understand grief were individually focussed, concerned with mental wellbeing and the categorisation of grief states deemed 'normal' or otherwise (Howarth, 2007). The resultant theoretical frameworks thus construed grief as a task

orientated process to be ‘worked’ through in order to achieve a ‘successful’ outcome (Howarth, 2007). These include the linear, stage-based models of grief offered by Kubler-Ross (1969). The bereaved was expected, if not required, to achieve detachment from the deceased and then, the formation of new attachments, which would restore ‘normality’ (Stroebe, Gergen, Gergen, & Stroebe, 1992; Walter, 1996). The inability to achieve these goals was deemed abnormal and sometimes incurred the diagnosis of acute or complicated grief (Valentine, 2006).

### **Treating with Death: New Directions**

In more recent times, the western academy’s exploration of grief has become more innovative and challenging as it endeavours to address identified gaps and limitations in understandings (Center for the Advancement of Health, 2004; Steffen & Coyle, 2011; Stroebe, Hansson, Schut, & Stroebe, 2008). Concerted efforts towards a more nuanced understanding of grief and bereavement are evident, with many relaying complex culturally patterned responses to death (e.g., Hayslip & Peveto, 2005; Kalish & Reynolds, 1981; Laurie & Neimeyer, 2008). The fervent search for pathological forms of grief or ‘exotic’ cultural expressions have given way to understanding grief and bereavement across individual, social and cultural domains (Valentine, 2008). Bereavement is being conceptualised as a process of negotiation and meaning making that is on-going and occurring across intrapersonal and interpersonal spaces (Neimeyer, 2000). Within the development of such understandings is the potential for innovative solutions and new pathways for thinking about grief and bereavement (Murray Parkes et al., 1997). New, revived and inspired ways of understanding and responding to death and grief offer exciting possibilities. The challenge lies in ensuring that new ideas do not assume the exclusive and dominant forms of the old (Howarth, 2007). We must hold open space in which divergent and emergent ideas and imaginings can take root.

The alleged superiority of indigenous and non-western approaches to death over those of the dominant western world is a common thread of discussion (Hockey, Katz, & Small, 2001; Schafer, 2007b; Walter, 1996). Such comparisons are largely futile and unproductive and distract from the more

useful task of acceptance and appreciation for other 'ways'. Therein, resides the potential to learn about others, but also ourselves. As societies are textured with social, cultural and spiritual diversity and fluidity, death and grief concepts will transform in response to societal changes (Howarth, 2007). Where beliefs and practices become inadequate against contemporary realities, new ones emerge or are resurrected from those marginalised by modernity (Howarth, 2007). One revived concept is that of 'continuing bonds', suggesting the possibility of deceased loved ones maintaining a positive and on-going presence in the lives of the bereaved (Neimeyer, Baldwin, & Gillies, 2006; Nowatzki & Grant-Kalischuk, 2009). Māori have long held such concepts. Continuing bonds with deceased loved ones form an integral part of mourning rituals and grieving, and life beyond (Nikora et al., 2013), serving to transform the deceased to ancestor status. The question this gives rise to is how do we move forward from grief, not detached from the deceased, but with a re-configured life with them remaining?

### **Meaning Making and Enduring Relationships**

Engagement with meaning making processes may be more apparent at different points in our lives, such when significant events like births, marriages, trauma and death occur. At these times we are pushed to reflect on some of the 'big' questions of life, who we are, what does life mean and how do these translate into our purpose of being. Sociologist, Tony Walter raises the question of how we make meaning in our lives and relationships within the grief that accompanies the death of a loved one. Walter (1996) offers a new model which suggests that grief's purpose is not of detachment, but developing a secure place for the deceased in the on-going lives of the bereaved. Through a personal account, Walter describes intrinsically social processes in which a bereaved community negotiated a biography of the deceased, revealing rich and sometimes new insights. In a collaborative process, the bereaved engaged and negotiated who the deceased was, their death, and what they meant to the bereaved. Perspectives offered were elaborated upon, corrected and sometimes challenged, ultimately

constructing a narrative of the deceased that was nuanced, authentic and honest.

The opportunity to contribute towards and have access to a shared and accurate narrative of the deceased can create a secure and reliable place for them in the on-going lives of the bereaved. Nikora (2016) describes similar and taken-for-granted meaning-making processes that occur across the duration of the tangihanga,

*Much of what occurs at tangi, mainly through talk, is directed at the deceased, who they were, what they did in life, the challenges they faced, their achievements, what they were renowned for, their quirky characteristics, their habits, and their relationships with others (p.7).*

She also asserts (personal communication, Nikora, 2 Jan, 2017) that,

*The emotional pain that grief causes relates directly to the process of creation and transformation of both the bereaved and deceased. Death brings change. The bereaved will never be the same. While memories may fade, the very practice of whakapapa, of keeping, reciting, and transmitting genealogies and stories of people and events held within them, keeps the deceased differently alive in our lives and across generations.*

Modern and distinct lifestyles may complicate the ability to engage in such meaning making processes and the construction of a shared and agreed upon narrative may not be possible. However, as Walter (1996), Klass, Silverman, and Nickman (1996) and others emphasise, the construction of a stable and nuanced biography of the deceased and the integration of an enduring relationship with them may ultimately support grieving, and also moving forward in life. Although experiences of and responses to grief are undoubtedly complex and diverse, when conflict enters into the equation these may become complicated and intensified.

## **Bereavement: Conflict, Negotiation and Resolution**

Theoretically, bicultural whānau may enjoy the resources of two cultural communities. However, the potential for conflict, tension and misunderstanding cannot be ignored. Bicultural whānau may be required to negotiate two sets of value and belief systems and accompanying ritual expressions in their time of grief. Failure to negotiate these satisfactorily can well have significant impacts on mourning and grieving. Seeing things differently, disagreeing, holding differing goals, perceiving unfairness or injustice, all have the potential to bring people and groups into conflict, every day. Although most will not erupt into dramatic or explosive situations, some will. Considering the emotional upheaval that death brings and, the complexity of relationships and decisions to be made within a bereaved community, it is surprising that very little has been written about bereavement conflict and negotiation. Within literature searches, I found very little relating directly to my specific topic of interest. Accordingly, I had to read more generally within the domain of negotiation and conflict resolution, which is concerned mostly with 'big conflicts' such as war, or economic conflict related to trade relations or organisational conflicts including work place relations. Where culture is considered, it is seen as complicating or an exacerbation to conflict, rather than as a potential source of insight.

While this bias in the literature is frustrating, what has emerged as most useful are the general principles of conflict resolution. Development of supportive climates, fostering effective communication processes, appreciation and respect for difference, acknowledgement of commonalities, empathy and concern for others and facilitating collaborative problem-solving and identification of common and shared goals are prominent strategies (c.f. Samovar, Porter, and McDaniel, 2007; Gudykunst, 2004; Tillett and French, 2005). Whilst the aforementioned are well established principles in the international literature, these are not unlike those formulated to hear Māori grievances related to Crown breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi here in New Zealand. Because of the similarity of the Treaty of Waitangi principles to more general principles of conflict

resolution within international sources, I have chosen to focus on the Treaty of Waitangi principles, with brief commentary and citations that draw links to the international literature. In writing this section in such a way, I am able to foreground a uniquely bicultural and New Zealand-specific framework for conflict resolution. The use of the term ‘The Treaty’ employed hereafter refers to the totality of both versions.

### **The Treaty/Te Tiriti: A bicultural framework for conflict resolution**

In early February of 1840, Iwi leaders, Crown representatives and interested others gathered in Waitangi, in the Far North of New Zealand to discuss a Treaty, that would become the foundation of relationships between Māori and Pākehā in New Zealand (Belich, 1996). Overseeing the ‘project’ as the representative of British Crown, Captain William Hobson was directed to conduct the process with sincerity, justice and good faith (Orange, 1987). Different versions of the Treaty travelled through New Zealand, for discussion, debate and ultimately, signatures. As was necessary, the document was translated and presented in both Māori and English languages, the English version as the ‘Treaty of Waitangi’ and the Te Reo Māori version as ‘Te Tiriti o Waitangi’ (see: <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/politics/treaty/read-the-treaty/english-text>). Te Tiriti o Waitangi explained, understood and signed by Māori was significantly different to the English version. Those who undertook the translation process at the time were certainly aware of these issues (Orange, 1987). The Treaty was strategically promoted to Māori in order for British hopes of sovereignty to be realised, with potential costs minimised and benefits emphasised (Orange, 1987).

Belich (1996) suggests that Māori interest in the Treaty sought a mutually agreed upon mode of ensuring protection of tino rangatiratanga, or unqualified exercise of chieftainship, custom, lifestyles and property. Māori also sought to facilitate a means of control over settler behaviour. Nikora (2007) describes Māori aspirations for the type of bicultural relations sought through the Treaty,

*They were seeking a way to ensure mutual and reciprocal benefit through the establishment of a transparent and peaceable relationship - a relationship, often referred now to as a partnership, intended to launch both Māori and Pākehā into a bountiful future (p. 18-19).*

The Treaty, has three main articles, with an additional fourth agreed upon orally, and collectively form the basis of agreement between the British Crown and Māori. Belich (1996) highlights the critical differences between the versions of the Treaty,

*The English language version gave Māori the rights and privileges, and implicitly the duties of British subjects; guaranteed their possession of all their land property; and specified that if they wished to sell land, they had to sell to the Crown. The British got full sovereignty - the Māori ceded absolutely and without reservation all the rights and powers of sovereignty-and there was no mention of continued chiefly power (p. 194).*

Given the clear and apparent differences within not only language but also values between Māori and Pākehā, Te Tiriti and The Treaty included critical and notable distinctions,

*The English version was that it split the powers with which it dealt into two: 'kāwanatanga', or governorship, which went to the British; and 'rangatiratanga', or chieftainship, which was retained by Māori. Chieftainship was not mentioned in the English version, in which all sovereign or governmental rights and powers went to the British, though Māori property rights were guaranteed unless voluntarily alienated. ...The English version was not easily compatible with the Māori written version, but there was also a tension within the latter. The British received 'te kāwanatanga katoa', or complete government, perhaps better translated a full governorship. The Māori received 'te tino rangatiratanga', the unqualified exercise of their chieftainship-not easily compatible with complete government (Belich, 1996, p. 194).*



Within two years of its signing, the passage of the Treaty became wrought with conflict, the devious and forcible acquisition of land, the deliberate nullification of the Treaty by New Zealand Courts, and, through massive immigration, the rise of Pākehā settlers to dominance in all public offices in New Zealand. In the 2010's, Māori continue to live as an indigenous minority in their own lands forever conscious of the breaches of the Treaty, both historic and on-going.

### **A place and space to be heard**

In 1975, the Government passed the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975, which included provision for the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal (Walker, 1990). Up until this time, Māori had nowhere to rest their grievances with any assurance that they would be heard fairly. Nevertheless, even the 1975 legislation was inadequate as it excluded historic grievances. Ten years later, this changed. In 1985, the Tribunal was vested with additional jurisdiction to hear retrospective grievances dating back to the signing of the Treaty in 1840 (Belich, 2001). Jones (2011) writes, "*The tribunal tries to create a space for Māori people to voice their concerns in a way that is appropriate for them*" (p.130). To have a place and space to respectfully rest a grievance for it to be heard is possibly the most critical aspect of peaceful conflict resolution. Cultural conflict theorists Gudykunst (2004); Samovar et al. (2007) and Tillett & French (2005) highlight this as an important starting point for the facilitation of effective, appropriate and respectful communication processes. To deal adequately with intercultural conflict, mutual encounter and exchange is required, with genuine openness towards different cultural ways of knowing and being (Brigg & Bleiker, 2011). There are indications that to at least some degree, the Tribunal has integrated some of the aforementioned into their processes, as Jones (2011) argues,

*The treaty settlement process in Aotearoa/New Zealand demonstrates, then, that there are possibilities for developing processes that reflect the values of distinct cultural groups...Acknowledging and reflecting key cultural values of parties within a conflict resolution process is an important but often under-recognised step in ensuring processes that are acceptable to*

*parties and maximise the durability of resolutions. This will be particularly true in cases where the dispute itself touches on key issues of cultural identity (p. 136).*

### **Reconciling power: Reconciling ‘truth’**

Processes of conflict resolution ultimately operate as a means of governance (Brigg & Bleiker, 2011), which involve the vesting of authority to make final determinations and where needed, to mobilise resources for redress. Emphasised by New Zealand’s ‘postcolonial’ landscape, there is the need for consciousness of the relative status of those engaged, in relation to each other. This includes awareness of political, historical and cultural context, including those marked by marginalisation and dominance (Brigg & Bleiker, 2011). Although the New Zealand Government strategically reserved ultimate authority over acting on any recommendations made by the Tribunal, day-to-day responsibility to hear Māori grievances is conferred to the New Zealand Courts and the Waitangi Tribunal. The authority of the Tribunal is suggestive rather than determinative, “...*the Tribunal investigates claims, and reports on the evidence received and heard, its reasoning and findings on the claims, and its recommendations to the Crown for a negotiated settlement*” (Hayward & Wheen, 2004, p. xvi).

Tillett and French (2005) signal that successful conflict resolution requires adequate and appropriate preparation, including the investigation and collation of related accurate and factual information. Although the collation of information is important in of itself, the process of doing so adopts an approach that is rational and analytical, providing balance to emotions invested and increasing the likelihood of a successful outcome (Tillett & French, 2005). Such processes can take into account multiple perspectives across people, places, spaces and time, enhancing experiences of *being* heard and *feeling* heard and having trust within these processes. As a commission of inquiry, the Tribunal has considerable flexibility over claims processes, which Jones (2011) suggests function as both a land claims commission and is akin to a truth and reconciliation commission.

With authority over process at least, the Tribunal and Courts face the complex task of reconciling the competing constructions of ‘truth’ offered by the multiple versions of the Treaty (Walker, 1990). Landmark rulings through the Courts and Tribunal have determined the need to adhere to both language texts of the Treaty, with a requirement upon the responsible government to construe both in way that can be understood by Māori (Walker, 1990). The Treaty is recognised by international law as a valid treaty of cession, through which the principles of good faith, estoppel and interpretation must be applied (Kingsbury, 1989). Fundamentally, these require each party to act reasonably and in good faith with each other and respectively to honour the Treaty (Kingsbury, 1989). The known issues within the drafting and translation of the Treaty effectively direct preference to the version understood and signed by Māori as the indigenous peoples, being Te Tiriti o Waitangi. In order to reconcile competing versions of Te Tiriti/The Treaty, general principles have been developed based on its spirit and intent. While responsibility for developing principles were levied upon the Courts and the Tribunal, this did not preclude others from equally engaging in the process, sometimes arising with principles useful and meaningful to the operation of organisations and everyday life encounters.

### **Treaty Principles: Breathing new life into old**

As both a contentious and pertinent issue, considerable literature has been produced in relation to the interpretation of the Treaty, by way of principles established that in turn can guide grievance and resolution processes. The intent is to allow pathways through which the Treaty can be applied within a contemporary context (Hayward, 2004). A number of writers with diverse interests and orientations have been active in this arena, including the Courts, the Crown, policy makers and academics (c.f Durie , 1989; Kawharu, 1989; Walker, 1990; Orange, 1987; Hayward & Wheen, 2004). The New Zealand Court of Appeal, the Tribunal and the Government have all variously identified principles drawn from the Treaty. In the late 1980’s a Royal Commission on Social Policy determined that the relevance of the Treaty is far reaching, with policy implications across social, health and land resources (Durie, 2001).

The following table presents some of the concepts and principles that have been developed and discussed by the Waitangi Tribunal, the New Zealand Courts, Government, lawyers, policy makers, tribal groups and Māori claimants. While the following principles have been identified and tested, it does not pre-empt the further identification of new principles, as times and circumstances evolve and change. Given the importance of taking a principled approach to conflict negotiation and resolution, the remainder of this chapter is devoted to describing the principles.

**Table 1. Principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the Treaty of Waitangi**

<b>Principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and The Treaty of Waitangi</b>	
Rangatiratanga	Self-Management
Kāwanatanga	Partnership
Active Protection	Exchange
Equality	Participation
Good Faith	Redress
Consultation	Mutual Benefit
Compromise	Mutual Respect
Reciprocity	Co-operation
Honour	Fiduciary Relationship

*(This table is drawn from a lecture entitled “Treaty of Waitangi: Concepts and Principles” presented by Michelle Levy on the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2008, at the University of Waikato, which was based on a number of information sources.)*

***Exchanging power and protection***

The principle of *exchange* is described as both paramount and overarching (Hayward, 2004). Implicit within this principle is that of *reciprocity*, where

Māori exchanged the right to govern to the Crown, in return for full tribal control and authority over lands and other valued possessions (Hayward, 2004). The concepts of *rangatiratanga* and *kāwanatanga* are central to the basic premise of the Treaty and the contentious assignment of status to the Crown and Māori respectively. These in turn provide what might be viewed as the bicultural foundations of New Zealand and the exchange upon which this was based. As detailed earlier, there were clear departures in the Māori and Pākehā versions of Te Tiriti/The Treaty making it difficult to determine how notions of *rangatiratanga* and *kāwanatanga* might sit with each other. While this remains a point of contention that continues to be debated today, a helpful way of viewing the *rangatiratanga* and *kāwanatanga* principles is as a dynamic, each weighing on the other, each responsible for and to each other.

The Tribunal has emphasised the need to find balance between *tino rangatiratanga* and *kāwanatanga* (Hancock & Gover, 2001). Entering into this equation are the principles of *protection* of Māori by the Crown; the principle of *mutual benefit* in which both parties benefit from the Treaty and the principle of *options*, guaranteeing Māori pursuit of directions of their choosing or *self-management* (Hayward, 2004). The delegation of sovereignty and governance of the Crown is subject to the limitations of *rangatiratanga* (Hayward, 2004). Here, the Crown is obligated to actively protect Māori rights afforded under the Treaty, inclusive of tribal self-determination, and the right of redress for Treaty breaches (Hayward, 2004). Affirmed under the principle of *active protection*, the Crown must actively protect Māori interests to the fullest extent that is reasonably and practically possible (Hayward, 2004). There are also explicit obligations of *consultation* between the Crown and Māori as partners to the Treaty (Hayward, 2004). However, the Crown assumes ultimate favour, with the right to override *rangatiratanga* with matters of national interest in exceptional circumstances (Hancock & Gover, 2001).

### ***Terms of Engagement***

One of the most valuable contributions accompanying the interpretations of principles from the Treaty is the identification of those terms of engagement

that would facilitate the relationships and partnership between the Crown and Māori. Durie (2001) describes the essence of what the principle of *partnership* means,

*Though not always clear who the partners are, or what the terms of partnership should be, at the very least the partnership principle suggests a relationship of equals between Māori and the Crown or its agencies. It anticipates a nation where Māori and Pākehā are participants at all levels of society... (p. 260).*

Elaborating further on the principle of partnership, the Courts have drawn attention to the fiduciary relationship inherent within the partnership between the Crown and Māori. As Hancock & Gover (2001) surmise,

*In other areas of law, fiduciary relationships arise where one party to a relationship has a legal power which will affect the interests of the other. In such a relationship, the party exercising the power often has a fiduciary obligation to act in way which protects the interests of the affected party (p.65).*

Thus, issues arising from actual or perceived imbalances of power are mediated by mutual and reciprocated trust and confidence with each other (Hancock & Gover, 2001).

Although the Crown is afforded considerable flexibility in how obligations under the Treaty are fulfilled, it must be able to demonstrate and justify that the means of doing so exemplifies the aforementioned principles (Hancock & Gover, 2001). In addition to the reasonable exercise of the Crown's governance, is the need for mutual and reciprocal *co-operation* between Māori and the Crown. Accordingly, both parties must make genuine and concerted efforts to work collaboratively within issues that may arise, and develop agreements in a similar fashion (Hancock & Gover, 2001). In doing so, the need for judicial intervention and resolution constitutes a last resort (Hancock & Gover, 2001). The principle of *participation* elaborates on that of partnership with both a contemporary and future focus. The intent of participation can be considered across three levels, individual participation, group participation and participation within processes of decision-making

(Durie, 1989). Furthermore, as a principle drawn from the Treaty, it emphasises the rights of individuals, but also groups to participate within decision-making processes regarding matters of interest and concern (Durie, 1989).

To summarise, the Treaty and more recent Waitangi Tribunal and negotiated settlement processes rest on principles derived from the respective versions of the Treaty that must be interpreted and applied dynamically. Each principle is weighted relative to other principles. At times some may assume significance, or at other times concede to the importance of other principles. Everything is measured, interpreted and balanced within and against the cultural and political context of history and contemporary realities. This is inclusive and ever conscious of dominance, inequality and power positions. The significant contribution of the Treaty to understanding and navigating bicultural bereavement conflict are the principles that sit at its core.

## **Thesis Outline**

In this introductory chapter I have provided an outline of related literature and key issues to provide a backdrop against which to understand Māori and Pākehā bicultural bereavement. Given the scarcity of topic related research, I have turned to the Waitangi Tribunal and the New Zealand Courts and the principles they have derived from the respective versions of the Treaty in order to develop an appropriate model of conflict negotiation and resolution. The application of these principles to bereavement conflict will become apparent in later sections of this work.

The remainder of this thesis is organised and presented across the following sections and chapters. In *Chapter 2: Research Context and Method* I describe the methodological orientation of the research, the context in which the study was located and the methods employed to gather, document, present and analyse the perspectives offered by the contributors. *Chapter 3: Findings* introduces the case studies gathered, which are divided across two sections. *Section 1* comprises the case studies contributed by members of bicultural kinship groups. These form chapters 4-7. *Section 2* presents the

expert and professional perspectives of those who engage with bicultural bereavement across Chapters 8-14. The final chapter, *Chapter 15: Discussion* presents the significant contributions of the thesis and maps a conceptual model for understanding bicultural bereavement conflict. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further research.



## Chapter 2: Research Context and Method

The research explores bereavement pathways engaged by whānau configured by both Māori and Pākehā cultural identities. Central to the topic is the negotiation of choices, cultural worlds, rituals, as well as meaning-making processes through the enactment of funeral/tangi. Negotiation strategies, sites of conflict and forms of resolution are examined from the viewpoints of the bereaved. The views of ‘experts’ such as cultural elders, funeral directors, coroners and religious ministers were also sought. Because of my own academic background and mixed cultural heritage, I chose an ethnographic approach to attend to the historical, cultural, relational and socio-political contexts in which bicultural bereavement is located. I documented and explored the contributions of participants through narrative and thematically focussed case studies. The adoption of these approaches afforded considerable flexibility and a responsiveness to participants’ narratives. As an indigenous and bicultural researcher, I positioned myself firmly within the process with intent. In providing space for my own voice, I attempted to make explicit and transparent the various ways my engagement influenced the research process and outcomes. The ultimate goal of the research was to inform understandings, policy and practice that will support Māori and Pākehā bicultural whānau through bereavement and beyond. In this chapter, I identify key concerns demanded by an exploration of bereavement within and across cultural worlds remaining aware of the interaction and influence of my own cultural identities as both Māori and Pākehā.

The use of the term ‘*whānau*’ refers to the whānau/family focus of the narrative offered by contributors and should not be taken to mean that the narrative is representative of an entire whānau/family. Despite the preference of my own discipline, participating individuals are referred to as ‘contributors’, which more aptly describes their significant contributions and positioning as ‘experts’ of their experiences. Below I discuss the methodology chosen and the methods employed in the research from the collection of data through to analysis and presentation. The chapter concludes with limitations of the research.

## **Tangi Research Programme**

My research was conducted as part of the Tangi Research Programme (TRP), a collaborative project between the Māori and Psychology Research Unit and the School of Māori and Pacific Development at the University of Waikato. Led by Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora and Professor Ngāhuia Te Awekōtuku, the TRP canvassed many aspects related to historical and contemporary Māori experiences of death, dying and grief (for example, Moeke-Maxwell, 2010; Jacobs, 2011; Wihongi, 2013; Malcolm-Buchanan, 2014; Paterson, 2015) Emphasised throughout the explorations of the TRP was awareness of the spiritual risks such endeavours could attract. In an attempt to mediate such risks, tohunga (ritual experts) and an ordained Anglican deacon offered guidance to programme researchers (Nikora & Te Awekōtuku, 2013). The interdisciplinary efforts of the TRP facilitated contact with several topic experts, some of whom became contributors in this research. As a research member, I drew upon the guidance, expertise and knowledge invested within the broader research programme. Furthermore, while situating myself as an indigenous researcher, I am also a bicultural researcher. In laying claim to my cultural identities as both Māori *and* Pākehā, I acknowledge lived familiarities emergent within and across these cultural worlds.

## **Māori Psychology**

As a Māori researcher and student of psychology, I am committed to praxis that supports Māori flourishing and the development of a Māori Psychology within an Indigenous Psychology framework. Indigenous Psychology has resisted any easy or concrete definition (Levy, 2007), and rightfully so given the diverse and complex contexts it represents. However, Rogelia Pe-Pua (2015) suggests some common principles to guide indigenous research endeavours, principles that coincide with those written about by Māori scholars in the 1990s (c.f. Te Awekōtuku, 1991 ; Smith, 1999).

- 1) Awareness that social interactions between researcher and participants affect the quality of research data;
- 2) Participants are treated as equals within the research process;

- 3) The welfare of the participants is paramount and surpasses the elicitation of research data;
- 4) The adoption of research methods centres on appropriateness, including the need to adapt these to extant norms;
- 5) The language of the participants is prioritised within the research.

Māori Psychology as an Indigenous Psychology has arisen from the wreckage of colonisation, underscored by resilience and the desire for self-determination. It emerges from a uniquely *Māori* worldview, guided by tikanga and invested in the development of a field that will ultimately “...meet the needs of Māori people in a way that maintains a unique cultural heritage, and makes for a better collective Māori future” (Nikora, Levy, Masters, & Waitoki, 2006, p. 255). Prominent within the development of Māori Psychology is the concept of whanaungatanga, foregrounding relationships and relatedness similar to the notion of relationalism emphasised within other modes of Indigenous Psychology (Pe-Pua, 2015). In the conception and conduct of this study, the concept of whanaungatanga points the researcher’s attention to the fact of relationships, between the deceased and the bereaved, between the bereaved and their kinship groups, and communities of interest. Everyone and everything is related and in relationship, a dynamic to be always consciously aware of.

### **Koutou, ahau, tatou: you, me and we**

The research sought a multiplicity of perspectives and experiences that intersected two cultural worlds, Māori and Pākehā. As such, the application of a singular culturally situated methodology, such as Kaupapa Māori, would have been inappropriate and problematic. Instead, I employed many flexible research approaches and strategies to consider the realities and meanings presented by contributors and explored by the research, which varied depending upon whom I was engaging with, where and why.

As an indigenous researcher, my encounters with others within Te Ao Māori were guided by tikanga. In my engagement with cultural experts and elders, I deliberately remained within my own Iwi network to source participants, as there was less risk of inadvertently causing offence. Contributors who

shared the same tribal relationships as I, like Ngāti Maniapoto, nourished, soothed and safeguarded discussions that were sometimes controversial, sensitive and often tapu. Where I engaged with others from tribal groups different to my own, I sought the guidance and often presence of people who held relationships with us both. Throughout these engagements, those who contributed to the research were positioned as equals in the process and I regarded their comfort and welfare as paramount.

As a bicultural researcher, I drew upon my lived experiences within the Pākehā world to employ appropriate and respectful modes of engagement. Here, I attended to the development of rapport and trust to facilitate the comfort of those who contributed to the research, which was especially important due to the sensitive and emotive nature of the topic. Informed consent, actively seeking to protect identities, and treating sensitively with information shared with me by contributors went some way towards easing the nervousness some participants expressed about their engagement and their desire to present perspectives that were respectful within a controversial topic. Relinquishing control over the case study reports to contributors helped to balance the responsibility between them and I, ensuring contributions to the research were presented in ways that were accurate, sensitive and tactful. It also meant that they themselves became active collaborators and owners in and of the research process.

## **Methodological Orientation and Approaches**

The Western treatment of death has generated lengthy debate and criticism. Central is the inherent limitations of an individualised bias shrouding the social and cultural embedded realities in which bereavement is situated (Laurie & Neimeyer, 2008; Rosenblatt, 2008; Walter, 1996). Hockey (1996) argues that traditional western scholarly approaches have served scientific discourse rather than the experiences of the bereaved for whom they are fashioned. These limitations have created a romanticised and envious awareness of ‘other’ cultural death ways (Valentine, 2006; Walter, 1996), but rarely extends beyond the search for universals or the novelty of cultural differences. What is forsaken is the possibility that the cultural ‘other’ may well have something of benefit to offer (Rosenblatt, 2008). The practice of

imposing Western models of grief upon other cultural worlds has also been challenged - what makes sense in one culture does not necessarily make sense in others (Rosenblatt, 2008). With immense diversity across and within cultures, indigenous scholars have suggested that scrutinised foreign or etic frameworks can certainly be helpful, but also ineffectual or profoundly damaging (Littlefield & Dudgeon, 2010; O'Neil, 2004). Care is imperative.

In the last decade, topic experts have noted a transformational shift in the conceptualisation of death, dying and grief (Center for the Advancement of Health, 2004; Steffen & Coyle, 2011; Stroebe et al., 2008). Increasingly, a multivalent approach is being adopted (Stroebe et al., 2008). Grief is viewed as socially and culturally constructed, reflective of the contrasts within and across societies and cultures (Laurie & Neimeyer, 2008; Rosenblatt, 2008; Walter, 1999). Notable academics have garnered critical insights by drawing on methodological approaches engaged and at least partially immersed within topic worlds and those within it (Hockey, 1990). Such theoretical shifts open up appreciation for unique conceptions and diverse responses to death, and provide fertile ground for exploring the social, cultural and spiritual milieu of death, dying and grief. With the benefit of progress made by these earlier researchers, below I have attempted to craft an appropriate methodological approach to my research.

### **Exploring bereavement: Narratives and Indigenous story-telling**

My research explores meaning and meaning making, a focus that lends itself best to qualitative narrative inquiry. Personal narratives are part of our everyday lives and are central to the way in which we create meaning and communicate experience (Lapsley, Nikora, & Black, 2002). Narrative focussed research offers a scholarly approach that examines language and the construction of meaning within social and cultural contexts (Lapsley et al., 2002). Research within the bereavement domain is increasingly emphasising qualitative strategies as an appropriate vehicle with which to explore how bereaved individuals experience, understand and construct

meaning in response to the death of a loved one (Buckle, Dwyer, & Jackson, 2009). Qualitative methods lend themselves well to research that seeks to understand peoples experiences and the meanings that they assign to those experiences (Mishler, 1986; Patton, 2002). Such methods are also noted for their ability to facilitate rich, detailed and in-depth descriptions. In particular, discursive and narrative methods have been highlighted for their ability to encourage contributors to share their experiences in ways that have meaning for them. They also reveal diverse and complex pathways by which bereaved individuals manage and make sense of death (Valentine, 2006). Such pathways also include the context(s) in which these are situated, as Riessman (1993) notes, “...individuals’ narratives are situated in particular interactions but also social, cultural, and institutional discourses, which must be brought to bear to interpret them” (p. 61).

The practice of storytelling is a familiar one to Māori and was used for a wide range of purposes including the transmission of culture, detailing intricate histories and genealogies, and explaining philosophical and theoretical frameworks (Barrett-Aranui, 1999). It provided an effective means of conflict resolution, with mythical and ancestral characters presented as models for appropriate behaviour patterns (Barrett-Aranui, 1999). Harry Dansey’s (1995) ‘A View of Death’ chapter in King’s *Te Ao hurihuri: Aspects of Māoritanga* collection is a brilliant example of imparting cultural insights through clever and memorable narrative. His storying clearly explains standpoints of experience and meanings made by Māori and Pākehā respectively in bereavement contexts.

### **Case studies**

Bicultural bereavement events draw together individuals and groups of difference, including those in expert capacities. To understand the complex perspectives and realities that occur in a bicultural bereaved community I chose a narrative case study approach. As Hodgetts & Stolte (2012) emphasise, “*Case studies are designed to produce nuanced, particular and practice orientated knowledge about specific contexts and human actions*” (p.381). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) affirm the advantages of such an approach, where multiple perspectives are sought through the production

of a “...*bricolage, a pieced-together set of representations that are fitted to the specifics of a complex situation*” (p.5). Furthermore, case studies offer the potential to “...*facilitate a deeper understanding of what is happening in a particular context and what might be helpful in addressing people’s concerns and needs*” (Hodgetts & Stolte, 2012, p. 381).

### **Ethnographic approach**

A general ethnographic orientation was important to building the case studies. Ethnography helped to facilitated in-depth engagement with contributors within *their* context. Falzon (2009) describes ethnographic approaches as privileging “... *an engaged, contextually rich and nuanced type of qualitative social research*” (p.1). My research encounters included biographical interviews with bereaved individuals, interviews with key informant experts, cultural wānanga [educational seminars], workshops, fieldwork and noho marae [overnight stay on marae]. I engaged informally with rituals and processes such as funerals, tangihanga, hura kōhatu, memorial and commemoration events. These were located across different settings, including private homes, organisational offices, marae, churches, public cemeteries, tribal urupā [burial ground] and sacred cultural sites. My encounters sometimes found me engaged in mundane activities such as washing dishes during tangihanga, as I watched, listened and reflected upon my research topic. Other more intimate moments included painful reflection upon my own bereavements and supporting others to co-ordinate death rituals. As I explored, considered and wrote about grief, I also experienced it.

### **Auto-ethnography**

Increasingly it is taken-for-granted that research can never be viewed as truly objective or value free (Flick, 2006; Patton, 2002). Barker & Galasinski (2001) elaborate further and signal the influence and bias of researchers in saying that, “...*‘knowledge’ is never a neutral or objective phenomenon but a matter of the place from which one speaks, to whom, and for what purposes*” (p.22). These concerns are emphasised within ethnographic and narrative focussed approaches to research, where the researcher becomes

the ‘instrument’ through which data is obtained, interpreted and presented (Simons, 2009). Aware of these issues, I sought to spotlight how my own background, experiences and perspectives influenced my engagement with the research. To do this, I kept a research journal in which I recorded reflective and descriptive accounts that explored my own experiences; the interaction between my own intuitive processes and those of the contributors; explanations of the decisions taken through the course of interviewing and data analysis; and my own working through of methodological issues (Carroll, 2001). In this way, my own experiences became an explicit part of the data set, allowing me to make transparent my own assumptions, biases and views. Excerpts from these accounts are threaded through the thesis, particularly within the Prequel: *My Story, Our Stories*, included as Appendix A. Here I gave voice to the complexities of my own bicultural whānau and bereavements that have occurred in my life. You will also notice that I am the narrator of the case studies, a position consciously chosen to allow each contributor to see how their story was being treated with. Subjecting myself to each contributor’s critical gaze kept me questioning how I positioned myself, my hearing, my interpretation and analysis, and my writing of their voices and stories. While this does not of itself eradicate bias, it goes some way in making the work, and me within it, transparent.

## **Research Methods**

The following sections describe the methods used to gather, analyse and present the research contributions. The research was conducted across two studies, the first, entitled “*Whānau Stories*”, documents the bereavement experiences of individuals from Māori and Pākehā bicultural whānau. The second study, entitled “*Expert Perspectives*” documents the perspectives of key informants who engage in bereavement within expert capacities.

### **Ethics, empathy and relationships**

The University of Waikato Psychology Research and Ethics Committee (TUWPREC) granted ethical approval for the research under Ethics Approval Application 11:35. Approval was granted for the recruitment and



interviewing of up to 30 bereaved research contributors. Further ethical approval was granted under Ethics Approval Application 15:06 for the recruitment and interviewing of up to 30 key informant contributors who serve bereaved individuals in expert roles. As the interviewing of expert contributors took longer than anticipated, I was required to submit an additional application to TUWPREC, which was granted under Ethic Renewal Application 15:06 for a subsequent 3-year period. Data collection was completed well within this timeframe.

The sensitive and emotive nature of the research emphasised the primacy of the relationships between myself and the whānau contributors (Buckle et al., 2009). Here, the detached researcher-participant relationship traditionally advocated risked inhibiting the ability to share and remain open to understandings, especially where emotion and personal meanings are concerned (Patton, 2002). From the outset, I understood that exploring bereavement experiences could invoke the remembering, and perhaps re-expression, of grief, which is exactly what occurred in my very first interview with an elderly male contributor. Researchers in the field note that the re-expression of grief is not always a negative arising (Buckle et al., 2009). All of my research contributors expressed appreciation for the opportunity to share their experiences with someone interested and willing to sit beside them and their grief (Buckle et al., 2009). Even so, I remained acutely aware of the potential vulnerability of participants. To remain present with the contributors I drew upon what Patton (2002) described as ‘empathetic neutrality’, that is, communicating understanding, interest and caring, whilst maintaining a non-judgemental position (Patton, 2002). There were occasions when I found this difficult, particularly when contributors identified actions (or inaction) of others that contributed to experiences of distress, hurt or conflict. At these times I also reminded myself that I was only hearing one perspective and that actions or inaction can be interpreted variously within an encounter.

Congruent with the work of other TRP members, I treated grief as a mode of human expression, which can encompass both tears and laughter (Nikora & Masters-Awatere, 2012). Most of all, I sought to engage with contributors

in ways that would assist them to feel comfortable in expressing themselves, their experiences and emotions. There were times that the contributors remembered experiences with tears and our discussions were punctuated with pauses. Often within the poignancy of these moments, I also shared tears. Contributors were reminded that our discussions could halt or conclude at any time; however, they all wished to continue, sometimes after a small break. Other modes of expression emerged within the interviews, with the contributors sharing stories or anecdotes that prompted much laughter.

Throughout my research encounters, I understood that a level of trust and rapport would be necessary to create a comfortable space where contributors could share their intimate stories. The pre-existing relationships that I held with all but one of the whānau contributors helped here. I also developed a comfortable rapport with the previously unknown contributor. I remained aware that there was potential for issues to arise in relation to the pre-existing relationships and managed this through ongoing discussions with my supervisory panel. I also discussed this issue with those whānau contributors concerned, all of whom indicated that their willingness and want to participate in the research was actually facilitated by our pre-existing relationships.

### **Study one: Whānau stories**

The primary aim of the whānau stories study was to explore the bereavement experiences of individuals who identified as belonging to a whānau configured by both Māori and Pākehā identities. I aimed to gather bereavement narratives that required some form of negotiation across Māori and Pākehā cultural worlds. I focussed on the way that contributors negotiated choices, cultural worlds, rituals, and meaning. Informing this focus were the politics and continual formation of ethnic and cultural identity.

#### ***Contributor recruitment***

I selected whānau contributors whose bereavement experience was likely to provide key insights upon Māori and Pākehā bicultural bereavement. I had

three key criteria; a) the contributors had to identify themselves as belonging to a whānau configured in some way by both Māori and Pākehā identities; b) that they had experienced the death of a loved one that required negotiation across Māori and Pākehā cultural worlds; and, c) that contributors varied with respect to gender, age, background and bereavement experiences. The number of contributors was deliberately limited to facilitate an in-depth exploration of their bereavement experiences, although I was concerned that this might produce insufficient data. After the first interview, it was evident that each case was likely to produce a rich abundance of material.

Most whānau contributors were recruited through my university, hapū and social networks. I discussed the project widely across these networks as a way of advertising to potential contributors. In one instance, a member of the public contacted us to express interest in participating following a local newspaper article about the TRP. Where individuals signaled interest in contributing to the research, I forwarded them an information pack, which included a covering letter and *Information Sheet* (Appendix B). I sent out sixteen packs, stressing there was no obligation to participate in the research. I encouraged potential contributors to consider their participation carefully, which might include consulting with whānau/family members. To ensure that none of the prospective contributors experienced any direct or indirect pressure, I asked them to contact me if they were interested in participating in the research; nine of the prospective contributors signaled their interest in this way. I did not follow up with the other seven prospective contributors, ensuring that the recruitment process avoided any pressure.

#### ***Whānau contributors***

Seven whānau contributors were interviewed about their bereavement experience between the period of 2009 and 2010. Two of the interviews were omitted from further analysis as it only became apparent during the interview that their experience did not reflect any negotiation between Māori and Pākehā cultural worlds. I explained the rationale for omission to these individuals and expressed my gratitude for their willingness to participate. Both individuals understood and agreed with the rationale for

omission. Consequently, four interviews remained in the dataset for analysis. In one instance, two contributors were interviewed jointly as members of one whānau. The data from this interview is presented within one case study, with the individual perspectives clearly identified.

Although the whānau stories constitute a relatively small number of case studies, they are demographically diverse (see *Table 1*) and dense with detail. The contributors' narratives portray an array of cultural and individual perspectives, processes and outcomes. The bereavement experiences related to differing types of relationships with the deceased, described as father and son, father-in-law and daughter-in-law, father and daughter and two of the cases concerned husband and wife relationships. The time between the bereavement and the research interview ranged from one month to eight years. Detailed information related to the contributors and their experiences are included within each case study.

### ***Anonymity***

From the outset, I considered issues of anonymity to be an integral part of my engagement with the contributors. Three of the contributors specifically sought assurances that identifying details would be deleted from their narratives. Across all case studies, I took great care to disguise or remove identifying information and worked carefully with the contributors through this process. However, one of the contributors wished for their and their belated partner's names to be included in their case study. I perceived some risk in doing so, as it could identify others not directly involved in the research but featuring in the narrative. I initially dissuaded the contributor from this decision, but they persistently reiterated the desire, causing me to reflect upon my insistence on using pseudonyms. I ultimately realised that this position was a function of my academic training and an imposition of my views upon the contributor's right to make an informed decision about the presentation of their story. Accordingly, I removed the pseudonyms from the data and reinstated the actual names for Graeme and his belated wife Georgette.

**Table 2. Demographic Information of Whānau Contributors in Study 1**

<i>Contributor</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Occupation</i>
Graeme	70+yrs	Pākehā	Male	Armed Services Instructor (Retired)
Kaea	32yrs	Māori	Male	Teacher
Teah	34yrs	Pākehā	Female	Nurse
Charles	58yrs	Pākehā	Male	Self-Employed Professional
Huia	47yrs	Māori	Female	Affiliated to an Academic Institution

### *The interview process*

Contributors signalled that they were ready to participate in the research via telephone or email. I encouraged the contributors to select a time and location for the interview most comfortable for them. These arrangements considered the potential for a range of emotions to emerge within the interview and support for the contributors both during and after the process. Two of the contributors selected their own home as a suitable location for the interview, whilst another selected their work place setting. The remaining interview occurred at my home, at the request of the contributor and in the context of our pre-existing relationship. The contributors were encouraged to have support persons present, but none sought this option. Once interview arrangements were made, I contacted each of the contributors 24 hours beforehand to confirm arrangements and check levels of comfort in proceeding with the interview.

### *Setting the scene*

At the beginning of each interview, I engaged with the contributors informally to establish a comfortable environment in which they could share their experiences. The interview process was outlined in the information pack sent prior to the interview and contributors were invited to present any questions, issues or concerns before the interview began. Some of the contributors sought clarification about anonymisation of their data. I detailed various ways that their identity could be protected and emphasised their absolute authority over presentation of their information. Following these discussions, the contributors were reassured and had no further

concerns. I then outlined the interview process and sought consent to audiotape the interview. I presented and explained the *Research Consent Forms* (Appendix C & D) which were signed by the contributors and the interview commenced.

#### *Interview guide*

An interview guide was selected over a structured interview schedule. Mishler (1986) argued for this strategy because it supports contributors to “...speak in their own voices” (p.69). This was an important consideration, given the nature of the topic. This strategy also positioned the contributors as ‘experts’ of their experience and removed pre-determined ideas or concepts from the process (Buckle, et al., 2009). Given the exploratory nature of the research, this created an appropriate space in which to elicit new insights and understandings. The interview guide focussed upon the chronological sequence of the bereavement, guided by the following themes:

- i. A summary of the life of the person who had died** – Building a life narrative of the bereaved and the person who had died;
- ii. Prior funeral/tangi arrangements and understandings** – Enquiring about any wishes expressed with respect to funerary/tangi arrangements;
- iii. The funeral/tangi event** – Details about what happened between the times of death to the point of interment. This theme also explored any considerations or challenges encountered, alongside supports and/or resources employed;
- iv. Looking back upon the funeral/tangi** – In hindsight, was there anything the contributor would change and why;
- v. Looking forward and memorialising** – After the funeral/tangi, were there any particular considerations given to unveiling/memorial events;

- vi. Other comments** – We invited contributors to make any further comments or present questions regarding anything discussed or the research project.

The interview guide was trialled in a pilot study conducted as part of a graduate internship programme, which resulted in a published journal article (see Edge, Nikora, & Rua, 2011). The interview guide initially included another theme that focussed on whether the contributor felt that the cultural identities of others participating within the bereavement influenced their own understandings, thoughts or actions, but this theme was deemed unnecessary, as it emerged naturally through discussion.

#### *The interviews*

Once the interview had started, the contributor was left to tell their own story. Where necessary, I interjected or sought clarifications only when necessary so as to minimise interrupting the flow of the contributor's narrative (see Mishler, 1987). As interviews came to a natural close, I invited the contributors to share any further comments or questions and thanked them for their contribution. The interviews ranged in length from 1 hour 20 minutes to 2 hours and 13 minutes. I sought permission to make follow up contact in the 24 hour period following the interview, to ensure that the discussion had not caused distress for contributors. I also reminded the contributors that a list of helping agencies was provided in the information pack, should they want to seek any support services. None of the contributors indicated that they felt the need to seek support.

I also sought permission to contact contributors if I needed to clarify any information from the interview. With consent obtained, I contacted two contributors to arrange a second interview to clarify some points; both contributors agreed and suitable arrangements made. These secondary interviews were relatively brief, the longest being 27 minutes in duration. I noted within these interviews that the contributors appeared to have 'exhausted' recollection of their experience within the first interview, which was understandable given some of the emotions expressed in that context.

Consequently, I avoided the use of secondary interviews and sought clarifications through email or telephone contact.

### ***Data analysis***

#### *Case study construction*

The data obtained from each contributor was collated into a data set that included audio recordings and notes taken during the interview. Some contributors shared other bereavement related data with me, including photographs, funeral service sheets and funerary invoices. Supplementary data was only included if relevant and with permission from contributors. Each data set was compiled into individual case studies, loosely organised around the chronological order of events. The case studies detailed the contributor's experiences, understandings, and meanings, alongside the broader historical, cultural and relational contexts in which these were situated (see Mishler, 1986). Great care was taken to ensure that the case studies were constructed in ways that were accurate, comprehensive and respectful to those concerned. The following processes were applied,

- 1) Audiotaped interviews were transcribed in full by the researcher. The transcripts were checked for accuracy against the audio in at least five complete cycles. Repetition increased my familiarity with the narrative data and the identification and analysis of emergent themes commenced.
- 2) The six interview guide themes provided the base structure of the case study format. The transcript was read through multiple times and text segments relating to each of the themes highlighted and coded.
- 3) Case studies were compiled through the ordering of the coded transcript text. As the themes mainly related to the sequence of events, the construction of the case studies ordered the narrative chronologically. Some of the coded transcript portions were summarised into a story format to enhance the natural flow and



presentation of the narrative. Direct quotations illustrating salient points made by contributors were foregrounded in case studies.

- 4) Once case studies were drafted, they were checked against interview transcripts to ensure accurate representation of the narrative. Attention was also paid to transcript segments that had not been coded to ensure that salient aspects were not omitted.
- 5) Draft case studies were reviewed by members of my supervisory panel to ensure that the data was presented accurately and respectfully. This also provided opportunities to identify points that needed clarification from contributors.

#### *Case study review*

Once a draft case study was compiled, it was forwarded to the relevant contributor for review. As contributors were positioned as experts, their authority over their respective case studies was absolute and was reflected in their role through the reviewing, editing and final confirmation of the case study. I encouraged contributors to make comment, amendments or retractions. Although I asked the contributors to complete the review within 2 weeks, most took longer to do so, with some taking 3 months. I worked within these constraints, mindful that the review process might be emotionally challenging. Some of the contributors made minor amendments, mainly related to the sequence of events. One contributor deleted segments related to other bereaved members, as they felt it was inappropriate to comment on the perspectives of others without consent. Three contributors extended parts of their narrative and their additional material was incorporated into the case studies. Once amended draft case studies were received from the contributor, all requested changes were made and the subsequent drafts returned for review. This process continued until the contributor was: completely satisfied with the draft; confirmed their acceptance of the case study; and consented to its inclusion within the research by signing a *Summary Report Deposit Form* (Appendix E, F & G).

### *Cross-case analysis*

The writing of the case studies was particularly advantageous as it facilitated the thematic organisation of data for both in-depth exploration and cross-case comparison (Patton, 2002). The cross-case analysis employed an inductive thematic analysis process, which offered a flexible mechanism for identifying an analysis of salient themes to produce rich, detailed insights (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Within the first stage of this process, I constructed a matrix table that summarised the critical issues in each case, with continual reference to the overall aims of the research. The second stage of this process compared and contrasted the critical issues across cases to illuminate convergences and divergences in the themes. Emergent themes, issues, commonalities and contrasts were then compiled into a second matrix table, with this information described and presented within text. As described in the discussion, a Treaty of Waitangi conceptual framework enabled the identification of conflict types and pathways to resolution. The principles of the Treaty were particularly useful in this regard as they guided my view of the data and identification of emergent patterns of negotiation.

### ***Contributor reflections***

Throughout the research, I remained in contact with the contributors, which provided opportunities for them to share reflections on their research experience. In a similar vein to other bereavement focussed research, contributors described the act of sharing their experience as emotionally challenging, but also beneficial (Buckle et al., 2009). One contributor underestimated the impact of interview on them, *“I did not really think much of [doing the interview], but when it came down to it, it was hard emotionally”*. Another contributor reflected on some initial reservations about participating, *“I was unsure whether I was ready, emotionally, to share my story. I used to be quite a mess, even a year ago”*. Yet another contributor remarked that the interview was enjoyable, despite the grief it evoked, *“I thoroughly enjoyed your company. I think I still have a tear or two to shed”*. Two contributors told me that my empathetic approach

facilitated a supportive space in which to share their stories. This was very humbling.

Contributors also reflected upon their engagement with reviewing their respective case studies. Some suggested that the review process provided access to a highly detailed account of their bereavement, affording a deeper understanding of their experience; indeed one commented that, *“Reading through the case study was quite amazing, because you cannot think of all that detail at once. It gave me another chance to heal”*. Another contributor spoke positively about the presentation of their narrative within case study format, *“It was like reading a story, but it was our story that you had written and that was really cool”*. Other contributors expressed reluctance in reviewing their case study, with one noting, *“I do have problems revisiting the death even though it was some time ago”*. Another was similarly reluctant about the review task, but ultimately found the process to be beneficial, *“I ended up enjoying going over it and making changes, it was actually very empowering. Thank you for the opportunity to share this korero with you”*. One contributor made minor changes, but they did not want the amended draft returned to them, as they did not want to *“...have to go through that [experience of reading the report] again”*. The reflective comments signal both challenges and positive impacts felt by contributors through their engagement with the research.

## **Study two: Expert perspectives**

This section details the processes used in the second study, entitled *“Expert Perspectives”*. The body of knowledge compiled in Study One gave rise to further questions best answered by those who engage in bicultural bereavement processes in an expert capacity. The aim of Study Two was to explore the perspectives and experiences of experts particularly with respect to conflict resolution strategies. Individuals within such roles can exert a supportive or constraining influence upon bereavement events and were therefore important to talk with. Investigating the experiences, perspectives and knowledge of experts alongside the bereaved allowed for the creation of multi-leveled understandings. Ultimately the intent is to contribute

knowledge that informs understandings, policy and supportive practice for Māori and Pākehā bicultural whānau.

### ***Expert recruitment and selection***

In Study One: “*Whānau Stories*”, contributors clearly identified people who played certain roles. The literature does the same (c.f Schwass, 2005; Schafer, 2007b; Sinclair, 1990). They include: cultural elders, funeral directors, religious ministers and sometimes coroners. Working with my supervisors and other members of the TRP team, I identified individuals within these roles who might be suitable experts. The recruitment and selection process involved locating those who were interested in the topic, knowledgeable about their respective roles and experienced with negotiating bereavement processes across Māori and Pākehā cultural worlds. As we investigated the types of expert roles that were of interest, it became apparent that there were certain perspectives that had been largely unexplored within current understandings of bicultural bereavement. For instance, there appeared to have been few attempts to access the knowledge and experiences of cultural elders, such as kaumātua and kuia. This presented a significant gap in the already limited understandings of the topic and thus we prioritized these roles for recruitment.

All the identified experts were known in some capacity to members of the TRP. Those who I knew already I approached with an invitation to participate in the research. Where other members of the TRP team were in relationship with a potential expert, I asked them to introduce me and to explain the purpose of my research. My supervisors were particularly helpful in this regard. If a potential expert contributor expressed interest I forwarded the *Key Informant Information Sheet* (Appendix H) for their perusal. Most potential experts took some time to consider their research involvement, which was anticipated due to the significant professional and sometimes cultural responsibilities of these individuals. Some potential experts indicated their need to carefully consider their involvement, citing concerns about the controversial and sometimes litigious concerns around bereavement conflict. In the meantime, I remained in contact, engaged in further discussions and offered clarifications as required. I eventually

recruited individuals from most of the expert roles sought. One kaumātua withdrew his interest before interviewing proceeded but I was able to recruit another suitable individual through my hapū networks. We also encountered difficulties recruiting a member of the Police and ultimately had to abandon the idea; this issue is detailed further in a later chapter section.

### ***Expert contributors***

Seven expert contributors were interviewed, between 2010 and 2016, about their engagement with bicultural bereavement events. The nature of the roles occupied were described as kaumātua, kuia, cultural elder, coroner, funeral director and a religious minister. Some experts also drew upon experiences from other roles including academic, counsellor and community-based positions. The narratives portrayed a diversity of individual, cultural, role-focussed and organisational/institutional experiences and perspectives. Of particular interest to this study were the insights experts brought to issues related to cultural values and responses to death and bereavement, post-mortem practices and funerary processes, coronial and legislative requirements and spiritual/religious concerns.

Within both recruitment and interview procedures with experts, we outlined confidentiality considerations and treatment of sensitive information such as specific bereavement events. We noted that the experts' identities could be protected, but acknowledged the need to describe their role (i.e. 'kaumātua', 'funeral director') to give context to their narrative. We also indicated that readers familiar with the expert's area of expertise might be able to deduce their identity. All expert contributors were comfortable with the use of their actual names within the research. We anticipated that experts would recall engagement with specific bereavement events, and I discussed with them ways to anonymise or remove identifying information but at the same time retain the important details of interest to their narrative and this study. Demographic information about the expert contributors is presented in table 3 below.

**Table 3. Background & Roles of Expert Contributors in Study 2**

<i>Contributor</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Role(s)</i>	<i>Affiliation</i>
Dr Tom Roa	Māori	Kaumātua/ Academic	Marae/Academic Institution
Hinekahukura Aranui-Barrett	Māori	Kuia/Counsellor	Marae
Haupai Puke	Māori	Kuia/Academic	Marae/Academic Institution
Nick Tūwhangai	Māori	Cultural Elder	Marae
Dr. Wallace Bain	Pākehā	Coroner	Coronial Services
Beth Richards	Pākehā	Funeral Director	Private Funeral Home
Reverend Thomas Poata	Māori	Minister	Religious ministry

***The interview process***

Following the completion of the expert recruitment and selection procedures, I arranged interviews. I anticipated that the significant workloads of these contributors might constrain their time availability and so I worked around their schedules, responding quickly when they were available, sometimes with less than a days' notice. I encouraged expert contributors to select interview times and locations comfortable for them. Four contributors selected their workplace settings as the interview site, which included rooms at the University of Waikato, a Coronial Services office and a funeral home. The remaining three experts chose their own homes, as this was where they were most comfortable. These arrangements required travel on my part, to locations such as Mokau, Kāwhia and Ōhinemutu.

***Setting the scene***

The interviews began with informal discussions, creating a comfortable space in which to bring forth perspectives. In the encounters with kuia, kaumātua and cultural elders, these discussions included detailing shared tribal affiliations and connections. Some experts opened the interview proceedings with karakia, a process that was duly respected. In other encounters, we shared introductions that focussed on personal and professional information. I reviewed the research outline and other

important points from the *Key Informant Information Sheet*. Particular attention was paid to issues of confidentiality, anonymity and the presentation of sensitive information. I emphasised that expert contributors would hold absolute authority over their material and invited them to present any concerns relating to the research. Some sought further information about the processes by which they could review their contributions, which I explained in full. None of the experts expressed any other concerns. I then outlined the interview process and sought permission to record the interviews; the consent forms were presented and explained before proceeding. Once expert contributors had signed the requisite forms, the interview commenced.

#### *Interview guide*

The interviews with experts used a semi-structured interview guide, which focussed on the background, roles, experiences and perspectives of contributors. This strategy incorporated flexibility into the interview and responsiveness to the perspectives offered by the experts, without the imposition of any pre-determined categorisation of their roles or experiential knowledge. In saying that, I did gather background information about their respective roles to identify potential areas to focus upon within the interviews; I also considered some of the supportive and/or prohibitive aspects highlighted in the whānau narratives in relation to engagement with experts. The emphasis on flexibility within the interview process facilitated space for the expert contributors to share experiences that were unanticipated but insightful. In this regard, three of the experts detailed their personal experiences of belonging to a whānau that included both Māori and Pākehā. This informed the expert perspectives they offered. The expert interview guide themes were:

- i. Background Information.** I asked the experts to outline their professional and personal background.
- ii. Role/Position and Organisation/Entity.** I explored the role that the expert held and the organisation or entity that they were affiliated with to give context to their knowledge, perspectives and experiences.

- iii. **Knowledge, Perspectives and Experiences of Bicultural Bereavement.** I invited experts to share their knowledge, perspectives and experiences of bicultural bereavement processes. Suggested areas for focus were conflict, negotiation, resolution processes and resources, constraints, and protocols or legal issues that may affect bicultural bereavement processes.
- iv. **Further comments, issues or suggestions.** Any other aspects, issues or suggestions that may help understandings of bicultural bereavement and supporting whānau through these processes.

#### *The interviews*

Given the expertise and knowledge held by these contributors, I perceived my role within the interview space to be that of a listener and learner; thus, the interview guide was only for occasional prompts. It was evident in each of the interviews that the experts were well-orientated to the topic and the nature of the perspectives sought from them. Often I had barely enough time to present the consent forms and start my audio recorder before they began to detail their perspectives. In fact, two of the experts were so engaged with the topic that their preparations for the interview included the compilation of essays about bicultural bereavement. Coroner Wallace Bain and Hinekahukura Barrett-Aranui respectively authored papers they gave to me and with their consent, are attached in full as *Appendix I & J*. The case studies compiled for these two contributors draw from their papers and interviews.

Some of the interviews came to a natural close, at which point I invited any additional comments or questions related to the research. Other interviews concluded due to time constraints, but with mutual agreement to meet again. With three of the experts, we had the luxury of being able to engage in discussions over the course of a day, with informal breaks for food and rest. With my Aunty Hinekahukura Aranui-Barrett, our research discussions took place at numerous points over the course of the research. With other expert contributors, it was more appropriate for subsequent interviews to occur in a more structured way. The length of the audio-



recorded interviews ranged from 1 hour 30 minutes through to 4 hours and 7 minutes.

### ***Data analysis***

#### *Case study construction*

The data gathered from each expert was organized and collated into a data set. Audio recordings of the interviews were transcribed in their entirety and I included notes from email and telephone conversations with experts, as well as authored papers mentioned previously. Each data set was sculpted into an individual case study, which detailed the contributor's knowledge, experience and perspectives. The themes within the expert contributor interview guide provided the general structure for each case study, but each was tailored according to the narrative offered and salient themes that emerged. The construction of the expert case studies mirrored the processes outlined under *Study One: Whānau Stories*, following steps one through five.

The narratives offered by expert contributors' often detailed sensitive aspects, including sacred processes. Although they were comfortable to discuss these within the interview space, some indicated concerns about how or whether these should be presented within their case study. Some explained that their comfort talking about sensitive topics was facilitated through our shared tribal affiliations as Ngāti Maniapoto. Through ongoing discussions with expert contributors and additional guidance from my supervisory panel, I worked to shape sensitive narratives until they took a form with which the expert contributors were comfortable. Other information was mutually identified as extremely sensitive and/or sacred and was deleted from the case study accordingly. Another key concern was the description of specific bereavement processes engaged in by the experts; in some instances, we were alerted to the need for specific events to be kept strictly confidential; consequently we developed ways to dilute the detail and consider the broader issues at play, which were then presented within case studies. In all instances, I highlighted any mention of specific individuals and/or bereavement events within drafts to draw the attention

of expert contributors in their review process. I consulted carefully with the experts to delete or disguise identifying information and to ensure they were comfortable with the inclusion of other details. In some instances, experts discussed bereavement processes that were matters of public record and I drew heavily on public accounts to avoid ethical conflicts for the contributors or others.

*Case study presentation and cross-case analysis*

Once the experts had reviewed their case study and any requested amendments were made, consent to include it in my research was given by signing the *Summary Report Deposit Form*. In consultation with my supervisory panel, we began to consider how the expert case studies would be presented. This was a complex and difficult process, which continued into the latter stages of the research. We identified two main options for presentation of the case studies, the first of which was thematically focused, where the case study material would be integrated and categorised according to major research themes. This strategy presented a straightforward approach to analyzing and presenting what had become an immense data set. Some, but not all, of the case studies were suited to such an approach, but there was risk that such treatment would strip away vital context; I was particularly concerned about this risk in relation to the kaumātua, kuia and cultural elder perspectives, which were clearly embedded within a specific cultural context. I perceived these case studies to be imbued with their own mauri [spiritual essence] and mana [prestige] and felt compelled to leave these intact. I eventually settled upon a second option, where each case study was presented individually and in its own right.

I conducted cross-case analysis utilizing the inductive thematic analysis process previously detailed within *Study One: Whānau Stories*. Here, I constructed a matrix table that summarized the key contributions of each case with reference to the research aims. Subsequently, I compared and contrasted salient and critical issues across the case studies to identify convergences and divergences. The outcome of these processes developed a broad and comprehensive picture of key insights, aspects and concepts

shared by the experts collectively. These insights were categorised under the broader research themes of contributors to conflict, negotiation processes and resolution pathways to help to organise my discussion chapter.

## **Limitations, Issues and Opportunities**

Undertaking research within a topic domain that is largely unexplored presents an exciting and sometimes overwhelming array of potential lines of enquiry. I made compromises and sacrifices as the research scope and design developed. The greatest challenge I encountered within the research was narrowing the range and diversity, and therefore the number of contributors that could participate in my research. Obviously there are practical considerations related to the research timeframe and my own capacity. As one of my supervisors noted in an early review of this chapter, “*YOU CANNOT DO EVERYTHING-IT IS OK!*” While some lines of enquiry were left untouched, I was able to pursue others in ways that produced exciting insights. However, I emphasise that the outcomes of this research represent a starting point, with my fervent hope that it stimulates discussion amongst whānau, bereaved communities, policy makers and practitioners, which will lead to other contributions.

### **Limitations**

There are important limitations within this research that must be acknowledged. The detailed, rich, qualitative narrative approach adopted to explore this topic I argue was necessary due to the lack of significant prior research in the area. It is the detail that is important and useful for further research and investigation. This is the purpose of the research, not the capacity to generalise (Breakwell, Hammond, & Fife-Schaw, 2000; Kennedy, 1979). If the latter was the objective, then a different approach to the topic would be in order.

Some may argue the need for more case studies than those presented in this research. Small (2009) argues that, “*...a well-executed single-case study can justifiably state that a particular process, phenomenon, mechanism, tendency, type, relationship, dynamic, or practice exists*” (p.24) and thus

the case studies in this research can be taken as evidence of specific processes in bicultural bereavement. With that said, an expert contributor astutely noted that, although individual case studies may generate understandings, the development of solutions to Māori and Pākehā bicultural bereavement conflict is more likely to be found within collective and collaborative discussions. Such an endeavour was outside of the scope of this study, but presents an exciting line of enquiry for future research.

The cultural perspectives offered by both whānau and expert contributors who identified as Māori are best understood within their specific whānau, hapū and Iwi contexts. The kaumātua, kuia and cultural elders were all from the same tribal group, that is, Ngāti Maniapoto, and while their contribution could be read as presenting a Maniapoto perspective, I argue that more than four people would need to be surveyed to make this so. What balances the perspectives of these experts is their more broader experience as educators and academics which enables them to insightfully stand back and discern those values, histories, customs and practices unique to Ngāti Maniapoto and those of other tribal groups. Even so, this is a limitation of the research and opens the field for further inquiry into tribal practices.

### **Missing cases**

There were two significant types of cases they were not included in this research. The first type of case concerned experiences where the body of the deceased was contested both privately and publicly. In recent times, such occurrences have been referred to as ‘body snatching’ and have been reported widely by the media. After discussions with my supervisory panel, we perceived ethical and moral issues attached to seeking out such a case. Most of these cases have had a high level of conflict and emotion amongst the bereaved. Any attempt to explore such a narrative could exacerbate conflict and cause harm for the contributor and others similarly bereaved. There was also some risk of negative implications for myself as the researcher, as I could find myself positioned as a mediator, which would have been unethical and inappropriate. Accordingly, I did not attempt to access such a perspective. There remains keen interest in contested bodies, from both popular and academic sources which has resulted in publications

of interest (e.g. Brandt, 2009; Mika, 2009; Tomas, 2008; Tomas, 2008-2009).

The second type of case concerned the Police as expert contributors. In New Zealand, the Police become involved when a death is sudden, suspicious or the cause of death is unknown. They also act as a servant to the Coroner and act as their representative in the field. To the public, they are the keepers of law and order and the first signal that something may well be amiss. Other expert contributors and the related body of literature acknowledged the role of the Police within bicultural bereavement conflict. However, I encountered significant barriers in attempts to recruit a member from the Police. While aware of the requirement to receive prior approval from the New Zealand Police Research and Evaluation Steering Committee (NZPRESC) before engaging formally with any member of the Police, I thought it necessary to identify an interested and experienced contributor first. My first and second supervisors contacted members of the Police known to them. They were reluctant to participate due to various controversies associated with the topic. One of the expert contributors I had interviewed offered to contact a member of Police on my behalf; the individual contacted expressed some willingness to participate in the research, but I was unable to make follow-up contact with them despite numerous attempts. During this time, I was advised that the NZPRESC were undergoing review and had suspended the processing of any research applications. As a result, I was unable to pursue this line of enquiry any further.

## **Opportunities**

Actively participating in the activities of the TRP gave rise to numerous opportunities to: engage with death studies researchers and their post-graduate students; to participate in wānanga on a range of death related topics; to attend tangi and funerals; to share resources and experiences; and to witness experts within the TRP team make informed comment to the media. During my study an opportunity arose to apply the knowledge that was emerging from my research, something I had imagined would occur only after the work was complete. The TRP team became actively engaged

in the Law Commission Review upon New Zealand Burial and Cremation Review and encouraged me to participate. We met with members of the review team and suggested aspects, issues and key individuals to consider and contact within the review. We also conducted a series of wānanga, where we invited an interested and knowledgeable community to attend. Here we contemplated and discussed the suggestions and recommendations made by the Law Commission Review. The outcome of these discussions were compiled and submitted formally to the Law Commission Review. I was somewhat disappointed to see little of our submission appearing within the summary published by them (c.f Law Commission, 2014).

Another opportunity occurred following my interview with Coroner Wallace Bain. I forwarded to him his draft case study for review. Coroner Bain telephoned me to discuss it further, complimenting the presentation of his perspective and emphasising the need for research upon the topic. He also enquired about the timeframe for disseminating the research findings, as he had outlined the case study to others within the judicial system who were very interested in obtaining a copy. I explained that the research would be publically available once submitted, which was likely to be some time away, but within the time limited context of the Law Commissions review, there was some urgency attached to disseminating Coroner Bain's case study. This was further underlined by the want for the research to contribute to those communities concerned. Accordingly, I ceased other research works in progress and focused on drafting a paper in a format suitable for Coroner Bain's request. This I forwarded to Coroner Bain, with my express permission to disseminate how he felt most appropriate. Although unanticipated, the research encounter with Coroner Bain and subsequent compilation of the paper described provided an opportunity to share key findings from the research as they emerged.

The research findings are presented in the following chapters, which are divided into two sections. *Section 1: Whānau Stories* encompasses the bereavement stories of members of Māori and Pākehā bicultural whānau, presented across chapters 4-7. *Section 2: Expert Perspectives* encompasses

the perspectives of experts and professionals who engage in bereavement processes. These are presented across chapters 8-14.

## **Chapter 3: Findings**

*Our lives, our stories, had changed. Fire bursts at the feet and engulfs the world, and even the beat-winged bird cannot climb above it, but must call and cry for rain (Grace, 1986, p. 138).*

The findings of the research are presented in the following two sections. Within the Section 1, the whānau stories are presented as individual chapters, reflecting their unique perspectives and experiences. Section 2 encompasses the expert perspectives, which are similarly presented within individual chapters and ordered to create a harmonious narrative.

### **Section 1: Whānau Stories**

The following four chapters presents the stories of five contributors who belonged to whānau configured in some way by both Māori and Pākehā identities. Their stories outline the ways that the contributors negotiated choices, cultural worlds, rituals and meaning through mourning and grieving the death of a significant loved one. The chapters begin with a brief outline of the interview context. The contributors describe the life worlds shared with their deceased loved one. They detail pre-death wishes expressed and the enactment of rituals, interment and subsequent memorial events. Each chapter illustrates how these contributors experienced and negotiated bereavement, the outcomes that resulted and the meanings assigned to these. The chapters conclude with a summary that describes the significant contributions of the narrative in the research.



## Chapter 4: Graeme's Story

*"[Georgette] made the right decision because all around her...is family, I said to the girls I am more than happy now, I am totally at peace with it."*

**Graeme**



*Figure 1. Graeme and Georgette on their wedding day (Photography: Graeme. Image used with permission)*

### **Interview Context**

*Graeme is a member of the public who contacted Dr Ngahuia Te Awekōtuku (Principal Investigator) after viewing the Tangi Research Programme's press release in the Waikato Times. Graeme, who is Pākehā, wanted to tell us about the passing of his wife, who was Māori. Dr Te Awekōtuku referred his details to Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora and Kiri Edge for further contact. The researcher delayed any interview with Graeme until the University of Waikato Ethics Committee granted ethical approval. This occurred two months after Graeme's initial contact. In the interim, Graeme remained in contact, forwarding photos and providing e-mail updates on the organisation of Georgette's unveiling, which occurred two weeks prior to the interview. The interview occurred in this context. Graeme and Georgettes actual names have been used in the*

*research, as specifically requested by Graeme. Other names, locations and identifying information have been changed or omitted to protect the privacy of others.*

## **Husband and Wife**

Georgette grew up on the East Coast of New Zealand's North Island. Georgette initially worked as a nurse at a local Hospital and then joined the army, where she first met Graeme. Graeme identified culturally as Pākehā but noted that he was quite comfortable in the company of Māori throughout his life and had many friends who were Māori. Graeme described a long tradition of military involvement in his family, with many family members serving in the armed forces. Graeme followed his family tradition and joined the Army, which was where he met Georgette. Describing his first encounter, Graeme told me,

*[Georgette] was walking past the school of Artillery. It was winter and the nurses had a grey uniform. [Georgette] had trousers and boots and was marching down and saluted an officer with a salute like I have never seen, perfect...I said to my mate 'Would you look at that, oh man, I am going to have to find out who she is before the other circling sharks get in!'*

In the 1960's, Māori and Pākehā relationships were somewhat of a novelty. Graeme contrasted the perceptions of bicultural relationships within the Armed Forces to that of civilian life,

*It was virtually the done thing in the army, for Māori and Pākehā to be married. Either a Māori man or a Pākehā man or vice versa, no one worried. Yet, out in 'Civvy Street'... We were coming up through a gorge, and we stopped for an ice cream and a couple of little Māori kids said 'See that Māori sheila; she's got a Pākehā husband!' That was in 1963 and it was not common, but in the [Armed] service, it was quite common. Because we worked together, we slept together, we fought together, we trained together we did everything together and it did not matter who you were.*

The couple eventually married even though Graeme's mother did not approve. Georgette's marae hosted the wedding,

*In the wedding party, there were two Navy guys on the outside, my best man was Army, I was Army, and these beautiful Māori girls in the middle, the guys were all Pākehā. The marae was right in a valley... they reckoned they had never seen so many brass buttons in their life, all the military people were all dressed in uniform, and it was wonderful.*

Large numbers of guests attended the wedding, with Graeme describing the wharenuī [meeting house on marae] as "...packed." In the early stages of their relationship, Graeme understood little of Māori culture. Graeme described some of the cultural differences he noticed on the wedding day. An uncle of Graeme (who was a major in the Royal Artillery) was seated at the wedding breakfast when a Māori man, dressed in dirty clothes with a big skinning knife at his hip, joined him at the table. Graeme's uncle struck up a conversation with the man, enquiring if he was part of Georgette's whānau. The man replied, "No, I just came for the feed." Graeme mentioned that at this point in the relationship he lacked knowledge and experience of Māori culture. Another difference he noticed follows,

*A Pākehā wedding breakfast is a big thing with all laid on food, but there was this bowl of green stuff there. I said to Georgette 'What is that?' and she said 'Turnip tops' and I said 'What! At a wedding breakfast?'*

Graeme described the good relationship he enjoyed with Georgette's whānau, although differences sometimes created amusing situations. Graeme bought Georgette a gift, a bottle opener with the words 'tēnā koe' inscribed on it. Graeme visibly cringed as he retold how he had asked, "What does this tēnā koe [hello] mean?" in front of his mother and father-in-law. Georgette's parents turned to Graeme with a look that seemed to say, "Oh! What is our daughter getting into?" In the first visit to meet Georgette's brother, Haki, the couple trekked through paddocks and over a river in a

box rigged up to a cable. When they eventually arrived at the house, Graeme looked at Haki and said,

*'Bloody Māori's! Why don't you put a bridge across instead of that thing?' [Haki] looked at me and said 'What's this?' The next day [Haki] took me out pig hunting. Georgette said he had never done that with a stranger before and especially not a Pākehā stranger.*

Graeme seized an opportunity to kill a pig which resulted in the following story, *"I heard the laughter and all these Māori's were lying on the ground laughing, they reckoned it was the funniest thing they had ever seen, a Pākehā having a knife fight with a pig!"* Graeme felt that he "...clicked" with Haki.

Haki instructed Georgette to take Graeme to the nearby waterfall. As they prepared to leave, Haki remarked, *"Do not forget it will rain,"* yet as Graeme looked at the sky it was clear and cloud free. However, by the time the couple returned later that evening, there was torrential rain. Georgette explained to Graeme that it always rains when a stranger visits the falls. Graeme had a strong reaction to this, *"I tell you what, I have heard some Māori myths and legends before but that shook me up quite a bit."* Graeme described the relationship with Haki and his wife Hine as *"...tremendous"*. Whenever they attended tangi or other marae events, Haki would translate the Māori speeches into the English language for Graeme.

Graeme's career in the military saw him occupy various posts around New Zealand and two tours of duty to Vietnam. It was traumatic for Georgette to see her husband leave to fight a war on foreign soil, leaving her and their children on their own. After this period, they lived overseas for a time as a family. Graeme and Georgette had a period of separation during their life together, however they reconciled. During that period, Georgette trained as a teacher through Teacher Training College and held various teaching positions before teaching Te Reo at a nearby college where she was much respected.

## **Prior Arrangements and Understandings**

Georgette was diagnosed with cancer; Graeme was reluctant to talk to Georgette about her final wishes yet this did occur in a brief utterance. Graeme asked Georgette if she would consider being buried at a nearby public cemetery. She replied, “*No! Look I want to go home, I won’t know anyone over here I will be so lonely*”, to which Graeme replied, “*What do you think you will do? Get up and party all night!*” Graeme and one of their children were particularly unhappy about Georgette’s decision to be buried some distance from where their family resided, which would restrict regular visits to the grave.

## **The Tangi/Funeral**

Prior to her death, Graeme and his family cared for Georgette at home, but after a sudden decline and admission to hospital, she died there. She was subsequently transferred to the funeral home, prepared, and dressed by her children. With so much noise and laughter, the undertaker had to investigate the cause of the commotion. Graeme fondly remarked that when his children are together, “*...You can hear them from here to the University!*” Georgette was taken to her home where many friends, family, and colleagues visited to pay their respects. Georgette’s bed was moved out of her room and her coffin was placed upon the ground, similar to what is done on a marae. Georgette’s sister assisted Graeme in this regard. She asked Graeme to place a bowl of water at the front door for Māori who came to the house, which Graeme had not thought of. A service was organised at the funeral home prior to departing for Georgette’s marae.

Graeme and his children decided to have an open casket funeral. Graeme had experienced this previously at an Aunt’s funeral where he felt she looked, “*...beautiful*”. Graeme’s children were happy about this and many who attended the service commented that it “*...made the service as it was not just a box sitting there.*” Within the casket, family and friends placed many special articles including a bottle of wine, a wineglass, needlework, a little frog and a crossword. The students that Georgette had taught performed a haka and sung waiata. The majority of the service was

conducted in English and where Māori was spoken, translations were provided. There are aspects of the tangi that Graeme, understandably, does not remember. Such details included people who attended the funeral that Graeme had spoken to, which he would not recall until later watching a DVD of the service. Due to the numbers attending, the funeral director suggested that Graeme hire a large screen TV to enable more people to be able to see the service. Graeme relayed many funny stories from the service and the comment was made by someone that, “...*You would have thought it was a wedding going on because there was that much laughter.*” Graeme chose friends from golf and the army to carry the casket to and from the funeral home.

Although Graeme remembers Georgette's sister had been in touch with people from the marae to organise proceedings at the marae, he does not recall being consulted as part of this. Graeme is unsure whether any of this was discussed with his children either, although he has not discussed this with them. Graeme did note that he did not want to be involved, but assumed this of those who organised the marae tangi, “...*They would do the right thing by me.*” Graeme also acknowledge gaps in his memories of the tangi and that there may have been a possibility that discussions may have taken place which he did not recall. Following the service at the funeral home, the whānau took Georgette home to the marae.

The whānau travelled in a convoy, waiting for Georgette's two brothers to converge with the group and lead the way. The group arrived in the afternoon at the marae and Georgette spent the night there before being buried the next day. Georgette's grandsons carried her onto the marae. Graeme recounted a total of five church services were held prior to Georgette's burial. At the marae, Georgette was placed at the front of the wharenuī, as night fell she was taken inside the wharenuī. Graeme was appreciative of the respect given to him at the tangi, special places were allocated for him to sleep and sit during the tangi. Graeme noted that requests he made during the tangi were respected. The whānau visited the gravesite being dug by people from the marae. Graeme's grandsons expressed their desire to help with the digging, but others at the marae

appeared to be uncomfortable with him doing so and he was only allowed a shovel for a few minutes. Graeme was very upset by this incident.

The entire tangi service was conducted in Māori, which caught Graeme by surprise, *“It was just I did not realise the total service was going to be in Māori, it just hurt me”*. This was obviously very upsetting for Graeme and his children, one particularly so, *“... Because she wanted to know what was being said about her mother and so did I.”* Graeme does not speak Māori, and neither do any of his children. As Graeme reflected on the tangi service, he emphasised that, *“...I would not have a clue whether it was a lovely service or not, I just do not know...They could not even say the Lord’s Prayer in English for me.”* Following Georgette’s interment, they were welcomed back onto the marae. Graeme expressed his gratitude towards a kaumātua, who detailed in English the genealogical connections between Georgette and others whose photos hung in the wharenuī.

Graeme described his overall experience of the tangi at the marae in the following way, *“I was bitterly disappointed over the whole affair, and I just could not wait to get home.”* Graeme returned home the next afternoon. He was away for just under 24 hours.

## **Looking Back On What Happened**

Given the benefit of hindsight, Graeme would have suggested to his children that they appoint a minister who could facilitate the tangi in both English and Māori languages. Graeme felt that his experience of the tangi could have been very different if translations were provided. Graeme provided an example of another tangi he attended where the service was conducted in both English and Māori. He thought that was lovely. Graeme’s wish for this research is that it might highlight issues that may assist marae to consider making some concessions for Pākehā during tangi, particularly when members of the immediately bereaved belong to this cultural group. Graeme hopes that his experience might be able to provide some understanding of Pākehā needs at such times.

## Looking Forward and Memorialising

Since Georgette's passing, Graeme, his children and grandchildren returned to the urupā to visit Georgette, particularly as they prepared for Georgette's unveiling ceremony. Graeme wanted to ensure some control over planning for the unveiling. A central part of this process was organising a Māori minister willing to perform the unveiling ceremony in both English and Māori to satisfy the needs of both Māori and English speakers. As a result, Graeme and his children were able to understand the entire unveiling service, which had great meaning for Graeme.



*The significance of the symbol is the joining together of two people, Georgie and Graeme and two cultures, Māori and Pākehā for eternity. Even though they faced life's ups and downs, they remain bonded by love and friendship forever.*

Inscription upon Georgette's headstone

*Figure 2. Georgette's headstone and inscription (Photography: Graeme. Image used with permission)*

There were some problems in communications between Graeme and the marae in organising the unveiling. Graeme had emailed and sent letters regarding preparations for the unveiling and was under the impression that the marae would organise some food supplies for their arrival. However, when the family arrived at the marae the food had not been arranged and one of Graeme's daughters had to travel to the nearest town to purchase supplies. Despite this, Graeme's overall experience of the unveiling was very positive, far outweighing any negative aspects.



In designing Georgette's head stone, Graeme selected a photograph depicting himself and Georgette on their wedding day. Graeme realised that this differed from Māori custom, which prohibits displaying pictures of a deceased alongside those who are still living. However, Graeme and his children felt that this particular photograph was appropriate and it was important to Graeme that people could see who Georgette had married. Feedback at the urupā suggests that no one was too upset about this; many commented it was something they had not seen before. Graeme recalled at the tangi he had asked to hang a picture of Georgette and himself on their wedding day in the wharenuī, but was advised that custom dictated that only photographs of those deceased could be hung in the wharenuī.

An important object used in the service was what Graeme referred to as the 'Vietnam chalice'. The Vietnam chalice has been to almost every war fought by New Zealand Armed forces. During the unveiling, the chalice held water for the blessings given by the minister. Graeme had hoped to use water from his pool at home that reminded him of Georgette and a frond from the ponga she used to sit under. However, Graeme forgot these items and improvised by collecting water and a ponga frond from the river beside the marae. Graeme discovered later that the specific place where they collected the water from was sacred and is used for water ritual blessings. Many people from the marae commented on this coincidence.

Graeme and the minister went to the urupā immediately prior to the unveiling and to their dismay; it began to rain very heavily. Graeme had been aware of the weather that morning, watching dark clouds lift off the hills only to settle back down again on the landscape. Graeme and the minister huddled under umbrellas in the urupā. Graeme became upset that the service would have to take place underneath umbrellas. Fortunately, as soon as the first car arrived the rain cleared and remained so until the ceremony had concluded.

Prior to the unveiling, Graeme organised for Georgette's cousin and a friend to take photographs of the headstone during the ceremony so he would have a keepsake of the ceremony and Georgette's headstone. However, as the photographers began their task, a Māori woman announced, "*E hoa*

*[friend], no photographs in here!"* Graeme enquired with a representative from the marae, who advised that this would be okay, as long as some discretion was employed. Graeme questioned why it was okay to take photographs standing outside of the urupā, but not inside the confines of the urupā. Graeme's noted that without the photographs, he would have no physical reminder of the headstone, whereas those at the marae can visit Georgette's grave every day. Graeme supplied photographs of Georgette's headstone (See figure.2) and explained some of the meanings incorporated into the design.

At the conclusion of the unveiling ceremony, the congregation was formally welcomed back onto the marae. The college students had composed a waiata for Georgette, which Graeme asked to be performed on the steps of the wharenuī, where the couple had been married. At the conclusion of the students' moving tribute, the minister addressed the congregation and remarked what a pleasing and peaceful end to the service the waiata was. The whānau cleaned the marae before returning to the urupā to say their farewells to Georgette. As the whānau gathered around the grave, the sun shone upon the headstone, Graeme described that moment, *"... It looked almost like greenstone with the sun shining on it. You could almost see a red fleck through it, beautiful."*

Graeme spoke very fondly of his experience at Georgette's unveiling. This experience obviously provided an important resolution to the dissatisfaction he experienced at the tangi. The most important factor for Graeme appeared to be his ability to include a minister within the proceedings who spoke in both English and Māori. His children and the grandchildren all understood what was said about their wife, mother, and grandmother.

Graeme still lives in the whānau home and now has quite a different perspective on Georgette's wish to be buried at the whānau urupā. Although Georgette's choice initially upset Graeme, he now believes it was the right decision. Since Georgette's tangi, Graeme has attended funerals at the local public cemetery. Graeme commented on his perception of the public cemetery, *"...Yes it is a lonely place; you can stand looking at someone's*

*headstone and not know anyone around you.*” Graeme is comforted by the thought that at the marae urupā, Georgette is surrounded by her whānau, “...[Georgette] made the right decision because all around her, just one pace from her is Hine, all around her is family, so I said to the girls I’m more than happy now, I’m totally at peace with it.” Graeme also spoke with a friend, who has a loved one buried at the public cemetery. For this friend, regular visits to the cemetery have now become somewhat of a burden. In comparison, Graeme will only be able to visit Georgette two or three times a year, but each visit will have immense meaning for Graeme and his whānau. Graeme carefully plans his visits to the marae urupā, and gets very excited about the prospect of doing so. Graeme compared his excitement to the feeling of getting ready to go on holiday and he loves every minute of it.

Graeme recounted some of what has occurred on the visits to the urupā. They have spent time tidying and beautifying the urupā grounds. Graeme has formed relationships with people at the marae, some of whom have shared memories of Georgette’s childhood. One of Graeme’s daughters installed a solar lantern by Georgette’s grave, so that, “*Aunty Hine and Mum can find their way home at night because the pub is just across the way.*” Graeme affirmed that he considers that his relationship with Georgette endures beyond her death,

*...As far as I am concerned we are still married. As I said in the memorial notice, death ends a life not a relationship. We are still married, her Mum and Dad gave her hand in marriage to me and I am still responsible for her.*

Graeme sometimes feels that Georgette is “...around” him and he is comforted by this feeling. He recounted an experience at his home where he thought to himself affectionately, “...*She is still here annoying me!*”

Graeme has considered his own final wishes and he would like to join Georgette and be interred at the marae urupā. Graeme will be cremated and a place for his ashes has been incorporated into Georgette’s headstone. Graeme did not want to disturb Georgette’s grave and this will avoid a costly

trip to transport his tūpāpaku to the marae. Most importantly for Graeme, it means his whānau will be able to visit both their parents in one location. Graeme's children seem are happy with this decision.

## **Reconciling Regrets**

Graeme sent an email (*dated February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2010*) after our interview. He expressed some regrets about aspects of the couple's life together,

*One of my big regrets is that I did not learn to speak basic Māori, after all, Georgie taught it. I did not realise what a jewel I had married. Harriet Beecher Stowe once wrote 'the bitterest tears shed over graves are for words left unsaid and deeds undone'*

Graeme discussed some of his regrets with a friend of Georgette's and she suggested that he might find it helpful to write Georgette a letter and burn it in a significant place and Georgette would 'receive' it. Graeme enacted the ritual, burning the letter under the ponga trees where Georgette often sat in the shade. He described how he felt after doing this,

*I felt a lot better, not forgiven, but I may not get such a smack in the head when I meet her again. I found it healed the pain a bit and would recommend it to anyone who loses someone very near and dear. I wrote it almost as if I were writing to her from Vietnam, nothing too personal but reminiscing about the beautiful times that we had.*

Graeme noted that he believed that this was more of a Māori ritual than Pākehā and he felt that it had brought him a sense of peace and helped with his grief.

## **Significant Contributions**

Graeme and Georgette encountered cultural differences in their relationship together, including food preferences and language. Prior to meeting Georgette, Graeme felt comfortable in the company of Māori but acknowledged that his understandings of Māori culture were limited.

Consistent with Harré's (1966) study of Māori-Pākehā marriages, Graeme and Georgette's respective family and whānau had different reactions to their relationship. Graeme's family tried to break the relationship up, whereas Georgette's whānau accepted Graeme. Graeme contextualised the establishment of their relationship within the 1960's, where mixed cultural relationships were somewhat unusual. In contrast, the couple met in the Armed Services, where such relationships were commonplace. They raised several children and Georgette taught Māori language and culture at a nearby school.

Georgette was diagnosed with cancer and expressed her final wish to be buried in her marae urupā. Graeme was unhappy with this location, preferring the nearby public cemetery where he could visit regularly. Despite his own preferences, Graeme respected Georgette's final wishes, which was the case for the majority of participants in Kalish & Reynolds's (1981) seminal bereavement study. Georgette died in hospital, her tangi/funeral rituals were conducted across three settings; the family home, a local funeral home, and Georgette's marae. Graeme appeared to have a central role in the proceedings at the first two settings, whereas Georgette's sister made arrangements with marae representatives for the tangi there. Georgette's sister incorporated the use of water at the home for the purpose of spiritual cleansing, which is noted in Dansey's (1995) reflective account of death in the Māori world. Graeme was not involved in arranging the marae based tangi and indeed did not want to be. Graeme assumed that his needs would be taken into account within the marae-based tangi. Graeme and Georgette's relationships were reflected in Georgette's tangi, including Georgette's school, the Armed services, and the wider community. At the marae, the tangi was conducted exclusively in Māori and no English translations were provided for Graeme. This effectively meant that Graeme was excluded from understanding the service, which upset him immensely. Graeme did acknowledge that his status as Georgette's husband was recognised in other ways during the tangi but remained bitterly disappointed over the monolingual enactment of tangi rituals. He left the marae immediately after the service concluded.

Georgette's burial location created a link between the marae, Graeme and his whānau. Given his experience at the tangi, Graeme took a proactive role in organising Georgette's unveiling ceremony. This included the use of a bilingual pastor to conduct the service in both Te Reo and English. Yum (1988) asserts that individuals with bicultural skills can be a medium for connecting cultural groups. Some of Graeme's arrangements differed somewhat from Māori customs, but this was negotiated with marae elders and compromises were made. From Graeme's perspective, the resulting ceremony was a positive experience, with feedback from the marae suggesting that it satisfied the needs of both cultural groups. Because of Graeme's experience, his understanding of Māori culture was extended and relationships with people from the marae forged. It is plausible that these aspects informed Graeme's final wish to be interred with Georgette. Graeme's perspective on Georgette's final wishes has changed and he is comforted by the fact that she is surrounded by whānau in this location. Graeme emphasised the enduring nature of his relationship with Georgette and providing examples of how this was maintained and the meaning this had for him.

## Chapter 5: Kaea and Teah's Story

*“...You could see that the [whāngai whānau] were just people too, just nice, normal people and he had obviously meant something to them, and he was linked to them. I guess you soften to that and think ‘that is fair enough’ ”.Teah*



*Figure 3. “Hari Senior's last song”. (Photography: Harlem McKenzie. Image used with permission)*

### **Interview Context**

*This chapter presents the story of Kaea and Teah, a husband and wife from a bicultural whānau. Kaea and Teah are in their early thirties and have three children, Pūtai, Hari Junior, and Kahukura, who are all under the age of six years at the time of the interview. Kaea identifies as Māori and is employed in the education sector. Teah identifies as Pākehā and works in the health sector. Kaea's father, Hari Senior, was a significant person to both Kaea and Teah. He died approximately five years prior to the interview. The researcher and contributors knew each other previously on*

*a friendship basis. Names, locations and other identifying information have been changed or omitted to protect the privacy of those concerned.*

## **Son, Daughter-in-law and Father**

Hari Senior was born in a coastal region of the North Island to a relatively poor family. His father was a stockman and the family relied on the land to provide food for four children. Hari Senior was the youngest in this whānau and was born when his parents were in their fifties. Hari Senior's mother suffered ill health after his birth and did not completely recover. Subsequently, Hari Senior was whāngai (adopted) to a whānau who were distantly related. Hari Senior's whāngai family were relatively financially secure and included five other children. Kaea contrasted the life worlds of his father's birth and whāngai whānau,

*... [The birth and whāngai whānau] are actually two very different types of families, the Williams [whāngai whānau], which is our name currently, were quite traditional, in the Pākehā sense. They lived in town, [the father] was a market gardener, and [the mother] was a 'stay at home' Mum. It was, for those times, a steady income. [Hari Senior's] real family lived on the beach, rode horses, lived in a six by four shed and they lived off the land. It was two very different worlds.*

Hari Senior's adoption was obviously a difficult subject for the whānau and Hari Senior's children grew up without any knowledge of the adoption. Kaea and his brothers did not discover this information until well into their adult lives. Hari Senior's adoption and the withholding of this information was a significant feature within Kaea's story.

Hari Senior met his wife, Hauraro when they were both in their early twenties. Hauraro originated from the upper North Island. Hauraro and Hari Senior had their first child by the age of twenty- two and went on to have what Kaea cheekily described as, "...*Three gorgeous sons.*" The whānau initially settled in Hari senior's hometown. Thereafter, the whānau moved to a small community located on the outskirts of a major city, where Hari Senior had secured employment. Hauraro also found employment in a



nearby Government department and the children commenced their education at the local school.

Kaea described this small community as predominantly Pākehā, the Williams whānau were one of only two Māori whānau in the area. Upon their arrival to the area, Kaea remembers his parents discussing some of the racism within the community. Kaea does not recall experiencing any racism through his childhood. Kaea suspected that he and his brothers were accepted by the wider community due to their sporting achievements. Kaea believed that this context had a negative impact on his connection to his Māori heritage,

*We grew up in quite a monoculture village...We grew up with the notion that we were Pākehā pretty much, because that is all we knew. We had no connection to our heritage whatsoever. We knew where home was, but we did not understand the significance of the place, it was just somewhere we went ... We did not have a connection at all with the marae but we knew it was there, we knew that is where the loved ones were that we would go visit. We knew it was a special place, but we did not really grasp what that really meant, that it was actually quite a significant part of our lives.*

From an early age, Kaea was at 'odds' with his Māori heritage and remembered only having Pākehā friends at school. When Kaea begun High School, he recalled experiencing what he described as "*culture shock.*" For the first time in Kaea's life, he was surrounded by people from diverse cultures. Kaea felt that this 'culture shock' intensified his rejection towards his Māori heritage. At this point in his life, Kaea did not feel his Māori cultural was meaningful to him, "*...It just was not something that I liked or enjoyed. It was how I was brought up, more so the environment I grew up. There was no need to and I did not see any value in it.*" Kaea encountered similar feelings on the occasions that the whānau returned to Hari senior's place of birth, "*...It was also a real culture shock for us when we went back home and saw how our whānau lived it was like 'Whoa!' That was because we were Pākehāfied at an early age.*" Kaea highlighted that his whānau usually only returned to their marae for one specific purpose, to attend

tangi. Such experiences intensified Kaea's negative perceptions of Māori culture, which he explained in the following passage,

*... My whole childhood experience of Māori was tangi. I think in a sense that is why, as well, I did not want to have anything to do with Māori culture, because I related it to death... The only thing I knew was the wailing of the karanga. To me, it reminds me of cold frosty mornings, going somewhere in the dark and seeing my loved ones dead. To be quite honest that is all I knew, I had not been to pōhiri [welcome ceremony on marae] or anything like that. All I knew was death, being in the marae in the early mornings and hearing the bell ring for church, hearing the crying and hearing the old koroua [male elder] speak. It was haunting really, haunted childhood of memories of death.*

After completing college, Kaea had a chance encounter with Teah at a social occasion with friends. The couple began a relationship and were married within three years. Teah was born in the South Island of New Zealand and was the second of five children. Teah's family moved around before venturing overseas for a period. Teah's parents divorced and the children returned to New Zealand with their mother. I asked Teah to describe the cultural identity of her family, *"I don't know, with our family it was more of a religious identity, all our values were based around that. I don't know, how does a Pākehā answer that question?"*

Teah did not have any real understanding of Māori culture growing up. However, she did feel comfortable in the company of Māori, as there were many Māori whānau at her church. Neither Teah nor Kaea noticed any cultural differences in the early stages of their relationship. Teah suggested this may have been due to Kaea being quite *"...Pākehā-fied"* when she met him. Soon thereafter, Kaea and Teah arranged to travel down to the coast to visit Kaea's whānau land. He discussed this journey with Hari senior. For the first time in Kaea's life, Hari Senior mentioned his adoption. Hari Senior revealed that the 'Uncle' they often saw working in the garden beside the marae was actually Hari Senior's birth brother. Kaea was shocked at this information. Kaea believes that the withholding of this information may

have been an attempt to “...protect” Kaea and his brothers from Hari senior’s birth family. Kaea does not fully understand why this occurred but suggested that there may have been negative perceptions of the birth whānau, their lifestyle and socio-economic status.

When Kaea and Teah arrived at the marae, they presented themselves at the home of Hari senior’s birth brother. Kaea was surprised to discover that the birth whānau knew exactly who he was and he was welcomed with open arms by the birth whānau. Kaea described this moving occasion in the following way,

*... [It was] unforgettable, it was an emotional awakening that night and we partied hard that night too didn't we? We caught up with twenty years of missed love there. Things were kind of falling into place. We looked the same. Their oldest looked like my oldest brother and I had a connection with their youngest. It was uncanny. They knew about us since we were born, but I knew nothing, nothing, and to this day, we still go on about it.*

After this emotional reunion, Kaea and Teah travelled regularly to spend time with the birth whānau. This forged the way for the rest of Kaea’s immediate whānau to also reconnect. Hari Senior and Hauraro began to visit the birth whānau although Kaea recalled that his parents seemed initially, “...standoffish.” Kaea’s brother, Rawiri also visited the birth whānau, often taking his friends on such trips. However, Kaea’s oldest brother, Taitea did not join his whānau in this process. Kaea was saddened by this, particularly as the birth whānau “...pined” for Taitea being the oldest sibling. Kaea recalled how the birth whānau attended his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday celebrations. This was extremely meaningful for Kaea, as he was aware that the birth whānau had not travelled outside of their district in over forty years.

To mark the significance of the reunion with the birth whānau, Kaea and Teah decided to hold their wedding celebration at the birth whānau’s marae. Kaea commented on how he thought his father felt about this decision,

*I think that was part of the healing process for him. Deep down he knew, after seeing what happened after that initial meeting, he realised what we had missed out on, that he had not given us that opportunity. I suppose that made that place all the more special. To have your blood living there on the beach, we go down there and that made it even more special. That dirt there is really ours too.*

At the end of 1999, Kaea and Teah travelled to the marae with their newborn daughter, Pūtai. Hari Senior and Hauraro planned to join Kaea and Teah at the marae a few days later. However, Hauraro telephoned to tell Kaea that Hari Senior was unwell and unable to make the journey. Kaea was immediately concerned; as it was highly unusual for Hari Senior to be ill. Hari Senior visited his doctor for what he thought was influenza; but was diagnosed with terminal cancer.

### **Prior Arrangements and Understandings**

After being diagnosed, Hari Senior called a whānau meeting to discuss arrangements for his tangi. Hari Senior provided very detailed instructions, including waiata he had selected for the tangi. Hari Senior specifically requested for his entire tangi to be conducted at his birth whānau's marae. When the whānau queried not going to his whāngai whānau's marae, Hari Senior responded: *"...Just stop on the side of the road, toot out, and go straight out the beach."* Hari Senior brought humour into this sombre conversation, suggesting that the whānau could transport his tūpāpaku home on the back of a trailer, saying, *"Just put some sunglasses on me, and I will just sit here like this [motions two raised index fingers]"*. Hari Senior began to travel around the North Island, visiting various whānau members to say his last 'goodbyes'. Kaea acknowledged their whānau found these visits difficult, but they accepted that this was how Hari Senior wanted to, *"...finish things."* Hari senior's visits included spending time with his birth brother and Hari senior showed him where he wanted to be interred within the whānau urupā. Hari senior's condition deteriorated throughout this journey.

Teah emphasised that having prior knowledge of what Hari Senior wanted for his tangi eased the process for the whānau. However, as Hari Senior's cancer progressed, his final wishes began to change substantially. Hari senior's whānau faced the dilemma of negotiating between different final wishes expressed. At this point in Hari Senior's illness, his whānau were unsure as to the impact his cancer may have had upon the decisions he made. Kaea described the whānau's dilemma in the following way, "... *What do you do? Do you take him here a few months out from when he died, or do you take him on his very last words? So that was the predicament we had, finding the middle.*" Kaea and Teah had hoped to record Hari Senior's voice during this time, which they would play at future significant events like their children's fifth birthdays. However, Teah and Kaea found enacting this task simply too hard.

## **The Tangi/Funeral**

After Hari Senior received his terminal diagnosis, he gave up smoking and received various forms of medical treatment. He and the whānau were advised that his condition was inoperable. The cancer spread to Hari Senior's brain and he was forbidden from operating any machinery. Although this assisted Hari Senior to realise the seriousness of his condition, he dealt with this restriction in what Kaea described as an, "...*interesting way.*" Kaea and his brothers would often 'catch' Hari Senior driving and he would gesture to them, "...*shhhh.*" Hari Senior continued to work right up until the latter stages of his illness. Hari Senior experienced a considerable amount of pain at the end of his illness, which the whānau found extremely difficult.

Early in November, the Williams whānau gathered at their parents' home to spend time with Hari Senior. Whilst there, Taitea and his wife Andrea had to depart suddenly but promised to return in the morning. Hari Senior wished Kaea a 'happy birthday' to which Kaea responded, "...*Don't you go bugging off anywhere!*" Unbeknownst to Kaea, this would be the last conversation that he would have with his father. Kaea, Teah, and Pūtai returned to their home later that evening. In the early hours of the next morning, Hari Senior asked Hauraro to get his guitar for him and he sung

to her. The couple sung together for some time until Hari Senior lay back in bed and died. Kaea noted that despite his illness, Hari Senior had his 'wits' about him right up until the end, when he, "...played his last song really." At six o'clock in the morning, Hauraro rang Kaea and Teah to tell them that Hari Senior had died.

On receiving the news of Hari Senior's death, Kaea, Teah, and Pūtai travelled to Hari Senior and Hauraro's home. Kaea expressed that he was, "...heartbroken", but struck by how, "...beautiful" it was to see Hari Senior looking so peaceful "... Just as he always was." As Kaea viewed Hari Senior, he almost thought that, "...He would just turn around and give you the shits and pop his eyes open and give you a fright!" Teah interjected at this point to say how, "...gutted" she was at the abruptness of Hari Senior's death. This was completely unexpected in Teah's view as she had imagined that the whānau would nurse Hari Senior through his illness. Kaea regrets that the whānau did not stay with Hari Senior that night but they had no way of knowing that it was to be Hari Senior's last.

Following Hari Senior's death, he was transported to a nearby funeral home for embalming. He was then taken to a kaupapa Māori [Māori approach] church, where services were held until midnight. Hari Senior's whāngai brother, Uncle Hēnare attended this service and challenged for Hari Senior to be taken to the whāngai marae. Uncle Hēnare made it quite clear that the whānau would not have his blessings if his request was not granted. Although Kaea understood Uncle Hēnare's point of view and acknowledged that his 'challenge' was the, "...True art of Māoridom; you fight for your loved ones don't you." Kaea felt that, "...There was a lot of shit that happened in that family. He [Uncle Hēnare] seemed to be trying to overrule what we had and undermine what we were trying to do."

As the oldest son of the whānau, Taitea was designated the role of making decisions in relation to the tangi. Although Kaea respected his brother's role in this regard, he felt that he could have had more input. Kaea felt he had gained more understanding of Māori culture and tikanga. In contrast, Taitea lacked this experience. Taitea capitulated to the requests made by others, whereas Kaea felt that other options could have been pursued.

At the conclusion of the church services, the whānau travelled to the marae through the night, arriving at six o'clock in the morning. Kaea reflected back upon this journey in the following way, “...*We had a long time to think about it, just about all night, all the way going down, thinking Dad wanted this, he wanted that. I suppose all that built up frustration and then we were finally there.*” The whānau stopped at Hari Senior’s whāngai marae and were welcomed on through a pōhiri ceremony. Hari Senior lay in state at this marae for several hours; Kaea described this part of the tangi,

*... It was so hard, we were tired, we were angry, we were hurt, but then we knew that they had loved him as well so we had to let that go and let them have their time with him. Although they would still be out at the beach, they wanted their time.*

Kaea expressed that his anger and frustration at having to stop at this marae remained with him throughout the pōhiri. Some of his feelings were due to a perceived lack of connection between his whānau and the whāngai whānau and their marae. Kaea did not know many of the people that were at the whāngai marae or their connection to Hari Senior. As the whānau sat down for the hākari, Kaea realised that this stop was the right thing to do. Teah extended on Kaea’s memories of their time at the whāngai marae. Teah shared Kaea’s initial anger and frustration, which was impacted by the fact she was eight months hapū (pregnant) at the time. Teah explained that these feelings evaporated during the hākari, “...*You could see that the [whāngai whānau] were just people too, just nice, normal people and [Hari Senior] obviously meant something to them, and he was linked to them. I guess you soften to that and think ‘that is fair enough’*”.

Kaea and Teah gained a different perspective on their stop at the whāngai marae, which Kaea reflected back on, “...*It made the road back out to [birth whānau marae] a smoother emotional and spiritual journey...it was almost like we left a bit of emotional baggage [at the whāngai marae]*”. Kaea and Teah highlighted that despite their initial distress at having to make this stop, in hindsight it had a “...*therapeutic*” impact on them. Kaea now feels quite differently about the whāngai whānau marae. He has

engaged with his children to ensure that they understand their connection there.

The whānau left the whāngai marae and travelled along the coast to Hari Senior's birth whānau's marae. Upon their arrival to the urupā, Kaea, Rawiri, and two of Rawiri's Pākehā friends set about digging Hari Senior's grave. Kaea described the role of Rawiri's friends.

*.. Because the bro' lost his Dad and that is kind of the way that they could tautoko [support]. They could not get up and speak on the marae, they could not, they did not know how...But they knew how to dig a hole and they wanted to do it.*

Rawiri's Pākehā friends took on a "... whiter shade of white," when kōiwi [bones] were unearthed in the course of digging. Kaea found out later that they probably pre-dated European settlement in New Zealand and acknowledged that Rawiri's friends were understandably disturbed. It was a common occurrence at the urupā due to the number of unmarked graves. Kaea sent for an uncle who performed karakia at the gravesite and the group continued with their task. Kaea recalled how Hari Senior and his brother would often supervise the digging of graves. Kaea described some of the techniques that Hari senior would employ if the size of the grave and coffin were incompatible, which occasionally occurred.

Throughout the interview, Kaea and Teah commented upon the therapeutic function of tangihanga and opportunities to both mourn and celebrate the deceased. Kaea noted the final night before the burial, where the informal 'poroporoaki' is often held,

*...I think the whole point of poroporoaki is to sooth your soul. I think for Māori, that is where our sense of humour really comes to the fore. You are in a state of emotional anguish, and then you are just laughing your tits off over someone who is dead. I think it is there for a reason, because you have all that time to grieve but then there is that time. It is quite uplifting.*



The next morning, Kaea, Taitea, Rawiri, and three others carried their father into the urupā for burial. Upon arriving at the gravesite, it was obvious that the grave was far wider than the size of the coffin. Recognising the humorous nature of the moment, Kaea reflected,

*.. It was the funniest thing you have ever seen...It was like, for fucks sake! I remember Taitea saying ‘Fucking hell, who dug this?’ It was kind of a light moment, everyone was [crying], and we just cracked up. It typified the moment really, and I thought to myself ‘oh god, the old man is laughing at us already.*

The coffin bearers placed the coffin upon large branches of driftwood that spanned the grave. Kaea explained that although large steel braces are commonly used for this purpose, the driftwood was far more appropriate for an urupā situated beside the ocean.

In the interview, Kaea prompted Teah to remind her that she was unable to participate in this part of the tangi ceremony. Immediately prior to Hari Senior’s interment, Teah was approached by Hauraro and a priest who advised her that due to Māori protocol, she should not enter the urupā in her pregnant condition. Teah explained her understanding of the protocol, that it served to prevent their unborn baby’s spirit being contaminated by the urupā, or “...*Mingling it with the land of the dead.*” Teah had no prior knowledge of this protocol, but she waited outside the urupā until the whānau returned. Although Teah found her exclusion difficult, she emphasised her respect for such spiritual beliefs, partly based on experiences at the urupā where she had witnessed unexplained occurrences. In Teah’s words, “...*I know that stuff happens so I am not going to argue with any of that!*” Although Kaea and Teah had selected a name for their child early in the pregnancy, they decided to mark the significance of Hari Senior’s death by naming this child, Hari Junior, after his grandfather.

Teah stated that Hari Senior was the first significant person to die within her lifetime. Prior to Hari Senior’s tangi, Teah had little experience with death rituals, either Māori or Pākehā. Teah likened her relationship with Hari Senior to that of father and daughter. Teah acknowledged that Hari

Senior assumed this role with her in a way that her own father had not. The love and affection Teah felt towards Hari Senior was patently obvious throughout the interview. Teah reflected on her first experience of tangi in the following way,

*... I found it amazing actually... At times, it was tiring and you think 'why do I have to do this? Why do we have to do this?'... I think because it is twenty-four hours a day you get that chance to grieve. You have everyone, just like the support I think.*

Throughout the tangi, she was able to openly express and process much of her grief. She felt very comfortable in doing so, as others expressed their grief openly around her. Kaea extended on this comment, “[*The people at the marae*] make you, and they know you want to be sad so they make you bring it out.” For Teah, this was very “...*therapeutic and helpful*” with her grief. Teah contrasted this to her previous experiences of Pākehā funerals, which she felt often emphasised the repression of grief or, “...*pulling it together.*” Kaea also pointed out that Pākehā funerals are often based on a one-day service, which the couple felt provided only limited opportunities to grieve for a loved one,

*.. That is the thing with European tangi, [the service might be] between 11am and 1pm on Wednesday, and that is when it is. However, emotionally, am I ready at 11am on Wednesday? It might be 3am in the morning on Tuesday... that is why I love it, because everyone finds their time [to grieve].*

As previously described, Hari Senior’s tangi was the first that Teah had attended. Teah had only a basic understanding of tangihanga and relied on the actions and guidance of others to ascertain what was expected of her. She highlighted that due to her role in the event, she did not have any control over the tangi proceedings. Teah noted that this was the case, even when she encountered aspects she disagreed with, providing an example of this. As Hari Senior’s tangi concluded, a distant whānau member, who was not personally known to the whānau died and their tangi was held on a marae some distance away. Following the advice of kaumātua, immediately after

Hari Senior's tangi concluded, the whānau left the marae to attend the second tangi. Teah reflected on this,

*I found that very difficult to deal with. For me it was their own father's tangi and they had to leave right after they have put him in the ground, after they had the hākari. We had to drive an hour and half and go to this other tangi, of this person they did not even know. It was just like, what the hell? I was just so tired, bugged, and upset.*

Despite how Teah felt about this, she acknowledged that it was not her place, "...to make a fuss" and she joined the rest of whānau as they boarded the minivan. Teah understood that there was protocol to be adhered to following the instructions from elders at the marae. Teah was also aware that her role within Hari Senior's tangi was largely determined by her relationship to Hari Senior, that of a daughter in law, which Teah explained,

*[Hari Senior] was not my Dad, he did not raise me, but I did have a bond with him and a relationship with him. My connection was not as strong as Kaea's, but I was a part of it, but a different part of it. I did not have a say in anything, whereas if my mother died I would have lot more of a say and it would affect me more. I guess it is, just knowing, seeing things for what they are, but also accepting things for what they are.*

In contrast, Kaea had quite a different perspective on the whānau's attendance at the second tangi. Kaea highlighted the, "...big picture" context, noting that although his whānau were grieving, they had also received a degree of closure following the conclusion of the tangi. Whereas for the newly bereaved whānau, their grieving had only just begun. Accordingly, Kaea felt that it was important for his whānau to offer their support for the second whānau. In doing so, Kaea was honoured that the second whānau invited them to bring Hari Senior's photo onto their marae. Kaea explained that by allowing this to occur, the second whānau assumed the mate [associations with death] from Hari Senior's tangi.

*.. They had taken a lot of that emotional strain off us and when we left, I just felt so much better too. For me, that was just a nice part of the healing, that sort of got us off Dad for a bit...We were still thinking strongly about him but it helped to ease things and put our emotions in check, especially when there was another body that we were thinking about too.*

At the conclusion of the second tangi, Kaea's whānau obviously felt the impact from attending two tangi within a very short time frame. Kaea and his whānau purchased a quantity of alcohol and travelled back to their marae, and in Kaea's words, "...Everyone just got smoked." This concluded the entire tangi proceedings for Hari Senior.

### **Looking Back on What Happened**

In reflecting back upon Hari Senior's tangi, Kaea noted one particular aspect that he would change if given the choice. Following the interment at the urupā, Hauraro asked Uncle Hēnare to wear the korowai [traditional cloak woven with decorative tassels] that adorned Hari Senior's coffin back onto the marae. Kaea felt quite strongly that Uncle Paruauru should have taken this honour, as he was Hari Senior's birth brother. Uncle Hēnare also stated quite clearly that he felt that Uncle Paruauru should wear the korowai. However, Hauraro insisted on Uncle Hēnare assuming this role.

Teah could not recall any aspect that she would have changed; however, it was apparent that she still struggled to understand why the whānau had attended the second tangi immediately after Hari Senior's. Teah noted that although she was unable to enter the urupā for the burial, this did not have a lasting impact upon her memories of the tangi,

*.. In looking back on that tangi, I had actually forgotten that I could not go into the urupā. It is not something that I actually dwell on, at the time probably, but I think it is what you choose to focus on. Overall, I actually found Dad's tangi to be really good, it was a positive experience.*

## Looking Forward and Memorialising

Hauraro organised the unveiling ceremony, which commemorated the anniversary of Hari Senior's death. The ceremony was a joint unveiling for Hari Senior and another cousin. Kaea explained that it is quite common for combined unveilings to occur when the anniversary dates fell within a similar period. Although Kaea felt that the unveiling ceremony was a positive experience, most of his memories concerned his efforts to placate a relation by marriage, which he found, "...*annoying.*" Teah could not remember much of the unveiling ceremony, except that she was again pregnant, thus excluded from entering the urupā. This upset Teah more than at the tangi, as she was unable to see the headstone that the whānau had spent many months preparing. It would be some time before Teah was able to view Hari Senior's headstone.

## Enduring Relationships

Kaea remembers the first six months after Hari Senior's death as being a very difficult time for him, which he described in the following way: "*I used to be quite a mess, even a year ago I would break down doing whaikōrero [formal speech], in front of people I did not really know that well.*" Teah acknowledged how difficult this was for their whānau, but in a current sense, they remember Hari Senior in, "...*Happy, positive ways.*" Kaea described how his children are integral to this, stating, "...*I see my father in my kids' eyes every day.*" Kaea focuses on finding ways in which he can transfer memories of his father to his children to help them to retain a connection to their grandfather. Teah has experienced vivid dreams of Hari Senior, which gave her, "... *The most amazing feeling, it was like euphoria, it was incredible.*" Teah detailed these dreams in the following way,

*... He just walked in and he was just there. He was still the same, he had the same shorts, the same singlet, and the same mannerisms, but he was peaceful and happy. I have had two of those [dreams] and it has just been really cool because I know he is good and he is still there, but he is at peace. That has been comforting for me, it buzzed me out actually.*

## **Kaea and Teah's Final Wishes**

Kaea and Teah are unsure about their own preferences in the event of their death. Kaea described options available to him within his parent's respective whānau urupā, but thought it likely he would be buried next to his father. Teah stated that in the event of Kaea's death, she would respect whatever his wishes were. I asked Teah if she had thought about her own wishes, "*I don't really know where I will be buried, I don't kind of belong anywhere, and I guess wherever they bury me*".

Kaea offered comment upon the long-term implications that can arise from such decisions. Kaea highlighted his own awareness that decisions on this matter can have great significance for future generations. Kaea discussed an example of a whānau member who was buried in his wife's whānau urupā, some distance from his own tribal lands. Kaea perceived that such decisions could have a negative impact on the preservation of whānau connections.

*It is a shame that he is buried there because now his whānau will not go back home. They will not have that excuse to go back and find out about their whakapapa, they have lost that whole side. Although, it is cool that he went to the place that he loved, that is the whole idea of why people fight for you too, to take you back home. Otherwise, just imagine that if we all went wherever, we would lose that sense of where people are from.*

Kaea discussed this in relation to highly publicised cases of people 'stealing' tūpāpaku and securing connections to subsequent generations,

*...there is a lot more to it than people realise. Too late, for the person who is dead, but it is thinking about all these other ones, when they are ready to come back, they have that opportunity. Then they can come back and say 'that is my Father there' instead of saying 'I think that is where my Father was from' because that is him there.*

## **Significant Contributions**

Kaea and Teah did not notice any cultural differences in the establishment of their relationship, despite Teah's limited knowledge of Māori culture.

Kaea described his younger self as being 'Pākehāfied' and he had feelings of rejection towards his Māori heritage. It emerged in Kaea's whānau that his father Hari senior was adopted at birth, the withholding of this information greatly upset Kaea. This was due to tensions between Hari senior's birth and whāngai whānau, despite the genealogical links between the two whānau. Hari senior's connection to his birth whānau was effectively severed. The severance of ties between Hari senior and his birth whānau differed from traditional Māori processes surrounding adoption described in McRae & Nikora's (2006) study about whāngai. The matter of Hari senior's adoption impacted upon the whānau, particularly in the processes that followed Hari senior's death. Soon thereafter, Kaea and Teah instigated a reunion with Hari senior's birth whānau inspiring Kaea to reconnect with his Māori identity. Teah acknowledged the importance of this for Kaea and supported him accordingly. Hari senior was diagnosed with cancer and he provided specific final wishes, which excluded his whāngai marae.

Hari senior died at home and Hari Senior's whāngai brother challenged for his tūpāpaku to be taken to the whāngai marae. Kaea's eldest brother, who held authority over such decisions, conceded to this request. Nikora et al (2016) affirms that as the eldest male, Kaea's brother held a culturally prescribed role of leadership and representation of the whānau. However, Kaea and Teah were upset by the decision, as it compromised Hari senior's wishes. As a younger sibling, Kaea was culturally bound to accept his elder brothers decision (Nikora, 2016), even though Kaea and Teah's conflict over the decision meant that they arrived at the whāngai marae in a very angry and emotional state. After the hākari, Kaea and Teah realised that Hari senior was a part of his whāngai whānau and the right decision had been made. The whānau proceeded to Hari senior's birth marae and the second part of his tangi commenced. Teah was prohibited from entering the urupā, due to protocol related to her pregnant state. Teah was upset by her exclusion but respected and accepted the protocol. Immediately after the interment, the whānau were required to attend a second tangi of a distant relative. Teah could not understand why this was required, when the whānau were still grieving their own loss. Kaea noted that it was important to support the newly bereaved whānau. This sentiment is echoed by Dansey

(1995), who notes that due to the importance of extended family connections, there is an obligation to attend tangihanga, even when the kinship connections are distant. One year later, Hari senior's unveiling ceremony was held. Teah was again pregnant thus, prohibited from the urupā. Teah was more upset this time, as she was unable to view the headstone.

Although Teah struggled with aspects of the tangi, she made a conscious decision not to dwell on those issues. Teah acknowledged her role within the tangi, which meant she had to accept any decisions made. Kaea and Teah perceived an enduring relationship with Hari senior, and the couple provided examples of how this was maintained by their whānau. One example included the naming of their son after Hari senior, which is noted by Stroebe et al. (1992) as a means of creating a connection between the dead and living. Kaea and Teah place equal emphasis on the Māori and Pākehā cultures within their parenting. The couple noted that although cultural differences are evident, they view difference as offering benefits to whānau.



## Chapter 6: Charles's Story

*“I have been to so many [marae] funerals. I have also been there with mud up to my knees, digging graves with the boys’ there, because that is what you do, and I have had all that. But for a Pākehā to have a Māori funeral, it has not been like that for me, it has not been an isolated case”.*

**Charles**



*Figure 4. “Red sails in the sunset”. (Photography: Neil Walter. Image used with permission)*

### **Interview Context**

*This chapter presents the story of Charles, who belongs to a bicultural whānau and self identifies as Pākehā. Charles is aged in his late 50’s and is a self- employed professional. Charles was married to Anahera, who identified as Māori and was employed as a teacher. Charles and Anahera have two children, Heni and Matiu, who are aged in their 30’s. Anahera died suddenly 9 years ago. Charles has since remarried. The researcher and contributor knew each other previously on a friendship basis. Names,*

*locations and other identifying information have been changed or omitted to protect the privacy of those concerned.*

## **Husband and Wife**

Charles was born in a semi-rural region in the North Island of New Zealand to what he described as a “...*white middle class*” family, who were financially comfortable. Charles described his cultural background as “...*really, really white*”, and he could not recall the family having any contact with Māori, “*My mother had some friends that were Māori, but we never knew who they were [laughter]. There was deep-seated racism really, it was an ‘us’ and ‘them’, never together.*” Despite the attitudes of his parents, Charles established many friendships with Māori peers, some of whom would remain lifelong friends. After completing High School, Charles worked in a small predominantly Māori community, where, “...*I learnt a little bit about life, it was ‘Once were Warriors’ personified.*” Charles lived in this area for a short period before deciding to travel overseas with friends. Boarding a ship for Europe, Charles struck up a conversation with a neighbouring passenger, Anahera.

Anahera originated from a small rural town with a strong Māori community. Anahera’s parents, Hirini and Areta were deeply involved in their marae and were active members of the church. Anahera’s religious faith remained a significant feature throughout her life. Hirini and Areta worked very hard to provide the best for their six children and were able to send two of them to boarding school; Anahera and her brother Hemi. At the age of 12 years, Anahera left home to attend a Māori boarding school and enjoyed the cultural and educational opportunities there. After completing boarding school, Anahera enrolled at Teachers’ Training College and once qualified, went on to teach at various schools around the North Island. During this time, Anahera reunited with a girlfriend from college and the pair boarded the same ship as Charles. Unbeknownst to Anahera, the young Pākehā man she sat next to on the ship would eventually become her husband.

After arriving in Europe, Charles left his friends and joined Anahera and her friend in their travels around Europe. The trio eventually settled in a rural

township and secured a flat near the local tavern. One night, Charles proposed to Anahera and the couple rang their respective parents to announce the good news. Charles suspected that his parents were not that enamoured with the engagement. However, Charles's brother, Edward, visited Hirini and Areta so that the two families could get to know each other. Charles was immediately accepted by Anahera's whānau, even though he was unknown to them, as he describes, "*...They did not really know me, but Anahera had not lived at home since she was 12 years old...all they wanted was the best for her, so they were fine as long as their girl was happy.*" Charles contrasted the reactions of both families, "*It was more of a shock for my parents than what it was for hers, because they [Hirini and Areta] lived in a rural district and although it was a settlement of Māori people, there were also many Pākehā.*" Charles's parents eventually got over the 'shock' of the engagement and accepted the relationship.

The couple continued with their time overseas until receiving news that Charles's father was unwell. The couple immediately returned to New Zealand and Charles helped with his father's business. Soon after arriving home, Charles and Anahera were married at the church next to Anahera's marae and went on to have two children, Heni and Matiu. Charles and Anahera believed that it was important for the children to be connected to their Māori heritage. During this period, the family enjoyed being close to both sets of grandparents'. Charles recalled many weekends spent with Anahera's parents, which centred on marae and church activities. Although Anahera may not have been as actively involved in the marae as others were, it was still a part of her life.

In the early stages of his marriage, Charles acknowledged that he, "*...had no understanding of Māori culture at all, least of all how things worked.*" Charles provided a vivid recollection of the first tangi he attended, for Anahera's Uncle Rahi,

*I had never seen a dead person before, or had close contact with how a marae worked. I got that at Uncle Rahi's tangi, it was my first taste of it. To this day, I remember going into the meeting house where he was lying and not knowing what to do. Hirini came onto*

*the marae with me and I was looking for a lead. I did not get one, instead I got a big hand on my back, and Hirini pushed me to the front. I followed what everyone else was doing, paid my respects, and gave [Uncle Rahi] a hongi [the ceremonial pressing of noses and forehead]. He was very cold and that was the first dead person I had ever seen.*

Through his life, Charles would participate in many tangihanga, which enhanced his understandings of the Māori world and influenced his own responses to death and grief,

*...until that first tangi I attended, I did not have that conception of how to cope with grief in the way that Māori do. As far as the cultural divide is concerned, I am converted to the Māori way of coping. Māori have it all over Pākehā when it comes to grief...In the Pākehā world, funerals do not allow the same feelings to come and go. I go to lots of funerals and they tell stories, but it is not like when you are at the marae, late at night, singing and sharing those stories with people. You share your grief instead of carrying it with you...and for me that is just so much easier.*

Charles elaborated on this point, noting that within tangihanga there are often opportunities to talk openly and honestly about the deceased,

*Everyone suffers in different ways, but because tangi is so open, you really celebrate the life of the person... Everyone says 'we are celebrating the life of so and so' and a few people might get up and tell a few funny stories, but they will not say if he was a bastard or not. I think that Pākehā are too politically correct, they do not want to say the wrong thing in case they offend someone. However, you get that on the marae, they do not give a rat's arse, and they will tell it like it is. If someone was a bastard, then they will say that. For me, that really helps with the whole grief process.*

Charles described how his engagement with tangihanga influenced his response to the death of his own father,

*One of the things that I remember very clearly was when my own Dad died and by then I had experienced how Māori treated death. Whereas, Pākehā leave the body sitting in a funeral home and they do not have that stuff that allows you to get rid of your grief like tangi does. I remember taking my niece with my own children to see my Dad. He had been very ill, but finally he was at peace and comfortable. However, when I returned my sister-in-law got angry with me, as she could not understand why you would take anyone to see a dead person. My sister-in-law was a Pākehā from the South Island.*

Soon after his father's death, Charles received a job promotion and the family relocated to the lower North Island. However, they found it difficult living away from the children's grandparents and eventually returned. Charles started his own business and Anahera worked alongside him before returning to teaching at a nearby primary school. She spent many years at this school and became a significant member of the community, which included the nearby marae.

Charles and Anahera went through a difficult time in their relationship, which included a period of separation. Although Anahera had always attended church, during the separation she became deeply involved in her religious faith. Charles firmly believes that Anahera's faith was her strength during this time and it helped to bring the couple back together. Charles and Anahera reconciled and continued happily with their life together.

### **Prior Arrangements and Understandings**

Throughout their relationship, Charles and Anahera did not discuss with each other what their wishes would be in the event of death. However, it would later emerge that Anahera had discussed this topic with close friends. Charles recalled his understanding of this conversation,

*Anahera had expressed to some friends, very directly, that she wanted to stay here. Part of that was the fact that the cemetery was*

*close to her school and looked out to the beach, but part of it was her faith in the church. She wanted to remain here.*

When Charles learnt of Anahera's final wishes, he had the following thoughts,

*...it was comforting to me and it seemed in tune with how she would have thought. She went away to school at such a young age and even though there were relatives buried at the urupā, there was not really a connection there. We went back there for funerals and that, but she never really had an urge to go back.*

Anahera's discussion of her final wishes would be extremely significant in the decision-making processes that followed Anahera's death.

### **The Tangi/Funeral**

A year after Charles and Anahera's reconciliation, they were involved in a car accident, in which Anahera died. Anahera's death devastated Charles, Heni, Matiu, and the entire whānau. The whānau had many matters to attend to after the accident, including considerations in relation to Anahera's tangi. As news of the accident began to spread, family, friends, and members of the community started to arrive at Charles's home. Devastated by grief, Charles was uncertain about considerations for the tangi, particularly where it would be held. Close friends of Charles and Anahera arrived at the home and shared with him a conversation with Anahera regarding her final wishes. This information brought considerable comfort as it removed some of the uncertainty surrounding arrangements for Anahera's tangi.

Members of Anahera's extended whānau began to arrive at the family home. Representatives from three marae expressed their connections to Anahera and each made claim for her tūpāpaku to return to their respective marae. Charles anticipated these claims and understood them as part of the tangi process,

*One of the things that happened of course was the whānau came and wanted to remove her back to the marae, which was not what we wanted. Of course, the people are going to want to take her back there, because it is a respect thing and that is the protocol.*

Charles explained that the claims that were made for Anahera carried differing meanings and intent. Two of the claims made acknowledged more distant genealogical connections to Anahera. Charles stated his perception that these claims were made out of respect rather than a real intent to take Anahera. Charles recognised that the third claim made on behalf of Anahera's parents expressed a very real intent to return Anahera to their urupā. Charles reflected on how he responded to these claims,

*It is amazing where strength comes from, particularly at that stage. I had to get up in front of them all and tell them the reasons why Anahera was not going anywhere. To their credit, they respected that, so we moved forward with the funeral and did what we had to do. It was a difficult time and I know they were not happy, they are probably still not happy, but, that was what Anahera wanted, so that is what we did.*

Charles elaborated on Anahera's wishes, which formed the basis of his response to the claim made by Anahera's whānau,

*Anahera had expressed to some friends very directly that she wanted to stay here. Part of that was the cemetery was close to her school and looked out to the beach; part of it was her faith in the church. She wanted to remain here because in the times that we went through, she had always gone to church but she got very deeply involved and it actually became her strength.*

During Anahera's tangi, there were two particular occasions where it was necessary for Charles to complete a difficult task. Charles believes that at these times, Anahera provided him with much needed strength. Charles's response to Anahera's whānau was the first of these two occasions. Although this task should have been quite difficult, Charles was surprised that it was relatively easy for him. Although Charles was sure that keeping Anahera at

home was the right decision, there was another important consideration. Anahera's mother, Areta was unwell and it was uncertain whether she would be fit to travel to Anahera's tangi,

*...that was probably the hardest thing, the fact that we did not know whether Areta could come to the funeral. By keeping Anahera here, it was preventing her mum from coming to the funeral. However, she came at the end of the day so that was ok.*

Once the whānau accepted that Anahera's tangi would not be held upon their marae, alternative arrangements were negotiated. Charles, Heni and Matiu decided that Anahera's tangi would be based at their family home,

*It was her place of peace, it was about her and I getting back together again and it was about where she belonged really... So to set it all up and have it as a tangi, because it was not a funeral it was a tangi. It was not about having her at home, it was about making the home a marae so we could have the full feeling of the way that we went... That was not just about my grief, but the kids' grief and the families', Anahera's family more so, because they are blood.*

Charles believed that the way in which Anahera's tangi was conducted, provided somewhat of a compromise for Anahera's whānau,

*I think for Anahera's immediate family that was why the tangi was fine as opposed to going down [to their marae]. Because we were doing things in the way that they thought, it should be done, although it may not have been within their wharenuī. They were ok, well they had to be. It is like anything, once things are done, you cannot change them.*

Anahera's brother, Hemi assumed a central role in facilitating the more formal and ceremonial aspects of the tangi, including the delivery of whaikōrero. Charles acknowledged Hemi in this regard, as it relieved him of tasks and allowed him to concentrate on coping with his grief,



*... [Hemi] is very much part of the church, as well as his [Māori] protocols. He had all that sorted so he took over that side of things. I did not have to organise anything, I just had to be there, moving through and coping with it all.*

Alongside Anahera's whānau, other significant aspects of her life were reflected in the tangi proceedings. Anahera was deeply loved by students, parents and staff from the school she had taught at. Anahera had also established relationships with people from the nearby marae, who viewed her in the highest regard. The school and the marae became integral parts of Anahera's tangi. Local kaumātua worked in conjunction with Hemi in officiating over the tangi ceremony. A priest from Anahera's Church, where she had been a devout member of the congregation, also joined the group. The priest performed prayers and other religious rituals, which acknowledged Anahera's strong faith.

When Anahera was returned to the whānau home from the funeral parlour, her pupils were given the honour of carrying her tūpāpaku home. The children, assisted by others, carried Anahera the full kilometre length of the winding driveway. As Anahera neared the dwelling, a karanga sounded from women standing in front of the house, welcoming Anahera home. When Anahera arrived, she was carried into the lounge and placed beside her whānau, who was seated on mattresses arranged in the room. Anahera remained at the home for several days, and from Charles's perspective the tangi was enacted, "*... in as much of a Māori way as we possibly could*". Anahera and Charles were well-recognised members of their community, and the numbers of people that attended the tangi were testament to this. Charles noted that they were fortunate that the home could accommodate all the visitors,

*...it was just like a marae, but then what is a marae? It is just like a house, it is a home really, where many people gather. That is what we had at our home, a place where many people could sleep and there were always people there. This included all the people that catered, the people that went diving and the people that went fishing.*

The size of the tangi and its location required careful planning and organisation. This included the erection of a marquee, intentionally located on the lawn away from the dwelling where Anahera's tūpāpaku was situated. In the marquee, members of the community worked in shifts, catering for the multitudes of visitors. Charles expressed his gratitude towards the many people who donated time and resources, including substantial quantities of food. Charles highlighted the role of the funeral director in how the tangi was organised and enacted,

*I think it is a consideration in [the research], it depends on the experience that the funeral director has and how they organise things. The funeral director had been in the area for so long and we have a predominately Māori population. If it had been another funeral director, maybe the same empathy to actually getting it to the physical stage of having a tangi might not have been there. That included having [Anahera] here and getting everything organised so it was like a marae.*

On the final day of the tangi, a formal service was held at Anahera's church in the nearby township. This particular church was a significant factor in the decision to hold Anahera's tangi at the family home. Anahera was an active member of the church, attending services throughout the week, with Charles joining her for the Sunday service. Charles and his children felt that Anahera's final service should be held in this particular church. Anahera's service was attended by many people, far beyond the capacity of the church, the overflow congregated in the surrounding grounds.

At the conclusion of the service, Anahera was carried into the funeral hearse for her final journey. The funeral cortege travelled out towards the coast to reach the cemetery that Anahera had mentioned previously to her friends. The cemetery was situated near Anahera's school and looked out to the beach where their whānau had spent much time. On the way, the hearse took a slight detour through the school as a last 'goodbye' to Anahera. The funeral party gathered at the gravesite and the entire cemetery was filled with people. Charles spoke at the cemetery, but has no recollection of what he said, although many commented later that his speech was very

appropriate. Charles described a sense of Anahera providing him with much needed strength during his speech. Although the weather was clear and fine on this day, a singular whirlwind-spiralled leaves up into the sky and people remarked on the significance of this. Anahera was interred and the funeral party returned to Charles's home for a kai hākari. Charles recounted earlier that his sister-in-law became upset when he took her daughter to see her deceased grandfather at the funeral. However, her experience of Anahera's tangi provided her with a different perspective,

*My sister-in-law made the comment that she could now understand why Māori take so much time off work to attend a tangi. That was not about the length of time, it was about how the grief is shared. It is sharing the stories about what that person was like, good and bad. I think that is something my sister in law benefitted from, she now has a better appreciation of how to cope with grief.*

Six weeks after Anahera's tangi, Charles and the wider whānau gathered at Anahera's marae for a kawe mate ceremony [carrying of the deceased's spirit to significant locations]. Charles explained that the purpose of this ceremony was to return Anahera's spirit back to her marae. The ceremony provided a remembrance of Anahera's life alongside blessings for the family and the cemetery where Anahera was interred. There were some difficulties in organising this event; however, it was very important to Charles. Charles perceived the kawe mate ceremony as a symbol of his respect for Anahera's marae and the place of her childhood.

## **Looking Back on What Happened**

As Charles reflected back on Anahera's tangi, he could not think of anything he would change. Charles also considered this in relation to Heni and Matiu, "...from my children's' perspective, I would not have had it any other way, I would not have changed anything." However, Charles is aware that Anahera's whānau have recently spoken to Heni about returning Anahera to their whānau urupā, an action arising from the fact that Charles has remarried. Charles acknowledged that he had considered this course of action after the tangi, "I thought at one stage it would be a good idea to take

*her [back to the marae] and put her back there with her Mum and Dad. But it is a physical thing and the spiritual side has already gone.”* Charles elaborated on how he felt about the matter now,

*She is at peace up there and that is the thing. But, it is coming out now that Anahera’s family want to take her body back to the urupā, but what is the point? If they addressed that in the way of her [religious] beliefs, she is in a better place. She would believe that and that is where she is. Why upset what is there and what has been done?*

Charles’s new partner has expressed her desire to live elsewhere. Charles wanted to support this move, particularly as it would allow him to live closer to his children and grandchildren. However, the prospect of selling the family home and moving from the area has raised some intense emotions for Charles and he became visibly upset,

*That is one of the things at the back of my mind about selling up and moving away, that means leaving [Anahera] behind. The house I can cope with, I am not worried about that because I know I have to move forward. However, if I leave the area she is here and no one else.*

Charles is also worried that his children might be unhappy about his selling the family home and moving away.

## **Looking Forward and Memorialising**

Charles, Heni and Matiu organised the unveiling ceremony to commemorate the anniversary of Anahera’s death. Charles remembers that all of Anahera’s whānau travelled to attend the ceremony. Charles did not have many recollections of the unveiling other than it provided an opportunity to celebrate Anahera’s life. Charles also emphasised that from his perspective, the unveiling ceremony served as a reminder that Anahera is at peace and is in a, “...*better place*”.

## Enduring Relationships

It was apparent throughout the interview that Anahera's sudden death still has a profound impact upon Charles,

*It is traumatic when someone dies, but the circumstances of Anahera's death made it very, traumatic. As you can see, it still affects me now, but I close it off. There is enough sadness around without me being a sad bastard as well. Sometimes I think it would be hard for people to understand just how I do feel and what goes on with me. They say that something shared is halved, but I do not want to share a lot of the stuff that I have there. Because, I cannot understand it and I do not think I ever will...You cannot change things, but it is always there and you cannot forget that.*

Charles emphasised that the way in which Anahera's tangi was conducted supported his grief process, "... *I would not have gotten through the funeral if it had of been done any other way*". Charles believes that if the circumstances of Anahera's death were different, he would be moving forward better with his grief. Charles visits Anahera's grave often and he believes that this has helped him to cope. Within these visits, Charles enjoys the opportunity to sit quietly and talk to Anahera. Charles views these visits as very private and he prefers not to discuss his visits with others. Charles is unsure whether he would have been able to visit Anahera so frequently if she was buried in her whānau urupā because of the distance.

Charles shared an experience he had 18 months ago which he finds difficult to explain. One windy night, Charles was travelling along the beach when images appeared to emerge out of the sand. The images seemed to depict old kaumātua, Hirini and Anahera. Charles suddenly stopped his vehicle and,

*...There was a big log right in front of me and I did not see it. I did not even know where I was, I had travelled all that way up the beach. I was dragged by these images in the sand, I was following them and they were calling me, it was so weird.*

When Charles eventually arrived home, he telephoned a close friend and to his surprise,

*... [My friend] started burbling and carrying on before I had even told him what had happened. He said to me 'You have had something happen to you' and I said to him 'Yes I have, but how do you know?' and he said 'I can tell, I can feel it'.*

As Charles spoke of this experience, he drew a link to some of the dreams he has been having of late,

*Certain things come and visit you every so often; I have been having all these weird dreams lately. I do not know if it is Anahera actually coming to visit me with what is happening at home or what. I have not dreamt like that for ages, all those Kēhua [ghost] have been revisiting. But it is your head, your conscience, it really is.*

### **Charles's Final Wishes**

Following Anahera's tangi, Charles has given his lawyer clear instructions for what is to happen in the event of his own death. Charles has decided to be cremated and his ashes spread on the beach near where Anahera is buried. Charles explained his reasons for this decision in the following way, *"That is about trying to make things easier for those that are still living, my kids, my wife and of course Anahera. It is about a compromise really."* Charles has not discussed this with his family and he is unsure how they will feel about his wishes. Charles was philosophical about how his family may respond to his wishes, *"...well, it's a compromise. That is the thing, sometimes you try to keep everyone happy and you are the one that is not in the end. It is just one of those things that will happen from time to time."*

### **Charles's Advice for Bicultural Whānau**

As the interview neared its conclusion, Charles offered some advice for bicultural whānau facing bereavement,

*You cannot change the colour of your skin, but you can certainly change the way that you view things... Swing to the Māori way of*

*approaching a tangi. That is not about the way that they do it but how it will help you cope with grief.*

As Charles discussed his advice for bicultural whānau, he extended on this to include Pākehā,

*I think that Pākehā should attend a few tangi so they can actually understand where Māori are at. Instead of thinking, Māori are bad because they make up this proportion of people in our jails. If they saw that side of things maybe they would be more accepting of the culture that is still very much a part of Māori and should be preserved, tangi and hui [gatherings, meetings] is a part of that... I honestly think that as a total society we could move further forward if more Pākehā experienced life on the marae.*

## **Significant Contributions**

Charles and Anahera's respective family and whānau had different reactions to their relationship. Anahera's whānau accepted Charles immediately, whereas Charles's family had some issues, which may have been connected to underlying racism. Charles noticed cultural differences in the relationship, as he had limited knowledge of Māori culture. Charles developed strong relationships with Anahera's whānau and actively participated in marae-based events. Charles's engagement extended his understandings of Māori culture; such undertakings are key to intercultural communication (Samovar et al., 2007). Charles and Anahera's children grew up connected to both Māori and Pākehā cultures. Anahera died in a tragic accident and the whānau faced the dilemma of deciding where her tangi would be located. It emerged that Anahera had expressed to friends her wish to be buried near her home.

Members of Anahera's whānau, hapū and Iwi whānau presented claims to return Anahera to three different marae. Charles anticipated these claims and understood their meaning and intent. The claims acknowledged the Anahera's kinship connections and were a means of honouring her and her genealogies. These challenges were understood and anticipated by Charles and resolution became part of the tangi process. Charles responded to these

claims by explaining Anahera's wishes and stating that her tangi would be conducted at the whānau home. Although Anahera's whānau were unhappy, they respected the decision that was made. Charles withdrew from the decision making process, which allowed Anahera's whānau to fulfil this role. Charles was then able to concentrate on coping with his grief. The tangi arrangements reflected protocols that were clearly derived from marae processes, which attempted to create a compromise for Anahera's whānau. Anahera's brother, assisted by local kaumātua and a priest, conducted the ceremonial aspects of the tangi. The tangi required careful planning and organising, which drew on resources from the broader community. Support networks provided instrumental and emotional support to the bereaved, buffering the traumatic impact of death (Cohen & Wills, 1985). These included community and cultural networks who mobilised significant resources to meet the necessary demands for catering, hosting and ritual enactments (c.f Nikora (2016)). These considerable processes were coordinated with assistance from the funeral director, who was very experienced with Māori death rituals and processes. Anahera was interred in a public cemetery near the whānau home. A kawē mate ceremony was conducted at Anahera's marae, which returned Anahera's spirit to her marae. Charles felt that this provided an opportunity to celebrate Anahera's life and symbolised respect for her whānau and marae, similarly described in Sinclair's (1990) commentary on Māori death rituals and identity.

Charles grief is still very evident and the conflict over Anahera's burial location has recently re-emerged. Charles has since remarried and his second wife would like to move from the area. Charles has mixed feelings over the prospect of leaving Anahera behind, despite his desire to move forward in his life. Anahera's whānau have reiterated their wish to return Anahera to the whānau urupā. Charles had previously considered this seriously, but addressed the issue with Anahera's faith, in that her spirit has moved on. Charles described an enduring relationship with Anahera, providing examples of a spiritual nature. Research indicates that a significant number of bereaved individuals experience such post death encounters (Nowatzki & Grant-Kalischuk, 2009). Charles's final wishes seek to provide a compromise for Anahera, their children and his second



wife. Charles made observations from his experiences of both Māori and Pākehā death rituals, noting grief can be expressed in diverse ways across both individuals and cultures. Charles emphasised his preference for Māori responses to death within tangi, which he had experienced as therapeutic and supportive. Charles emphasised tangihanga as facilitating the sharing of grief and stories about the deceased that were open and honest. In this way, the bereaved community constructed an accurate and nuanced portrayal of the deceased and their relationships and meaning to others, Charles felt that this eased his grieving processes significantly. Charles's reflections sit well within Walter's (1996) suggested model of grief, which asserts that the purpose of grief is the construction of a durable biography of the deceased by the bereaved collectively, which enables them to integrate a memory of the deceased within and beyond the bereavement. Charles noted that Pākehā participation within tangihanga could afford a more balanced and appreciative perspective of Te Ao Māori, noting the reflections of a family member that demonstrated this point. This was similarly raised by (Harré 1966), who noted that negative ethnic stereotypes could be dismantled in contexts that afforded a close association between Māori and Pākehā.

## Chapter 7: Huia's Story

*“...As I sit here with you today, I do not know if my father’s ashes have been uplifted. We cannot uplift them because [Ruth] is the executor of his will. That was reinforced through the process by the funeral director. For all I know, my father’s ashes could still be [at the funeral home]. My stepmother will do whatever she likes with them and I do not know what that is”. **Huia***



Figure 5. “Tom's Kingfisher”. Buller, Walter Lawry. *Birds of New Zealand*.1888

### Interview Context

*The following chapter presents the story of Huia, who is of Māori and Pākehā descent. Huia’s mother identifies as Māori and Huia’s father is described as Pākehā. Huia’s parent's divorced when Huia was 3 years old. Huia has many siblings, including those from her parents’ previous and*

*subsequent marriages. Huia's father died unexpectedly three weeks prior to the interview. The researcher previously knew the contributor through university related networks. Names, locations and other identifying information have been changed or omitted to protect the privacy of those concerned.*

## **Father and Daughter**

Tom was born 5th generation Irish in a rural part of New Zealand. In the early years of Tom's life, his family encountered difficulties and he was placed into the care of an orphanage. Tom eventually returned to his family, however, "*...a lot of damage had been done*". Huia remembered Tom sharing painful memories from the orphanage, including being beaten for using his left hand for writing. Huia also acknowledged the impact that other critical events had within Tom's family of origin. "*...Unfortunately [Tom's] mother was raped and his grandmother was raped, so he comes from a lineage of that*". Tom's mother appeared to hold racist attitudes towards Māori, which Huia found difficult to understand. Huia's confusion about this racism was linked to the fact that Tom's mother's name was a Māori name. Huia commented on this further, "*... Scratch the surface and apparently there is some whakapapa there, but nobody wants to talk about it on that side of the family...*" Despite the attitudes held by Tom's family, he grew up surrounded by Māori people and developed an affinity with the Māori culture. In Tom's early adulthood, he was employed as a bushman and he enjoyed a close relationship with the natural world. "*... [Tom] did a lot of hunting and camping and for periods in his life, he actually lived off the land completely. During one period, he lived entirely off kaimoana [seafood]*".

As a young man, Tom married a Pākehā woman and the couple had two children. This relationship eventually ended and Tom was left to raise the children on his own. Tom found this difficult to manage and he subsequently advertised for a housekeeper. From the applicants, Tom selected a young Māori woman, Puti, for the position. Puti came from a large whānau, which included 15 other siblings. Huia described Puti's parents as "*...humble hardworking people*" but the whānau were relatively poor. Huia

described Puti's mother in the following way, "*[Puti] was what we would call a full blooded Māori. She was raised in the Ringatū faith, and came from a long line of very humble healers*". Puti excelled in her education and was awarded a scholarship to attend a Māori boarding school. Although the school was Māori orientated, Huia described the environment as being based on Pākehā processes and values. Puti was influenced by these values, alongside wider societal aspects occurring in New Zealand during this time. "*[Puti] was part of that generation that was assimilated into thinking that you do not need your reo and you do not need to go back to your marae*". Despite this, Huia described Puti as "*...very tūturu [culturally confirmed] in some ways*". Puti's childhood had also been marked by sexual abuse, which occurred throughout a significant period of her childhood.

When Puti reached the age of sixteen, her mother contracted tuberculosis, which resulted in her death. Puti assume the role of caregiver for her siblings. As they grew older, Puti was able to begin a nursing career but this career path ended abruptly when Puti encountered an infectious disease. She found it difficult to secure other employment but she successfully applied for the housekeeper position advertised by Tom. Soon after accepting this position, Tom and Puti fell in love and subsequently married. Puti wholeheartedly accepted Tom's children from his previous marriage and the couple went on to have five other children, which included Huia.

Puti and Tom had a difficult marriage marred by domestic violence. Huia explained this further, "*...You can kind of see how that came about, both of them with their wounds that had not healed*". Despite these issues between Tom and Puti, they both loved their children immensely. Huia acknowledged this the following passage, "*There were a lot of things that were not right about the marriage, but the parents' loved the children. We had a very good Dad and a very good Mum, they adored us*". Sadly, one of Tom and Puti's daughters died when she was only 2 months old. Huia underlined the significance of this to her whānau, "*There was never a moment in my life where I did not know grief. That was just part of our family culture. The story about my sister's life and death was just part of our family story*". Tom and Puti's marriage deteriorated and the couple

separated when Huia was 3 years old. Tom moved out of the family home and Huia reflected on the impact that this had upon her,

*I adored my father when I was little but when he failed to come home, I think the child grieved and buried him, somewhat symbolically. The love I carried and still carry for my father is the love of a child for the perfect father. However, that was a very long time ago, because I am now nearly 50.*

Puti and the children relocated to the East Coast of the North Island. Puti faced many barriers as she strived to support her young whānau. As this occurred during the 1960's, there were few job prospects for women, particularly for Māori women. There were also no welfare benefits or other support services for women in Puti's situation. With limited options available to her, Puti obtained another housekeeper position. Puti began a relationship with her employer and they married before having two more children. As Puti grew older, she reconnected with her marae and became involved in land issues. As Huia spoke of her mother, she underlined some of Puti's spiritual qualities, "...My mother is very matakite [clairvoyant]... as a child she got spooked by a lot of matakite stuff. She works with it but does not want to go into any of those sorts of traditional things".

Throughout this period, Tom became somewhat estranged from his children and maintained only sporadic contact with them. Tom's involvement with his children appeared to coincide with the times that Tom was 'between' relationships. Huia recalled how her and her siblings were treated on a rare visit with Tom and his third wife,

*She cooked dinner and had dinner with Dad and her children in the dining room. My siblings and I were put into a separate room. We experienced that kind of discrimination...Maybe it was too difficult for her to embrace his children. I do not know how much of that was to do with our ethnicity as Māori.*

Eventually, this relationship ended and Tom began to spend more time with his children. During this time, Huia had many happy memories of staying with Tom in his home near the coast. "We could go there and have holidays

*with him, it was cool. We loved spending time with our Dad, we had fun with him*". After a period on his own, Tom began a relationship with Ruth. Ruth was a Pākehā woman, who had four teenage children from a previous relationship. Ruth initially appeared to accept Tom's children and Huia and some of her siblings were invited to join them on holiday, which Huia remembered fondly as their "*...first real holiday*". As Huia grew older, she became aware that Ruth appeared to exert a considerable amount of control over Tom's relationship with the children. Huia explained this dynamic further in the following quote, "*...You had to fuss over the stepmother in order to have a relationship with your father*". Huia described visits with Tom as "*...constrained and controlled contacts...I think that [Ruth] orchestrated most of the contact*". Huia explained this further, "*[Tom's] relationship with his Māori children was predicated on how much involvement or permission his Pākehā wife would allow him to have at any one time*". From Huia's perspective, this allowed Ruth to present herself in the following light, "*[Ruth] got to shine, being the benevolent stepmother, having these very superficial relationships with [Tom's] children*". Huia also suspected that Ruth harboured some jealousy towards Tom's children, often comparing them with her own children in a competitive vein. Huia felt uncomfortable with these dynamics, which she referred to as "*...game playing*". However, she did acknowledge that her eldest sister, Hinemoa, supported Ruth's relationship with Tom.

As Huia became a young adult, her relationship with Tom became very strained. As Huia reflected on this, she noted two aspects that impacted negatively on their relationship. At the age of 20 years, Huia began to reveal to family members that she was a lesbian. When Huia advised Ruth of this, her step-mother insisted that this information was withheld from Tom. Ruth stated that Tom would make her "*...life hell...and [Tom] would have a heart attack.*" Huia also perceived that the developing rift between her and Tom was influenced by their different personalities,

*I am very ngāwari [gentle]... [Tom] had this way of relating that was very caustic. Because I was so insecure and damaged through*

*my own loss and grief, I just could not bear it. So I chose not to have much to do with him.*

This situation resulted in Huia becoming estranged from Tom, which remained in effect for several years.

Some five years ago, Huia decided to attempt to reconcile with Tom and she contacted him accordingly. Similar to her previous experiences, Huia felt obligated to make a 'fuss' over Ruth to enable contact with Tom. The relationship between father and daughter improved and Huia decided to express her feelings towards Tom and conveyed to him that he had been a wonderful father who she had been very happy with. Tom received these messages well and Huia could see that it had great meaning for him. As Father's Day approached that year, Huia realised that due to work commitments, she would be near Tom's home on this day. Accordingly, Huia rang Ruth to ask if she and Alice could visit on Father's day. Ruth responded cordially and welcomed this suggestion with a promise to organise an afternoon tea for them.

The intended Father's day visit held great meaning for Huia, particularly as it would be the first time she had visited Tom's home in over 20 years,

*I felt that this was good because my partner and I had worked for a number of years on building a relationship. We could build this bridge and literally go over the landscape to where [Tom and Ruth] lived.*

As Huia and Alice arrived at Tom and Ruth's home, they were surprised to find the driveway filled with vehicles. As Huia and Alice entered the home, they were greeted by a large gathering of Tom and Ruth's family. Huia and Alice felt confused and awkward, as Ruth had not advised that a family occasion had been arranged. Huia sat with Tom, who was in high spirits following a celebratory luncheon that the group had attended nearby. Tom commented to Huia that she should have joined them on the outing. As Huia looked around the room, it was obvious that she and Alice were the only ones who had not attended the luncheon. Huia and Alice felt extremely hurt and excluded, "...Everyone else in the room went and there was me and my

*partner just sitting there. I looked at my partner and I could feel the pain in my chest*". At the first opportunity, Huia and Alice made excuses to leave and said goodbye. After their departure, Huia turned to Alice and said "... *We will never go back*'. *Because to me that was very disrespectful and I felt very whakamā [embarrassed] over that*".

Huia distanced herself from Tom and Ruth, before deciding once again to initiate contact. Huia began to meet Tom for coffee and as father's day approached, she invited Tom and Ruth to her home for a special afternoon tea. Huia prepared a lovely meal and presented Tom with some special gifts, one of which represented the area that Huia and her siblings had lived with Tom in childhood. The afternoon went exceedingly well and Tom appeared to have a great time, as Huia described "...*We really made a fuss of him and [Tom] was like the kingpin, he was really chuffed*". Huia was extremely grateful for this special time spent with Tom. She found relating to Tom easier, as he had appeared to lose the "...*causticness from his tongue*". This helped Huia to gain a better sense of who Tom was as person in his own right and she articulated some of her understandings of Tom,

*He was filled with complexities my father. He was a bird man, he loved birds, he talked to birds, he photographed them and he whistled like a bird. He was very, very aroha [loving] but also, I think, very insecure as a person.*

### **Prior Arrangements and Understandings**

Although Huia and Tom's relationship was difficult at times, Tom maintained a close connection with two of his children, Hinemoa and Moana. Tom and Moana were very close, and Tom confided in her that he was unhappy and wanted to end his relationship with Ruth. Hinemoa also remained close to Tom over the years, and Tom had entrusted Hinemoa with a particular task in the event of his death. Huia shared her understanding of Tom's request, "...*Before Dad died he asked [Hinemoa] to promise him that she would help Ruth and Sam to give him a proper burial.*" Tom did not provide Hinemoa with any specific instructions for his



funeral. However, Huia commented on what she thought Tom may have wanted,

*My father was Pākehā and a very ‘proper’ Kiwi man. He would not have wanted a tangihanga... but he would have wanted something where he could be proud and be proud of his family. He would not have wanted to be buried as a pauper or an orphan. He would have liked to have thought that his mana was looked after.*

Hinemoa took the promise that she made to her father very seriously. Hinemoa endeavoured to uphold this request, despite the conflict that eventuated at Tom’s death.

### **The Tangi/Funeral**

A few weeks prior to Tom’s death, Huia attended a work related meeting in a nearby city. Shortly after the meeting began, Huia heard the distinct bird call of a ruru, or native owl. Huia scanned the room for the ruru, to no avail. Huia asked her neighbouring colleague if they had also heard the noise. The colleague looked at Huia sadly before replying that he had not heard the ruru. Huia’s immediate thought was “...*thank-you tipuna [ancestors], I have been warned*”. Huia believed that the ruru call was a message from her ancestors, warning of an impending death in her whānau. The ruru call was so significant to Huia, that she described to her colleagues what had happened during feedback after the meeting, “...*I talked about mātauranga Māori, and when the ruru called. I told the group that I was looking around the room to see where [the ruru] was. But then I realised, I was in a room and outside was only an urbanised hotel complex*”.

Several weeks after Huia’s meeting, she gathered with her whānau to celebrate the birthday of a mokopuna [grandchild]. As Huia recalled the occasion, she spoke fondly of how she felt on this day,

*... It was a beautiful day, in that the weather was wet and our whānau, friends and children were crammed into this dining room. But the aroha was amazing... it was beautiful and I felt very blessed to have such a wonderful whānau. It was really awesome.*

Eventually, Huia and Alice said goodbye to the group and departed for home. As the couple neared their destination, Huia noticed several missed calls from Hinemoa to her cell phone, which were marked 'urgent'. Huia immediately returned her sister's call and was advised that Tom had died suddenly but peacefully. Although this was the information that been relayed to Hinemoa, they would later discover that this account of Tom's death was inaccurate. Tom had collapsed at home and Ruth had called an ambulance. Huia understood that the medics were unable to revive Tom, but worked on him for quite some time after he died, "... *He did not die immediately, but he was dying. [The medics] were working on [Tom] and it was pretty hard on him*". Immediately after Tom's death, Ruth requested that his tūpāpaku was uplifted by the funeral director as soon as possible. Huia was upset by this request and found it difficult to understand. Huia suggested that perhaps it was due to Ruth's belief that "...*when somebody is dead, they are dead, and that is it*". Fortunately, Ruth's daughter had intervened and suggested that Tom remained at the home until Huia and Hinemoa had arrived. Huia and Hinemoa were extremely grateful to their step sister and thanked her several times for considering them in this way.

Huia's immediate concern after Tom's death was to be with him as soon as possible. Huia asked Hinemoa to ring Ruth with this request on their behalf. Huia emphasised that she did not feel it would be appropriate to turn up at Tom and Ruth's home unannounced. Huia contrasted this to what would normally occur after a death in her whānau, "*In our whānau, we would just rock up. But in a Pākehā whānau, it did not feel like you could just do that*". Huia was also mindful of the difficult dynamics her and some of her siblings had experienced in their relationship with Ruth. Ruth consented for Huia and her whānau to visit with Tom at their home. Hinemoa continued to contact various whānau members with the news of Tom's death. Huia and Alice began to make preparations for their journey to Tom's home, which was some distance away. Alice suggested that they stopped for soup and a hot beverage before leaving; she commented "...*We do not know how long we are going to be*".

When Huia and Alice arrived at Tom and Ruth's home, they were shocked to find only two vehicles parked in the driveway,

*If this was my mother who had died, cars would be all around her house, down the driveway and spilling out onto the road... Here was my Dad and there were only two bloody cars! I thought to myself 'What the fuck is going on?'*

Once Huia and Alice got out of their vehicle, Huia suggested that they blessed themselves with the sacred water that they had packed for this purpose. Huia felt that this was the right thing to do in the circumstances, as she stated to Alice "...We do not know what we are going to get ourselves into here".

Huia and Alice entered Tom's home and were greeted by Ruth, two of her daughters and two of Ruth's neighbours. Huia searched the room for her father, "*I could not see my Dad. He was not on the floor and he was not in his chair. I thought 'Where in the hell is my father?'*" Huia's thoughts were interrupted by Ruth's neighbour, who offered her a cup of tea. Huia commented on how this gesture made her feel, "*I was really offended, but I had to respect that this was Pākehā culture. Everything is fixed with a cup of tea. But, you could not fix this with a cup of tea, sorry, this is not our kaupapa*". Despite how she felt, Huia graciously accepted the offered drink, even though she wanted to extricate herself to be with Tom. Huia eventually turned to Ruth to enquire where Tom was. Ruth gestured towards the spare room along the hallway. Throughout this conversation, Huia remembers being careful to be "...ngāwari" and using deference in her tone. Huia carefully asked Ruth if they could go down to the room to "...say 'hi' to Tom". Huia explained her careful treatment of Ruth, "...Because with Ruth, it is all about her. Dad might have died, but she is the one that had the 'experience'. It was not about the tūpāpaku. It was about the person who was living and all that had happened to them".

Huia and Alice walked down the hallway to the spare room to see Tom. Huia offered a vivid description of what they saw as they entered the room,

*We walked in and both got a fright. My father was unrecognisable. Dad's face was distorted and his mouth was hung open. I have never seen him without [dentures] and he was grey. The thing that struck me was that the sheet only came to his chest and he was naked. Dad was absolutely whakamā and I know this in every cell of my body. I knew this and my partner knew it too.*

Huia approached Tom and began to speak to him in a soothing tone, “Hello Dad, I know you have had a big shock ... It is ok, we are here now and we are going to help you. Dad, it is ok, it is alright. You have been on your own, but we are here now”. Huia proceeded to stroke Tom’s shoulders, telling him, “You do not like having your body uncovered like this, do you? I am going to tuck this blanket up around your neck, Dad”. Huia smoothed the blanket over and rubbed Tom’s arms and face and kissed him. Huia told Tom how much she loved him and what a beautiful father he had been. Huia became momentarily aware of Ruth and the others in the house,

*There is this thin wall between us, with my father and what is happening in the lounge. The people there were talking about ‘the crisis’ and what they were going through. That was their focus and our focus was here, with my father and he was in trauma.*

Huia and Alice stood beside Tom and began to recite karakia and sing waiata in continuous succession. Huia believed that through this process, Tom’s tūpāpaku began to “...settle”. Huia placed another blanket around Tom and assured him that Hinemoa and her husband Pou were on their way to be with him. As Hinemoa and her husband neared the home, Huia gave Pou specific instructions for their arrival, “Dad has not been very good. When you get here, bring my sister up and wait in the lounge. I will come and bring you through”. Huia remembers Ruth and her daughters’ entering the room for brief periods. However, Ruth and her daughters were obviously distressed and Huia felt that they may have found the room “...cold and upsetting”.

Once Hinemoa and Pou arrived, Huia met them in the lounge and escorted through to Tom. Huia offered a moving description of the way in which she acknowledged Hinemoa's arrival,

*I held onto my father's feet and anchored his tūpāpaku with my body. I did a karanga for Hinemoa as she came into the room. She is my eldest sister, the first born of Dad's Māori children and [the karanga] just came out. I thought to myself 'I should not do that karanga because I am in a Pākehā house and I do not think they will like it'. But something just came up out of me, because it was the right tikanga. That was my father and that was my tuākana [older sister].*

Hinemoa sat beside her father and Huia felt that with her presence, Tom's tūpāpaku [deceased body] "...settled down a lot more". The group continued to recite karakia and sing waiata. Huia began to notice a subtle change in the room's atmosphere, "...Of course, after singing for quite a number of hours, things settled and it started to warm up in the room". Hinemoa found Tom's dentures and Alice carefully re-inserted them for Tom. Huia was exhausted and there was hardly any space in the room for her sleep. Huia felt assured that Tom's tūpāpaku had 'settled' and she went to find somewhere to rest for a few hours. This also allowed Hinemoa and Pou to have some special time with Tom. As Huia looked for somewhere to sleep, she was astounded to find that Ruth's family and friends had departed. Ruth was alone in the lounge, where she slept on the couch. Huia allowed herself only a brief rest, as she felt that her time with Tom was "...limited".

When Huia re-joined the others with Tom, she noticed a significant change in the room, "[Tom] was looking like his old self. He was serene and the energy in the room was beautiful. His mouth had closed and he looked exactly like he did in life. It was very healing for him having my tuākana and Pou there". Huia believes that Ruth noticed this difference also, and the following morning she began to spend longer periods in the room. Huia welcomed Ruth during these times and asked if she had any particular songs that she would like the group to sing. Huia felt that Ruth was co-directing what was occurring in the room. Ruth requested a hymn, which had been a

favourite of Tom's. Huia was aware that Ruth had not yet approached Tom and she gently encouraged Ruth to do so. Ruth sat down next to Tom and the group began to sing Tom's favourite hymn,

*[Ruth] just collapsed on Dad's chest and cried and cried and I praised God. I was so pleased she could have that moment with him, this was her husband of 35 years. Although their marriage was rocky, sometimes you miss a sore toe when you have had it for a month.*

Huia emphasised that this time spent with Tom, appeared to have a beneficial impact on everyone at the house, "...*There was a healing, not just with our whānau, but there was a healing for [Ruth's] family also. It was really beautiful and I do not think that anyone could deny that*".

Ruth eventually went back into the lounge, leaving Huia, Alice, Hinemoa and Pou, alone with Tom. Huia looked up and saw a kingfisher perched outside the window, and she felt as though the bird had come to see Tom. She stood up from her chair and gave a mihi [greeting] to the kingfisher. Huia acknowledged the role of Pou during this time, who she likened to a "...*anchor*", particularly for his wife, Hinemoa. Hinemoa was very upset and "...*mokemoke*" [loneliness, sadness], as she had been very close to Tom. Pou seemed to understand the significance of the kingfisher and instructed Huia to sing a waiata to the bird. When Huia finished singing, everyone in the room was crying. Hinemoa turned to Huia and said, "...*That is Dad's kingfisher. Dad looked for the kingfisher every morning, Dad used to photograph him and talk to him*". Huia was unaware of Tom's fondness for the kingfisher and she described how moving this moment was for her, "...*It was beautiful, it was one of the most special moments for me*".

Just prior to the funeral director arriving the group commenced final rituals, which Huia described, "*We had this service, with karakia and waiata. We were getting ourselves prepared. Dad was ok, but we needed to get ourselves ready to let him go with the funeral director*". When the funeral director and his assistant arrived, Huia sensed that they were "...*hurried*". Huia went and spoke to the funeral director, advising him that the whānau

were having a final karakia and waiata. The funeral director assured Huia to take her time. Yet, within a few minutes he had become impatient and Huia and her whānau hastened to complete their service. When the funeral director entered the room to collect Tom, Huia requested for her father to be taken down uncovered and she explained this to the funeral director, “*I want him to be able to have the air on his face. [Tom’s] whare [home] is surrounded by the moana [ocean] and the ngahere [forest] and I want him to see all of that*”. However, the funeral director became upset with Huia and denied her request callously, citing reasons of hygiene.

Huia did not pursue the matter any further, but stated that Alice would remain in the room whilst Tom’s tūpāpaku was prepared for transportation. This was due to Alice’s experience with tūpāpaku, as a registered nurse in the field of palliative and hospice care. Alice was distressed by the way in which the funeral directors undertook the removal of Tom’s body,

*First of all when [the funeral directors] went in they did not mihi to my father, they treated him very roughly and they did not use the protocols that are in place for moving tūpāpaku and they treated him very disrespectfully.*

Huia forewarned her whānau about the emotional difficulty of this process. In recognition of this, Huia began to sing waiata for Tom as he was carried down to the hearse. However, this became very difficult, as Tom’s tūpāpaku was banged along the walls and at times, ‘upended’ through the house. Huia recounted,

*... It was a challenge to keep the waiata going in the energy of it, with the disrespect to my father’s tūpāpaku. If I had not been able to contain that, I do not think my whānau could have coped, particularly with the poor handling of [Tom’s] tūpāpaku.*

In Huia’s opinion, this situation could have been avoided, if the whānau had been consulted about the best exit route. Huia noted an easily accessible exit door beside the lounge. As Tom’s tūpāpaku was placed inside the hearse, Huia recited a final karakia and waiata. Meanwhile, the funeral director made his impatience known, pointedly checking the time on his cell phone.

Huia felt this was extremely disrespectful and upsetting. As the hearse departed, Huia sang a final karanga until the vehicle disappeared from view.

As preparations for Tom's funeral began, Ruth advised that a six day delay would be imposed on the funeral arrangements, to allow her son, Sam, to return from overseas. Ruth made arrangements for Tom's tūpāpaku to be left at the funeral home during this time. Huia was very upset about this matter, particularly as various reasons were given for Sam's delay. Huia and her whānau were eventually told that Sam had postponed his journey to complete a work contract. Huia found this "...*absolutely offensive*", as she explained further,

*... It meant that we could not release Dad; it was a long time for him to hang around. [Dad] was not going to leave his tūpāpaku until he had been put in the ground or burnt. It was also a long time for us to carry his energy in that way. It was a long time for a whānau under stress to wait to do the right thing by him.*

Despite Huia's feelings about the delayed funeral date, she continued to help to organise Tom's funeral. Ruth was adamant that Tom had wanted his funeral to be held at his home. However, Hinemoa tried to point out that this would be impractical, due to the large number of people expected. Ruth's daughter also questioned her mother's statement, as she found it hard to believe that Tom had made this request. Ruth eventually conceded that this was her preference, rather than Tom's. Huia was becoming increasingly unhappy with the situation, as it appeared that Tom's wishes were being misrepresented. Huia decided to withdraw herself from the process and discussed this with Hinemoa. It became apparent that other whānau members had experienced similar difficulties with Ruth in the past. Yet, Huia had been largely unaware of this, "*I did not know a lot about this, because I tend not to be someone who deals with such stuff... I like to think that my profile in our whānau is to bring people together and create healing*". In support of her whānau, Huia decided to stay and help Hinemoa and the others with Tom's funeral.



Huia, Hinemoa and Ruth began to discuss the ceremony and Ruth selected songs, prayers and photos for the service sheet. Ruth asked Huia if she could do a reading during the service. However, Huia felt it more appropriate for Hinemoa to do this, as she was the eldest sibling. Huia had previously suggested to Hinemoa that she conduct a reading on behalf of their siblings who resided overseas and would not attend the funeral. Prior to his death, Tom had specifically instructed these children not to travel back to New Zealand in the event of his death. Huia had asked these siblings to compile a reading which would be presented at the service on their behalf. Ruth then asked Huia if she would sing at the service, but Huia was reluctant to do so. Instead, Huia suggested that Ruth select songs that the entire congregation could sing. This provided a humorous moment for the group, “... *Everyone could join in and we could call it ‘Tom’s choir’.* We all had a laugh about that, and it was nice”. Huia emphasised that her focus was on involving everyone in Tom’s funeral, as she commented, “...*I did not want it to be about me, that is not my tikanga*”.

With the service details largely finalised, Huia decided to return to her home. Hinemoa and Ruth attempted to negotiate some final details, but some frictions ensued. Ruth started to remove songs selected by Huia, stating that they were, “...*over the top*”. The escalating tensions amongst Tom’s family members became all the more apparent. The following day, Huia, Alice, Hinemoa and Ruth met with the funeral director and pastor to finalise the service. Huia and Alice printed off the service sheet and returned to show the others. On their return, they found Ruth, the funeral director and the pastor whispering to each other. Huia felt uncomfortable but she approached Ruth to show her the service sheet. Huia asked Ruth for her feedback and enquired if she would like any changes to be made. Huia described the way in which she was trying to engage with Ruth, “...*Because this how we work in our whānau, mahi tahi tātou. We work together for the one good*”. However, Ruth barely acknowledged Huia and treated her quite disdainfully. Huia turned to the pastor and asked if he would be able to select a final hymn for the service. The pastor stood to his full height over Huia and remarked, “*My job is to officiate at Tom’s funeral and if you do*

*not want me to do that, then I will not”*. Huia was perplexed by the way in which Ruth and the pastor had responded.

It would eventually emerge that the funeral director had expressed concerns that Ruth was being ‘bullied’ by Hinemoa and Huia. Huia and Hinemoa were incredulous at this accusation, as they felt that the majority of the service was based on Ruth’s wishes. Ruth had chosen the officiating pastor and delegated readings and songs to her friends and family. This enhanced Huia’s perception that the situation had become unsafe for her whānau. In Huia’s mind, she had fulfilled her role in terms of looking after Tom’s tūpāpaku. Accordingly, Huia decided to withdraw herself from the process and she elaborated on this difficult decision,

*I realised that there were too many games; it was not a collaborative process. My sisters and I were being maligned... It makes me whakamā to even think about how we were accused and put down. Ruth told all her neighbours, friends, family, the funeral director and the pastor that Dad’s Māori children were taking over. She set us up in the eyes of everyone to look like some kind of ‘renegade’ perpetrators of funerals. But, what we were doing in our minds and hearts was manaakitanga [expression of kindness, support and care]. Hinemoa was honouring her promise to our father. I did not want to be involved in the process from the start. I was only doing what I was invited to do. I knew that what we were dealing with was not right.*

Hinemoa continued to help with the preparations for Tom’s funeral. However, her efforts became hampered by Ruth’s accusations. It became obvious that these had been discussed with others. When Hinemoa contacted Tom’s neighbour to confirm that he would perform a service reading, he refused and replied, *“Your family is doing everything, you do it!”* Hinemoa relayed the difficulties she was experiencing to the rest of her whānau, including those overseas. The whānau were upset to hear about the situation, during what was already a difficult time for them. Huia acknowledged that this was particularly distressing for her whānau overseas, *“...They were carrying this mamae [ache, pain] too...They could*

*see how we were 'in' the problem and we were getting hammered... They wanted to come back, but they would not make it in time. They wanted to tautoko our whānau. Huia expressed how the rest of the whānau in New Zealand felt about the situation, "...It was a very traumatic experience for us all".*

During this time, Huia and her whānau visited Tom daily at the funeral parlour, as they waited for the funeral date to be set,

*... We went in as a whānau to be with my father. We had our karakia and waiata and the children were allowed to talk to their granddad and have a biology lesson and all the things that kids do. We had to do the best we could with that very foreign set of circumstances.*

After six days, Ruth set the date for Tom's funeral, without any discussions with Huia's whānau. Unfortunately, the date selected by Ruth coincided with Hinemoa's birthday. Huia's whānau were very unhappy and responded accordingly,

*All our whanaunga [relations] were calling to say 'We do not want this to be on Hinemoa's birthday'. But, sorry there is not a fair process here. All the way along we were compromising and giving up parts of our personal and family tikanga to acquiesce to this Pākehā family. I cannot read it generously in any other way. I wish I could but I cannot.*

Whilst Huia grappled with the date for Tom's funeral, the final blow was delivered. Hinemoa telephoned to inform her that Ruth was removing the only waiata from the service, as she did not "... want anything Māori at the funeral". This devastated Huia, and for the first time since Tom's death, she openly wept. When Alice saw Huia's distress, she asked what had happened. Huia replied "*Ruth does not want anything Māori at the funeral, but I am Māori, how can I take the Māori out of me?*" Huia was confused by Ruth's stance, as she felt that Ruth had witnessed how the karakia and waiata had 'settled' Tom's tūpāpaku. Huia also believed that these processes had appeared to assist Ruth with her grief. Huia emphasised that the arrangements for Tom's service were based largely on Ruth's preferences,

*“She chose the songs she wanted, everything she wanted and now she wanted to take the token Māori song out, that she had put in there. That hurt me so much”.*

As the date of Tom’s funeral neared, Hinemoa asked Huia if she would perform the service reading on behalf of their siblings overseas. Huia declined, but offered a compromise that she discussed with her whānau,

*I am not going to put your memories and aroha out there, it is not safe with that bloody māngere [idle], koretake [incompetent] pastor. I am not putting those precious words into that environment. I will take your words, add my own, put them in an envelope and hide it in our father’s casket.*

Huia’s siblings agreed with her suggestion and Huia duly compiled the letter to Tom. During one of the visits with Tom at the funeral home, Huia carefully secreted the letter in Tom’s pocket. At this point, Huia did not trust Ruth to leave the letter undisturbed if it came to her attention. Alongside the letter, Huia placed two coins in Tom’s pocket, as requested by her siblings and her cousin Bert. Huia explained that the coins would enable Tom to, “...pay the ferryman” in the afterlife.

On the night prior to Tom’s funeral, Huia gathered with her adult children and their partners for a meeting. As the group discussed the following day, Huia addressed some of the difficulties that had occurred, “...Yes, there have been some whānau problems. Yes, it has been exacerbated by loss, grief and stress. The tangi has gone on for too long, that whole process, that Pākehā process”. Although Huia noted that her children were more than capable of making their own decisions, she gave them a specific instruction, “...Nobody is to say anything out of turn at the funeral. You are to honour your grandfather and our father. If there is anything to be said, it will come from me or Hinemoa, as we are [Tom’s] children.” The whānau arranged to sit together and support each other throughout the service. Huia explained to the whānau that Ruth had decided not to go to the crematorium with Tom following the service. Instead, Ruth would remain at the funeral home to have refreshments with the guests. Huia and the whānau agreed

that they would accompany Tom to the crematorium. Huia emphasised the importance of this decision, “...*I could not go and have a cup of tea knowing that my father was going off on his own to get burnt. Some of the others may have been ok with that, but that was not my waka.*” Huia issued one final instruction for her whānau regarding the conclusion of Tom’s funeral proceedings,

*‘I will be walking my father to the crematorium, have karakia and then we will go. I will not sit and eat with those people and I do not want you to either. We will have our hākari, but we will go somewhere else. I will pay for it, we will go somewhere as a whānau.’*

Huia was extremely moved by the way that her whānau responded to this statement. Huia’s whānau embraced her and offered assurances of their complete support. This was extremely important to Huia, particularly as her whānau were unaware of some of the difficulties that had occurred.

On the day of Tom’s funeral service, Huia and her whānau arrived early at the funeral chapel. The whānau congregated in the foyer, as they waited for the funeral director to signal that it was time to place the casket lid on Tom’s coffin. Huia explained the significance of this task,

*...It is one of those particularly difficult times, it is a hard time. When you are on the marae, the casket lid will go on before the sun comes up. That tikanga did not happen [at the funeral chapel]. Nonetheless, I knew I would be there when the casket lid went on.*

Huia saw the funeral director speak quietly to Ruth, before walking towards the room where Tom was situated. Huia quickly followed the funeral director and informed him that the whānau would like to be present during the closure of Tom’s casket. The funeral director nodded offhandedly at Huia’s request and she went back to collect her whānau. The whānau gathered around Tom’s casket to recite a final karakia and waiata. Huia had woken with a particular song on her mind and her whānau had agreed that it would be appropriate for this time. Without any ceremony or interaction with the whānau, the funeral director quickly went about his task. Huia was

obviously upset by the way in which the funeral director seemingly ignored the whānau, during what was obviously a distressing time for them.

Tom's funeral service commenced and Huia estimated that nearly 200 people were in attendance. The pastor delivered a sermon, which included a statement that deeply offended Huia and her whānau. Huia described this part of the sermon, *"...The pastor commented that Tom had only made a few mistakes in his life, but that was before he met Ruth. It was a very pointed reference to [Tom's] previous marriages"*. Huia felt that this was a highly inappropriate comment, given that Tom's progeny from two of his marriages were amongst the audience. With the supportive presence of her husband Pou, Hinemoa stood and delivered Tom's eulogy. At the conclusion of the eulogy, Huia stood and sung a waiata for the congregation. Hinemoa acknowledged Huia's role to the audience, *"...That is my sister Huia and it is a real honour for her to waiata for me today and for our father, because we are Māori and we are proud of it"*. Huia was extremely grateful for the way that Hinemoa acknowledged their cultural identity and highlighted the difficulty of situation,

*... [Hinemoa] told them, that is who we are and what we are proud of and we are not leaving that at the door. It was a hard thing for [Hinemoa] and I to stand up, knowing that Ruth had told everyone that Dad's Māori children had 'taken' over'.*

At the completion of Tom's service, the funeral director began to prepare Tom for transportation to the crematorium. Huia reminded the funeral director that some of the whānau would accompany the hearse to the crematorium on foot. Huia recalled that when she had initially discussed this with the funeral director, he had discouraged her from doing so, stating that it would be a considerable walking distance. However, Huia and her whānau were adamant about accompanying Tom and advised the funeral director accordingly. Huia noted how important this act was for her, *"...This man brought me into the world and the least I can do is walk him out"*. The hearse left the chapel and the whānau began to walk behind the vehicle. Huia was shocked at what happened next, *"...Normally a hearse would go very slowly with people behind it. It was raining, but that did not worry*

*me. But the hearse took off and left us behind. It was very deliberate, it was dreadful*". Huia noted that despite what the funeral director had said, the crematorium was only a short walk from the chapel. On the whānau's arrival, several of Tom's grandsons carried him into the crematorium. Due to the contention that had occurred, Huia felt that the funeral service had been very controlled. Only a select few were able to speak during the service, but there were whānau members that needed to say goodbye to Tom. This was facilitated by the open floor microphone situated at the crematorium. The whānau recited a final karakia and waiata for Tom, after which Huia addressed the group,

*... 'The hardest thing is that we have to leave him here, on the other side is the cremator and that is where he is going. I am going to waiata you out to make it easier for you - turn around and walk out, I will waiata for you'.*

The whānau slowly departed from the crematorium, to the stirring sound of Huia's waiata. As a final goodbye, Huia completed a karanga before leaving to join the rest of her whānau.

As arranged previously, Huia and her entire whānau left the crematorium complex immediately. The whānau met at a nearby cafe for a private hākari and Huia shared her memories of this gathering,

*...It cost me a bit of money, but I would have paid twice as much. Because there was our whānau, our beautiful mokopuna and we had a lovely time. Everything just calmed right down and we were out of that three-ring circus. I thanked them all and told my children that I was very proud of them and pleased that they could respect my tikanga. I am very much like my mother in some ways and she would have done the exact same thing that I had done.*

Eventually the whānau departed from the cafe, signalling the end of the funeral proceedings for their father and grandfather.

Huia discussed one final aspect of Tom's funeral that remained outstanding, which concerned the disposal of Tom's ashes. Although Ruth had stated that

Tom's preference was to be cremated, Huia had reservations about whether this was entirely accurate. Despite her concerns, Huia did not feel it would be appropriate to dispute this decision. Initially, Ruth had asked Huia and Hinemoa about possible locations for the disposal of Tom's ashes. Hinemoa suggested that the ashes could be spread along the pathway that Tom frequently used to access the coast near his home. Tom had lived in the area for 40 years and the coast was an important part of his life,

*... [Hinemoa] and her husband had helped Dad to cut a new track recently; it was a lot of hard work and took them a week. That track was really imbued with our father's wairua and [Ruth] seemed to want to go along with that.*

For Huia, another option would have been for Tom's ashes to be placed within the grave of his daughter, who had died in infancy. Huia thought that this may have been Tom's preference also, as he had visited her grave on many occasions. In considering these two locations, Ruth agreed with Hinemoa's suggestion and gave the impression that she would make the necessary arrangements. However, sometime afterwards, Huia rang the funeral director on an unrelated matter and was informed that Ruth had instructed that Tom's ashes would be taken to a location unfamiliar to Huia. Huia was upset by this, as Ruth had not discussed this matter further with the whānau. At the time of her interview, Huia did not know what had happened with Tom's ashes,

*...As I sit here with you today, I do not even know if my father's ashes have been uplifted. We cannot uplift them because [Ruth] is the executor of his will. That was reinforced through the process by the funeral director. For all I know, my father's ashes could still be [at the funeral home]. My stepmother will do whatever she likes with them and I do not know what that is.*

## **Looking Back on What Happened**

As Huia reflected back on her bereavement experience, she outlined several points that would have enabled a more positive experience for her and her whānau. Firstly, Huia expressed her regret that her whānau were not



immediately informed of Tom's death. It was apparent that Ruth's family, friends and neighbours were advised without delay. However, several hours passed before Hinemoa received the news of her father's death. Huia contrasted this to what would normally occur in her whānau. *"...Traditionally, if there is a mate, the call will go out really quickly and it is to everyone"*. This was an important point for Huia, as she felt that had the whānau been advised earlier, Tom would not have been left on his own for so long. Huia presented her ideal scenario,

*...The first part that could have been done better was handling the information of the mate well. Then the tūpāpaku should have been put upfront, not left alone and half naked. In effect saying, "This has happened. What do we need to do for our tūpāpaku? What do we need for this person that has died? We need to tell his children and those people close to him".*

In the previous passage, Huia alludes to her second point, which related to *"...putting the tūpāpaku up front"*. Huia recounted her shock at finding Tom all alone and she described what she would have preferred to see,

*...The most important thing of all is aroha. To see my father surrounded by people who love and care about him and being very aroha towards him; that is what I would have expected and that is what I wanted.*

Huia elaborated further on the centrality of tūpāpaku within the bereavement customs of her whānau,

*...We are there for one reason only, we are with our tūpāpaku and everything is [centred] on that. There is no way that anyone in my family would feel that they were anything but loved at that time. It is the time for our tūpāpaku to hear us, to see shows of love and affection. This allows them to know that they are well loved and that we are encouraging them to move on.*

Communication processes appeared to be a central theme as Huia reflected on her experience. Huia felt that many of the difficulties encountered could

have been negotiated and resolved if Tom's families had been able to work collaboratively. Huia described what this type of approach would have entailed,

*...A better process for us would have been open, transparent, coming to some sort of agreement about all these things, instead of the way that we were treated... This would have meant some kind of genuine, equitable, equal partnership. In terms of working out what we all needed, what my father would need and developing a process that would take care of that.*

Huia provided an example of an issue that may have benefited from a collaborative partnership. In Huia's opinion, the six day postponement of Tom's funeral resulted in a long and stressful waiting period for the bereaved and Tom's tūpāpaku. Alternatively, Huia suggested that a memorial service could have been arranged later for those who would be unable to attend the funeral service. Huia also highlighted some of the lasting implications that may have resulted from the collaborative approach she described,

*...If we could have worked in a non-obstructive way, our connection and relationship could have been strengthened through this process. I could categorically say we would have so much more do with my stepmother and that whānau. It could have been a really beautiful thing for everyone.*

## **Looking Forward and Memorialising**

As Tom's funeral had occurred only weeks prior to Huia's interview, it was difficult for her to respond to questions concerning memorial events. At the time of this interview, Huia felt it was unlikely that she would be involved in any formal memorial service organised by Ruth. This disappointed Huia, as she would have liked for Tom's families to share a memorial ceremony for him. Huia commented on such an event, "*...It would have been lovely for us to have his ashes as a family and to have another opportunity where we could have sat, honoured him and cried about him.*" However, Huia suspects that a planned holiday with two of her sisters in Europe may

provide the opportunity for an alternative memorial event. Huia, Alice and two of Huia's sisters had planned a 'girls' holiday', but Huia expected that the trip would now serve a very different purpose,

*... I strongly suspect that it is going to be a very moving, tangi, tangi sort of time for us and that is ok. But how weird is that going to be on [foreign] soil? But I think our souls will connect. My sisters have been sent over the service sheet and the service video. I think that we will be sitting there, watching it and we will have that time together.*

Prior to this journey, Huia plans to spend some time with her other sister in New Zealand for a similar purpose.

### **Contributors to Conflict**

From Huia's point of view, the conflict that eventuated after Tom's death provoked two major consequences. Firstly, Huia's experience clearly impeded her ability to grieve for Tom. Huia offered a heart rendering description of this, *"...The grief process has been interrupted and complicated... To this day I have not cried for my father, my tuakana has not cried for our father, because we were denied that"*. Huia explained this point further, *"...With all these intercultural dynamics and being whakaiti [belittled/debased] so badly, we had to go into protection mode. It was not just protecting ourselves, but also the mana of our whānau, our mother and our siblings"*.

The second major consequence of Huia's experience concerned her relationship with Ruth. As a direct result of all that had occurred, Huia had decided to withdraw from any future relationship with Ruth. Huia felt that Ruth had been culturally insensitive to their needs within the bereavement process, and at times she appeared to manipulate the situation to suit her own wants.

### **Understanding Conflict: Cultural Factors**

In the time that has passed since Tom's funeral, Huia has tried to make sense of what occurred between her whānau and Ruth. From Huia's

perspective, some of the different cultural values and processes played a significant role in the conflict that occurred. Huia acknowledged the implicit nature of such concepts and she described the way in which these were shared across the generations of her whānau,

*...We were raised with our mother's tikanga, which was unspoken and natural. Our mother did not say 'I am teaching you this because it is manaakitanga or aroha'. We did not grow up with our koro [grandfather] and kuia [grandmother], because they were dead. [Puti] was our matriarch, she had this tikanga and that was how we learnt it. So what we think is normal, these values we have and these ways of knowing, mātauranga Māori [Māori knowledge], this is actually our whānau tikanga [whānau customs].*

As Huia discussed some of the cultural values of her whānau, she drew a connection to her own understandings of the way in which death is responded to within the Māori world,

*...The reason that I admire and respect those traditional tangihanga practices is for very practical reasons. When we think about all those processes, that involve pre-dying karakia, waiata, talking to the tūpāpaku, it is very ritualised. It is that whakaaro [understanding] about moving the wairua through that journey to the other side and looking after all the bereaved. We know that these processes work.*

### **Understanding Conflict: Individual Factors**

Although cultural differences appeared to be a significant factor in Huia's experience, she also felt that some of the individual dynamics should be considered. Huia commented on this aspect, whilst she discussed the possibility of reconciliation between Ruth and her family and Huia's whānau, "... [Ruth and her] whānau would need to recognise that they had been deceptive, obstructive and culturally insensitive before any of us would be prepared to sit at the table with them". Throughout Huia's narrative, it was evident that the actions of some individuals had a distressing impact on Huia and her whānau. However, these were not only

family members, but included people that were involved in a professional capacity.

## **Funerary Professionals**

The pastor and funeral director that assisted with Tom's funeral appeared to exacerbate the conflict between Tom's families. Huia was incredulous that Ruth selected a Baptist pastor to officiate over the service. Huia identifies as a lesbian and the Baptist Church considers same sex relationships to be a sin against God. Huia felt that the pastor had a very negative reaction to her during their first meeting,

*... [The Baptist pastor] just looked at me and 'bang' there was a reaction. Although he did not know that I am a lesbian, it is like they can feel it. I thought 'Oh, we are going to have a barrier here' because anything that I touch to do with this service is going to be challenging to this Pākehā Baptist pastor.*

Huia described earlier how deeply offended her whānau were by some of the pointed comments made by the Pastor during his sermon. The Pastor also appeared to be sympathetic to the allegations of 'bullying' that were levelled against Huia and her whānau.

According to Ruth, it was the funeral director who initially expressed concerns over her being 'bullied' by Huia's whānau. Huia provided many examples of disrespectful and insensitive behaviour by the funeral director, including the process of uplifting Tom's tūpāpaku. Huia is considering submitting a formal complaint against the funeral director for these reasons. Huia felt that it was important for funeral directors to be impartial in their work with bereaved whānau/families. Huia perceived that this would enable a more supportive process for everyone involved. In Huia's experience, this particular funeral director "...did more harm than good". Huia also discussed some of the legal and financial issues that assign authority and control to certain individuals,

*... You have a tūpāpaku and the law says that nobody owns a tūpāpaku, but somebody has the rights as the executor of the will.*

*In terms of funeral directors, somebody has to pay the bill. In some cases, the funeral director does not seem to care about anybody else, except whoever is paying the bill. Ultimately, that person is their customer.*

## **Reconciling Conflict**

Huia felt it was unlikely that the conflict between her whānau and Ruth would be resolved. However, Huia still expressed her gratitude for what occurred between the families immediately after Tom's death. *"...Despite what happened, I can still say that I pray for my stepmother and her family. I give thanks for the healing and the joy that took place. I know in all of our hearts, we can hold onto that."* Huia clarified her comment in relation to the *"...healing"* that took place,

*...It is interesting that through that whole period, the one thing that we can hold on to, is the part of the process that we tried to make as tikanga as possible. We knew that was what was needed at that time.*

## **Enduring Relationships**

Another somewhat unusual source of comfort for Huia was obtained through a close friend that she described as *"...matakite"*. Due to the perceived 'distressed' state that Huia found Tom's tūpāpaku in, she needed assurances that Tom's wairua was at peace. Huia's friend confirmed that Tom had passed over to the *"...spiritual world"* and was at rest. On the day of Tom's funeral, Huia's friend sent her a text message which read, *"...The rain has washed everyone's tears away and your father was so absolutely proud"*. This message was very comforting for Huia, and she noted that her friend did not know the date of Tom's funeral. For some time, Huia had pondered a point made by Ruth, *"...Your father was not a Māori, he was a Pākehā, and he would not have liked any of that [Māori] stuff"*. Huia asked her friend how Tom may have felt about her final karanga at the crematorium. Huia's friend replied *"...He was so proud, he cried"*. Huia

interpreted these ‘messages’ as confirmation that her actions were appropriate for Tom, which she thought was “...*beautiful*”.

### **Huia’s Advice for Bicultural Whānau**

In terms of her own personal experience, Huia offered some very specific advice for bicultural whānau,

*... Because of our complexities in ethnicity and intercultural relationships, we all need to take individual responsibility for what it is that we want for ourselves. We then need to sort that out with our whānau before the event. Do not leave that shitty stuff for other people to pick up, make sure that [the whānau] all know what you want.*

In light of this, Huia has begun to discuss the issue of final wishes amongst her own whānau. Huia commented on this process, “...*If my whānau want to give that information to me, I will be the kaitiaki [guardian] of that story*”. Although Huia felt that some difficulties could be avoided through preparatory discussions, she acknowledged that conflict could still arise. In terms of such situations, Huia had this to say,

*... Try and find the best processes of communication that you can. Failing that, every whānau has to make their own decisions based on their whakapapa and tikanga. We know when it is our time to stand up, E tū, you know when it is your time to act. That must be decided by each whānau, according to their tikanga and their whakapapa. I would never advise people about that, other than to do what their kaumātua and tipuna are telling them to do.*

Huia also noted that for her personally, if a situation warranted it, she would be prepared to go and uplift a tūpāpaku “... *I would, if I knew it was on my heart, I would do it*”. Huia did not feel that this was appropriate after Tom’s death, as this would not have been Tom’s preference.

## **Bicultural Bereavement: A Different Experience**

Huia's first cousin Bert had been very close to Tom and their relationship was similar to that of father and son. Tragically, three weeks after Tom's death, Bert committed suicide. Huia described Bert, his partner Chrissy and their three children as Pākehā. Hinemoa and, later Huia, supported Chrissy through her bereavement, which included looking after Bert's tūpāpaku and assisting with the funeral arrangements. During this process, Chrissy stated that did not want anything 'Māori' incorporated into Bert's funeral. Huia respected Chrissy's decision, commenting that as her relationship to Bert was that of a cousin rather than daughter, she did not feel as emotionally involved as she did with Tom's funeral. Huia suggested to Chrissy that close family were present when Bert's coffin was closed for the last time. Huia also negotiated with Chrissy for waiata and karakia to be performed at this moment. Although Chrissy had not considered being present during this time, she really appreciated this special time to farewell Bert. The funeral director and Bert's son asked Huia to perform a karanga whilst Bert was transported to the crematorium. Huia was mindful of Chrissy's preference and negotiated with her to sing a Pākehā song in Māori.

Although Bert's death was a very sad time for his family and friends, Huia described the experience as *"...very positive and healing for everyone"*. Huia also highlighted that the process was *"...more of a bicultural approach"* than what had occurred after her father's death. Huia's involvement in Bert's funeral left her with a sense of *"...vindication and redemption"*. Huia felt that the process illustrated that it is possible for *"...Māori and Pākehā whānau to work together, to create something really beautiful"*. Huia contrasted this to Tom's funeral, *"...Our tikanga is all about the good of the whānau and community rather than the individual. This is what we tried to achieve at Tom's funeral, but there were personal differences and cultural clashes"*. Many of those that attended Bert's funeral commented that the funeral service *"...really brought people together, it touched people and created healing"*.



## **Post Script**

Sometime after Tom's funeral, Huia lodged a formal complaint against the funeral director employed by Ruth. Huia's complaint critiqued many aspects including inadequate processes for transferring tūpāpaku and displaying a bias towards the executor of the will and discriminating against other whānau members. Soon afterwards, Huia was pleased to receive a letter of apology from the funeral services manager. The manager thanked Huia for some of her suggestions, which she had aligned with the recommended (but unregulated) standards of the NZ Association of Funeral Directors. The funeral services manager offered assurances that their practices would now incorporate many of Huia's suggested changes. Furthermore, the manager invited Huia and Alice to meet with them face to face to discuss matters further. Several months after Tom's funeral, Huia and Alice attended a meeting with the managing funeral director and resource manager to voice their concerns in more depth. Huia and Alice received an apology and were gifted with a bouquet of flowers. The funeral services manager particularly liked Huia's suggestion of introducing a post-evaluation process for whānau. This would facilitate one way of gauging whether their services were appropriate and supportive.

## **Significant Contributions**

Huia's parents divorced in her childhood and Tom eventually remarried, to Ruth. Difficult blended family dynamics impacted on Huia's relationship with her father. Huia became estranged from Tom but she made several attempts at reconciliation and eventually a relationship was established. Tom died suddenly at home, and there was a delay in communicating this information to his children. Tom did not express any final wishes, but extracted a promise from Hinemoa that he would be given a proper funeral. When Huia and her partner, Alice arrived at Tom's home, they found Tom alone and perceived his tūpāpaku to be 'distressed'. Huia's reaction is accounted for by Sinclair's (1990) and Dansey's (1995) descriptions of Māori death rituals, in which tūpāpaku is in the constant companionship of whānau. Huia and her siblings commenced Māori ritual processes, including karanga, waiata and karakia around Tom. As a result, Tom's

tūpāpaku appeared to 'settle' and the whānau, including Ruth, had an opportunity to openly express their grief. The funeral director that arrived to collect Tom did so in a manner that contravened industry standards, causing distress to the whānau. Some of the actions of the funeral director exemplified criticisms made against the funeral industry in (Larkins, 2007), relating to practices that seek to maximise efficiency and profit, whilst minimising fuss.

Huia and her siblings tried to work with Ruth in planning Tom's funeral, but conflict arose. Ruth assumed an authoritative role, leaving little room for compromise or consideration of alternatives. Ruth appeared to misrepresent Tom's preferences at times and mistruths were noted. Ruth was supported by the funeral professionals, who openly disrespected the whānau and levelled accusations of 'bullying' against them. Throughout the process, Huia encountered differences between Pākehā values, beliefs and responses to death, which conflicted with that of her whānau. Ruth sent a directive that there was to be no Māori aspects in Tom's funeral. This deeply hurt and perplexed Huia, particularly after Ruth had benefited from the Māori rituals after Tom's death. Huia withdrew herself from the situation; however, Hinemoa remained involved due to her promise to Tom. The bereavement process was prolonged on Ruth's insistence, to allow her son to return from overseas. Huia was offended and upset by this decision for a number of reasons. One of which is underlined in Dansey's (1995) portrayal of Māori death rituals, as Huia perceived that Tom's spirit would not be released from his tūpāpaku until his internment, some six days away. Despite all this, Huia and her whānau found ways to honour Tom and express their love towards him. Huia noted many differences between the way that her whānau and Ruth's family responded to both death and grief. The whānau left the chapel immediately after Tom's cremation and gathered for a whānau hākari.

As a direct result of the conflict, Huia felt that her grief process had been interrupted. Huia severed all contact with Ruth and her family and would only consider reconciliation if Ruth acknowledged her actions. Consequently, Huia will not attend any formal memorial events for Tom,

instead her whānau intend to share a memorial event on a holiday. Huia is unaware whether Tom's ashes have been uplifted or what Ruth intends to do with them. Drawing on her experiences, Huia offered advice for other bicultural whānau. Huia emphasised the importance of individuals expressing their final wishes to whānau. Huia recommended finding the best processes of communication and for whānau to work in an equitable, collaborative partnership. Failing this, whānau should make decisions based on their whakapapa, tikanga and the advice of elders. Huia underlined that funeral professionals should be impartial and supportive of all whānau members. Huia highlighted the therapeutic benefits of tangi and provided examples of these. Huia also noted the centrality of tūpāpaku throughout the tangihanga processes. Huia perceived an enduring relationship with Tom. Huia's use of a matakite [clairvoyant] is similarly noted by (Stroebe et al., 1992), as a means of maintaining the bond with a deceased loved one. Consistent with Nowatzki & Grant-Kalischuk's (2009) study of post- death encounters, Huia found great meaning in these experiences and they brought her considerable comfort.

## **Section 2: Expert Perspectives**

This second section of the thesis presents the experiential knowledge of experts and professionals who engage in bereavement processes in a variety of capacities. These include funeral director, coroner, religious minister, kaumātua [male elder], kuia [female elder], and cultural elder. The contributions of these experts are presented within individual chapters, reflecting their unique experiences, perspectives and cultural worldviews.

These chapters elaborate further on the insights from the whānau contributors and collectively these two distinct, yet related, sections culminate a multi-levelled understanding of concepts, issues, and processes that may manifest in bereavement negotiated within and across Māori and Pākehā cultural worlds.

## **Chapter 8: Beth Richards, Funeral Director**

Funerary professionals have a central role in the organisation and enactment of post-mortem processes, from the time of death through to disposal of the deceased. Funerary professionals feature prominently in the bereavement processes described by the whānau contributors and through media reporting of bicultural bereavement conflict. This chapter presents discussions with Beth Richards, who has worked within the funerary industry for over 20 years. Beth offered her perspectives and experiences of negotiating bereavement processes and outlined some of the roles and tasks undertaken by funerary professionals.

### **Expert Contributor: Beth Richards**

Beth is a qualified funeral director, completing her formal training 15 years ago. Beth is a registered member of Funeral Directors Association of New Zealand (FDANZ). I first encountered Beth during the Death Studies symposium hosted by the Tangi Research Programme at the University of Waikato in 2010. Beth was an invited speaker within the symposium and her presentation provided a reflective account of changes within the funerary industry that endeavoured to better cater for the needs of bereaved communities. Beth's perspectives draw from professional experiences supporting bereaved families and whānau, the majority of these relating to Pākehā families. However, Beth and her organisation continue to play a role in the care of Māori whānau, and Māori and Pākehā bicultural whānau.

### **The Roles of Funerary Professionals**

Funeral directors are contracted by bereaved whānau for the provision of professional post mortem services. Schafer (2005) summarises the role and accompanying tasks undertaken by funeral directors,

*This occupational group liaises with other specialists, retrieves the body after death, organises the requisite certification, prepares the*

*corpse, facilitates funeral ritual, arranges disposal and increasingly offers after-care and memorial options (p.3).*

I asked Beth to outline the role of funeral directors and the typical tasks undertaken through their work with bereaved whānau. The role of the funeral directors centres upon ascertaining what assistance the bereaved families require and enacting these tasks accordingly. Beth acknowledged bereavement as an on-going process that continues beyond the conclusion of funerary events. Although the role of a funeral director is concentrated upon the funerary event(s), Beth felt that a holistic approach increased support for bereaved whānau,

*...I am more interested in a more holistic approach to this work. We often meet people for the first time when they have got a bereavement, and you work intensively with them for three or four days and then sort of let them go and move on to the next person. But for me, I used to worry 'How are they getting on? What is happening for them now?' ...because that is where it really matters. Yes, you have to do this initial part of bereavement in terms of ceremony correctly and well in order to help that on-going bereavement process.*

Beth's concern for the on-going experience for the bereaved and the limited ability to follow up with clients prompted her to create a bereavement support role. Although not formally trained as a counsellor, the bereavement support person provides the bereaved with the opportunity to talk about their experience. They also connect the bereaved with resources like formal support services. Beth described the benefits of such,

*In that way, I feel like our families are being better cared for. Funeral directors do this intense work with [bereaved families] but it is that on-going work that we need to make sure they are travelling all right further on down the track.*

Beth's holistic focus reflects an increasing emphasis on pastoral care within the Aotearoa/New Zealand funerary industry (Shafer, 2007). Beth shared her perceptions of the nature of grief and bereavement processes,

*...I always think of grief like a snowflake, in that every snowflake has a different pattern. I think grief is like that and it is a unique experience to every individual. There is no right way or wrong way, I think what matters is that each individual has the opportunity to do it well so that there are good outcomes.*

Beth's comment acknowledges the diversity of grief and the importance of the bereaved being afforded opportunities to grieve in the ways that they want and need. Beth has observed that some individuals can become "...locked in grief", which she likened to a chronic illness that could affect people for the rest of their lives.

Funerary professionals provide a range of services that have been adapted over time and in response to client needs. She outlined changes she has observed within Pākehā responses to death and grief, including the increasingly common practice of having the deceased lie in state within private homes, "...We take a lot more bodies' home than we used to. Personally, I think that is a wonderful thing for families, if that is what they want to do. I think it is a very healthy thing to do". McIntosh (2001) makes a similar observation on this practice, as an influence of Māori mourning practices upon Pākehā. Beth also talked about the marked decrease in the use of religious hymns during services in favour of contemporary music meaningful to the bereaved and/or deceased. She also noted the emergence and importance placed on visual media such as photo slideshows within European funerals.

### **The first call**

Beth described the initial contact made by the bereaved to her funeral home, through the 'first call',

*I think that is hugely important, people are ringing with a purpose and at night they get quite a shock to find they haven't got an answer phone, so that's important. That is what we call a 'first call'; they are ringing to tell us that somebody has died.*

Within the 'first call', the funeral director will collect basic information regarding the death and funeral intentions and begin to prepare the necessary documentation. Such paperwork can include coronial papers, death registration for internal affairs and in-house paperwork. Pellow's has implemented in-house paperwork procedures to ensure that all staff members are kept up to date with each case and assist where needed. The majority of first calls occur via telephone; however, the impact of grief can prompt other means of contact,

*Occasionally people walk straight off the street here with no appointment, walk into our rooms, and say 'I want to arrange a funeral - my mother has just died or she died yesterday'. I am always perplexed and think 'Where else can you walk in and expect to see somebody immediately? Not your dentist, or your doctor, or your accountant'. But, this is what happens when people are grieving; they need to do this so they just do it.*

Within the first call, the funeral director will make arrangements for the first meeting with the family. Depending on the circumstances of the death, the funeral director may be required to report the death to Coronial Services, who will exert jurisdiction over post mortem processes, including care and custody of the deceased. As the bereaved begin to consider the range of decisions before them, the funeral director will commence co-ordination of the funerary processes. Some parts of the funeral may also require assistance from other professionals such as florists and caterers. Event management and organisational skills are key components of the funeral director role, which includes a range of pre-funeral preparations, "...if you have done the preparation properly, [the funeral is] the easy part of it, because you have got your plan, you know what is going to happen, and that is where you go". The decision-making will have also included the time for the deceased to be uplifted into the care of the funeral director for preparation. Beth noted that their organisation has an on-site mortuary, which allows all preparations to be completed on their own premises. Through the course of funerary decision-making, the bereaved may volunteer to take care of certain tasks themselves. However, Beth allows for



the possibility that the bereaved may underestimate the demands of bereavement,

*...You have to remember that you are dealing with people that are grieving. Often people who are used to being good organisers themselves think they will do this and that. However, they forget that when you are impacted by bereavement you do not always function as well. Then you add in the time constraints. They do not realise that there are the phone calls and that people will visit them, the family arriving... They will not have their normal time to do things and they are actually not functioning like they normally would.*

### **Funerary Professionals: Key Skills and Attributes**

Beth's discussions of the role and preferred attributes of a funerary professional present a model for 'best practice'. It is evident from Beth's narrative that she values a high level of care, empathy and professionalism. She outlined some of the attributes she considers pivotal to her practice as a funeral director.

*... They see it as an opportunity to help people, it has that value, for some people it is a vocation rather than a job. Given the availability, the hours you work and the demands that are made on you; you have to be passionate about what you are doing. Definitely when you see a family that ends up with a great outcome, you made something special happen for them. That is all that matters, it is not about getting the kudos.*

Beth emphasised honesty and integrity as integral to her work as a funeral director,

*I never get over the fact that I can meet a family that I have never met before and I am a stranger to them. [The family] will entrust you with secrets, with information, with stories and with family dynamics. But most importantly, they will entrust you with their mother whom they have been nursing for the last 3 months and they*

*give her to us, a stranger, to do this final preparation. That is a huge thing, an amazing privilege to have that. I always find that is a measuring stick and to never forget that.*

The nature and context of the work of a funeral director necessitates expert communication skills, which are called upon throughout funerary processes,

*...We always need to improve our listening skills and we carry on doing that. Listening is one of the most important skills and communicating, learning to communicate appropriately with different people, we all know that you need to communicate differently with some people, so communication is very important.*

Such skills were particularly advantageous in facilitating negotiations and mediating potential conflict within bereavement processes. Flexibility is also important throughout funerary processes, particularly during funerary events. Beth endeavours to employ a “*can-do attitude*” with regard to requests from clients, even when it concerns aspects that she is not familiar with,

*We have to be hugely flexible, as a funeral director you have to try to make the family that you are with at the moment feel like that; they are the only one you are looking after. If I can do that, I think that I have done my job well.*

Individual bereavement cases can include a range of complexities, which can place greater demands upon the funeral directors appointed. A capacity to multi-task is important,

*...That can be difficult especially in a weekend because you have reduced staff and you might be looking after three or four families. Some families obviously have greater demands than others do and that might be because of family dynamics or it might be because of the nature of the death, all sorts of things might contribute towards that. But, that does not matter, we still have to meet the demands of*

*that family, in a professional way, they need to feel that they have been cared for, and listened to.*

But professionals also need to be detached. Beth says,

*I think as funeral directors you have to... personally, I stay emotionally removed from my families; I sort of have a one-metre barrier. That is not to say that I do not care for them, that I do not care that they are hurting but I am actually there to do a job for them and at a time that sometimes the ground has disappeared from underneath them. It is no use if I am crying with them or seem inadequate.*

Beth feels that it is important for her clients to feel assured of her competence in her role and aspires to bring a sense of calm as she works with bereaved families. Although professionalism is a critical facet of funerary work, this does not negate the potential for funeral directors to be personally impacted by their work. Beth described some of the emotional demands and impacts attached to funerary work, “...sometimes you go home just too tired and you do not want to talk, you do not want anything. [The work] has an emotional toll; you are giving out emotionally a lot”. Beth shared the reflections of one of her mentors,

*We are called to be funeral directors so while we are being a funeral director, we do what is best for the family, we act in a professional way, and when it is over, we can go round the corner and fall to pieces. That is about being professional, but also being allowed to be human as well. But you have to have control over those situations, which is very important.*

Beth values high standards of professional practice amongst her team, alongside appreciation for their diverse skills and approaches to their role, “...for me it is important that my team operate out of who they are, not some pre-conceived idea of how they will operate. They have got to be themselves; otherwise it is not going to be genuine”. In acknowledging individual approaches to the role of funeral director, Beth was aware of the potentiality for issues to arise in relation to compatibility between

professionals and bereaved families. On occasion, Beth may receive a request from one of her team members for assistance,

*I have done that very rarely; I have actually taken over the funeral. The minute that I have done that, everybody has behaved themselves. Whether it is because the manager is looking them after, I do not know. Whether the dynamics just did not gel, or they did not have the person they perceived they were going to have looking after them, I am not sure. But occasionally that has worked well.*

Beth's reflections on funerary practice, associated tasks, demands and necessary skills and attributes allow us to better understand the engagement of funerary professionals within bereavement processes. However, their engagement is defined and confined by the nature of their role and its accordant purpose. Funerary professionals may assist in the negotiation of bereavement conflict; however, it must be acknowledged that this is not a primary function of their practice. Drawing from her many years of professional practice, Beth offers observations that contribute towards our understandings of decision-making, negotiation and conflict within the context of bereavement.

## **Preventing Conflict**

Beth identified several points that could potentially support bereavement processes, those that could be sites of conflict and suggestions for amelioration. She emphasised the importance of taking measures that prevent conflict arising. In relation to bicultural bereavement, Beth commented that the cultural orientation of individuals in life could be influential in the response to the death of a loved one,

*I would say either they take the European way of doing things and they have always done that or else they have always done the Māori thing or else they are somewhere in the middle and they do a bit of each and usually that is fairly apparent. It is not always conflict I do not think, because often that is sorted out ahead of time.*

Beth shared her observation of tensions that can emerge within whānau that are somewhat disconnected from their culture. Amongst such whānau, there may be some members who seek to reclaim their cultural connections and place great value on this. The tangi/death may become a ‘theatre’ within which they can ‘perform’ their newly acquired and discovered Māori identity. However, this may not be similarly experienced by all whānau members and tensions may emerge in negotiating ritual enactments. Beth has observed instances where individual whānau members have wanted to include aspects drawn from tangi rituals, whereas other family members rejected such suggestions,

*In some families, perhaps in Europeanised families where you have people who have gone back to their Māori heritage, they can be more radical about what they want than perhaps this other way. They can perhaps be more dominant about it and not wanting to take over and control but make sure that they are going to have this even if that is not what the person wanted. In my experience, that sometimes happens.*

In some instances, pre-death negotiations and the ability of individuals to accept and participate in cultural processes unfamiliar to them can mediate the potential for conflict. Yet, it is possible that responses to the death of a loved one will express cultural aspects that were not apparent in all facets of an individual’s life. Beth shared an example of a bicultural funerary process where the deceased identified as Māori and his widowed wife identified as Pākehā. In this instance, the deceased was to be interred in his whānau urupā [burial ground] and the widow made comment to Beth about the decision to do so, *“I am not used to all this because we never [participated in marae based events], but I always told whoever that he would be buried there and I would be happy”*. Despite the widow’s own unfamiliarity with marae processes, she supported the return of her husband to be interred in his ancestral burial grounds. Beth described her impression that the widow was gracious in her approach during the tangi proceedings and *“...just went with the flow”*. Beth also noted the obvious respect for the widow and recognition of her role in the tangi from the marae community.

Beth emphasised the importance of individuals talking with significant others regarding their final wishes. She told me that engaging in such conversations in life not only informed others about the nature of final wishes, but allowed time to process and understand them. This point would be similarly raised by some of the whānau contributors and Coroner Wallace Bain within this research. Beth emphasised that individuals making their own pre-death arrangements directly with the funeral director should not negate the importance of discussing matters with their family. Beth recounted one such instance,

*...there was the man and there were his wishes, all in writing. [Prior to death, the deceased] had been in and arranged it, but the executor had the control over his body. The fault there was the [deceased] had never discussed it with his executor. When I am talking to groups of people, I always say 'Make sure your executor knows what you want and will actually carry out your wishes'.*

## **Determining Authority**

Funeral directors are contracted by member(s) of the bereaved through financial payment for services. In some instances, the deceased's estate may take responsibility for payment of funerary services. Where such funds are not available, a member of the bereaved may take responsibility and assume the role of 'client'. While this maybe so, and as discussed in Coroner Bain's case study, the director still has a legal obligation to identify whether an executor was appointed, who the next of kin are and to recognise the legitimacy of their directives irrespective of who is paying. Although Beth employs neutrality within her practise, she acknowledged such obligations,

*...If I perceive there is an issue over money and somebody is picking up the bill, I think that they should actually have the right over what is chosen. But, I will try to do that in such a way that people get their say but that [the bill payer] is comfortable with that. I am going to be thinking 'He is paying the bill, I need to have him happy, but I need to facilitate people being heard within that'. I do not want to manipulate anything, I am not into manipulation.*

Such commercial obligations may inadvertently prioritise the interests of the 'client(s)' within decision-making processes. In a practical sense, the interests of the 'client' could potentially restrict the authority of others, including the executor(s). Similar to Parsons (2003) discussions in the context of the United Kingdom, there is no formal mechanism that designates who should assume the role of 'client' within the funerary services contract. Such legislative and contractual issues constrain the potential for negotiations to equally represent and consider the needs of all those significantly bereaved. This leaves considerable room for conflict and perhaps limited means by which it can be resolved by the bereaved and funerary professionals.

## **Determining Arrangements**

Depending on the circumstances of each case, the bereaved may face a barrage of decisions requiring determinations. For example, some of the decisions faced by the bereaved can include: interment location; choices of burial or cremation; the time and venue of the funeral service(s); language of funeral notice; transportation arrangements for the deceased; choice of casket; service sheets; catering, and the like. Indeed, the finalisation of one decision can prompt further decisions - the bereaved may decide on a particular public cemetery for the interment location, but the cemetery may incorporate distinct areas, each incumbent with different memorialisation restrictions, such as headstone shape and size. As the grieving family begins to consider the decisions and choices before them, a range of factors can influence not only the choices made but also the resultant outcomes for the bereaved. Beth stressed the importance of being aware that the process can overwhelm whānau,

*... 'You can do this, this and this, have you thought about this, this or that?' Sometimes with a family, you get so far and you say, 'Actually, I think that you have done enough for today and we don't need to do any more of this till tomorrow'. Because, they just had no idea how many choices there would be and a huge amount of decisions to be made.*

Through her role, Beth has accumulated some knowledge surrounding cultural patterned responses to death and grief amongst cultural groups with whom she has worked with. In some instances, prior understandings alerted Beth to the types of needs some cultural groups may have in bereavement,

*Obviously if it is a Māori family, they may want to move the process on because they usually like to work within a time frame. [The whānau] may want to get the body to the marae as quickly as they can.*

Beth has observed that within some Pacifica cultural groups, the bereaved community may nominate a spokesperson to liaise with the funeral director,

*...Now it may be an aunty, it will often be a woman and they will be the spokesperson. You are only going to take any instructions or changes from them, and you tell the whole family that. So, if somebody comes up and says 'oh we are changing our mind about that', you say, 'well you get aunty to come and tell me that' because that is the way they operate.*

Beth took care to emphasise that responses to death and grief can vary considerably across individuals, familial and cultural groups. Beth stressed the importance of not making any assumptions regarding the needs of a bereaved whānau, but ascertaining these through discussion,

*If it is a Māori family, they often will come in here, and we will usually know that they might like to dress the body once we have it ready. Usually they might do their own transportation [of the deceased]. But, all those things we will talk through because we are not going to assume that is going to happen. Therefore, it is the same with any family, no assumptions. The most important thing is that we put all the choices in front of [the bereaved].*

As Beth discussed some of the factors that influence upon processes, she shared aspects of her practise that seek to eliminate or lessen complications and conflict.



## **Grief, Relationships and Decision- Making**

One of the key considerations emphasised by Beth was the impact of grief and familial dynamics upon bereavement decision-making. She shared some of her understandings of these dynamics, alongside strategies that can mediate impacts. Beth described grief as affecting individuals in a myriad of ways, which can include the ability to comprehend information, “...because some people are not functioning very well when they come to us, some people cannot see words or pictures”. Beth observed that one impact of grief could include the intensification of individual reactions,

*...sometimes when people are under grief, obviously their reactions are more intense or greater than usual. If you already have a certain personality type, you add in grief you are going to have that plus!*

As Beth highlights, there is potential for the expression of grief to complicate the processes of decision-making. As a funeral director, she strives to retain a compassionate and professional approach, “...it just brings it back to being non-reactive to their reactions and saying ‘These people are hurting, and they have come here to buy a service’”. In the course of her work, she sometimes has to assume roles that she described as a mediator, facilitator and negotiator,

*Just because a family has suffered a bereavement that does not necessarily mean it is going to heal any problems that might already exist in that family. If there are relationship problems, some families may put on a brave face and pretend that everything is well. However, you will know that it is not or else you will become immediately aware that there are some interesting dynamics. You just have to work with that and [family dynamics] may be exacerbated because of grief.*

In some instances, Beth may receive some warning that tensions exist within a bereaved family, such as requesting use of the funeral home as ‘neutral ground’ for decision-making. Individual members may disclose

familial tensions to Beth; however, she still tries to approach each family with a degree of neutrality.

*...Everybody grieves differently and everybody is reacting out of their own life experience whether it is their life experience with the deceased or their life experience with their siblings. It is always interesting when in-laws come in as well and how much power they can hold. Therefore, you watch dynamics and really try to be neutral to make sure people are heard, to find the common ground.*

Beth described what she considers her key focus and role should conflict or tensions begin to emerge,

*...For me, it is about dignity for the family. I do not want to expose anything; I do not want to exacerbate anything. I hope that when I am in a room, I am a facilitator; I would like to think that we played a neutral role.*

Beth elaborated further as she explained some of the strategies she employs to prevent the escalation of conflict,

*I will say 'Well mum has died, and we need to behave as adults, we need to do this in a dignified way'. I might lay down some very basic ground rules without being dictatorial. I would be bringing them back to the base reason that we are there, mum has died and we need to do this in a way that will honour her, in a dignified manner. Everybody will be able to have a say and we will work out something that everybody will agree with. You are looking to lay groundwork.*

Beth also noted occasions where there did not appear to be any pre-existing family tensions but complications arose during the funerary processes. This point is similarly raised in some of the whānau case studies where pre-existing family tensions indicated potential bereavement conflict, but conflict could unexpectedly also arise through the course of negotiating and enacting funerary processes.

## **Opportunity to Contribute**

One of the key points emphasised by Beth was the importance of ensuring that where possible the immediately bereaved have the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. Where individuals perceive that such opportunities are restricted, this can have negative impacts on their bereavement experience. The perception of time restrictions within funerary processes can place extra pressure on the bereaved,

*Many people still have an idea that we are locked into a time frame for funerals but that is not the case. There is no legal requirement for when a funeral should take place providing that the body is not causing a health hazard. Sometimes people are hugely relieved to find that out, and that we can wait for family members because we are so global now.*

Beth also described instances where bereaved individuals had commenced proceedings with haste, which served to exclude significant others in the process. Beth recalled instances where individual family members gave instructions for funerary arrangements, prior to the arrival of other family members. On one such occasion, Beth received instructions from an individual family member for a direct disposal, where the deceased is interred or cremated without a funeral service. Fortuitously, the remainder of the family arrived prior to the enactment of the direct disposal and Beth was able to provide the family with some time with their deceased loved one. These cases had left a lasting impression upon Beth and she expressed sympathy towards those who had been excluded. Consequently, Beth will enquire as to whether there are others who should be present during decision-making processes, but is unable to intervene further.

Although there are clearly aspects that Beth is unable to account for or address within her role, there are some approaches that can support decision making amongst the bereaved,

*...you might get somebody who is sitting over there that perhaps has not had a chance [to speak] and I might say 'ok we've decided this or that and so Ann how do you feel about that?' It is like giving her*

*permission to speak. The family may not take her up on her idea but she is heard within the whole family and she would not be heard if the funeral director did not facilitate that.*

The physical environment in which discussions occur can be an influential factor and Beth endeavours to create a context that is most conducive to the decision-making process. Something as simple as encouraging families to discuss matters around a table can be beneficial. Beth prefers to find some space that is quiet and relatively free from distractions in which to conduct discussions. However, this can be difficult within private homes, as the bereaved may be interrupted by telephone calls and home visits. Beth also highlighted technology such as cell phones and televisions as distracting individuals from giving full attention to the decisions at hand. Distractions can create unnecessary difficulties, but Beth acknowledged that she is unable to control such factors.

### **Negotiating Compromises and Fusions**

Beth shared examples of bereavement processes that indicate the possibilities for negotiating compromises that acknowledge different aspects of the lives, relationships and identities of both the deceased and bereaved. In particular, Beth has observed compromises that expressed different cultural identities of the deceased and/or bereaved. The potential negotiation of compromises may provide a means of preventing and/or mediating bereavement conflict. Beth recalled one case where severe bereavement conflict emerged and she worked intensively with the bereaved to find a compromise,

*We just keep talking and I kept talking with them until we all could agree that we would do the burial in a different cemetery and that these people would come. These other people did not want to be there then, but when everybody left, they would come over to the open grave and do their thing. Everybody agreed that that would happen and that is what happened.*

In this instance, the change of interment site and the provision of separate funerary enactments by different bereaved parties at the gravesite provided

the compromise. Beth described other funerary processes where rituals have been enacted across multiple settings, including church and marae venues. Beth noted one case where funeral rituals occurred at a marae, and then church with the deceased eventually interred within an urupā. Beth provided comment on her observation of fusions that can occur between culture and religion,

*One of the things that interests me when it comes to some traditions, we know that Māori work to their own timetable and are not rushed and I think there is a lot of good about that...but if we do a Māori funeral that is a member of the [Denomination deleted] church, it is totally structured, it is totally timed and people do what they are told and that is it. I find that an interesting paradox, those are just observations that I have made.*

Beth noted that in some instances, religious ministers could assist in finding a compromise to opposing views. Beth recalled rare occasions where compromises have been discussed and agreed to, only to be overridden within the tangi/funeral,

*I find that personally really rude, because it goes against what was decided and they have already compromised, there has been a compromise. I wonder if I did not follow protocol perhaps on a marae because I was going to do this anyway. However, that does not happen very often.*

Although Beth described strategies that seek to prevent and/or mediate bereavement conflict, there remains the potential for difficulties to arise.

## **Bereavement Conflict**

Although a relatively rare occurrence, severe bereavement conflict creates significant complications that prolong funerary processes and ultimately impacts negatively upon the bereaved. One of the critical points presented within Beth's case study are the limitations attached to the capacity of funerary professionals to intervene within bereavement conflict. Beth would prefer not to be involved in bereavement conflict but would attempt to

mediate should issues arise in her work with bereaved. Beth recalled instances where conflict has interfered with important funerary arrangements, such as the cancellation of burial plot arrangements. On very rare occasions, Beth has been concerned about the potential for the deceased to be uplifted by bereaved members without amicable agreement from others. In some instances, bereaved whānau might express such concerns,

*...Sometimes a family might say to you, 'You are not to allow this person in'. However, if it is a Māori family, normally we are going to have whānau waiting here for the body, because you know they do not leave the body.*

Beth explained that a funeral director has limited authority to intervene should the uplifting of a deceased body occur. As an early precautionary measure, Beth has sought advice from the Police and was advised that Police intervention could only occur subsequent to the committal of an illegal act (i.e. unlawful removal of a deceased body). However, Police engagement within such situations is complicated by legislative grey areas pertaining to deceased bodies as detailed by Coroner Bain. Although the funeral home has several security features installed, such measures would only secure the deceased whilst on premises. Beth emphasised that the safety of her staff is paramount and she has briefed them on using security measures and seeking assistance from the Police or others if required. Beth recalled one such situation where she halted all funerary arrangements to work intensively with the bereaved,

*...We put them round the table and I just said to them that I expected them to listen to each other, and that we were not going to proceed until we were able to do this together. We had already made interment arrangements but another family member turned up and said there is no way that is happening... we just keep talking and I kept talking with them until we all could agree about what we would do...I'm not saying that there still wasn't a tenseness amongst family members, but we got an outcome that suited everybody. That*

*meant we did not go down a track that we were headed down in the beginning.*

The negotiations with the bereaved were fraught and intense and took place over several days. Beth emphasised that her approach to the situation was focussed on preventing escalation of conflict,

*...Prevention, I think is far better, honestly and that was why I cancelled [the funerary arrangements]. Let's prevent [uplifting of the deceased] from happening, let's work our way through it. I want to prevent things from happening and I think that is a far better approach.*

Beth emphasised that her response to the situation described embodied her own professional practise. Whereas, other funerary professionals may have different approaches to dealing with bereavement conflict,

*...when I talked to one funeral director about what I had done with that family they said 'Beth, I would have put them in a room and locked the door and walked away and let them fight it out', but I could not do that. However, some [funeral directors] might, that is just the difference, and it is just a different way of dealing with [bereavement conflict].*

Beth also noted that high profile cases of bicultural bereavement conflict may influence how funerary professionals perceive and respond to such situations, “*But when you have got the Takamore case sitting there for people, that is what they see, isn't it? I mean, that is just a tragic affair*”. I asked Beth what course of action she would consider if bereaved negotiations reached an impasse. Beth suggested that her next course of action would have been to seek outside assistance from others,

*... I would definitely consider ringing a coroner, or perhaps a kaumātua. I would be thinking 'Actually, I need somebody in here who either has some mana or some standing to bring about [resolution]. I would look at it on a case-by-case basis and say 'Who can help fix this? Alternatively, who do we need in here? I would not*

*battle on if I thought there was a better person to do it, or a better way to handle it.*

I enquired with Beth about whether there were connections within the community that she could call upon in such situations, to which she responded,

*[I have] considerable connections out in the community, absolutely. You haven't been in [the funeral industry] for 20 years and not to have worked out who is who. Even if it is somebody that you rang who could tell you who would be the best person.*

Beth was extremely relieved that the case of bereavement conflict she was involved in did not deteriorate to a point of necessitating serious intervention, *"I did not want for my company, I did not need that sort of publicity. But most importantly, I do not want that for my families, there is no future in that"*. I asked Beth how she would respond if a deceased body in her care was uplifted without amicable agreement and her reply was adamant, *"I just do not want to be that situation!"*

Beth has worked with funerary processes where the deceased has been under the care, custody and control of Coronial Services immediately following death. In some instances, Beth has been aware that Coronial Services have facilitated negotiations with the bereaved prior to the deceased being released from their jurisdiction. Beth recalled one case where the coroner released the deceased to a specific individual as a means of negating conflict amongst the wider family, which was an effective measure. I asked Beth to reflect on her experiences working with Coronial Services,

*[Coronial Services] do a great job. Over the years, I can think of cases, especially after the new Coronial Act, where [Coronial Services] have helped move processes along... I have had occasion to ring on- call Coroners and talk to them and they have been just wonderful. I just see them as not quite as fellow work mates because they are Coroners but, but you are all on the same team, working together. [Coroners] are wonderful people, wise people and they*



*only want the best as well. I have only ever had very good experiences with Coroners.*

I briefly outlined to Beth Coroner Bain's suggestion that the jurisdiction of Coronial Services could be extended to include intervention and mediation of bereavement conflict. I asked Beth for her thoughts and she commented on the importance of bereavement conflict being dealt with appropriately,

*I do not have a problem with that at all and it is only going to be a few cases where that would be the case and probably it is going to be culturally based. Therefore, I think that it has to be handled by people, the right people.*

Beth elaborated further on the engagement of professionals within bereavement processes, particularly in relation to issues of culture,

*...If I am with a Māori family I will sit down and we will work things out and that is usually not a problem. Nevertheless, for any culturally based family, I will say to them 'Are you alright having a woman funeral director? Or would you prefer to have a male? You are always aware of those things.*

Beth stated the importance of being self-aware of such issues and consulting with bereaved families regarding their preferences.

## **When Things Go Awry**

I asked Beth to describe how her organisation responds to client complaints. Beth noted that their complaint level is very low; however, she has had to respond to complaints on a few occasions in a career of over 30 years. Beth stated the importance of dealing with complaints swiftly,

*I want to get to those people as fast as I can and I will front up and I will always stand in front of my staff, I will never blame my team, never. Moreover, I will not involve them in that discussion either, that is where the buck stops with me. So it is about honesty, owning the problem, doing what works.*

As soon as Beth is aware of either a complaint of an unhappy client, her first step is to make personal contact with the client immediately,

*...because I need to make sure that they see that whatever they have come to see me about, it is important, it is important to me, it is important to them and that I will just give them one on one time.*

Beth's approach to client complaints focussed on allowing the client to express their perspective without interruption, acknowledging their distress and developing an appropriate resolution. Beth recalled her very first complaint. She asked the client, "*What can I do to help you? I can't change what has happened, but what can I do?*" to which the client responded, "*You have already helped me, you have listened to me*". Although Beth endeavours to ensure that decision-making processes include all the bereaved, this can be difficult. Beth noted that she has received feedback on two occasions from clients, who felt that she had prioritised the views of a particular individual,

*...obviously, I am not perfect at it all right, but you can receive that sort of response when there are only two people. It is very easy to get trapped into dealing with the person who is easiest to deal with.*

Beth elaborated further on this point, noting that complaint processes should incorporate self-reflection by the provider/industry professional and be viewed as an opportunity to improve and develop professional practise.

## **Significant Contributions**

Beth's chapter allows us to better understand the role and engagement of funerary professionals within bereavement processes. Emphasising a holistic focus, Beth identified professional attributes, skills and approaches that seek to support the bereaved. She also suggests strategies that may prevent and/or negotiate conflict within bereavement. Some of the points raised by Beth elaborate on issues that arose in the whānau case studies, including cultural competency and professionalism. Critically, Beth's discussions emphasise the commercial nature of the role of funerary professionals and how these impacts upon their capacity to assist with the

negotiation and mediation of bereavement conflict. This includes strategies that seek to include the bereaved as a collective within decision-making processes. Although the mediation of bereavement conflict is beyond their scope of practice, Beth describes a 'best practice' model with a responsibility to support the amelioration of bereavement conflict. For funeral directors, there appears to be little formal support available from other sources, including that of the Police, unless bereavement conflict results in a contest of property that includes the deceased being uplifted without amicable agreement amongst the bereaved. Beth also emphasises the need for more awareness in relation to the authority vested with executors. This authority assumes primacy within bereavement decision-making.

## **Chapter 9: Dr. Wallace Bain, Coroner**

In accordance with New Zealand Coroners Act 2006, deaths within certain circumstances are reportable to the New Zealand Coronial Services (NZCS). Once appointed, the NZCS retains the statutory right to exclusive rights of custody over a deceased body. Within this capacity, Coroners assume significant authority over the deceased and related bereavement processes. The role of the coroner is to establish the cause and circumstances of death through investigative post mortem processes. Coroners will co-ordinate with key professionals including the Police, funeral directors and medical personnel such as doctors, pathologists and mortuary staff. Coroners are also required to notify the deceased's immediate family, and certain others, of significant matters pertaining to the duties and processes conducted in relation to the deceased. Once coronial enquires have been completed, the coroner will authorise release of the body to those designated responsibility for the burial of the deceased, which is usually the appointed executor(s).

### **Expert Contributor: Coroner Wallace Bain**

Coroner Bain is currently the Regional Coroner for the Bay of Plenty area. He holds a first class honours degree in law and a doctorate in medico-pharmacy Law. He contributed to the amended 2006 Coroners Act, which incorporated important cultural considerations into coronial processes reflecting his engagement with Te Ao Māori and in particular Māori in the King Country and Rotorua regions. Coroner Bain has provided media commentary on high profile cases of bicultural bereavement conflict and was an invited speaker at the 2010 Death Studies symposium hosted by the Tangi Research Programme at the University of Waikato. Coroner Bain's perspectives draw on his considerable experience in working with bereaved whānau amidst significant time pressures, complex familial dynamics and the emergence of conflict within bereavement. The exploration of a Coroner's perspective provided a vehicle through which to consider legal intervention within situations of bereavement conflict. Focusing on the interface between bereavement conflict and legislative intervention is

important to consider and engaging with a Coroner was one way to achieve this.

## **Cultural Processes of Conflict Negotiation**

Through the course of our discussions, Coroner Bain expressed his understanding and appreciation for cultural processes of conflict resolution. He explained that his understandings were developed through working closely with Māori within the King Country region, including participation in tangihanga,

*Māori do with their processes on the marae; have a way of dealing with [conflict]. That is centuries old and so has worked in most cases, and it may well be that they need to be given a day or two to do that...*

Accordingly, Coroner Bain prioritises opportunities for whānau to engage in cultural processes through his coronial practise. Coroner Bain detailed some of his recollections of cultural processes of negotiating resolution,

*I had been on marae when there had been traditional arguments over bodies. It is a fearsome sight to watch when a Māori speaker... is in full flight, walking towards people with strong emotion in their body and in their voice, arguing that a body should not be buried in that area but should go back to another area.*

Coroner Bain suggested that witnessing such expressions without understanding the accompanying resolution processes could be extremely intimidating. He described ways in which he has seen conflict responded to and resolved,

*In all of the situations that I have been in, and this can go for days, I have witnessed that they have resolved [the conflict]. The hapū that are hearing it, listen, consult, talk, and then say 'Thank-you. We have considered everything that you have had to say, but no, we are going to bury the person here'. They set out their reasons, and that has always been accepted, [they] shake hands and go on as friends.*

Coroner Bain acknowledged that these processes require supports from significant others, “... *You have to see it to believe it, very emotional and demanding with the oratory that is delivered. You have got to have strong people on both sides to deal with that*”. Coroner Bain described what he considered the ideal outcome arising from bereavement conflict,

*... A good outcome is for there to be something finite determined, for views to be heard, and heard in a way that is proper and respectful. Those views need to be given consideration and a decision made so that the family can all move on. That has been done on marae for years and certainly all those that I witnessed on marae in Maniapoto have been done very respectfully. I assume that would occur elsewhere rather than being hijacked. It is only when that process is not working, in terms of those cases of ‘body snatching’ that we then need an alternative process.*

When a death is reported to the Coronial Services of New Zealand, the coroner then by Law has exclusive jurisdiction and the right to custody of the body. The Coroners Act designates the Police as the agents of the Coronial Services and the two agencies work closely together. The Police assume a dual role, their policing role under the Police Act and as members of the inquest officer inquiry team under the Coroners Act. Accordingly, the Police have access to Coronial Services resources, such as information pertaining to each case. The Police conduct necessary inquiries alongside liaising with bereaved families, which can include mediating conflict. When issues have arisen within families, Coroner Bain has initially called upon the Police to discuss matters with them, hoping that matters can be resolved through discussion as opposed to exerting jurisdiction. Such processes could take some time (usually hours), however this was far preferable to the time that could be spent within lengthy judicial hearings. Coroner Bain emphasised the importance of families having opportunities to discuss and negotiate matters together. In describing his particular approach to conflict, Coroner Bain illustrated experiential knowledge and empathy,

*My focus is on resolving disputes as sensitively and with as much compassion as I can. This means trying to respect the feelings that*

*the differing families or people who are in a close relationship with the deceased have. [The family] have just lost the deceased, they are emotional and sometimes they are not thinking rationally. [My approach] is to just calmly go through and work it through, so that there is respect and there is resolution to what can be a very difficult matter.[The family] have got a lot of things to do and think about as well as the funeral and all those things.*

The Coronial Service compiles a register of individuals closely connected with the deceased to liaise with regarding significant matters such as post mortems. All individuals in a close relationship with the deceased are entitled to be registered for contact. Relationships can include those recognised legally (e.g. husband or wife) and others such as de-facto partners. The Contact Register is compiled at the discretion of the Coronial Service. The Coroners Act 2006 includes a proviso that in order to facilitate effective liaison with immediate family, the Coroner may at their discretion or as requested by the family, recognise and liaise mainly with one or more representatives of the immediate family. Furthermore, the coroner may recognise only the smallest number of representatives necessary to fairly represent the interests of all immediate family members. The Act also notes that certain others may be registered for coronial liaison and notification if their interests are not expressed by the representative recognised for the immediate family.

Coroner Bain explained that sometimes difficulties might be encountered in liaising with different bereaved members, requiring some diplomacy. In one instance, the wife of a deceased man was registered, alongside his extra-marital girlfriend. Conflict arose when the girlfriend began to organise funeral proceedings and the wife protested the girlfriend being registered for contact. Although this was a difficult situation for all involved, the conflict was mediated through discussion. Those registered for contact were reminded that the release of the body could be delayed if an amicable agreement was not reached. Subsequently, the girlfriend ceased the funeral arrangements and the wife took on this role, but recognised the girlfriend's relationship with the deceased.

The Coroner will determine and organise a post mortem if deemed necessary. The amended 2006 Coroners Act incorporated cultural considerations with regard to post mortems. Drawing upon his previously described experiences, Coroner Bain put forward a submission to incorporate considerations for cultural beliefs and values when the Act was reviewed. His submission highlighted processes that recognised the cultural practices of the whānau, alongside coronial requirements. He reflected upon how this worked, *“It is about knowing the customs and practices and talking to senior Māori and allowing [cultural practices] to happen and recognising their customs and beliefs.”* Subsequently, section 32F and 32 G of the Act stipulate the desirability of minimising the causing of distress to people who by reason of their ethnic origins, social attitudes or customs, or spiritual beliefs customarily require bodies to be available to family members as soon as possible after death, and secondly, the desirability of minimising the causing of offense to people who (by the reasons aforementioned) find post mortems offensive. This exemplifies how significant cultural values can be recognised and negotiated within coronial practice and processes. The negotiation of objections to post mortems is a regular aspect of coronial practice, requiring a sensitive and experienced approach to dealing with whānau. Coroner Bain suggested that a similar approach could be applied to the mediation of bicultural bereavement conflict.

Coroner Bain designed a form to support whānau through coronial processes and safeguards against unconsented removal of tūpāpaku. The form expresses understanding that the whānau will need time to grieve and consider issues such as consenting to a post mortem (if required). The form requests that the whānau nominate a representative who will liaise with the coroner and ensure that the tūpāpaku is not moved without the consent of the coroner and the Police. He felt that this approach was appropriate as it allowed the tūpāpaku to remain with the whānau while inquiries took place. Coroner Bain acknowledged the cultural need of bereaved whānau to remain with tūpāpaku and was reluctant to remove tūpāpaku unless absolutely necessary. As Bain noted with compassion, *“... see what [bereaved whānau] want is the body, they want it there, they want to*



*come, they want to see the body, they want to stroke it, kiss it, all those things, so why take the body away?"*

Coroner Bain presented exemplar cases which further indicted the desirability of negotiating coronial processes with due respect for cultural sensitivities. He discussed a case where the wife of a kaumātua [cultural elder] had passed away suddenly. The widower had objected to a post mortem being conducted. Bain acknowledged that in some circumstances it is possible to forego the procedure. In this instance, Coroner Bain suggested to the widower that ascertaining the cause of death could alleviate any doubt surrounding the death, which could support the grieving process. Bain left the widower and bereaved whānau to consider the issue overnight. The following morning the widower gave consent for the post mortem. Bain attended the tangi, during which the widower made a special acknowledgement,

*[The widower] addressed me as Wallace Bain the coroner, he went through Māori cultural practises about not wanting a post mortem. He referred to my Maniapoto connections and how grateful he was for the information he received back from me that his wife had died of natural causes. He outlined that he originally said no [to a post mortem] and asked for a night to think about it. He then went on to say how beneficial and the peace of mind it had been to learn that she had died in her sleep and on reflection he really needed to know [the circumstances of the death].*

Bain noted this as commonly the approach he takes with objections to post mortems and in some instances bereaved whānau may remain opposed. Where possible, Coroner Bain may dispense with the post mortem and the cause of death will be recorded as unascertained.

Once circumstances surrounding the death have been recorded, the Coroner will determine to whom the body will be released to. This process is normally organised through the funeral director involved. The Coroner is often unaware of who has been appointed the executor of the deceased's estate. In line with their Coronial role, the Police usually become aware of

potential conflict arising from the release of the body and notify the coroner accordingly. Coroner Bain deals with such situations by exercising his jurisdiction, organising meetings with the family (either in person or by teleconference) to resolve conflict prior to releasing the body. Once the Coroner authorises the release of the body, their jurisdiction is extinguished (Ministry of Justice, 2006). If bereavement conflict arises subsequent to the release of the body, the Coroner is unable to reassert jurisdiction. Salient issues surrounding the role of the executor and role of the Coroner are highlighted within the case of Mr Ben Ujdur, whose cultural background was both Māori and Pākehā.

### **The Case of Mr Ben Ujdur**

In 2008, Mr Ben Ujdur and his wife were involved in a vehicle accident, Mr Ujdur suffered fatal injuries and Mrs Ujdur was airlifted to Waikato Hospital (Tahana, 2009a). Coroner Bain was appointed and conflict between Mrs Ujdur and Mr Ujdur's whānau appeared to emerge soon after his death. Mr Ben Ujdur had nominated his wife as his executor within his will. Mr Ujdur's brother made a request through the coroner for permission to take Mr Ujdur's body for a two day mourning period to allow his whānau (including his mother, siblings, children and grandchildren) to say goodbye and complete their Māori orientated grieving process (Tahana, 2009a). Mr Ujdur's brother formally guaranteed (in his professional capacity as a Police constable) that Mr Ujdur's body would be returned to his widow (Tahana, 2009a). Coroner Bain liaised with the widow over this matter and she appeared to be agreeable. Thus, with the coronial processes completed and amicable agreement reached between the widow and whānau, Coroner Bain was statutorily required to release the body to the widow (Bain, 2011).

Once Mr Ujdur's body was released, Mrs Ujdur arranged for a nearby funeral director to uplift the body. Mrs Ujdur indicated that conflict had emerged with Mr Ujdur's whānau and she was concerned that there could be an attempt to uplift the body without amicable agreement. Mrs Ujdur gave the funeral director instructions to secure and conceal the location of Mr Ujdur, who was taken out of the area. Several members of Mr Ujdur's whānau contacted the funeral director to try to locate Mr Ujdur and were

referred to Mrs Ujdur on each occasion. A member of Mr Ujdur's whānau alleged that the funeral director accused them of wanting to 'snatch' the body, which was upsetting and considered unprofessional and unwarranted. Mr Ujdur's brother made a final telephone call to the funeral director, who advised that the deceased had been cremated. The funeral director mentioned the possibility that Mrs Ujdur might allow the ashes to be returned, however this would be conditional upon the whānau "*...behaving and showing some respect*". Although Mr Ben Ujdur had left instructions in his will requesting burial within a specified cemetery in his tribal homelands, this case depicts how such instructions can be overridden. Mr Ujdur's whānau were effectively prevented from accessing or viewing his body, or fare welling Mr Ujdur (Bain, 2011). The whānau also reported that the cremation of Mr Ujdur directly contravened the deceased's wishes and the whānau held strong views against cremation. Despite the apparent conflict that emerged, Coroner Bain had no jurisdiction to intervene, as the body had been released from coronial custody.

The Ujdur case raises several important issues, including the tension between an executor's ability to exercise absolute authority and control over a deceased body, and customary rights and expectations of whānau to carry out cultural practices in response to death (Bain, 2011). Within the inquest findings Coroner Bain stated, "*It is a trite law that the executors of a will are those that have control and authority over the body once it is released to them*" (Watson, 2010). He highlights that the purpose of the 2006 Coroners Act was to incorporate provisions recognising the rights of family and others in a close relationship to the deceased to have their ethnic origins, social attitudes, customs and spiritual beliefs properly recognised. As this case demonstrates, such recognition can be thwarted following release of the body. Coroner Bain suggests law reform is required to include a mechanism by which bereavement conflict amongst whānau can be resolved through mediation. He suggests that an amendment to section 19 of the Coroners Act, extending Coronial jurisdiction, could facilitate such a process.

In stark contrast to the Ujdur case, Coroner Bain described a more recent case of bereavement conflict where a successful outcome was attained. Coroner Bain hopes to present this case as an exemplar to the Law Commission. Coroner Bain was rostered as the on-call coroner when he received a referral at approximate 7pm. A senior sergeant had been called to a situation where a deceased body was located at a private residence. As the bereaved family members gathered at the residence, conflict arose amongst three factions of the family. The level of conflict increased to the point that there was a real risk of physical violence. Accordingly, the senior sergeant had deployed more Police officers to try to diffuse the situation. The senior sergeant contacted Coroner Bain.

At this point, the cause of death was unknown and more information was required in order to ascertain whether the death would be formally reported to the Coroner. However, an urgent response was required to ameliorate the arising whānau conflict. Coroner Bain instructed the senior sergeant to go back to the family and advise them that he had spoken to Coroner Bain, who had issued directions. The family were advised that they would be given until 10.30pm that night to make a decision. Failing that, the body would be taken into the custody of Coronial Services, until an agreeable solution was found. Within an hour and half the senior sergeant reported to the coroner,

*I just want to report to you, and I want to thank you. It is just an amazing thing, the transformation that occurred as soon as those fighting factions learnt of what you told me to tell them. They talked sense, they sorted it out, and they signed a memorandum. They are all shaking hands, it is all set.*

In reflecting upon this example, Coroner Bain emphasised that asserting his jurisdiction by uplifting the body would not be the preferred course of action. However, by informing the family of this possibility, they were provided with an opportunity to find their own resolution and a strong incentive for doing so. Coroner Bain elaborated on the how his approach worked, “Once [the bereaved family ]realise that we have got the power over the body and the body is going nowhere until this is sorted out in a sensible way that is respectful of the dead, then it works”. Coroner Bain

emphasised that it is crucial for those within roles of authority and decision making to be experienced, aware and sensitive to cultural issues surrounding death and bereavement.

I asked Coroner Bain for comment upon the implications arising from unresolved bereavement conflict, *“I would imagine it drives families or parts of families apart for a long, long time if not forever”*. Bain went on to comment upon some of the different aspects from which conflict can arise,

*...You see it with Europeans as well particularly... not normally so much of an argument about the burial or cremation, but certainly about property rights. Where there is a dispute that is it for the family, you can almost put a ring around it, brothers do not talk to sisters. I think that is the implication of [conflict], it is just one stage earlier.*

## **Conflict: Prevention and Resolution**

Coroner Bain presented a range of issues that can potentially support or inhibit the resolution of bereavement conflict. He emphasised that the focus should be on preventing conflict from occurring. Where conflict does emerge, an immediate response is warranted to avoid entrenchment. Speed also allows funeral/tangi to proceed within a reasonable time frame. These prevention measures suggested by Coroner Bain are presented below.

### **Pre-emptive discussions**

Coroner Bain pointed to the need for individuals to consider and discuss with whānau their wishes following death. This is an opportunity for individuals to give living voice to their wishes and underlying rationale. Coroner Bain suggested a template could be developed to enable individuals to make a memorandum regarding their wishes. With rapid advances in technology, there is the possibility that such memorandums could be filed somewhere appropriate on the World Wide Web. Such a means could avoid the need to incur legal fees alongside providing a brief that could guide bereavement processes.

Coroner Bain commented upon his impression that there is reluctance amongst Māori with regard to wills. In describing particular cases of bereavement conflict, Coroner Bain noted,

*...if nothing else it is a timely reminder to have simple will, even if you do not have much in it. You can sort out property later, but I am appointing this person as executor and these are my wishes.*

The absence of such a document leaves room for confusion and conjecture regarding the deceased's wishes. The High Court is then required to make determinations, including the appointment of an executor. Ideally, this could be avoided through the drafting of a will, where individuals can express their wishes, including the appointment of an appropriate executor(s) who has ultimate authority over bereavement processes. This is one area that Coroner Bain felt needed to be addressed through the Law Commission Burial and Cremation Act Review, which commenced in July 2010.

### **Role of executor**

Coroner Bain highlighted the need for increased awareness of the role and jurisdiction of an appointed executor(s). Commonly, the executor is appointed to settle property matters. However, recent cases have highlighted that executors have ultimate jurisdiction over the deceased's body and its disposal as illustrated in the Ujdur case described above. The appointment of an executor requires careful consideration, as their determinations alone are legally binding. Coroner Bain suggested that the appointment of an executor with the same cultural beliefs could be an important measure. It is also possible to appoint multiple executors who will be required to reach consensual decisions. Consideration should be given to the impact that grief could have upon the decision-making ability of executors closely related to the deceased.

The widely reported Takamore case, (NZPA, 2008b, 2008c) has provided some clarification upon the duties of an executor. Coroner Bain noted that executors must consider others, including their cultural views. Bain described the executor role as akin to a trustee, in that although they hold

considerable authority, there is also a grafted on duty to consider other people's views including those culturally orientated. In this case, the Court recognised that Executor(s) should facilitate culturally appropriate processes for discussion and negotiation amongst the whānau with regard to issues such as the place of burial (Bain, 2011). However, this presumes that executors will have the knowledge, skills and state of mind to facilitate such discussions. The executor role is further examined in a following section pertaining to the current review upon New Zealand's Burial and Cremation Act.

## **Issues for Consideration: Professional Roles and Legalities**

### **No 'property' in a body**

Coroner Bain raised some of the issues in relation to the Common Law rule which recognises no legal property in a dead body. If a body is uplifted without amicable agreement, legal authorities are unable to pursue charges of theft through criminal law. Coroner Bain is firmly of the opinion that there is property in the coffin and any contents therein. Accordingly, this provides facility for the Police to pursue matters under the premise of theft. This issue was central in the case of Ivy Ngahooro, who was uplifted by an estranged daughter against the wishes of other bereaved family members. In this instance, the Police were reluctant to act without clear legal jurisdiction. Fortunately a compromise was eventually reached and the body of Mrs Ngahooro was returned to Hamilton and buried accordingly (Bain, 2011).

Bain also outlined the case of Tina Marshall-McMenamin, whose body was uplifted from a Lower Hutt funeral home by her birth father and taken to Ruatōria (Bain, 2011). Despite a High Court Order preventing burial and the reported wishes of the deceased to be cremated in Lower Hutt, her body was buried in her tribal home lands near Ruatōria. Through negotiations, the family eventually reached an agreement and the body was exhumed and cremated (Crombie, 2007). Wairarapa MP John Hayes appeared have had some role within the family negotiations and offered comments upon means

of resolution to bicultural bereavement conflict. John Hayes rejected the suggestion of legislative amendment being required to address bereavement conflict, preferring the facilitation of negotiations amongst the bereaved, *“The existing law is more than adequate. What is important is to encourage the families involved to speak with each other directly and not through the media”* (Crombie, 2007). Mr Hayes was also critical of the approach undertaken by Wigram MP Jim Anderton within the Takamore case, stating, *“Minister Anderton was in the unique position of a local member who could have contributed to resolving the problem with his constituents had he engaged with the parties rather than conducting a dialogue through the media”* (Crombie, 2007). Mr Hayes highlighted the view that legislative amendment and intervention could exacerbate bicultural bereavement conflict and have other far-reaching impacts, *“Following the course being suggested by Anderton would ultimately create conflict between the Police and the families in effect, between the State and Māori. That outcome would not be in the interest of any New Zealander”* (Crombie, 2007).

There was some criticism levelled at the Police for not intervening within this case, however they apparently viewed the situation as a civil matter and with no legal property in a body they could not intervene (Bain, 2011). Ruatōria Police Sergeant Herewini was quoted within the media as being pleased that a resolution had been reached without Police intervention, *“Give me a burglary any day. There’s too many emotions involved with families in this sort of situation and it’s great they sorted matters without us”* (Crombie, 2007). Although Coroner Bain expressed understanding of the legal and emotional complexity of these situations, he affirmed that the law offers some clarity that would support Police intervention, as there is property in the casket and shroud or clothing with the deceased and it is indeed theft to take these (Bain, 2011).

### **The role of the Police**

The role of the Police within bereavement conflict may vary dependant on upon whether Coronial jurisdiction has been activated. If a death is reported to the Coronial Agency, the Police are appointed as agents of Coronial



Services under the Coronial jurisdiction. Coroner Bain expressed the view that in conjunction with an appointed coroner, these parties may be able mediate conflict swiftly and effectively. However, there are a significant number of cases that will fall outside of Coronial jurisdiction. In such instances, the Police must deal with conflict without the support and guidance of Coronial Services. The role of the Police is further complicated by the legislative grey areas surrounding deceased bodies. In high profile cases such as Ngahoro, Takamore and Marshall-McMenamin, there appeared to be some uncertainty regarding the jurisdiction of the Police, who were reluctant to intervene. Even in instances where exacting orders are issued by the High Court, the Police may face implementation difficulties. This was evident in the Takamore case, where the Police were reluctant to implement High Court orders and withdrew from doing so due to safety reasons amidst the conflict (Shanks, 2014).

### **Māori Iwi Liaison Officer**

Coroner Bain highlighted the role of a Māori Iwi Liaison officer as a key support in mediating bereavement conflict. Coroner Bain has called upon such individuals to negotiate with very successful outcomes,

*They go in when the families are in dispute, and they can sort it out with them face to face. We have, for example, a case manager here who is Māori, and we have had situations where the body has been in the morgue and there have been difficulties and so I have sent him there. Ministry of Justice have at times tried to stop him but I have sent him there basically to say 'look the coroner will be here in a couple of hours, I've got to report to him, if we can't get this resolved...'*

From his experience, Coroner Bain felt that Māori whānau often appreciate liaising with professionals from the same cultural group, “Māori appreciate a Māori face coming with customs and practices and protocols and understanding of it. It is a mark of respect to them, and to the family and that has worked very well”. With shared understandings, issues are often able to be resolved through an understanding and supportive process. Bain

believes such a role could be situated within the Police, or as with others, he has worked with, independent of the Police. The main requirement of such a role is availability to Coronial Services when required,

*...The inquest officers call on them and say 'Right, we want you to go in here, here's the background to it, we want you to go in there do your very best to explain to the families so on and so on'. That can take time, by time I mean hours, but it has proved to be very effective, very effective and I think that is probably the way to deal with it.*

Coroner Bain emphasised that the integral nature of such a role would require adequate resourcing and policies to support the development of skills and training.

### **The role of the media**

Bain has been critical of the role of the media reporting of bereavement conflict. As Coroner Bain has noted, debate amongst bereaved whānau is a customary practice that has strong historical foundations. Bereavement debates are dealt with in accordance with cultural customs and protocols. The role of the media in contemporary times has brought unwelcomed and sometimes warped attention to such processes. Coroner Bain said “...it was demeaning to see private family matters and cultural practices about death being dragged through the public media in the manner they had been” (NZPA, 2008b). Commenting on media reporting of the Ngahooro case Bain said,

*...It was demeaning to Māori because you had [photographs] taken out at Taumarunui with gang members with folded arms. This was the lead item in the news virtually every day and [the family] were trivialised over that very sensitive process.*

This issue was also discussed by MP John Hayes in relation to the Marshall-McMenamin case, who commented on the role of the media having a direct impact upon the negotiations amongst the bereaved, “Problems had arisen

*in both cases when the dialogue was conducted between the media”* (Crombie, 2007).

## **Alternative: Extending Jurisdiction of the Coronial Services**

Throughout his discussions, Coroner Bain made suggestions as to how New Zealand systems might be best utilised to assist with the mediation of bereavement conflict. In relation to the Ujdur case, Bain noted tensions arising from the exclusive rights and authority of a widow as sole executor against the customary rights and expectations of the deceased’s whānau to carry out cultural practises. Given these issues and the complexity of bereavement, Coroner Bain suggested the view that bicultural bereavement conflict is far more appropriately and effectively considered on a case-by-case basis. Moreover, mechanisms for mediating such conflict must have the capacity of respond swiftly and sensitively, “...*the object of the exercise has to be able to get quick and speedy resolution in a culturally sensitive way*”. Bain used the Ngahooro case as an exemplar, suggesting that a coroner could have instructed the Police to uplift the body immediately into coronial custody until the conflict was resolved.

However, as previously noted, only deaths within specific circumstances are reportable to Coronial Services (Ministry of Justice, 2006). As was the case in several high profile instances of bereavement conflict, Coronial Services were not involved and were unable to intervene. Coroner Bain reflected upon the circumstances surrounding some of the aforementioned cases, noting that involvement of Coronial Services could have facilitated swift resolution of conflict. Takamore’s de-facto partner Denise Clark commented that having a coroner as a mediator would have helped their situation (Watson, 2010).

Coroner Bain has provided media comment on this point and detailed his suggestion in our discussions. He noted that the Coronial Services Agency has considerable experience in mediating bereavement conflict, “... *As Coroners, much of what we do particularly when we are on call is work through the various issues with the families to get [conflict] sorted*” In

instances where a deceased is taken without consensual agreement or there are differing factions disputing access over the deceased, a coroner is able to mediate and use their skills and experience to develop a solution. Coroners are specifically trained in such matters and deal with these issues with some regularity.

In response to bereavement conflict, Coroner Bain has been advocating for an amendment to the Coroners Act 2006 for quite some time and well prior to the Takamore case. As a practical and effective means of ameliorating conflict, Bain has suggested extending current coronial jurisdiction,

*...notwithstanding sections one and two (those which have to be reported) the designated coroner shall have jurisdiction and exclusive right to the custody of a body at any time, whether or not the death has been reported to a coroner, and or that coroner has released the body, and may make such orders and directions as that coroner sees fit.*

In essence, such an amendment would allow Coronial Services to enact jurisdiction over any deceased body, at any point in bereavement proceedings. Thus, Coronial Services would be able to intervene in any situation where bereavement conflict emerges. Coroner Bain was certain that if such an amendment were in place, cases such as Takamore and others would not have occurred. This would include re-activation of jurisdiction, addressing issues that may arise subsequent to the release of the body and extinguishment of coronial jurisdiction. Coroner Bain pointed to cases such as Ujdur, where conflict was seemingly resolved and the body released, only for conflict to re-emerge and the coroner was powerless to intervene. Coroner Bain discussed the feasibility of vesting such jurisdiction with Coronial Services,

*... We are the people that deal with [death]...What I am suggesting is as recommended by senior kaumātua both here [in Rotorua] and in Maniapoto. If you are going to have someone who has authority to resolve [bereavement conflict], we are the people that deal in death all day, every day. I do not want any extra work and it is very*

*difficult with some of these situations. However, you have control because you have the body and that sorts [the conflict] out.*

Coroner Bain also noted that the proposed mediation through Coronial Services would not incur whānau/families costs such as those engaged through the various Courts. Bain elaborated upon discussions with Māori kaumātua regarding resolution of bereavement conflict,

*...We had the Hon. Koro Wetere, the kaumātua Tiwha Bell of Maniapoto and the kaumātua, Fred Whata of Te Arawa, all in 100% agreeance that if you have the body, in terms of Māori, you will get cultural resolution very quickly, if you have someone making the decision that is very culturally aware and sensitive.*

We asked Coroner Bain whether his proposed extension of Coronial jurisdiction would potentially result in increased workload or required resources. Coroner Bain did not consider that there would be any great increase in workload or resources, should the jurisdiction be extended. Bain noted that Coroners are supported by three or four highly trained staff within the Auckland call centre, which facilitates contact with the on-call Coroner.

The current Chief Coroner, Judge Neil MacLean, has not lent support for Coroner Bain's proposed amendment, positing that the resource and cost implications are unjustified for such "*...relatively rare situations*" (Watson, 2010). Coroner Bain's proposal utilises existing coronial resources, which in some cases would be minimal. The relative rarity of such cases further supports Bain's view that there would be minimal strain placed upon Coronial Services. Judge Neil MacLean commented that, "*Many Māori would understandably take the view that by custom and practice the issue of claim to the body is a matter best left for all the competing interests to resolve without intervention by an uninvolved outsider*" (Watson, 2010). However, Coroner Bain's proposal has support from several senior kaumātua consulted. Furthermore, cases of extreme bereavement conflict, particularly where tūpāpaku are uplifted without amicable agreement, will inevitably incur judicial intervention. Judge MacLean asserts that, "*In the*

*relatively rare occasion when it cannot be sorted out, the High Court has the jurisdiction and expertise to expeditiously resolve the issue"*(Watson, 2010). However, as cases such as Takamore indicate, court proceedings can potentially take many years and remain unresolved.

Importantly, Coroner Bain considered the advantages offered by Coronial Services in supporting bereaved whānau/families in conflict. Coronial Services would guide all processes in terms of resolving bereavement conflict. Bereaved whānau/families would not be required to make applications to the court, pay filing fees or decipher court procedures. Instead, Coronial Services would work with whānau/families, gathering relevant people together (in person or by teleconference) to discuss matters and develop some resolution to issues presented. As indicated in the exemplar case described earlier, Coronial processes can provide space for whānau/families to negotiate their own solutions. As Bain emphasised, coronial processes can be activated immediately which in all probability is far preferable to length court processes, as was the case in Takamore.

Coroner Bain suggested that the Coronial Services might also be able to assist with the appointment of an executor in instances where a will is absent. As noted previously, currently such matters fall under the jurisdiction of the High Court. Potentially, jurisdiction to appoint an executor(s) could be vested with Coronial Services, who could work with the bereaved family to do so. The High Court could retain a supervisory role to receive coronial recommendations with regard to executor appointment and burial proceedings. In practice, the appointed Coroner could work with the family to hear all views and making a determination from this information. The final determination could be suspended for 24 hours before being implemented to allow the opportunity for appeal.

## **Future Gaze**

With increased opportunities for cross-cultural encounters and relationships in the modern world, I asked Coroner Bain for his thoughts upon the forecast for the future. Bain felt that people are becoming better educated and new technologies are offering broad possibilities. The

development of a web resource to inform whānau/families of the relevant issues, processes and potential implications could be very helpful. From his experience, Bain is confident that the upcoming generations would be able to deal with bereavement conflict quite effectively. With increased likelihood of cross-cultural marriages, Bain did not think that this would necessarily mean increased bereavement conflict. Bain felt that with the right processes in place, access to education and pre-emptive whānau discussions, conflict could be avoided.

## **Significant Contributions**

Coroner Bain's narrative takes us into the role and jurisdiction of New Zealand Coronial Services. One of the key insights offered by Coroner Bain's perspective, is his development of cultural understandings and attempts to incorporate these into his professional approach. Coroner Bain raises exemplar cases and critical points that emphasise concerns and significant gaps within the current legislative approach to bereavement conflict. He stresses the adoption of conflict resolution processes that work collaboratively with the bereaved and some of the considerations that attend to such an approach. Coroner Bain suggests several alternative measures that adopt a preventative approach to conflict, including pre-emptive discussions amongst whānau/family, drafting of wills and the need for increased awareness of the executor role in selecting individuals within this capacity. Coroner Bain also suggests areas for consideration within relevant legislation and the role of others, including the Police. Coroner Bain also advocates that Coronial Services are well positioned to prevent and mediate bereavement conflict, a view which has garnered some support from prominent kaumātua.

## **Chapter 10: Reverend Thomas Poata, Anglican Minister**

Although New Zealand is often described as an increasingly secular society, the whānau case studies indicated that religious ministers often hold a key role in bereavement processes. Accordingly, the need for a religious perspective was recognised. My supervisors suggested that Reverend Thomas Poata would offer insightful descriptions of the clergy's role in bereavement processes. This chapter presents discussions with Reverend Thomas Poata, a well-respected Anglican minister and kaumātua.

### **Expert Contributor: Reverend Thomas Poata**

Reverend Poata was born and raised in Whangaroa, he is of Ngāti Kahu descent. Tom's whānau have a long tradition of faith, dating back to first arrival of missionaries in their tribal lands. He is now a valued member of the Rotorua community, known for his humour and ability to connect with people across generations. Articulate in the languages of both Te Ao Pākehā and Te Ao Māori, he regularly officiates at community events and rituals. We invited Reverend Poata to participate in the research in relation to his role as a religious minister. As I was raised in a secular family, I approached the research interview with some reservations and slight trepidation; but the encounter with Reverend Poata was in stark contrast to my tentative expectations. His philosophical and intellectual rigour was most evident and frankly, more than a little intimidating. Tom deconstructed key facets of spiritual and cultural worlds and revealed the familiar as unfamiliar as he explored concepts and responses to death and grief often taken for granted. His considerable experience across geographic, cultural and societal contexts culminate a wealth of knowledge pertaining to conflict and resolution. Tom's narrative also identified some of the complexities and transitions relating to culture and faith in contemporary society.

### **The Role of Ministers: Spirituality amongst Secularity**

Given Tom's cultural and spiritual affiliations, he offered a somewhat unique perspective that traversed both Te Ao Māori and Christianity.



Central to his role is the provision of spiritual solace, to the dying and subsequent to death, to the bereaved, “...*your job is to preach on salvation, to offer hope, redemption and eternal life and all those things*”. Tom emphasised his belief that religious ministers do not hold “...*any intrinsic power or authority*”. Rather they offer support by way of invitation and at the request of the bereaved. We asked Tom to clarify this point, as some people do perceive the role of religious ministers to be vested with authority. Tom elaborated further,

*...No they do not, not anymore. The days of grovelling to churches are long gone. You will get young people come up to you and tell you what they think [of the church] and I think that is marvellous. We deserve to be told. For too long we hid behind the power of church, that was a spiritual fear. Make them afraid and then they will not argue with you. But now, you cannot do that.*

Tom acknowledged the world is now more secular, but suggested that critical life moments can prompt people to seek spiritual comfort,

*We may claim secularity, but when it comes times of deep emotional pain and suffering, people need a theatre, a stage with lights, mood and ambience ...All of that is to ameliorate the sense of separation. It is the separation that is the pain, not the death.*

Tom described his efforts to account for the diversity of cultural and spiritual beliefs in society,

*...At any [given funeral] there will be [some] people who think “What a load of rubbish”. There will be those who would be happy if [the ceremony] was spoken entirely in Māori and they never understood a word of what was said, but it sounds good. Then there are others so steeped in their religion, at the other of the spectrum. What you have to do is try to go through the middle, pull that thread in and that thread in, like Tāwhiao’s [whakataukī], threads of a many colours. You pull them all in so that you arrive at a conclusion that is about [deceased] and [the bereaved’s] relationship with them, not mine [as a priest].*

Tom responded to criticisms that have suggested religious based funerals offer depersonalized and inaccurate portrayals of the deceased, describing the intent to emphasise shared humanity, rather than differences,

*... [They are] human and [that] never changes. Successes and failures have I many and you talk about that. People misunderstand and believe that faith is an argument about who the person is. They are human, [they were] standing up at one point and now [they are] lying down.*

Tom shared experiences where he has officiated within funerals where the immediately bereaved have disclosed an absence of religious beliefs, but have wanted to consider the needs of others,

*At least those families are cognisant that there can be a lot of people there who do believe [in Christianity], even if they do not. It is not just [the bereaved's] beliefs or in fact [the deceased's beliefs] that matter, but [everyone's]. So, you make everybody welcome.*

In expressing respect for the diverse spiritual beliefs, Tom indicated that the role of the Church needs to be similarly respected,

*When you give the mauri over to the Church, it is given with both hands and it is taken with both hands... when you give the mauri to the church, she [the Church] has her own voice and does not need to be told what to say.*

Funerary services are often collaborative efforts that necessitate due respect for the roles of others,

*...When you are in these roles, you are dependent upon your fellow cast members. Nobody ever does this on their own; it is not a single man's show or a single woman's stage performance. You are always dependent on the cast, it is about relationships and respecting each other's boundaries.*

Such measures of respect and professionalism suggest that should difficult matters arise, these should be discussed privately rather than publically.

## **Between and Across Worlds: Culture and Spirit**

Tom offered a philosophical commentary upon Māori and Christian worldviews. Although distinctions exist between these, they can be reduced to dimensions universal to humanity,

*You can argue about the differences, cultural differences, perceptual differences, but when you have exhausted all of those you will always end up arguing about life and death, happiness and misery, war and peace. You cannot avoid it... When you get all of those things and start to put them in a line, and view them externally, you find the same pieces missing in the jigsaw. They are a separation of the material world that we live in that is culturally bound, and ... Te Ao Wairua, or the immaterial world. The material world versus the spiritual world; that is all it is.*

Tom suggested that objective analyses would reveal intrinsic differences between religious and cultural systems and their function. With careful emphasis, he asserted that such systems are meaningless unless supported by belief in their value,

*...Culture, like religion is totally pointless unless, it is buttressed by a faith or a belief that this is good, a cultural pou that says no mātou wenei, hei kakahu [Translation: these values are ours, a protective cloak] it is ours and therefore it has intrinsic value. That is all we do with religion anyway, it is ours and it has intrinsic value because we believe it... The power is in the belief, and of course that is all faiths and that is all religions, all sciences and all mathematics.*

Although respect for diversity and allowance for different expressions are ideals to be pursued, these may not always be possible or practical, “... *Every culture has [their own approach to] the proper disposal of the dead. That is by allowing every individual to express themselves in their own way, but eventually self-expression has its place, at other times it does not*”.

## **Te Ao Māori: Re-interpreting, Re-Imagining, and Re-Modelling**

In acknowledging the role of religion within an ever-changing world, Tom observed,

*Nothing has been an eternal truth except life and death. What happens in between ...it is built into culture, philosophy, history, success and failure, wealth and poverty, war and peace, all of those dualities. So Māori are in the same position but we have more than a duality, we have a multi view, if you ask me, because we are post-colonial, modernist, secular and non-religious [as well as ] religious, deeply spiritual people, and still basically tribal.*

Tom described the trajectory of cultural traditions, from historical origins through to contemporary expression. In times past, Māori were pragmatic in their understanding of and responses to death,

*... If you are dead, you are dead, and our tūpuna were just as pragmatic as that. Kua mate te tangata [Translation: The person has died. That is it] Then you just do what is necessary to fulfil the [cultural] obligations.*

Often in contemporary times traditions can be enacted regardless of meaning and function, compromising the solidity of the cultural system,

*Nowadays, there are so many cockamamie ideas that are half-baked, they are not solid. You can sit and ask one or two probing questions and pull the whole lot down like a house of cards. There is no system, the system got lost when we lost the language and it certainly got lost when we lost our rural roots. But, there is nothing to say that we cannot rebuild these.*

This is an assertion of hope. Although language change and urban migrations prompted cultural impacts, Tom described the latter as self-determined and intentional,

*...When people left their homes, their village church, their marae, and the 'home crowd', they wanted to free themselves from all of that, including religion. To shake it all off, go to Auckland, get a job, get a wife, buy a house and have children... It is what you did and we have been doing it ever since.*

The impact of colonisation and assimilation upon Māori is well documented; but Tom suggested these as part of a bigger picture requiring more in-depth analysis,

*... That pattern, that lifestyle has not been truly analysed with an open mind. Instead, we say "Oh, it is the colonials! Those Pākehā and their bibles! They ruined us! All these young people in Waikeria [Prison] are there because of some missionary two hundred years ago!" That is not it at all! ... Attributing the state of Māori to a particular event is pretty dangerous; I do not think it is possible. A confluence of things over a few generations has brought us to where we are now.*

Tom emphasised that consideration of such issues should be solution focussed, rather than problem focussed "...Give us some freaking hope! Never mind what the problem is, what is the answer?" Cultural systems are embedded within particular histories and traditions, that are transmitted to subsequent generations which affirms, "... a spiritual inter-relationship between one generation and another". However, culture must retain the capacity to evolve with the inevitability of change,

*...We had to choose what to jettison and what to retain. Every generation has always decided on its own terms, according to its own wisdom or self-awareness, what to jettison and what to retain. Religion was jettisoned because our parents jettisoned it and we are inadvertently jettisoners.*

Tom describes the fine balance to be negotiated with retention versus relinquishment of aspects of culture. Such decisions should be directed by consideration of place, relevance and benefit,

*It is all of those things that give me so little faith in the system we have now, because it is not a system, it is a hotchpotch. If we could get back to a point where we could reinvigorate the idea of the notion of place and benefit or not of these things- again what do we jettison and what do we keep. There has been so much that has been jettisoned, that I think we have lost at least part of 'the baby'... [by throwing out the bath water].*

Without such considerations, there is a risk that aspects of culture retained serve no function within a contemporary context. We sought further clarification, suggesting that some perceive traditions as cultural 'truths'. Tom responded with a key point, "... [For some it may be the truth], but is it a life-saving truth or is it just a curiosity that we want to maintain?" He emphasised the need to critically examine the link between cultural aspects and the fulfilment of core virtues, ultimately supporting the pursuit of happiness,

*[Some] talk about the language as the key to being a Māori. I do not care so much what language it is, but does it bring happiness? Does the norm, the behaviour, the system bring happiness, fulfilment, acceptance? The virtues, or do we take out religion and bring in [cultural] Nazis? They are everywhere, "Women cannot do that! No, you cannot do that, if you do someone will die". Some of these things have become a matter of "Look at me" rather than looking at how this benefits or makes things so much better. I think we need to go back to what is it that [the tradition] meant to achieve.*

Moreover, Tom expresses that the key function of culture rests within relationships of a positive nature,

*The system loses its credibility if it is not protecting, nurturing, encouraging, supporting... then it is not doing anything, it is just a bunch of rules. We do not need any more of those because we have got heaps already. I think being Māori is now more difficult than it has ever been and it is going to get worse. Relationships are the crux of one of the massive problems that Māori have. Our culture is*

*there to nurture, to nurture our nature. We have lost so much and we still do not ask the difficult questions.*

Although Tom identifies issues within Te Ao Māori, he also expressed the potential that lies within addressing some of these,

*... We are on the verge of a complete re-modelling, so while we are at it we might as well test the system. If [particular aspects] do not fit into the system then it probably should not be there. [It may be] an invention or the manifestation of someone's dreaming. It only takes one strong kaumātua to say, "We do not do that because...", and of all a sudden that is the way it has always been. [Maybe] he just never liked those ideas.*

Key individuals do exert considerable influence upon the interpretation and enactment of cultural traditions. Tom questioned the impact that modern lifestyles and secular education have upon the selection and 'training' of future elders,

*...And we now have some speakers who are not equipped emotionally or spiritually, because it is a spiritual role. Make no mistake that the role of a kaumātua on a marae, on a pōhiri [ritual ceremony of encounter], a whakatau [welcoming ceremony], or a tangi, is spiritual work. I am sick of hearing "Here is the kaumātua, he is infallible"... Do you seriously think that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we should think that anyone is infallible? That they cannot err and if they do, that we have no opportunity to say "I think you erred".*

Tom's comment effectively exposes a dilemma facing many Māori communities, that is, who and what defines the role of kaumātua? That question is considered elsewhere.

## **Conceptualising Death**

Tom offered commentary upon concepts related to death and grief and their expression through emotional, social, ritual and practical responses. Regardless of how we perceive death, it enacts the ultimate physical separation of the deceased from the bereaved,

*No amount of conversation, in one way, is going to bring you back or restore the relationship, it now reaches a different level and that is it, there is no altering it. We go into death. Death does not come out of itself. We go into death.*

The degree of finality felt can vary according to belief in the presence or absence of 'life' after death. Tom elaborated on what this meant from a Christian worldview,

*...The teachings are quite clear, you are at the point of death, nothing. Death is immediate and does not end until salvation appears. You do not think, you cannot do, and you cannot speak. You have no feelings, physical or emotional. You are dead. There is nothing until God comes, that might be tomorrow or a billion years, and calls out your name and you arise! I think that is much better, otherwise the grave, the tangi, the funeral is all senseless. It has no purpose if it does not leave behind the sense of hope.*

Tom elaborated upon the Christian perspective regarding human remains,

*... There is nothing there, but the disposal must be decent and proper. That is an expectation and every culture has that, whatever their idea of decent and proper handling of a deceased person is. It is still the handling of a human; they never cease to be human, within the sanctity of the grave, and the sanctity of the body.*

Given these perspectives, we asked Tom for his perspective upon cremation and cremains,

*I have no problem with being burnt and I never have.... At 1200 degrees centigrade, any material sign of human life has gone; all that is there is just ash...[Some assert] that it is not a Christian [practice], because it is not what happened to Christ. The scriptures are ambiguous at least, or vague as to whether or not it is possible to recover a body after incineration.*

Tom suggested there was little distinction to be made between cremation or burial,



*...What is the difference? People say “Oh no! You cannot be burnt because that is not what we do”. Well, what is the difference? Is it any kinder to the tūpāpaku to put it under 6 feet of mud and jump up and down on it? What difference does it make? The dead are dead; there is nothing that you can say to or about them that they can hear. The notion of talking to the dead is a mortal thing, it offers some solace to the speaker and perhaps the [living] listeners. However, it renews no contract between the dead and the living, that gulf can never be bridged*

Tom noted cremation as a practical means for returning home those who had died overseas, given the considerable cost of repatriating a tūpāpaku. He has advised those diagnosed with a terminal illness in Australia to return to New Zealand immediately, while there was opportunity to do so without overburdening themselves or their family. This was pragmatic advice.

In contrast to Christian concepts of ‘life’ after death, Tom described those held to within Te Ao Māori,

*...if you stuck strictly to pre-colonial ideas, there could be any number of sacred places where you would disappear to, down a hole, across a river, up a mountain, to the sea. Or you might swing off a pohutukawa tree... look back at the people and they would wail and sing and you would say ‘See you later’ and go on to Hawaiki.*

Although distinctions are noted across cultural responses to death, there are also commonalities, “...Those are all part of the construct that we put around coming to terms with grief, but most of all coming back from grief, stepping back from it”. Moreover, Tom emphasised that death and grief are universal experiences intrinsically tied to the human experience, despite the differing responses that may ensue, “... because that is part of the thread that sews us together and makes us human. That is what makes me, me and you, you and both of us different, but also the same”.

## **The ‘Theatre of Death’: Responding to Death and Grief**

Even within a secular society, grief may prompt the bereaved to seek spiritual comfort through the enactment of a ‘theatre of death’, in which mourning processes are facilitated by practitioners and experts. Such enactments affirm the death event and attempt to ameliorate separation from the deceased. The deceased is assigned a central and symbolic role within the ‘theatre’. However, the responses to death and grief ultimately manifest amongst the living, as Tom asserted, “...*The event and the person to whom the event occurs will have no knowledge, concept, precept or feeling... There is nothing to be done for the dead*”. Notions of separation are integral elements of the response to death, “...*There are always spiritual separations to do. They are not physical or practical separations; they are always philosophical or religious separations*”. Tom reiterated his comment that fundamental understandings of the function and meaning ascribed to death rituals have become blurred and opaque. This causes our responses to be reactionary, rather than well considered,

*We have this system, a systematic approach to death. But, it is not necessarily ideal. We have got a bunch of rules that state “This is what you do”. You ring up [the funeral director] and he comes and gets the [body]. Then the ‘girls’ go up there, take the clothes and dress the old girl, put her pearls on and you take her to the marae for three days and all will be well. But, can you see how absurd a notion it is?*

Tom’s comment identifies the constraints of unquestioning ‘taken for granted’ practises which become a role or scene to be played accordingly. In contrast, Tom described his preference for simpler, more modest responses to death,

*When really one would just say, take her into her room, most often if people die at home, they die in their bed, so leave them there. Then get people to come and pay court and the next day, bury her. That is very simple, similar to eastern traditions of death, with burial*

*before sunset. That is a perfect system, you are dead, and you are gone.*

Tom described an increasingly inflexible approach within tangihanga as interfering with its key therapeutic function,

*... We now have this huge growing idea that unless you do 'A, B and C' in that very order and unless you are aware of that very order, the whole thing will turn to acorns and you will get sick and your children will get sick... That is absurd, yet so many people perpetuate those sorts of stories by not being realistic, and not saying "You have got trouble and it is actually happening in your heart, it has got to do with your heart". Māori have got learn to fix their own hearts. Part of that learning comes from our ancestors, but we cannot be them, we are not in their time and we cannot be.*

We asked Tom to share his observations upon the enactment of contemporary tangihanga,

*Generally, everybody wants there to be some basic truth to it, some great indiscernible truth that it is a good thing, but nobody is quite sure what that is. [It is] the disjuncture between who we are now and who we might be and then transport that onto a marae context.*

Tom raised concerns that practices have little meaning unless supported by understanding and intent to fulfil their function - spiritual, therapeutic or otherwise. He noted how customary practice is compromised by contemporary interpretations. The enactment of tonono, requesting the deceased lay on a specific marae, is one example,

*So you get all these systems, ways of dealing with things but so many of them have become corrupted. We have corrupted tikanga. This whole notion me hoki tātou ki ngā tikanga tuku iho o mātua, ō tūpuna [translation: We must return to the inherited customs of the forebears, the ancestors] Can you see the problem in the statement, in the tonono, the request, the beseechment? Whose tūpuna? Your*

*ancestors or mine? Yours are not mine and mine are certainly not yours, so whose and what?*

Thus, the cultural statement expressed through *tono* does not account for the multiplicity of identities, cultures and relationships represented within a bereaved *whānau*. Tom suggested that the theoretical concepts associated with death and grief can be misconstrued within ritual responses to death. Tom provided comment on one of the key distinctions between Māori and Pākehā death systems,

*I think one of the great differences is that Māori have maintained the contact between the living and trans-generationally, cross generationally, and the dead and dying. We continue to take children to where dead people are, or nearly dead people and all these kinds of things so that most of us cannot remember the first dead person that we saw.*

Te Ao Māori places immense value on concepts of enduring relationships between ancestral and living communities. In commenting on these enduring relationships, Tom suggested that the ritual of *takahi whare* contravenes this value,

*I think it is a lovely idea, it is a wonderful sentiment and a beautiful one. Yet the recently dead are the ones we chase away when they die. We chase their *wairua* away because we came back after the burial and do a *takahi whare* and chase them away!*

*Takahi whare* is a ritual performed following burial where home of deceased is 'stamped/trampled' in order to release or expel their spirit. Tom's commentary recalls traditional notions that death, even that of a beloved, is essentially polluting and a contamination that must be cleared. Tom offered a countering view,

*...At what point did our deceased become threatening to us? When did we decide that we should go straight home from the burial, to the house of the individual that has died and chase them out? What an absurd nonsense! What absolute and abject rubbish! I have been*

*against this [ritual] for years and years...That is the problem, the problem is that the system needs to be solid or it is not a system. Instead, it is a ramshackle, thrown together lean-to that could blow over in the next wind!*

Tom's analysis suggests that takahi whare may effectively replace the positive separation from the deceased through mourning, with the notion that the dead should be viewed with fear,

*...All of a sudden you take a beautiful process of separation and turn it into something to be afraid of. There is absolutely no way that I would accept the notion that we should fear our dead, in any context!*

With the fundamental intent of supporting the bereaved within their grief, Tom suggested an alternative ritual that acknowledged the relationships between the deceased and bereaved in a different way,

*Because, what we ought to do is bury the person, and burial seems systematically the time it would be most practical to go back to their house and say, "Thank God for her or his presence in this house. May the spirit of peace and happiness and memory and love which he or she brought and filled this house up, may it remain and sustain us in difficulty and adversity".*

Tom also pointed to opportunities within death rituals to acknowledge complications in the lived relationship with the deceased,

*[Someone might say to the recently bereaved] "Are you going to your mother's funeral? [They might respond] "I would not waste my time; I would not spit on her coffin!" But no, now is the perfect time to go and get rid of that. With every fistful of mud that you hurl into that grave, you get rid of it and bury it with her. It is a perfect opportunity to do precisely that, get rid of that mamae, that pain, it is symbolic. Some may write things down and burn them in a ceremony, but to me to me it seems more sensible and functional to hurl mud on top of a coffin. Say or think whatever you like, but let it*

*go. It does not make any difference to [the deceased], but it will make a lot of difference to you, if you happen to be the wounded soul.*

Tom highlighted cultural responses to death that acknowledged the vulnerability of the immediately bereaved and their need for support. Within tangihanga, immediate family members are usually forbidden from speaking formally, “... *That is so important because it stops people being vulnerable and saying things they should not have said in moments of grief. Those are mechanisms that save people from that*”. Maintaining silence in public, or the position of ‘wahangū’ was about taking care of the bereaved and this restriction served an important protective function within the Māori death system, yet there are those who may disagree with this point,

*So, there is another part of the system that has a purpose, it can be defined, and it can be clarified but yet there are those who will disagree, “I want to talk about my mother”. Well, what have you got to say about your mother that could only be said in this context? That could not be said when she died or when she was at the hospital?*

For Tom, the principal concerns for Māori death and grief systems are very simply stated,

*...Everything is spiritual and we cannot even spell that anymore. We have traditions and rituals but we do not even understand them. We do not [relinquish aspects] that are no longer relevant, yet we embrace what we think a 21<sup>st</sup> century human being is. We have to know something about that, because we are living it, and it is about self and what will help me, not what will help anybody else.*

As he suggests, the needs of individual self are becoming prioritised over those of the whānau or community. Such an individual focus may support people to respond to death how they want to, rather than be guided by how death systems suggest that they should. As an example, Tom described the

introduction of modern technological resources without careful consideration, resulting in rituals being compromised,

*... You are doing the burial which is the most solemn moment of separation; those three handfuls of mud are so final and symbolic. They are probably more symbolic than tears, those three handfuls, earth to earth, ashes to ashes and that is it. But then you get somebody standing right next to you recording the whole thing and you think, "What is this? Have we come to this? Has the performance become so robbed of its depth and significance that it is just something you put on your phone? And then where do you put it? Do you put it on 'Twitter' or 'Facebook'? I mean anything is possible, but can you? Should you?*

In Reverend Poata's ministry, this presents a forceful example of the intersection of material and spiritual practice and values. Tom reflected further on what is considered acceptable or not within Māori responses to death and grief,

*...There is a movement in understanding from the days where you did not do those things, to now. Now, what is accepted in the secular or temporal world is acceptable even in [a Māori] context. Whereas, the boundary used to be quite firm in the notion of tapu or noa.*

Māori death systems emphasise notions of enduring relationships held between living and ancestral communities, which are culturally transmitted to subsequent generations from a young age. Is the digital universe part of that knowledge transmission? Tom contrasted such concepts to those within the Pākehā world, which may display traditions retained from genealogical 'homelands',

*Pākehā felt in their own tradition that one shelters children from death. That is an accumulation of their own culture and their own traditions and who is to say that is harmful or not. That is the English way, but the Irish would put Uncle Paddy in the front room, everybody getting in there and having a whisky and a sing song, booze and ceilidh and all the rest of it. Visitors could have a cup of*

*tea and a feed. The Catholic priest would come around and he would enjoy it as much as they would.*

Although distinctions are apparent across systematic approaches to death, fusions are also possible, “...so much of what we do now is a blend anyway”.

### **Conflict: The Domain of the Living**

Bereavement conflict may emerge when members of the bereaved hold differing ideas of what constitutes ‘proper’ responses to death and grief,

*It is of the living that is where the problems are, not with the dead. It is a clash of ideas of consciousness...There is this sense of propriety, decency and or indecency. This is where the clash of ideas occurs. It is ideological, not practical.*

Tom suggested how different ideas held within Māori and Pākehā cultural worlds might play out within responses to death,

*... Someone [of Pākehā descent] might think, “All these Māori’s came and took the body” or “There is a dead person in my lounge room, can you come and get it please? I will pay you to do that”. Or someone [of Māori descent] might think, “Oh, we must take all the furniture out, put mattresses down and light the fire. Look, there is so much to do! We have got to get a paepae [orators] and put it in the corner, we have got to have women in black dresses saying “Haere mai [Welcome, greeting]”. Otherwise what? If we do not [do those things] then what? There is [actually] no argument.*

Elaborating further, Tom suggested that although cultural differences may inspire conflict, it can emerge due to other factors including the grief experience and a sense of loss of control in the face of death,

*...That is not a clash of cultures that is a clash of grief, life meets death. The thing about it being Māori and Pākehā is irrelevant to [bereaved’s] emotions; it has got nothing to do it. Well, part of it is that [the deceased] has died. Part of [the bereaved’s] grief is that*



*they lost control at some stage of the event of her dying. [The event] is not [the bereaved's] or anyone else's, it is the [deceased's].*

## **Negotiations**

When issues do arise, Tom suggested that these are best negotiated amongst the bereaved, including key members,

*...Those discussions are usually resolved within the family and that is the only place they can be resolved. Nobody has anything else to say about that. The family needs to decide these things and they are often decided at the point of death or else it is when [the immediate family] can first get together, or when the oldest comes back from Perth and all those sorts of things. But, when all of the system works well, you can make those decisions in no time at all; because the older brother or older sister, the mover and shaker, is there.*

Familial dynamics have considerable bearing upon bereavement negotiations, emphasizing the need to work in a timely and collaborative fashion,

*...You can tell when a family is disjointed; it does not take long to figure it out. It happens in Pākehā families and it happens in Māori families. There is always a relative from hell who knows everything about tangi and everything about whakapapa, and everything about what [the deceased] wanted. However, they will arrive on the second or third day after all the decisions have been made and the advertisement has been put in the newspaper about when and where the burial will be. They will say... “[The deceased] never wanted that and I am telling you now it is not going to happen that way”, with hands on hips!*

The death of a loved one may also draw together individuals from different cultural and spiritual backgrounds into a shared bereavement context. These in turn influence different ideas about decisions to be made and approaches to doing so, “...If there is even a common process that can be identified, that is the problem. I think it is sort of an organic thing that

grows out of who has the biggest voice, who shouts the loudest". Tom described the limited role of a minister within bereavement conflict,

*...There is always conflict; sometimes you are party to it and other times you are better not to know and just go on with the process...I just leave them to it because it has nothing to do with me. Show me the dead person, give me the nod and I will give my dead person talk. What [the bereaved] does, they can rip each other to shreds but it is not my business.... I am not going to wade into it because I will come away scratched and burnt. You cannot survive intra-family conflict and you are a fool to go there anyway.*

Tom's position as a practicing minister is clearly defined and does not extend to conflict mediation which he underlines the risk in doing so. He is nevertheless aware of opportunities where it is possible and appropriate to offer support,

*If you were at the home and they were having a discussion at the dinner table, you might help to facilitate, I might say "What do you think Mum would have wanted? Start from there, and then put yourselves in your places, in relation to what she would have wanted, or what she said or was supposed to have said".*

Where the deceased has not left any final wishes, the bereaved may face an array of funerary options and a reminder about the funeral purpose could be helpful,

*... What you do is discern the problem and then you say [to the bereaved] "Well, let's not forget that this is [the deceased's] event". Suddenly, [the bereaved] say "Oh, it is about [the deceased]". [I remind them] "If [the deceased], for whatever reason, left you with a blank canvas, use that blank canvas to have a lovely hui. Do not let it turn into a farce. What are you going to have at this occasion? Sadness and unkindness?"*

Tom shared an observation that deciding upon interment locations is a common site of conflict,

*...The conflict is usually over where the person should lie at the end, the ultimate lying down. Whether that should happen at [a public cemetery] or at [an urupā], or whether [the deceased] should go back to [their tribal homeland].*

Tom clarified that within the capacity of his role, his stance on such matters is neutral, “... it has got nothing to do with me really, because I will bury [the deceased] wherever [the bereaved] decide to bury them. If they decide to bury them in a cave somewhere [that is fine]. Tom elaborated further on the conflicting perspectives related to such decisions. The deceased may have expressed at some point the wish to be buried within their tribal homeland, despite having established a life elsewhere. However, Tom indicated the need to carefully consider such a course of action,

*...Would [the deceased] really have wanted to go back to their people? Did they visit there during their life very often? No? Funny that they never went back to their people. But, there you are, [their people] probably won't know [the deceased] anyway.*

Tom's comment highlights that the absence of a lived relationship with a tribal community may impact upon the ability and want to respond to their death, including hosting the tangihanga. However, the alternative option of interment in the vicinity of lives established elsewhere also needed deliberation. Tom detailed the type of conversation he might initiate with the bereaved considering such an option,

*... [Tom:] “Now, have you considered [where you are going to bury the deceased?]?” [Bereaved:] “Yes, we are going to bury him at the Northern Suburb Cemetery” [Tom:] “Oh really? Why the Northern Suburb Cemetery?” [Bereaved:] “Oh, so we can be near to him” [Tom:] “Oh, and how long will you be in Sydney? And your children? Will they always be in Sydney? How do you know that? Where will he lie? Next to [someone from a different ethnic group]? Have you thought this through? You want him to be near you but why? He is dead. What has nearness got to do with it? The only thing you are going to be near to is the grass, the lawn and the stone.*

*Well, take a picture of [the grave] and hang it in your front lounge on the wall. Look at it all day, every day and sense his being with you [instead].*

Tom suggested that issues related to interment locations may become inconsequential when supported by spiritual understandings,

*The opportunity for conflict is all over the place but it all fades into nothing, it all becomes absolutely nothing. All the big arguments about where people lie and where they are lying now all amount to nothing in the end. [Some whānau] are buried all over the place, in Wellington, the middle North Island and in Auckland. However, they do not worry about that because those families have a concept of Papatūānuku [earth mother].*

Tom asserted that secularity provides little comfort for the physical separation between the deceased and bereaved,

*...The only reason you would be so angry about being separated from the body of a deceased person is because you have no spiritual concept to fill that gap. That notion of separation, the material from the immaterial.*

This is a severe judgement, contextualising how beliefs related to a spiritual 'afterlife' become a supportive factor in responding to death and moving forward in life.

Tom asserted that bereavement negotiations should attend to the primary concern of preserving relationships amongst the bereaved,

*...I just do not believe in fighting over dead people, they are dead. Certainly if there is a principle at stake, we can discuss the principle. But, I would not lose earthly relationships, family or any sort of relationship over it. You want the dead person, you can have it. But, I am telling you this, in forty years' time nobody will know where he is lying...If the family were people of faith, they would say "Well, they are dead, what do we want with a dead person? Do we really want the body? What difference will it make? This is my point, what*

*are you worrying and fighting about dead people for, they are dead". Now, if you put as much energy into their children and their grandchildren....*

However, Tom noted that burial within provides a memorial of the deceased amongst a related ancestral community,

*Unless you go back to your own [urupā], which I think is always the best idea. Because then the generations will walk past and say "That is a brother to that one", it is something tangible. There will always be people who know that person. If you bury them in a public cemetery somewhere in Auckland or Sydney, they are just going to be one of a million and you will never find them.*

With this astute analysis, Tom considers the significance of the dead for the living, and how their resting place may effectively ensure continuity of relationships and the sense of community.

## **Bicultural Bereavement Conflict**

Some of the issues that have emerged within high profile cases of bicultural bereavement conflict were mentioned in discussion, though none of those present had direct involvement in any of those cases. We shared our understandings of what had occurred. Tom alluded to the suggestion in some instances that pre-existing familial conflict amongst the bereaved conceivably influenced the emergence of conflict. In some cases, the bereaved constituted an extended kinship group through marriage, which ultimately drew them together following the death of their loved one. The expression of *tono* often requests return of a *tūpāpaku* to a particular locale for burial. However, Tom noted that in a traditional sense, *tono* also encompassed the union of people, *whānau*, *hapū* and *Iwi*. It was a powerful assertion of the primacy of *whakapapa* connections, and their continuity,

*If you bring somebody into your family by giving your son or your daughter in marriage to them, it is the old notions of tono. What is a wedding? What did a wedding used to be? What is a wedding now? Now, it is a farce, it is just a contract between two people.*

*[Whereas] a wedding used to be a contract between Iwi and hapū and it was an important contract...This business of manaaki and whanaungatanga, those concepts were never spoken of because they were taken for granted. That is what you do, you love your whānau...Times change but I do not think necessarily always for the better.*

In a traditional and ideal sense, the union of two individuals within marriage extended to the unification of their respective hapū and Iwi groups. Through the birth of a new generation, both parental whakapapa lines are reinforced. Tom also draws a link between the cultural values expressed within the context of whānau, manaaki, whanaungatanga and aroha. Although these concepts sit within the context of Te Ao Māori, they present wider, human ideals that offer significant and supportive resources to bereaved.

In some instances, the intent and presentation of tono for the tūpāpaku may not leave any room for subsequent negotiations. Instead, tono may be presented with the intent to uplift the tūpāpaku regardless of whether the tono was conceded to or not. Where parties are steadfast in achieving their sought outcome, approaches such as intimidation, assertion of authority or uplifting of a tūpāpaku without amicable agreement could occur. The ways that individuals and groups approach such negotiations has considerable bearing on the outcomes that result,

*There are all sorts of things, ways that you can try and make it harder than it needs to be. In [some] circumstances, two groups come together, one group have thought one thing and the other have resented that thought. Why did they resent it? Usually, there was unkindness in the delivery.*

Tom addressed the suggestion by some that the removal of the tūpāpaku in cases of contested bodies was justified due to the tūpāpaku being left unaccompanied, contravening the cultural protocol of constant vigil, “*Oh, but he was on his own*”, *[or other] peculiar excuses, but I am sorry, I have been to marae where there has also been nobody sitting there [with the*

*tūpāpaku*]. Contests for the *tūpāpaku* may express the want to ‘re-claim’ a tribal member who has become disconnected or estranged from whānau, community and culture,

*“You fullas’ had him in life, we want him in death”. No, no, no that does not make sense to Pākehā’, that does not make sense to son’s who might be brown, but who live as Pākehā, very successful, very happy. “We have been a happy family for all of these forty-something years, he has got grandchildren and we have lived [away from the tribal homelands] all our lives. Who are you to suddenly come out of nowhere and take him?”- And that is quite right.*

Te Ao Māori observes the cultural responsibility to return deceased members for interment within tribal homelands. Whereas, the deceased’s established family may prefer a burial location close to where they established their life together. Tom elaborated on some of the long term implications that may result from such a decision,

*Nobody who is 18, 25, 30, or 40 years old can be certain they are going to be in the same place tomorrow. “We want him buried with us”-but, where are you going to be in ten years’ time? ...Who is going to visit him when your children marry and get transferred to Kuala Lumpur? ... [Or when] you get a boyfriend and end up living in Canada?*

Although Tom presents the want to inter a deceased loved one in close proximity as understandable, but stresses the need to consider future possibilities such as the bereaved relocating elsewhere.

I asked Tom to describe how he might approach situations of bicultural bereavement conflict, including the laying of *tono*,

*... I would let [the bereaved] know that people were coming and that they would want to discuss the burial of [the deceased] and could they have some time. That is, to [actually] discuss that, not with jack boots on and parking up with the van out there and the back door open.*

Tom emphasised the importance of sharing understandings and negotiating a mutually beneficial outcome,

*... That is not negotiation and that is not sharing the benefit of knowledge and saying “This is what we do and it will be so much nicer”. The benefits of [returning the deceased to tribal homelands] should be carefully explained. It is not so much [what] you ask, it is the method of asking...You have got to sell your case, and you only begin that from a position of trust.*

Notwithstanding the differing perspectives held by those who entered into the process, Tom suggested that diplomacy is more likely to facilitate an agreed upon outcome,

*If [the bereaved] could be talked into it, gently guided, mustered and gently shown the way, they might then agree and everybody would be happy- “Oh it would be lovely”. All those sorts of things can be done, but Māori have to be mercenary about it now.*

Where the bereaved do not agree to returning the deceased to their tribal homelands for burial, Tom suggested that the pursuit of a kawē mate ritual at a later point could provide an alternative compromise,

*I would make sure that there was a kawē mate organised and [say to the widow and children] “You fullas’ make sure that you come”. Those things can help to ameliorate the problem. What do you want? Do you need the body or do you need the wairua? I would go for the wairua, I would settle for wairua every time.*

The ritual of kawē mate symbolises the return of the deceased’s spirit, but also provides opportunity for the bereaved community to recommence, potentially supporting on-going relationships. As Tom would elaborate upon, the complexities of contemporary social contexts necessitate similar diverse pathways to conflict resolution, “... *The social disjointedness now means that there are different forms of resolution, for different groups, in different places, for different reasons*”. However, Tom suggested that the



prevention and mediation of conflict may rest upon considering others through acts of common courtesy,

*I think one of the things that we have forgotten is courtesy, it is not that surprising, but it is courtesy. People [being] polite, courteous. I think once we handle the courtesies, we can work on the system much easier, because most things are about courtesy, not to offend [others].*

Tom noted that the need for courtesy also extends to the awareness of people changing their minds, of being ‘muddled’ by grief; it is about being sensitive to the needs of the living. In a similar vein, the bereaved need to be aware of the impact certain types of decisions could have upon others and concerned communities. Tom used the example of enacting funerary processes over multiple locations, such as private homes and marae. Without prior negotiation with those involved, such decisions could overburden others and interfere with the reciprocal nature of entitlements and obligations between marae and tribal members,

*[The deceased] is going to spend two nights at home and then the night before the burial [they] will go to [the marae]. Well, no because that complicates [the marae’s] process. [That contradicts] the idea of what or how you are entitled to be on a marae and the responsibilities involved in that entitlement. Do not [go to the marae] the night before [the burial]. [The entire tangi] is either [at the marae] or it is not, you will have already had [private] family time [with the deceased].*

Often, however, financial cost can be an issue. Tom elaborated further on the acknowledgement of significant relationships within formal tangi rituals, including living and ancestral communities related to the deceased and bereaved,

*... When you bring a tūpāpaku to the marae for the first time and put it down on the mattress... the whakatau attempts to bring all the tupuna of that [tangi together], all of the tupuna of the paepae, all of the tupuna of the gathering, all of the tatou, from the east coast,*

*from the south island, from France, from Europe. It is a contract between the living and Te Ao Wairua. Ko te mea tuatahi, te mihi tuatahi, ki te wairua [Translation: The first priority is to address the spirit, the wairua]...the whole purpose of that is [putting in place] the spiritual contract at the beginning [of the tangi] which only gets broken at the end, with the karanga of the woman who says "See you all later".*

Tom's comment describes the symbolic affirmation of a 'spiritual contract' between those brought together within tangi, both living and deceased. Such affirmation gives voice to the common thread that draws all those in attendance together, shared grief over the death of a loved one.

Tom identifies cultural and spiritual expressions that present an ideal through which relationships are acknowledged. However, as instances of bicultural bereavement conflict indicate, such ideals may not always be fulfilled. We asked Tom for his perspective upon legal intervention within bicultural bereavement conflict,

*... [It is] an almost impossible thing to bring together Pākehā ture [law] and Māori whenua [land], nehu [burial], tapu. [They are] very difficult concepts to find a marriageable relationship between. The Police have a duty and a responsibility under the law. The law has to supersede everything else. Without law and its proper execution, there is nothing, just anarchy. There is l-o-r-e as well [as l-a-w] and those two never sit well together...In law it is very hard to break that relational protection [of the contract between married persons]. There is no win-win situation in any matter of law; there is always somebody who is aggrieved.*

One of the central issues raised within high profile cases concerns the relative authority of the bereaved over decision-making processes. We asked Tom for his thoughts upon who should be vested with the ultimate authority, and he was emphatic in reply,

*In law, and morally, the partner. In my view, the person who has cooked, cleaned, scrubbed and borne children, whose lives are*

*intertwined financially and emotionally. They built a life, they have had children, moko's, [grandchildren] all the rest of these things - the partner primarily because lots of people do not like their brothers and sisters, but love their husbands or wives.*

We asked Tom what should occur if the deceased's family of origin disagreed with such a view,

*Well, who are they to disagree? If I had taken my husband or wife and lived in Western Australia for forty years and we have raised our family there, we have had a whole life and an earthly union. Why should that ever be separated at the death? If he has been away for forty years and raised his family, why all of a sudden at death is he so important or more important than his partner and [children]?*

Tom further clarified the various relationships and claims presented upon a deceased loved one,

*You think that you have a call on another human being but you have no contract with them. You might have a whakapapa contract in that you were born of the same kōpū [womb] or the same ure [penis], but you have no contract other than to be brother and/or sister. [The sibling] contract is an issue [in relation to the deceased], but that is all, you do not have to have loyalty to each other. But, if [a family member] contracts to marry another, that contract supersedes all the others, the mother or the father, and they invest themselves in the other person. No-one has anything to do with that contract. It is a spiritual contract, a spiritual giving. They may honour their mother and their father but they must leave them... There is a distinction between the giving of self to another person and being born to a family, I did not choose my family, and none of us did.*

Tom countered the suggestion of some that descendants of the deceased be assigned authority over decision making, commenting on the appropriate role of the younger generation,

*You go to a whānau meeting about a funeral process, and Māori are increasingly leaving it to young people to decide such matters. No! No! No! It is wrong and it is misguided. What do the young know of separation? You have to learn what that is. You have to experience somebody lying in another people's land, amongst another people [to understand] the benefits [or otherwise] of that.*

Tom also highlighted risks in basing decisions upon what the bereaved perceive the deceased's wishes would have been,

*...You get 18 and 19 year olds arguing over, "Mum said we are not having religion, Mum never believed it". I will say, "How do you know what was in your Mum's heart? When did your mother ever tell you that she did not believe in God?" [The bereaved might say] "Well, she did not, but she did not believe in that". But you do not know what is in someone's heart, they may never voice it. You are playing a very dangerous game trying to read other people's minds. However, I think you cannot go wrong if you are thinking that it is [the deceased's] event and not yours. If you do not believe in God, do not take it out on [someone else]. Just because I happen to believe in God, I have no right to impose God on that person.*

Tom offered advice regarding decision making processes engaged by Māori and Pākehā bicultural familial groups, "Each has to sell the benefit to the other. Pākehā have to justify the benefit of their thinking and Māori must justify their's. Between them, they decide what is in the best interests of the beneficiaries, not [just] themselves". We asked Tom to clarify who he considered as the beneficiaries of tangi,

*The purpose of tangi is the Iwi, the beneficiary is the Iwi. The name is retained, the connections are revitalised, reworked, re-understood and if it is done cleverly, relationships are re-established. It is about the living. The dead person just ends up buried.*

Although the family of the deceased assume important roles within bereavement, these processes extend beyond the immediate family. Tom

suggested that the term 'immediately bereaved' was problematic as it arguably applies to a wide range of people connected to the deceased, "*...but everybody is immediately bereaved because no person is solely a family functioning person. Everybody had a job, had a youth, and had infancy*". Tom emphasises that the bereaved may represent diverse and sometimes distinct relationships held with the deceased. Although the negotiation of bereavement processes should ideally consider collective needs rather than individual interests, this may be an aspiration not easily achieved.

## **Significant Contributions**

Reverend Poata's case study outlines the role of the religious ministry and the churches responses to death and grief, particularly given an increasingly secular contemporary world. Reverend Poata emphasises the importance of having a clear analysis of one's role as a minister of the church, and the need for awareness and respect for roles played by others. Tom's searingly critical and analytic commentary increases understanding of the patterns (sensible and crazy) of the Māori world and the pressures upon them. His narrative explores issues related to spiritual contracts, through marriages, lives lived together and beyond death. Particularly significant, is Reverend Poata's wisdom related to decision-making. He emphasises processes that endeavour to account for the needs of all those connected to bereavement, that is, the different bereaved individuals, families, groups, communities of interest, and that of the deceased. Having 'good manners' and respectful regard for others is a key touchstone for him.

## **Chapter 11: Dr. Tom Roa, Kaumātua**

In the context of Te Ao Māori, cultural and ritual experts such as kaumātua and kuia play an integral role within cultural responses to death and grief. Commentaries surrounding high profile instances of bicultural bereavement conflict indicate inadequate knowledge and misunderstandings of cultural processes, protocols and values expressed through tangihanga. Kaumātua and kuia emerged as pivotal roles in the whānau experiences within this research. Accordingly, I approached cultural and ritual experts to explicate how death is perceived and responded to within Te Ao Māori. Specifically, I sought to draw on the kaumātua's and kuia's experiential knowledge of tangihanga to elaborate on processes of negotiation, conflict and resolution in the context of bereavement and specifically, bicultural bereavement. This chapter presents discussions with Dr Tom Roa, a prominent kaumātua and academic.

### **Expert Contributor: Dr Tom Roa**

Dr Tom Roa is affiliated to Ngāti Maniapoto and Waikato Iwi and is a recognised specialist in the translation and interpretation of Māori-English, Kīngitanga, Waikato-Maniapoto oral and written history and traditions. At the time of the research interview, Tom had recently been elected as Chair of the Waikato-Tainui executive board, Te Arataura. Academically, Tom was a senior lecturer in the School of Māori & Pacific Development at the University of Waikato. Tom participated within wānanga held by the Tangi Research Programme and his considerable wealth of knowledge provided a valuable contribution to the research. Tom's expertise has been recognised by national media outlets, who have sought his commentary on bicultural bereavement related conflict (Binning, 2008). In response to discussions surrounding the role of Māori leaders in response to high profile cases of bicultural bereavement conflict, Mr Roa suggested that so called 'body snatching' instances were an indication of dysfunction and questioned whether legislative amendment was an effective solution (Binning, 2008). We invited Tom to participate in the current study in recognition of the key

roles that he has assumed in negotiating bereavement related conflict. I first encountered Tom Roa from a distance, at the tangi for Emeritus Professor James Ritchie. The sad, yet extraordinary occasion seemed to personify James's efforts towards biculturalism; a tangi held for a Pākehā man at Tūrangawaewae Marae, no less! As a student attending James's tangi, I was awestruck as I watched Mr Roa in his role as a kaumātua. The mana that Tom carried was palatable, yet it was his skilful negotiation across Māori and Pākehā worlds that fascinated me.

### **Bicultural Bereavement: Knowledge, Experiences and Perspectives**

At my request, my chief supervisor, Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora, attended the interviews with Mr Tom Roa. Tom opened the interview proceedings with the following acknowledgement,

*Tēnā kōrua e, me mihi ki a kōrua ki taua inoi, kia tau iho nga manaakitanga, ki runga i ā tatou whiriwhiringa korero, me te kaupapa e kawea nei e korua ki taua pai marire, tēnā kōrua”.  
[Translation: Greetings to you both, I greet you and that our discussions are protected, and the kaupapa that you to carry, that it is in peace/safety, and I greet you.]*

In reflecting upon his current roles, Tom explained that the foundations of his learning began at a young age and was guided by the kuia in his whānau, “I'm a fulla who was made to sleep with my grand aunt, to keep her legs warm at night. So much of my understandings come from my nannies, not from my koros, but from my nannies”. Tom outlined his first experience of a bicultural bereavement as a young man of 22 years, residing in Auckland with his wife and whangai daughter. Tom received a telephone call advising that his aunt, who was Pākehā, had died. Tom immediately left his home to join his father, uncles and aunts at the hospital where his aunt had died. Tom recalled the preparations that he thought would be made for his aunt, “[It] was my expectation that this kuia, although she was a Pākehā, would be brought home to our family Marae, at Pirongia, Pūrekireki”. During the interview we sought further elaboration from Tom,

*LWN: Can I ask why it was your expectation that they would go home [to Pūrekireki]?*

*TR: That she is a Pākehā, she is married to my uncle, and we would take her back to our marae. It is a funny sort of expectation that I just had. Like I said, I was a young fulla; I did not have the breadth of knowledge at that time. That is aunty; take her home [laughter].*

Although Tom obviously considered Pūrekireki Marae to be the natural choice of venue for the tangi, others thought differently. As the whānau began to discuss funerary arrangements, the widowed uncle stated that his wife was to be returned to Rotorua and taken to the nearby Tunohopu Marae. Tom immediately considered the potentiality for conflict in enacting his uncle's wishes, which would require negotiation across several different groups. Tom turned to the eldest of the whānau, an uncle, and asked, "*Is this the right thing to do?*" His uncle's eyes were cast downwards and he remained silent. Instead, the widower replied "*Yes, it is the right thing to do*". Tom turned to the rest of the whānau to ask who amongst them would convey their aunt to Tunohopu Marae, none volunteered. Tom was growing increasingly concerned and expressed his belief that his aunt should be returned to Pūrekireki Marae. However, Tom's suggestion was rejected by the widower uncle, who stated, "*...but she does not know that place*". Tom countered this point, listing several notable occasions at the marae that the couple had attended, remarking, "*You know it; you were born and bred there*". As Tom reflected back on these discussions, he explained the differing connections that his late aunt and uncle held to Rotorua and Pirongia,

*They had been living in Rotorua for 40, 50 years. [Aunt] was a nurse at the hospital and all the people in Rotorua knew her, but nobody from home knew her, only the close family... [My uncle] felt much more comfortable in that context than coming home and...at that stage in my life, I blamed him. He did not keep his responsibilities up, so therefore people grew cold to him.*



Despite how he felt, Tom offered to accompany his uncle to discuss the matter with elders from Tunohopu Marae. The widower questioned why any such discussions were necessary. Tom responded with disbelief, “*Well, aren’t they going to come and ask you to take her to [the Marae]?*” As Tom explained further,

*It was his expectation that he has been living there for so long that he could just go [to the marae]... I’m scratching my head and wondering ‘Now, how in the hell are we going to negotiate this?’ Because I have seen Te Arawa and my own people having ‘ding-dongs’ about where tūpāpaku will lie.*

Some of the whānau transported Tom’s aunt to the funeral home, whilst the remainder returned to the widower’s home. At this point, Tom anticipated that a delegation of Te Arawa kaumātua would call upon his uncle to discuss the matter. However, when Tom queried his uncle about the expected arrival time of Te Arawa contingent, his uncle did not appear to know what Tom was talking about. Tom’s retort was terse,

*Taihoa koe, he aha hoki ēnei tikanga e kōrero nei tāua. Koe, Māori, anō ki a au, Māori tūturu, ngō whakaaro, whakaaro Pākehā, kua mau koe i te panekoti o tō hoa. You have been caught in your wife’s skirts; she’s the Pākehā, you the Māori. [Translation: Hang on, what tikanga are we discussing? You are Māori and to me, very Māori, but your thinking is Pākehā, you appear to be under the influence of your Pākehā partner].*

Tom’s uncle issued a rebuke to his nephew, “*Oi! You watch yourself young fulla!*” Tom expressed his concerns more directly, “*I do not want you to go to Tunohopu and these Arawa people turn up and say ‘what in the hell are you doing here?’*” Tom’s uncle stressed the point that the people from Tunohopu were his friends. Tom countered this argument, “*But we are your blood, and we have got to be there to look after you and now aunty. Who is going to do that?*” Tom’s uncle replied simply, “*You are*”. The widower uncle was nominating Tom to be whānau spokesperson in the negotiations with kaumātua from Tunohopu. Tom felt some trepidation about what such

a role would require of him, “... *I do not know how to do it, but I know what needs to be done. Here am I, a young kid, being told by this uncle, who is in his 80’s, he, Māori tūturu.*” Tom argued against what his uncle was proposing, “*E koro, kua roa nei to noho ki roto i Te Ao Pākehā, ahakoa Te Arawa*’ [Translation: *Koro, you have been a long time in the Pākehā world, even though you are in Te Arawa*]. Tom elaborated further on the gravity of the situation before him,

*I am only 20 years old, I am just a bloody kid and [Uncle] is expecting me to stand up to these [kaumātua] and I am saying ‘No, no, no!’ [The whānau] know, ko au te mea Māori o te whānau [Translation: I am the Māori one of the family], but my father has 4 older brothers and 5 younger brothers, they are a huge family. In Te Arawa, it is the tuākana [eldest] who takes the precedence, but I have got two older brothers and eight sisters. I am the baby.*

Despite Tom’s protestations, his uncle was insistent that Tom would assume the role of whānau spokesperson. Tom was able to convince his uncle to ask the kaumātua from Tunohopu to visit him at his home. During this time, Tom telephoned several kaumātua from Ngāti Maniapoto and Tainui to request their support and attendance at Rotorua. Tom emphasised his awareness of time pressures upon this situation, as it would have to be resolved within a few days to allow the tangi processes to occur.

Tom and his whānau were about to enter into negotiations requiring knowledge of cultural protocols, particularly those observed by the Te Arawa people. Tom held some reservations about how his whānau might respond during the complex processes that were about to commence,

*Dad’s oldest brother had been in Auckland for 50 years, and the other uncle had been in Whanganui for about the same time. They had families in those areas and seldom came home. Dad was the only one at home, but he is a fulla that does not go in the front, he is a kitchen man, I had never seen him stand on the marae and do whaikōrero.*

Soon thereafter, the widower uncle's friends from Tunohopu arrived at the home. Tom described how he felt when the delegation of prominent Te Arawa kaumātua entered the home, "*These are big timber from Te Arawa that came into this little family's house. I am quaking in my boots because I do not know what my uncles are going to do*". The kaumātua declined the offer of refreshments, with a subtle reminder that their discussions should take place first. One of the kaumātua, with whakapapa connections to the whānau, gently prompted Tom's uncle, as the eldest member to begin the proceedings. Tom recalled his uncle's reaction, "*Uncle, he has been away so long. He knows what he should do, but he is nervous...He says 'Oh, we said that our nephew will do this'*". Tom covered his head as the kaumātua turned and addressed him, "*He aha ō kōrero boy?*" [*What are you going to say, boy?*]. In response, Tom broached the issue of impinging upon cultural protocols by assigning to himself the role of whānau spokesperson,

*Taihoa koa e kōrero, e mōhio ana au ki ngā tikanga o Te Arawa, te kawa, kei aku mātua, koe te tuākana, koia te tuarua, koia te tuatoru, ko taku pāpā te tuawhā, e rua aku tuākana* [Translation: *Before we begin talking. I understand the customs of Te Arawa. The customs, due to my parents generations, [this uncle] is the eldest sibling, He (over there) is the second, he (over there) the third and my Dad is the fourth brother. I have two elder brothers.*]

The kaumātua's eyes widened, but he replied "*Kei roto tātou i te whare o tō mātua.*" [Translation: *We are in the house of your uncle, speak*]. Tom rose and formally addressed the kaumātua. Although the kaumātua were not angry, their tense body language displayed the realisation that their visit held more significance than they anticipated. Tom's oration acknowledged the decisions facing the whānau as they considered the different geographical connections held by the aunt and uncle,

*I talked about the mountains, calling on this kuia. The rivers that her husband swam in and I saw him with his wife in the river getting tuna, they are calling to him. I have a request from the kaumātua from Pūrekireki, that we take the kuia home. But, I am*

*struck that I cannot overstep my tuākana. I have said to [the whānau], we need to talk about this and you need to hear it.*

Although Tom wanted to return his aunt to Pūrekireki, he was uncertain that his hapū would support this endeavour. Tom reflected further on this point, *“I was totally confident about what I was going to do. However, I was not confident that my marae people would be there to follow through on the obligations, because of the mixed messages that were coming from home”*. The notable absence of representatives from Ngāti Maniapoto and Tainui cast further doubt on the matter. Tom weighed these issues against his widower uncle’s wish to conduct his wife’s tangi at Rotorua. Through their lives together, Tom’s aunt and uncle had established strong relationships with the people of Rotorua. The whānau also held longstanding kinships with Te Arawa, knowledge of which was bequeathed to Tom by his nannies. Tom elaborated on this lineage, drawing upon broader cultural concepts,

*There is a concept that I am hearing that I never heard as a younger fulla, ahi tahutahu. There is ahi kā and ahi mātao and those terms about people keeping the fires burning at home and then those ones who leave, those fires go cold. Ahi tahutahu is the rekindling of those fires that have gone out. In our case, in our family’s case, that fire had long gone out.*

In Tom’s address to the kaumātua, he acknowledged the kinship between his whānau and Te Arawa carefully, *“...there is a long whakapapa [to Te Arawa] that I used at the tangi, as a linking, not as a claiming of any status and the old fullas' knew that”*. Tom concluded his address and the kaumātua sat back and looked at each other until one arose. The kaumātua enacted a mihi and imparted his whakapapa before stating *“Ko te tono ki te whānau. We ask the family to bring our sister to Tunohopu”*. The kaumātua emphasised the relationships between the whānau and the Te Arawa people were brokered through long association. Tom recalled his thoughts as he listened to the kaumātua, *“...‘the bugger is giving me an in’ [laughter]. I think he did it deliberately, but he was also having a test on the whānau for doing it.”* Tom perceived that the kaumātua had provided an opening

through which arrangements could precede in accordance with the widow's wishes. Tom also felt that the opening presented by the kaumātua was that of a request rather than an ultimatum,

*...I think that [the kaumātua] were aware of uncle's position and aunty's position and they wanted to do the best by their mate. I felt that this was a good tono, it was full of aroha and manaaki. The opening that I saw was in that whanaungatanga. I felt that we could accept this opening by going back to this whakapapa.*

As the kaumātua sat down, Tom made a request in English, as some of his aunts could not speak Māori, although they understood the language, "Excuse me, taihoa koa. Can we have a little family get together? The family has to make some decisions before they say yes or no to this tono". The widower uncle interjected, "Whatever you decide boy". Tom disagreed vehemently, "No, no, no! It is not one person's decision, it has significance". The kaumātua suggested that they return later that evening to hear the whānau decision and accept the previously offered refreshments. Upon their departure the kaumātua remarked to Tom, "Kia kaha e tama." [Be strong boy]. The whānau began to discuss matters over a cup of tea. Tom expressed his perspective on the options that lay before the whānau, "Uncle, it is disappointing. I have to say it is disappointing that you did not give any consideration to [Pūrekireki]". Tom acknowledged that the kaumātua had provided an avenue through which Tunohopu Marae could be called upon. Yet, Tom was unsure whether his whānau fully appreciated the intricacies attached to the use of Tunohopu marae, "...I talked about our whakapapa and that long relationship to Tunohopu that we can lay claim to in this instance". Tom turned to his whānau and questioned them, "...the problem is, do you fulla's know that? [To which they replied] 'No, we do not'."

Tom drew the attention of his whānau to the implications that would arise from assigning the role of whānau spokesperson to him, "...What you have just done is you have signalled to [the kaumātua] that you are giving your mana to me. You are signalling to them that I am your spokesperson, so

*that is it*". The whānau responded with indifference, and Tom stressed his point further,

*...If I am at a hui and you are there, you cannot talk before me. You have a think about this. You have a son, is your son going to give up his position to me? That is what you are doing, that is what you are saying, that I am now the family spokesperson and nobody stands before me. Because when we go on to that marae, nothing goes through to the paepae except through me.*

The whānau maintained their stance and Tom accepted the role of whānau spokesperson. Tom stressed the serious nature of what the role would entail, "I knew what I was doing, but it was a hell of a responsibility. I could not let these fulla's stuff it up, otherwise there would be all sorts of trouble to pay". The enactment of the aunt's tangi would require substantial co-ordination, resources and labour, which Tom commented on,

*I recognised that in tangihanga, and it still happens today, when you hear that there is a tangi, people immediately know their roles, 'I am going to do this', 'I will do this'. I know that 'so-and-so is in charge of the kitchen, if I start telling them what to do, they will tell me to bugger off. If I make a suggestion, they will say 'oh that sounds good' then carry on doing it their way anyway. People know their roles and the roles are set.*

As Tom went on to explain, in the context of Tunohopu there would be a complex mixing of roles as the workforce of Tom's whānau and hapū merged with the people of Tunohopu marae,

*I knew that [the people from Tunohopu] had their roles, they knew, mai rano [from long ago], but [the whānau] would not know their roles ... all the kinds of things that would have happened naturally at [Pūrekireki], would have to have a different flavour [at Tunohopu].*

We asked Tom to elaborate on the relative authority between the two groups of workers,

*LWN: So [the whānau] had to take their lead from whom- ever had the role in the kitchen or whatever? I also assume that if there wasn't a local who had that role, they had to step up?*

*TR: Yes, that is a good word, assumption, because at that time I did not believe that I could make any assumption. I had to make sure that this was what I knew to be the right thing to do and make sure that others knew what was right to do in the situation. I was not going to let my uncles or elders get in the way, so we had to establish that right in the very beginning*

With such issues in mind, Tom carried out preparatory discussions with his whānau and hapū prior to their arrival at the marae. Tom carefully impressed upon his whānau "...*Just remember we are in Arawa, we have to make sure that they are ok with us.*" Tom described how the potentially difficult situation was mediated,

*The understandings were set before we went [to Tunohopu]. My cousins knew their roles, we talked about it...the broader family who were turning up to do the work, and they had already gone to the marae, introduced themselves and started the work. All that sort of negotiation was already settled and when we went onto the marae, the family was safe; I was the one that was not.*

In the previous passage, Tom alludes to his somewhat precarious position as the whānau spokesperson. Tom and his whānau were formally welcomed onto Tunohopu marae and as their spokesperson; Tom took his place upon the paepae. After being formally greeted by a Tunohopu kaumātua, Tom stood and responded. Although Tom's role had been previously negotiated, it obviously perturbed a member of the Tunohopu people, who knew Tom from University. Tom invited his friend to voice his concerns, which he duly accepted, "*Why is [Tom] standing up? He aha te take e tū nei tēnei teina, kei konei ana mātua? [Translation: Why is this younger sibling standing when his parents/uncles are present?]*". However, the Tunohopu kaumātua retorted, "*Kua whakaritea [It has been arranged]*". Although Tom participated as a member of the paepae during the initial powhiri ceremony

at Tunohopu, his whānau were surprised that Tom would not do so during subsequent proceedings. Tom tried to explain his specific role to his whānau,

*... 'I will fulfil the functions as the pouaru [widow], the whānau pani [immediately bereaved family]... We had to do a lot of talking around and through. I know that a lot of things that I said then, I would never say now, they were absolutely wrong. It was a case of just having to get in there and push it.*

Tom has illuminated some of the processes that occurred across and within whānau, hapū and Iwi groups. What remains unexplored, are the negotiations between Māori and Pākehā cultural groups within this event. In an effort to anticipate the needs of the aunt's Pākehā family, Tom briefed his own whānau and outlined specific roles,

*I said to one aunt, 'When your sister-in-law's family turns up, you watch for them. Don't you go into the kitchen, don't you go where you usually go, you watch for that family and you be there to help them through the processes. I will be there with you, because the paepae will be manned by Arawa people and we will just be there in support'.*

Upon the arrival of the Aunt's Pākehā family, Tom discussed with them the arrangements that had been made for the tangi. We asked Tom whether these discussions were consultative in nature,

*I did not consult with [the Pākehā family]. I did not feel that was a role that I wanted to play, because there were other higher priority things that were in the way. I also believed that the widower had already made his mind up; so that there would be not so much of a negotiation with Aunt's family... it was an expectation on my part that would be handled by the paepae, the immediate family would be consulted. I believe there was some consultation with Aunt's Pākehā family.*



By way of explaining the basis on which the tangi was being arranged, Tom emphasised his Aunt's relationship with her husband and his cultural world,

*[My aunt and uncle] had been married for 50 years and [My uncle] knew his in-laws. There was more than an assumption, but an understanding because Aunty was more Māori than some Māori's. She worked in the hospital. I never heard her speak Māori but heard her respond to Māori so I knew that she understood Māori... In retrospect, I do not think that I thought about it much, I just did it.*

As Tom mentions earlier, the tangi arrangements were made by the Tunohopu kaumātua upon the paepae. As part of these processes, the kaumātua consulted directly with the Pākehā family but also with Tom, who liaised with the widower and whānau. Tom described considerations for the Pākehā family which created somewhat of a fusion between ritual pathways,

*[Aunty's Pākehā family] played a part in the service, her brother did the eulogy. [Aunty] was Catholic, so there was a Catholic minister but Uncle was Anglican, so there was that kind of mix again. One of my cousins said 'we should put the 'pai maire' in there too Tom' and I said 'Don't complicate things even more!' [Laughter].*

In reflecting upon the tangi enactments, Tom recounted his impression of how the Pākehā family responded to the process,

*In many respects, I thought they were more Māori than my family. They understood that this was a Māori process and they would join the Māori process. They would talk and work with their nephews and nieces, and with their brother-in-law and the brother-in-law's family. They had no idea of the broader negotiations that needed to be carried through. We did not inform them of that, we just allowed them also to mourn, and to be safe.*

Tom's comment highlights the expressed need to comfort the bereaved and shelter them from the issues that were emerging. Notably absent from the tangi, were members from the broader hapū and Iwi networks connected to the whānau. When Tom telephoned members of his hapū and Iwi, they

advised that they would not be attending the tangi. Tom asked for the reasons behind their decision, to which they responded “*We will tell you when you get home, we will tell that uncle with you when he gets home*”. Tom knew that members of the hapū and Iwi were unhappy with the situation, though Tom was not completely sure why, “*I was just a kid really, maybe they did not want her [at the marae], they did not want all the other stuff that will go with [the tangi] as well*”. Tom speculated that some may have felt that his uncle had “*...deserted his responsibilities to them*”. Tom probed the matter further, asking what would happen in the event of his uncle’s death. Tom received a flat response, “*We do not want him*”. Tom issued a caution about taking such a stance.

As the tangi proceedings at Tunohopu concluded, Tom’s Aunty was taken to the nearby crematorium. It was probable that within this particular time context, being the 1970’s, cremation was still considered a new and peculiar practise within Aotearoa/New Zealand. The decision to cremate his Aunty had provoked a “*...hue and cry amongst the family*”. Tom elaborated further on the decision, “*I do not think that it was negotiable, because Uncle had already made up his mind. [Uncle] said to me ‘I want your support’*”. Tom had expressed apprehension about the cremation to his Uncle, who simply reminded Tom about his responsibilities as whānau spokesperson. In an attempt to mediate the situation, Tom relayed to the whānau a notable instance of cremation from their hapū history. The Ngāti Apakura hapū hold the belief “*...that the mana over the whenua passes through the woman*”. At one time, the kuia who held this mana attracted envy from male members of her hapū. As Tom explained, “*...They wanted to kill the kuia and eat her so the mana would pass to them*”. However, the war party that set out to capture the kuia was met by her son-in-law who stated, “*I am in your way. If I hear that has happened to my mother-in-law, you will answer to me*”. The taua were determined but were ill prepared to engage with the son-in-law and his companions and thus departed. The kuia, who had narrowly evaded her demise, alighted from her hiding place in the trees above where the altercation had occurred. The kuia instructed her son-in-law, “*...use this kotiate [whale bone club], you kill me, burn me, cremate me then spread*

*my ashes across the land so the fruits of the land will feed my mokopuna and the mana will pass to them”, which was duly done.*

Despite hearing the story of their ancestor, the whānau reiterated “...*I still do not want my Aunty cooked. I still do not want my Mother cooked*”. In reflecting back on the discussions, Tom noted, “...*there is this thing that we as Māori seem to have adopted about cremation and the cooking*”. Tom elaborated on this point in recalling how he responded to his whānau,

*Well, do not say that it is because of a tikanga of us, that it is a tikanga Māori that you have this understanding. I am in support of it because I want [Aunty] to come home and I know that we cannot do that tomorrow. So, [Aunty] will come home in ashes and we will put her over beside our grandfather.*

The whānau returned to Tunohopu marae for the hakari [ceremonial feast]. During this time, Tom formally invited the Te Arawa people to Pūrekireki, to bring the ashes of his Aunty with them. Tom described two important functions that would be fulfilled at the proposed commemorative event at Pūrekireki. Firstly, the returning of their loved one’s ashes would provide some sense of closure for the bereaved whānau,

*...For me, and I think the majority of the family, the closure did not occur until we put her ashes [in the urupā] and then we had a big feed afterwards and in those days, a big party. [At the tangi] there was no party, no wake, it was uncomfortable. That is one of the most important things that I feel about tangihanga, if there is no closure, it just keeps biting away at you... When there is visible earth going over the top and there is this visible, tangible and physical stuff that happens, then the spiritual [aspects are] appeased.*

Secondly, the commemorative event would also provide the opportunity to reciprocate the generosity of Te Arawa during the initial tangi. Tom’s descriptions of the preparations for the event highlight the importance of the whānau obligations in hosting Te Arawa at Pūrekireki,

*We had real kai, we made sure that [the whānau] went out to Kāwhia and got crayfish and all that kind of stuff, which is a little over the top. [We] continued to tell [the whānau] ‘it is your mana that is at stake here’.*

Comments from one of the Te Arawa kaumātua later indicated that Te Arawa was appropriately hosted at Pūrekireki. As occurred previously at the Aunty’s tangi, the commemorative event was marred by the absence of members from the wider hapū, who “...boycotted” the occasion. Tom remarked on how he felt about this, “*The blood starts to boil about this, the hurt that these fullas are not there*”. However, Tom expressed understanding of the broader reasons behind the ‘boycott’ in relation to the complex inter-tribal relationships drawn together by his Aunty’s tangi,

*...there were all sorts of other impacts that this young fulla did not know and still does not know that meant that the [wider hapū] could not come over ... But young fulla that I was, I did not know the ripples and further impacts beyond my own shuttered vision... There were other things at play, I think the Arawa whānau were that much more understanding, me te nui o te manaaki a Te Arawa.” [Translation: With the great hospitality of Te Arawa peoples].*

Some fifteen years later, Tom received a telephone call advising that his widowed uncle had died. Tom made haste to Rotorua, issuing instructions to his cousin that no arrangements should be made until his arrival. When Tom arrived, others argued that the uncle should be taken to Tunohopu Marae. Tom’s response was firm, “...*I made no bones about it, [Uncle] is coming home*”. Tom remained steadfast and finally it was agreed that the uncle would return to Pūrekireki. Tom rung members of his hapū to request that preparations be made for their arrival, “...*You will be there to greet [uncle] when we bring him back to Pūrekireki*”. Some of the whānau were noncommittal in their response, which Tom addressed sternly “...*if you are not [at Pūrekireki], you bloody watch out!*” Tom recalled his feelings at this moment vividly, “...*blood boiling, relatively young still, ready to take*

anything on [laughter].” We asked Tom to consider his respective experiences following the death of his aunt and uncle,

LWN: *If we compare the strength of, or the passion of the intent to claim and return, in relation to your uncle versus what happened around his wife, was there that same passion and intent to claim and return in those two circumstances or were they different?*

TR: *Very different. I think uncle might have passed on 15 odd years after aunty, so there is a difference in maturity as well. There is a difference in aunty being a Pākehā and the pull is somewhat more tenuous than making sure that uncle comes home and goes to the family cemetery.*

We asked Tom whether he would have done anything differently at his Aunty’s tangi, given the benefit of hindsight,

*I would have gone and picked up somebody from home. I would have made more of a noise to bring her home and made the tono for her stronger from the people at home and talked more about the obligations of the family to home. That is probably the first thing I would have done.*

Tom also reiterated an earlier point regarding his relative youth during the events recalled,

*Because of my youth at that time, I believed I could do everything...little snotty nosed kid believing that he can do anything. Secondly, I do not know that it was an ambition [of mine], but I look back now... taking on that role, and pushing it on myself and then finding ‘shit I’ve got to do this, shit I’ve got to do this’ and falling down because I can’t do those roles. I think I could have saved myself a hell of a lot of grief.*

Tom reflected further on his approach to the processes surrounding his Aunty’s tangi, drawing analogies to a recent Rugby World Cup game,

*...Being young and full of energy and a bloody know-all, whakahīhī [laughter]. Go!! bit like the young fulla Aaron Cruden last night [laughter], make a mistake so what, keep going. This is a good life and tomorrow I will be on my skateboard! It is that kind of energy that carries it.*

Extending upon this point, Tom highlighted factors that assisted in mediating the processes surrounding his Aunt's tangi, "...There was that passion and energy, but there were also other plans, other skills brought to play, so that in this situation, I believe, was a win-win". Tom spoke of the roles that he subsequently fulfilled and some of the difficulties he has encountered in the process,

*... From that day, I have been the family spokesperson and had to fill those kinds of roles and responsibilities. There have been times when I have fallen down terribly and got into a real funk. But, with good supports in place I have come through it.*

At the conclusion of the first interview, Tom expressed a critical point regarding tangihanga,

*The key word for me in tangihanga is manaaki. If there is no manaaki of the tūpāpaku, things go to hell. If there is no manaaki of the whānau pani, if there is no manaaki of the tangata whenua [local people], things go to hell.*

## **Death and Grief in Te Ao Māori**

Death rituals provide a vehicle through which significant aspects, relationships and accomplishments of the deceased can be expressed. Yet, individuals, their lives and relationships are nuanced and complex, unlikely to be fully captured within a singular event. Bereaved whānau face the onerous task of weighing up the multitude of options available, as ultimately decisions must be made in order for funerary processes to occur. Amongst grief, and sometimes time constraints, spaces must be created for opportunities to discuss debate and negotiate such arrangements. In the context of tangihanga, bereavement is not confined to the immediate family,

but is shared amongst a broader grieving community (Nikora & Masters-Awatere, 2012). Such communities may cut across whānau, hapū and Iwi groups, increasing considerations that need to be accounted for. Those who are designated decision making roles and authority must consider the multitude of options, the strength of connections, the weight of obligations and the practicalities that must ensue.

## **Mātauranga Māori and Tikanga**

In order to understand responses to death and grief within Te Ao Māori, consideration must be given to Māori ways of knowing, being and interacting with the world. Broadly speaking, the concept of Mātauranga Māori refers to distinctly Māori systems of philosophy and knowledge (Mead, 2003). Tikanga Māori encapsulates the process whereby Mātauranga Māori is expressed and practically applied. Tikanga structures Māori ways of being and interacting with the world around them. Tikanga Māori provides a guide for appropriate behaviour and expression through ritual, in accordance with cultural knowledge and philosophies (Mead, 2003). However, Tikanga Māori and Mātauranga Māori must be understood in context, due to the varied interpretations and expression across Iwi, hapū and in some instances, whānau groups (Mead, 2003).

In Te Ao Māori, death and grief are responded to through the customary processes of tangihanga. The familiar yet mutable pattern of tangi provides bereaved members a sense of security, comfort and reassurance as it guides what constitutes appropriate responses and processes (Nikora & Masters-Awatere, 2012). The tangi process is an enculturated pattern, and as was the case for Tom, knowledge of which commences at a young age and develops through on-going engagement and participation (Nikora, 2007). The acquisition of extensive cultural knowledge provided Tom with resources critical to his mediation and facilitation roles within tangi processes. Through his experiences, Tom indicated specific spheres of cultural knowledge that were utilised and applied within various tangihanga.

## **Relationships and Connections**

There are specific cultural values that guide the nature of engagement between Iwi groups. Iwi groups are positioned within roles determined on the basis of whether they are hosting or visitors to a specific event. Integral to these expectations are values of mana and manaakitanga. In the case of hosting Iwi, there are very clear expectations that the utmost care and respect is afforded to visiting Iwi. However, such cultural expectations can complicate negotiation processes between Iwi groups. Iwi may encounter tensions between their obligations as hosts and the ability to represent the needs of their own people. Obligations can also be created through concessions made by a particular Iwi group, which will have future implications. In situations where concessions are made on behalf of an Iwi group, there is an expectation that the generosity shown will be acknowledged and reciprocated at some future point.

The concept of manaakitanga is foundational to relationships and interactions within Te Ao Māori. Although manaakitanga may represent an ideal to be strived for, it is a dominant value that finds expression throughout tikanga (Mead, 2003; Ritchie, 1992). Manaakitanga refers to reciprocal, unqualified caring for others and is considered a fundamental obligation of all group members that affirms connectedness to others (Ritchie, 1992). Attached to this value is the belief that in one form or another, contributions made will eventually be reciprocated (Ritchie, 1992). Tom was explicit about the centrality of manaakitanga within tangihanga, and his want to consider the needs of others was evident. Tom's consideration of others encompassed various individuals and groups represented within tangihanga.

Tom emphasised the importance of knowledge concerning macro-level relationships and their connections to time, place and space. Within the grieving community that gathers to mourn, relationships cutting across boundaries of whānau, hapū, marae and Iwi groups may manifest. Tom expressed his awareness of relational dynamics and their enactment within bereavement processes. As an individual, the deceased may affiliate to multiple hapū and marae situated in differing geographical locations. With



different options available, decisions will need to be made regarding the nature of these connections and their expression within bereavement processes. Cultural concepts and values surrounding relationships are critical to such decision-making processes. Connections to whānau, hapū and Iwi groups are wrought through birth; yet relationships are lived experiences, requiring on-going engagement, interest and intimacy (Nikora et al., 2013). In a modern world where people are highly mobile, the degree to which we reside in social networks that are deeply committed to the wellbeing of its members is a point to be considered.

#### **Ahi kā and Ahi Mātao: Obligations and Responsibilities**

Tom drew upon the concepts of ahi kā and ahi mātao to emphasise the reciprocal nature of relationships between tribal members and tribal collectives and homelands. The concept of ahi kā describes strong, lived and maintained relationships to home, those which ‘keep the home fires burning’. In contrast, ahi mātao refers to the absence of maintained relationships to home, where the ‘home fires’ have been extinguished and gone ‘cold’. As Tom alluded to earlier in his narrative, these concepts underline the responsibilities and obligations attached to relationships with traditional homelands. Tom described examples where the extent to which individuals carried out their responsibilities impacted upon the obligation felt by the home community to respond to their death. Tangi are voluntary events with community networks and resources rapidly mobilised to meet the resource demands for food, accommodation, rituals, different types of spaces (for mourning, food preparation), and the like (Mead, 2003; Sinclair, 1990). As such, the degree to which an individual is embedded in the social fabric of a home community may influence the willingness of the community to respond.

#### **Inter-group dynamics and relationships**

Knowledge regarding broader level dynamics, such as cross-hapū and cross-Iwi relationships and histories is imperative to mediation roles within tangihanga. In Tom’s first bicultural bereavement experience, Tom drew upon knowledge of dynastical relationships to emphasise kinship links

between two distinct Iwi. The relational knowledge used by Tom in that instance stressed connections between the groups, which assisted the achievement of a desired outcome. Tom took care to highlight that inter-tribal relationships are complex, the sheer extent of which can be beyond full understanding. Tom's earlier recollections depict awareness of the delicate and somewhat precarious nature of negotiating across Iwi groups. In this instance, Tom's role focussed on inter-tribal negotiations and ensured that his whānau and hapū engaged appropriately and respectfully with Te Arawa. Tom recognised that serious repercussions that would result from inappropriate or disrespectful behaviour towards the hosting Iwi.

Tom's narrative reveals critical higher level negotiations within tangihanga that many attendees will be unaware of. Negotiations at this level may be conducted with a subtlety and out of the public eye, for example over a late night cup of tea with kaumātua. Tom provided one example that illustrated the process of such negotiations, "*...We had late night cups of teas with the kaumātua, saying 'What about this or what about that?' So those people became settled. All of this was being done out of the public eye and with a subtlety.*" The discretion employed underlines the delicacy of such situations, but also serves to allow the bereaved whānau to concentrate on mourning the loss of a loved one.

### **Tangi: Values, Rituals and Practices**

Tom illustrated vast knowledge of cultural values, concepts and their expression within tangihanga processes. Tom's knowledge of tangihanga began at a young age and developed experientially through his lifetime. These accumulated experiences provided Tom with a deep understanding of the pattern of tangihanga which enabled him to guide others through the intricacies of process. Tom recognised the varying levels of cultural understanding held by participants in tangihanga, both Māori and non-Māori. Tom highlighted the impact that infrequent cultural engagement could have upon the understanding of tangi processes for some of his people.

## Roles

Integral to understanding tangi processes is knowledge concerning culturally prescribed roles and their function within Māori death rituals. Importantly, examination of roles and their function illuminates important insights regarding negotiation and conflict within the context of tangihanga. Tom identified key roles and elaborated on role expectations and positioning within the broader context of tangihanga. Tom's reflections illuminate the interconnected nature of ritual processes and the overarching cultural belief that death and bereavement are shared with a broader community, rather than confined to the immediate family (Nikora & Masters-Awatere, 2012).

As the immediately bereaved, the whānau pani occupy a significant position within tangi and the provision of support for them is a priority. The primary function of the whānau pani is to grieve, but there is also an underlying obligation to contribute towards the practicalities of conducting the tangi. Members of the whānau pani are recognised on the basis of their proximity of relatedness to the deceased. Composition of the whānau pani may reflect complex and layered relationships held by the deceased, including their extended family of origin and those established later in life. Conceivably, the whānau pani can encompass individuals with differing affiliations, interests and agendas. Whānau pani membership is also inherently fluid, shifting and changing in response to a range of factors including physical context of the tangi, ritual enactments, practicalities, nature of relatedness to the deceased/bereaved and the relative seniority of group members.

Although the whānau pani hold important roles within tangi, their role does not necessarily assume absolute authority over decision making processes. Significant jurisdiction over the tangi will be vested in the context, being the hosting marae and community. Tom's earlier account is indicative of this point, where considerable emphasis was placed on ensuring that the jurisdiction of the hosting marae was acknowledged and respected by the whānau pani and extended whānau. Across both the whānau pani and the hosting marae community, the authority of specific individuals will vary

according to the nature of their relationship to the deceased and their relative seniority within the group.

Within the whānau pani, key members may be ascribed with particular status amongst the group. In circumstances where the deceased is survived by a partner, the pouaru [widow] is recognised as a holder of status. Importantly, the role of the pouaru is to convey their knowledge of the deceased's wishes regarding their tangi. The pouaru role is not perceived as a position of absolute authority, as this is shared with other key stakeholders. Tom acknowledged the important role of the pouaru within tangi and the obligation of care and support towards this individual. Equally, the pouaru has an obligation to consider the needs of others, particularly the deceased's children, whānau and hapū. However, Tom qualified this point as an ideal, commenting that it is not uncommon for the pouaru to display ignorance towards the interests of others. Tom explained further, "*...because it is a norm, it is accepted as a norm. We go through things and make sure the right things are done*".

Descendants of the deceased occupy a unique position amongst the whānau pani. Within tangi, the status of descendants reflects close relatedness to the deceased and the significance of their death to these individuals. Such status also acknowledges the key point that the relationship between descendants and the broader kin network will transcend beyond the tangi event. Tangi is reliant upon the connectedness of ancestral and living kinship communities to care for, and honour both the deceased and the bereaved (Nikora et al., 2013). The immense value placed upon continuity of relationships to people, space, place and collective histories is illuminated throughout tangihanga processes. The responsibility of securing the continuation of relationships falls upon the broader whānau and hapū networks, which is particularly evident in negotiating internment locations. Whānau and hapū retain a spiritual responsibility to return deceased kin to tribal homelands to be mourned and interned amongst kin, both past and present (Nikora et al., 2013). However, the internment within tribal homelands also observes the responsibility to descendants, through the

forging of bonds that encourage subsequent generations to return, and continue to return home.

Tom noted difficulties that may emerge in the process of negotiating the interests of the descendants with the interests of the pouaru. Tom described complex dynamics that can arise from blended families, such as those where descendants result from relationship(s) prior to that held by the pouaru. Although Tom respectfully acknowledged the status of both the pouaru and descendants within tangi, a distinction was made regarding the on-going nature of the relationship between descendants and the broader kin network. Tom highlighted that the role of the deceased's children was of crucial importance and emphasis was placed upon securing on-going relationships to ensure the return of successive generations to home, place and people.

### **Negotiation and Decision-Making**

Examination of roles within tangi identifies some of the key stakeholders alongside their relative positioning and relationship to others. Central to the current study is exploration of the processes of negotiation in which the bereaved and key stakeholders will engage through tangihanga. As indicated throughout Tom's narrative, negotiation processes can encompass multiple identities, interests, relationships, obligations and practicalities. The final outcomes resulting from negotiations will determine the pathways charted through tangi. However, the processes by which outcomes are reached can have considerable impacts on stakeholders engaged in the event.

Tom's experiences reveal a complex array of expectations, agendas and interests that culminate within tangi. Stakeholders within tangi must find ways in which such complexities can be represented and negotiated. Tom described processes of hui, whereby whānau, hapū, Iwi and other key stakeholders gathered to discuss and negotiate tangi proceedings. As Nikora, Masters-Awatere et al.(2012, p. 403) describe, participants within hui “... seek inclusion, respectful listening, the expression of views and reaching consensual outcomes” (p.403). The aforementioned presents an ideal to be strived for, and one which may not be readily achieved. The

pathways pursued through negotiation processes may not result in consensual outcomes nor achieve the aspirations held by all parties. Negotiation, debate and sometimes conflict are neither unusual nor unexpected within tangihanga. However, when substantive difficulties arise, whānau may defer to the leadership and authority of elder members of the whānau/hapū/Iwi for assistance (Nikora & Masters-Awatere, 2012). Tom offered critical insights upon factors that can exacerbate or ameliorate bereavement conflict.

Tom emphasised the importance of provision for bereaved whānau and key stakeholders to participate in decision-making processes surrounding tangihanga. In Tom's first bicultural tangi, the pouaru instructed Tom to decide whether to accept Te Arawa's tono for his aunty to lie in state upon Tunohopu marae. Tom replied with great conviction, "*No! No! No! It is not one person's decision, it has a significance*", expressing Tom's belief that important decisions need to be determined collectively rather than individually. Inclusive and collective decision making provides opportunities to discuss and debate relevant matters, including exploration of options and potential pathways through the tangi process. Although an agreeable outcome for all parties may not be possible, participation in decision making processes can facilitate understanding of the rationale for eventual outcomes and potential acceptance thereof. Critically, collective decision making processes may ameliorate tensions between the assertion of individual mana and wants versus consideration of the needs of all bereaved.

The involvement of authoritative individuals or entities can assist and mediate bereavement negotiation processes. However, there is also potential for such individuals/entities to unwittingly instigate or exacerbate conflict. Authorities can ignorantly disregard considerations of mana (connected to the deceased, current/previous partners, children, hapū and Iwi), even when negotiations have occurred and compromises developed. Tom noted instances where the invoking of a higher authority removed opportunities for discussion and negotiation amongst stakeholders. Without adequate negotiation processes, decisions can be imposed upon

stakeholders resulting in considerable distress. Tom highlighted instances where the opinion of higher level authorities was manipulated or even misrepresented by individuals. In some instances, individuals appeared to seek the fulfilment of their own individual agenda, excluding considerations for other significant stakeholders.

In highlighting elements that could both instigate and exacerbate conflict, Tom described some of the impacts and responses that could result. Responses to conflict can be expressed in a myriad of ways, both overt and subtle. Tom recounted several instances where stakeholders completely withdrew from participation in tangi or subsequent memorial events, as an expression of deeply held frustration and distress. Such responses could be directed towards specific decisions but also the processes undertaken to arrive at such outcomes. Thus, conflict and its impacts can remove opportunities to express and share both grief and support. Furthermore, conflict can have far reaching and enduring ramifications, beyond the individuals and event within which it originated. Conflict of such a nature can prove very difficult to resolve or remedy.

## **Skills and Attributes**

Tom's narrative emphasises sophisticated skills and attributes that allowed the application of knowledge and the development of solutions, amongst the demands of tangihanga. Such demands included complex negotiations and consideration of issues across dimensions of people, places and time. Tom displayed critical self- awareness alongside the ability to synthesise complex information. Ultimately, these aspects facilitated and supported the development of pathways towards solutions and resolving conflict.

### ***Positionality***

Tom expressed awareness of his role within processes, including his scope of practice and boundaries therein. Tom's position within tangihanga varied dependent upon where he 'stood', with whom and for what purpose. Tom was aware of his own positionality, a concept that refers to the positions we occupy, the perspectives we see and actions we take, relative to others with whom we interact. Tom's awareness of his positionality and that of those

whom he was representing was vital to his engagement within bereavement processes. Although Tom appeared as an individual, his role within tangihanga was constituted by the specific stakeholder groups that he represented. Leadership roles, such as those assigned to Tom, carry the key responsibility of consulting with others in order to ascertain the needs and interests of the bereaved collectively (Nikora & Masters-Awatere, 2012). In order to consult and consider the respective interests, Tom drew upon a range of relational resources available to him.

Tom's relationship resources encompassed existing relationships established by him, but also knowledge of relationships across whānau, hapū, marae and Iwi networks. The social structure within Te Ao Māori is complex and interconnected, with kinship relationships acknowledged bilaterally (Ritchie, 1963). The coming of each generation provides new layers of connections that are acknowledged, often relished and rarely forgotten. Tom's narrative emphasises the importance placed upon kinship, which bears consequence through decisions that seek to acknowledge, respect and maintain bonds of kinship. The skills employed by Tom are not unusual within the Māori world, amongst the complexities and multiplicities of social relationships and dynamics. Tom's awareness of his own positionality, the perspectives of others and the connections between assisted Tom to be respectful, culturally appropriate and effective within his role and engagement with others.

### ***Perspective taking***

Engaging across a range of stakeholders amidst time constraints, grief and other complexities requires particular skills in order to do so effectively and appropriately. Tom was clearly aware of his own positionality and those whom he represented, but he expressed the ability to consider the views and interests of others engaged within tangi. In some instances Tom held tentative expectations of how processes might unfold, he remained receptive and respectful towards other perspectives. Tom's ability to recognise alternative perspectives has been noted as critical to effective intergroup communication (Gudykunst, 2004). Such an approach also embodies the principle of kotahitanga, which describes decision making



processes whereby unity is sought through consensual discussion, where all perspectives must be heard and accorded due respect (Ritchie, 1992). Regardless of Tom's role or whom he represented, his approach to tangi proceedings expressed the cultural belief that tangi is shared amongst a broader grieving community. Certain stakeholders may assume a position of status within proceedings; however such status does not exclude the need to consider other key stakeholders and groups.

### ***Resolution Pathways***

Critical within the context of bereavement, Tom conveyed understanding and empathy towards the diversity of responses to grief, even when it manifested in difficult or inappropriate behaviour. Tom appeared to withhold judgement, affirming his belief that a key function of tangi was facilitating expression or 'release' of emotions, in whatever form. Tom acknowledged that individual tensions could create some difficulties; however Tom remained focussed upon ensuring that the appropriate considerations and enactments were fulfilled across the broader tangi context. Throughout Tom's reflection, it was evident that his key focus was envisaging the pathway most likely to at least partially meet the individual, relational and cultural needs evident within the tangi event. Tom sought to find some balance between what could be competing agendas, interests and ideals. With such an apparent focus, Tom was able to anticipate obstacles and difficulties alongside strategies to overcome such challenges. Deep knowledge of process and the high value placed upon manaakitanga enabled Tom to anticipate the needs of others with foresight. Tom took a proactive approach in ensuring that others understood processes and their roles within tangi. Such measures could include preparatory conversations, or where a greater need was identified, assigning a specific individual to guide others through processes. Tom's role within tangihanga could encompass myriad relationships, time pressures and practicalities enacted across potentially multiple locations. However, there remained one constant across the tangihanga, the aspiration to enact processes that acknowledge people, maintain relationships and restore wellbeing both within and beyond the immediate and singular tangi event. This includes being alert

and sensitive to the needs and safety of the immediately bereaved and the potential impact that conflict could have upon them.

### **Significant Contributions**

Dr Tom Roa's case study treats with culturally embedded values surrounding death and grief within tangi. He emphasises the complexity of negotiating the needs, wants and expectations of stakeholders engaged in a specific tangi, which involved the widower, their children, whānau, representatives of distinct hapū and Iwi groups, alongside Pākehā family members of the deceased. Through subsequent sections of the case study, Tom shares broader insights and knowledge drawn from accumulated experiences of tangihanga. Tom's reflections depict some of the layered complexities faced by those designated decision-making and authoritative roles within tangihanga. Importantly, exemplar situations described by Tom highlight barriers encountered and resources accessed in the course of mediating bereavement related conflict within Te Ao Māori.

## **Chapter 12: Hinekahukura Aranui-Barrett, Kuia**

Within Te Ao Māori, there are gendered roles and responsibilities shared amongst male and female elders (Barrett-Aranui, 1999). As female elders, the role of kuia is a critical role within cultural rituals and processes, particularly those associated with death and grief. Kuia often work very closely with the immediately bereaved within tangihanga, offering cultural support and guidance through decision-making, negotiations and participating within various rituals across the tangi sequence. This chapter presents formal and informal discussions with Hinekahukura Aranui-Barrett, a well-known kuia and Māori counsellor.

### **Expert Contributor: Hinekahukura Barrett-Aranui**

Hinekahukura is affiliated to Ngāti Maniapoto and has dedicated much of her life to her tribal peoples. Professionally, Hinekahukura has trained and worked as a counsellor and cultural expert across various educational, academic and community settings. Hinekahukura is acknowledged as a strong advocate for the implementation of biculturalism, inclusivity and recognition of Māori as tangata whenua within the counselling discipline and beyond. By way of invitation, Hinekahukura has lent support to indigenous advocates, travelling extensively across Hawaii and Alaska. Hinekahukura is a member of the Executive Committee of Te Whāriki Tautoko, an organisation which supports the principle of whakamana [Translation: self-determination] for Māori Counselling in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Hinekahukura's wealth of cultural knowledge and experience as a kuia, counsellor, academic and advocate offers a significant contribution to the research. Hinekahukura also offers perspectives of a member of a Māori and Pākehā bicultural whānau. Hinekahukura's late husband was Pākehā and they raised seven children together.

Hinekahukura is a significant member of my whānau and hapū. Hinekahukura's mother, Pani was sister to my koro Hēnare Barrett. Pani and Hēnare enjoyed a very close relationship, with Pani insisting that

Hēnare come to live with Pani and her whānau in the later years of his life. As I prepared to embark upon the research, I sought guidance and confirmation from my whānau and hapū. Thus my father and I travelled to see Hinekahukura to discuss my research kaupapa. Hinekahukura took me upon a whikoi [journey] to a wāhi tapu, a place sacred to our Iwi where I received a blessing for the research journey I was about to begin. Throughout the course of the research, Hinekahukura remained a touchstone of support and guidance. Hinekahukura encouraged me to participate in a tikanga marae course that she was facilitating during the first year of the research. The course was conducted through noho upon Maniapoto marae, including several to which I am connected. From both an academic and personal perspective, the noho provided me with opportunities to develop cultural understandings within the context of my whānau, hapū and Iwi. These understandings were developed through lived engagement with people, places and spaces, in stark contrast to the more 'literary' learning modes associated with academia. Through these means, I was able to consider, discuss and reflect upon Te Ao Māori and my research topic amongst a supportive roopu [group]. In the following chapter, Hinekahukura offers perspectives that reflect her experiences as a wahine [woman] raised, engaged and situated within Ngāti Maniapoto. Hinekahukura also draws upon her engagement with Te Ao Pākehā as a member of a Māori and Pākehā bicultural whānau.

### **Tangi: Sharing, Grieving and Supporting**

Hinekahukura emphasised the therapeutic functions of tangihanga that seek to support the expression of grief and the provision of successive opportunities to do so. There is an intrinsic link between the therapeutic and relational functions of tangi. Within tangihanga, the response to death is shared inclusively across a broader grieving community, representative of extended kinships, social and professional relationships. Tangihanga processes encompass both formal and informal acknowledgment of these relationships and connections to people, spaces and places. With the response to death shared across a bereaved community over the course of several days, there are diverse practicalities that must be accounted for.

Tangihanga are facilitated through the assistance of voluntary networks and will incorporate a range of tasks, specialised roles and resources. There is a cultural expectation that support and contributions will be formally acknowledged and reciprocated at some future point.

## **Understanding and Responding to Death**

Hinekahukura acknowledged that the death of a significant loved one can provoke a diversity of responses from those connected to the deceased. However, the ways in which death is thought about and responded to within the cultural world(s) to which individuals belong will have a significant influence. Hinekahukura articulated salient distinctions between Māori and Pākehā responses to death to identify points of consideration within bicultural bereavement processes. Hinekahukura explained that one of the key distinctions lies within how death is conceptualised,

*There are many differences between Pākehā and Māori in relation to tangihanga. There are no barriers in Māoridom, yet for Pākehā there appear to some invisible barriers. For Pākehā, there seems to be a sense of shame surrounding death. Death is a topic that is not considered 'above board'; it is not talked about in society.*

Hinekahukura explained that the sense of shame associated with death within the Pākehā world can have a restrictive influence on the degree of participation afforded to others within the response to death. Hinekahukura shared her perception that Pākehā bereavement processes can be private and restricted events, which can be experienced as exclusion by some,

*...Unless whānau [pani] give their permission, other whānau members can feel like an outsider. However, such exclusion does not dismiss bloodlines. In the Pākehā world, I am blown by the winds, shunned by the people who should be including me in the whakapapa and it feels cold.*

## **Relationships Within and Through Grief**

Within Te Ao Māori, great importance is placed upon relationships and connections to people, places and spaces. Tangihanga processes reflect

these aspects, through the recognition and role of relationships within the response and ritualization of death. In contrast to Hinekahukura's perception of exclusivity within Pākehā death rituals, the response to death within tangihanga is shared inclusively across a broad grieving community. The bereaved community may represent diverse relationships connected to the immediately bereaved and deceased, including their cultural, familial, social and work related worlds. Extended kinship relationships are a significant feature of tangi which can encompass both close and more distanced relationships,

*In terms of tangihanga, whakapapa is the opening gambit for inclusion. Therefore, when a stranger is introduced as part of a whakapapa, in the Māori sense there is a total inclusion. There is a distinct feeling of I was lost but now I am found. I have a sense of belonging. I am like the leaf that has fallen from the tree and I now know where I should settle.*

Importantly, tangihanga provide significant opportunities for relationships and connections to be acknowledged, established and maintained,

*Therefore, when I am coming to a tangi that I know has bloodlines that reach me and the person greets me as a lost whānau member, there is warmth that glows from being attached to that ahi kaa and is part of my whakapapa. It is like finding parts of a jigsaw that has been missing in my life as that lost person.*

### **Facilitating Grief**

Te Ao Māori refers to death rituals as tangi, which means to cry. As such, within tangi the expression of grief is encouraged and the allocation of time and space to do so are prioritised. Hinekahukura emphasised that the facilitation of grief begins immediately following the death of a loved one,

*Often for Māori, death may bring astonishment but also a sense of release and relief. For Māori, the wailing and emotional expressions start at the very time the person takes the last breath. Crying and farewells are said by the whānau and everyone is allowed the*

*freedom to express emotional grief. This can take a couple of hours or more, depending on the closeness of whānau members (Barrett-Aranui, 2011).*

## **Decision- Making**

Amidst their grief, the whānau pani will be faced with some immediate decisions that will need to be addressed in order for the tangi preparations to commence. Such decisions will include primary considerations such as the location and time period of the tangi,

*While the whānau is expressing their grief, there is a move to discuss what will happen next, where the body will lie in state, and how long the tangihanga will take place. All this is discussed before the body is moved anywhere, so that members will know who will be coming from long distances, and who will stay with the body so that it is never alone (Barrett-Aranui, 2011).*

The whānau pani have a central role in decision-making processes within tangi. However, the complexity of the decisions before them may require support and guidance from tribal elders,

*We have actually said to the whānau pani, “It is up to you. Yes, you talk about it and you decide”. We will honour the decision that they have made, but by the same token if their decisions are going the wrong way, it will be up to the kuia to say to them, “Taihoa, just wait a moment”.*

## **Tono**

The complexity of the decision making processes is enhanced by awareness that the outcomes may be contested by others. There may be various claims to the tūpāpaku, representing kinship relationships or those established through the life of the deceased. These claims may be presented both formally and informally and carry a range of intents. Some claims may be presented as means of honouring the deceased and acknowledging connections held. Whereas, other presentations may carry the very real intent to lay claim to the tūpāpaku. If claimants perceive that the tūpāpaku

is not being treated with honour and care, this may lend support to their claim and custody of the tūpāpaku may be contested and potentially asserted.

Hinekahukura described an exemplar case that illustrated this point, where she was required to guide members of the whānau pani to ensure that decisions reflected important tikanga. Hinekahukura received a phone call from a nephew to advise that his father had died and they were beginning to make arrangements for the tangi. The nephew was emphatic that Hinekahukura needed to attend the tangi, and relayed to her what his father had stated, “...*My father was talking about you before he finally died. He said to me, ‘You listen to what the kuia says’*”. Hinekahukura arrived at the marae and greeted the nephew, who outlined to her that he had decided on the burial location. Hinekahukura did not dispute her nephew’s decision, but asked him to consider all aspects of his father’s life, including connections to other marae. However, her nephew remained resolute regarding the chosen burial location.

The situation became more complicated, as a kaumātua presented a tono for the tūpāpaku to be brought to one of the marae mentioned by Hinekahukura. As her nephew deliberated over the decision, Hinekahukura reminded him to consider the precedents set by the marae and urupā where other close kin had been laid and buried. Hinekahukura emphasised that care needed to be taken, particularly as exclusion of marae could result in offense taken by people affiliated there. The nephew stated that he had no wish to cause offense but was reminded by Hinekahukura that although that was not his intent, the decision could be interpreted in that way. Hinekahukura left the son to consider the options and discuss it further with others. Hinekahukura felt that it was important that her nephew was aware of his father’s connections and the implications that could result from the decision.

The example relayed by Hinekahukura describes her role as kuia in providing cultural knowledge and guidance for bereaved whānau. Through her efforts, Hinekahukura was able to support her nephew to develop a compromise that would acknowledge significant connections and preserve



relationships. In this instance, the nephew decided to conduct his father's tangi across two marae in order to appropriately acknowledge their connections to the deceased. Hinekahukura noted that the enactment of tangi across multiple locations may be perceived negatively as "... *marae hopping*" by some. Although Hinekahukura emphasised the importance of observing tikanga that acknowledged significant connections, compromises such as that described may not always be feasible or practical. In some circumstances, there may be potential for such compromises to be developed, but for a variety of reasons these may not be considered or sought as an option. To elaborate further on this point, Hinekahukura offered a contrasting experience within her narrative of what occurred following the death of her mother, Pani Aranui (nee' Barrett), who was known to my whānau as Aunty Pani.

Aunty Pani died at her home in Mokau, surrounded by her whānau. The whānau discussed the arrangements for her tangi and in accordance with Aunty Pani's wishes, it was decided that she would be returned to lie at Mōkaukohunui Marae, Piopio. Hinekahukura described the initial parts of this journey, "...*So the journey home started for her in Mokau. We collected the death certificate and proceeded to Te Kuiti, not knowing that she was to direct our journey*". As Hinekahukura alludes to in her comment there would be certain occurrences that she would interpret as being 'directed' by her mother. Throughout the journey to Piopio, there would be five occasions when the vehicle stopped suddenly, in each instance beside a marae or landmark significant to Aunty Pani. On the last of these occasions, the vehicle halted in an awkward location and could not be re-started. Hinekahukura was confused about the location and addressed her mother's tūpāpaku, "*Mum, there is no marae here. I know what you are saying, you are stopping at all these marae to say goodbye to them all. But, there is no marae here. What are you saying to me now?*" Hinekahukura realised their location was near to the marae that her mother had stated she did not want her tangi to be held at. Hinekahukura addressed her mother again, "*Yes, there is Tookanganui-a-Noho [Marae], you are saying goodbye to her, ok, alright*". The vehicle was then able to be re-started and they continued on their journey.

Before the whānau reached Piopio, they were motioned to pull over by a following vehicle. When the two vehicles stopped beside the road, Hinekahukura saw that it was a well-known kaumātua and she instinctively knew that he would lay a tonono for her mother's tūpāpaku. Hinekahukura turned to her father, *"Dad, what you are going to say if he says to bring her up to Tookanganui-a-Noho? Because you know that is what he is going to say"*. Hinekahukura's father replied, *"You will know what to say"*. Hinekahukura inwardly groaned and thought to herself *"oh god, here we go again, the decision is left for me and it is a very difficult situation"*. When the kaumātua presented the tonono, Hinekahukura was ready with her reply, *"My mother went to every hui that you had at your marae. Now it is your turn to go and see her at Mōkaukohunui [Marae]"*. The kaumātua respected Hinekahukura's plea and stated that they would be at Mōkaukohunui in the morning. True to the kaumātua's word, a large roopu from the marae arrived at Mōkaukohunui early the next morning. Pani Aranui had predeceased her brother (my koro) Hēnare by a few days and Hēnare's obituary described his sister Pani's tangi, *"...Mrs Aranui was held in a great deal of respect and regard by those who knew her. A crowd of 800 people attended the Tangi [sic] at Piopio"* (Waitomo News, 1982). Hinekahukura reflected on how she negotiated the decision to enact her mother's tangi at Mōkaukohunui,

*That was the teaching that my mother gave me [on the journey to Piopio]. You do not have to call in to all those places; you can just pause for a moment. You can pause there without having to get those people involved. I have heard of other tangi where they have stopped at several marae and I think that would have been major for all those marae to accept them and to host them. That is not always wise".*

Hinekahukura drew further on the cultural teachings of her mother and lived experiences to describe some of the key roles and processes that may manifest within tangihanga. Although the whānau pani has a central role within decision making processes, their role is confined in other respects. Intrinsic to the process of tangi is the emotional and practical support

offered by the bereaved community, which allows the whānau pani to focus upon their grieving,

*Looking at the whānau pani, I think that it is very important that they should be mentioned because their role is really a very submissive role. The role of the whānau is not seen as coming forward. The whānau pani sit beside the tūpāpaku and they keep it warm. But, the role of the whānau pani is not just sitting beside the body, it is their time of grief. Accordingly, the whānau pani should not be involved with anything else on the marae.*

Yet as previously demonstrated by her response to the tono presented for her own mother, the whānau pani may also need to be assertive within their role. However, there can be exceptions to the confined role of whānau pani as Hinekahukura would explain. Hinekahukura attended a tangi and noticed that members of the whānau pani assisting in the kitchen. Hinekahukura chastised these members but they advised her that the deceased had instructed them to do so and they were merely following their wishes. Hinekahukura retracted her statement and noted that the wishes of the deceased were more important than her instructions, even as a kuia upon the marae.

## **Death Vigils**

Hinekahukura's earlier comment emphasises the cultural imperative that a constant and collective vigil will be maintained over the tūpāpaku. Hinekahukura explained that the enactment of death vigils serves a range of spiritual, therapeutic and practical functions. Vigils may also seek to prevent the tūpāpaku being uplifted without amicable amongst the bereaved. Hinekahukura explained that the enactment of a collective vigil by the bereaved will commence in response to the imminent death of a loved one,

*As we encounter the death of a loved one, our focus is on the release of emotions and a letting go of, or giving permission to the dying so that the person is able to let go of the living. For the deceased, it is essential to have whānau and friends surround them so that they*

*are not alone during that important time of stepping into the unknown. Often, the hands of the person will be held and there is a karakia that is chanted to allow the person to let go (Barrett-Aranui, 2011).*

Within Te Ao Māori, the tūpāpaku is believed to retain a connection to the spiritual essence of the deceased. With a cultural belief in a spiritual realm, the collective vigil seeks to support the spiritual essence on their journey to the next realm. The enactment of vigil acknowledges the sacred and tapu nature of the tūpāpaku and treatment that reflects respect, spiritual regard and affection for the tūpāpaku and their spiritual essence.

As Hinekahukura detailed the enactment of a constant and collective vigil prior and subsequent to death, she reflected on some of the differences she has noted within similar Pākehā processes. Hinekahukura acknowledged that Pākehā may enact similar rituals associated with last rights, but described a comparatively smaller group that attend such processes,

*Although this activity is done by Pākehā, with prayers and an anointing by a priest, more often, there is just a small group or just the parents or close relative to see the person take their last breath (Barrett-Aranui, 2011).*

Hinekahukura also observed that subsequent to death, Pākehā may arrange for the deceased to be despatched to a funeral home, where they will remain, often in isolation until the burial. Hinekahukura noted the primary role that is often assigned to funerary professionals within Pākehā funeral processes,

*Pākehā would have designated a funeral attendant to deal with everything and usually leaves them to deal with the body's cleaning and dressing before leaving the body in the parlour until such time as it is collected for burial (Barrett-Aranui, 2011).*

Hinekahukura elaborated further on this point noting that many of the tasks associated with funerary processes will be delegated to professionals such as funeral directors, caterers, priests and cemetery workers.

## Death Rituals

Once the whānau pani has decided upon the most primary considerations, this information will be shared with the bereaved community. Such information will allow for attendance to be arranged, alongside the support and resources required throughout the tangi process. Voluntary networks will be swiftly activated and preparations will begin with haste. These processes will require support from those within key roles to ensure that cultural obligations are fulfilled and the tangi event is successfully managed. The enactment of tangihanga will require cultural expertise, considered negotiation and skilled and experienced volunteers. There is a cultural expectation that the bereaved community will offer their skills and time to facilitate tangihanga (Barrett-Aranui, 1999). A multitude of tasks will be undertaken, including those related to the facilitation of ritual enactments, support with the hosting and catering of attendees and burial works. The processes of tangi will call upon a range of resources to meet the demands of the event. Such demands will require contributions from the bereaved community, as marae will be unable to meet those demands solely. As Hinekahukura rightly observes, “*Smooth running of activities during this period is a spectacle to be admired*” (Barrett-Aranui, 1999, p. 16).

The practicalities of tangihanga serve to facilitate an environment where the cultural processes of mourning, grieving and enacting death rituals can occur amongst a supportive collective. Hinekahukura comments on one of the key expressions that is aspired to within tangihanga, “*The warmth, empathy, and support given and received by everyone in all situations become realistic expressions of love and care*” (Barrett-Aranui, 1999, p. 16).

The expression and demonstration of grief will continue throughout the tangi processes and indeed, beyond. Alongside appropriate treatment of the tūpāpaku, the enactment of vigil creates a liminal space in which the bereaved will mourn, and deceased will be mourned over. This liminal space becomes of the epicentre of the proceedings, within individuals entering therein to grieve, as a shared and collective experience. Hinekahukura describes the centrality of grief and its expression within the context of

tangihanga, *“Grief is visibly seen and physically shared. Grief is real. Compassion is practised and accepted”* (Barrett-Aranui, 1999, p. 16).

Hinekahukura contrasted processes of tangi to the one-day service that often serves as the primary death ritual within Pākehā responses. Hinekahukura suggests that the single day service provides limited opportunities to acknowledge connections to the deceased and establish and maintain relationships across the bereaved community. The affirming of relationships and connections was described as key aspect and function of tangihanga. Hinekahukura offers a concluding acknowledgement regarding some of the differences in cultural responses to death and grief,

*...That is not to say that Pākehā do not respect their dead, but the manner in which the respect is given is certainly different. I have been to both Pākehā and Māori tangi, and always I am humbled by the way Māori treat all comers and especially the deceased and his or her whānau* (Barrett-Aranui, 2011 p.6).

From the commencement of tangihanga through to completion, there are formal and informal processes that seek to acknowledge relationships amongst participants. Expressed through formal speeches or informal poroporoaki, relationships are detailed and memories of the deceased are shared. As Hinekahukura explains, participants are also expected to share their emotional responses to the death in the various forms that may take,

*On entry, or at the pōwhiri, stories are told of their link to the deceased. Whether they are linked by bloodlines or work systems or friendships they are told and there are no holds barred. Both anger and sorrow is expressed by everyone who enters the marae. The stories can be funny or sad, but they are told. There are tears and laughter shared by all* (Barrett-Aranui, 2011, p.2).

To further elaborate on perceived distinctions between Māori and Pākehā responses to death and grief, Hinekahukura detailed some of her lived experiences of death rituals. Hinekahukura recalled some of the responses that accompanied the death of a young nephew, who belonged to a Pākehā family. Following the nephew’s death, his parents arranged for his body to

be taken and laid in state at nearby funeral home. However, this decision had a distressing impact on a cousin of the deceased, who identified as Māori. The deceased and his cousin had enjoyed a very close relationship and his cousin sought physical closeness to the deceased following his death. The cousin suggested to the deceased's parents that perhaps he could remain at the family home to allow the bereaved to spend more time with the tūpāpaku. However, the deceased's parents explained that situating the deceased at the funeral home was considered normal practice within their family. Although the cousin respected the decision that was made, the inability to remain close to the deceased exacerbated her distress, "... [The cousin] tried desperately to stop her tears, but the love she felt for her cousin was just too much. However, her uncle and aunt struggled to understand this". The deceased's parents were concerned about the cousin's expressions of grief and approached Hinekahukura to ask if she could intervene. Hinekahukura explained to them that such demonstrative expressions of grief were considered appropriate within Te Ao Māori,

*[The deceased's cousin] could not contain their tears, which seemed a very natural phenomenon for Māori but certainly unnatural for Pākehā because it seemed like showing a weakness to cry. For Māori, crying profusely releases the tension of loss, and that is why we cry.*

Despite her best attempt to explain the acceptance of grief expression within Te Ao Māori, Hinekahukura was unsure whether the uncle and aunt understood. Hinekahukura's experience of the mourning processes for the nephew had already been somewhat awkward. When Hinekahukura arrived at the funeral home to see the nephew, she brought with her a korowai made by her own mother many years before. Hinekahukura asked the funeral director if she could place the korowai on the coffin and was advised to seek permission from the parents. However, the parents refused Hinekahukura's request. Hinekahukura was confused by their response and ultimately felt that she "...sitting on the outside" of the bereavement processes as a result. Years later, the bicultural kinship group would gather again to mourn the loss of another family member. The deceased was

brought home to lie in state and the aunt and uncle previously mentioned visited to pay their respects. Following their participation in the mourning processes at the family home, the aunt and uncle reflected back on what had occurred following their son's death,

*...They realised how important it was for family to say goodbye to their loved one, with tears and openness. They saw the korowai and how it draped the tūpāpaku with aroha [love, concern, compassion]. It was a sad affair, to bring that realisation to fruition through the death of another family member. It was then that the aunt and uncle felt that they could have done better for their child, but sadly it was too late.*

Although Hinekahukura respected the diversity within responses to death and grief, she expressed her appreciation for tangihanga,

*For me personally, I prefer the marae where you cry and laugh and where singing and storytelling is the norm. But importantly, whakapapa binds everybody together, whether in bloodlines or in friendship.*

Following on from Hinekahukura's discussions of death and grief across distinct cultural worlds, she articulated some of the key aspects of tangihanga including roles, decision making, negotiation, conflict and potential resolutions.

## **Roles**

Amongst the whānau pani, the pouaru has a particularly significant role within tangihanga. In some cases, the pouaru may wish to be actively involved in all aspects of the tangi. However, Hinekahukura suggested that the pouaru should be guided by kuia and kaumātua in doing so. Hinekahukura emphasised the importance of the pouaru being present during powhiri rituals that welcome attendees to tangi,

*The role of the pouaru is very important; they have got to be seen by the manuwhiri as they arrive at the marae. If the pouaru are not present during the powhiri, there is something that happens with*



*the korero from manuwhiri. The manuwhiri will want to talk with the pouaru and they are addressed formally on the marae atea. The feelings of the manuwhiri for the pouaru are tantamount and need to be heard by everyone.*

Hinekahukura elaborated further on the roles of the pouaru, whānau pani and kaumātua within decision making processes, particularly in regard to the presentation of tonono,

*[The pouaru] cannot think straight, due to their grief. The people, especially the hau kāinga [Home people] will want to make that the pouaru are safe and that they are not stressed. However, it is very difficult for kaumātua to say what needs to be said unless there is a nod from the pouaru and from the whānau. Sometimes, the whānau will have to be talked with if there is a tonono and then a whānau korero will happen. The whānau pani will be part of the decision making, but the kaumātua will voice the decision on their behalf.*

Hinekahukura elaborated further on the processes of tonono and the importance of such claims being acknowledged by the whānau pani. There is potential for a range of competing claims upon the tūpāpaku to emerge within tangihanga. Amidst competitive claims for the tūpāpaku, the pouaru, whānau pani and representative kaumātua may have to engage in difficult and complex negotiations,

*...if there is a tonono for the tūpāpaku, that has to be heard by the pouaru. Sometimes the pouaru may say no to the tonono, when in truth the tūpāpaku needs to go home. But in other circumstances, when the deceased has been a rangatira there in that place that they lie, it is very difficult for that pouaru to say anything. In fact the pouaru may have very little to say and the kaumātua may have very little to say. It is the people involved in the way through the tonono process that will make the decision. In particular, it is the kaumātua that will make the decision as to whether that person goes home or not.*

Hinekahukura’s commentary alludes to the tensions between two specific claims upon tūpāpaku, those that represent tribal connections and homelands versus those which acknowledge relationships and status established by the deceased within other communities. Hinekahukura explained that tono often express whakapapa or genealogical connections and the want to return the tūpāpaku to ancestral homelands,

*The tono will probably be involved with whakapapa. In fact, it is whakapapa that will drive the wedge between either the going or the staying of the tūpāpaku. That is why the tono is put down, because they want to bring that body back home where they were born, koi na to ūkaipō [translation: bringing the tūpāpaku back to their homeland].*

As Hinekahukura suggests, the complexities raised by tono may require guidance and direction from kaumātua. Kaumātua may need to consider whether options available represent individual interests and the long term implications that may result,

*However, if the option for a tūpāpaku to stay in a particular place is the personal desire of an individual, then the kaumātua will say to them, “What happens when you die? When you go away?” And that has to happen at times. So, the kaumātua has a big role in making that decision to either make the tūpāpaku go or to stay.*

In contrast to claims to return tūpāpaku to their ūkaipō, there may be other competing claims which require due consideration. Hinekahukura described claims that relate to the deceased’s rangatiratanga, including their accrued status and relationships established within other communities,

*...The individual’s rangatiratanga has to be heard as well. The kaumātua may acknowledge the whakapapa of the tūpāpaku but say “We want to leave him here where he is known, and he is known because of this and this and this”. The kaumātua will need to think about all those aspects.*

Hinekahukura explained that in this context, the concept of rangatiratanga spoke to not only an individual's status but their contributions to particular communities,

*...Some women have developed some very neat ideas and have gathered the people together. When that happens, those people will want to keep that woman there. A man's role is different, he brings up different ideas. Whereas a woman will gather people together and if she has been strong in doing so, you can bet your life it is going to be difficult for anyone to tona for that body to go home.*

I asked Hinekahukura whether these issues had emerged within deliberations over the tona presented for my grandmother, and her first cousin, Arona. Throughout the course of the research, I have sought to better understand the meanings, outcomes and implications that resulted from the negotiation of Arona's tangi. As relayed in *Appendix A: Prequel: Our Stories, My Stories*, subsequent to Arona's sudden death, a tona was presented for her tūpāpaku to be returned to her ancestral homeland. Hinekahukura was part of the roopu that presented the tona for Arona. For various reasons, including recognition of Arona's established connections to the Coromandel, the tona was denied. Hinekahukura reflected on the decisions that were made for Arona's tangi,

*I can understand why in the end, Uncle Hēnare said "Yes, my daughter will stay here in the Coromandel". Because, Arona did a lot of work to gather the people together and those people honoured her by having her as the first tūpāpaku to go to Matai Whetū Marae. That was an honour in itself and to me, my mother had to keep quiet because that was so strong. So then, Huia was buried beside Arona and she is not alone. Her brother was also buried beside her so she is not alone. We do not feel that she is alone completely. Possibly that is why her son has stayed in the Coromandel for most of the time, he wanted to be near his mother.*

As I listened to Hinekahukura's reflections, I began to appreciate that the decision to allow Arona to remain in the Coromandel reflected significant

connections that she had established in her life. Importantly, it provided an opportunity for Arona's considerable contributions to her lived community to be acknowledged. Although Hinekahukura expressed understanding of the decisions made, she recognised that some whānau members remained unhappy about the outcome,

*...In the case of your grandmother, I know my mother said to me afterwards "I would have brought Arona home to her own mother". Because, Arona was very close to her own mother. Arona was also very close to my mother, sometimes she was closer to my mum than I was and than she was to her own mother.*

Although Hinekahukura's explanations allowed a more fuller understanding of the decisions that were made regarding Arona, I cannot help but wonder whether the return of Arona to her ancestral homeland would have provided an anchor for my own whānau within our tribal homelands.

Although kaumātua will consult with the pouaru, whānau pani and broader communities through the course of decision making processes, Hinekahukura also highlighted the belief that ancestral communities play a spiritual role within decision making processes. Hinekahukura described ways in which living elders will attempt to access the wisdom of tribal elders before them,

*The kaumātua will be talking to the wairua to ask them what they feel. If the kaumātua cannot converse with the wairua it is doubly difficult. Even though the kaumātua may not talk to the wairua visible, because even though he may not talk to him visibly, there is an on-going whakaaro in his mind, "What would so- and- so say? What would so- and -so be saying to me if she was alive or he was alive?" Those are the things that are important.*

Hinekahukura went on to explain the role of kuia within tangihanga, pointing out that kuia will similarly attempt to access the wisdom of ancestors to assist with their role,

*As a woman, the woman will look at both sides, whereas a man may only consider one side, one person. Sometimes it is very difficult for a kaumātua to think about both sides so he will ask the kuia “What do you think?” and she will say to him “Well, what would so- and-so say?” and the kaumātua will say “Oh, I never thought about that”. Now that so-and-so may have been dead and buried years ago, but the kaumātua will think about what that person would have felt.*

Hinekahukura elaborated further on accessing spiritual wisdom within her role as a kuia,

*I think on the topic of receiving messages from the wairua, it is important for us to realise that the wairua of the person will direct what happens. If you do not listen to the wairua things may not go well. People have asked me how do I talk to the wairua? And I say ‘You just talk to them, just as ordinarily as you and I are talking, they are hearing, they might be sitting on your shoulders, they might be laughing up a storm, but they are there, to help you, to guide you. But they are also there to honour what you are saying.*

Although Hinekahukura emphasised that spiritual considerations and accessing the wisdom of the ancestors was an important facet, she also noted that at times, living discretion may need to be employed. Hinekahukura recounted a tangi that she attended where she sat beside the tūpāpaku. Hinekahukura felt a strong sense that the wairua of the tūpāpaku did not want her to sit beside the pouaru and she thought to move herself to another location. However, the pouaru insisted that Hinekahukura remained where she was. Hinekahukura felt compelled to listen to the wishes of the living. The pouaru expressed his appreciation for Hinekahukura’s support, stating, “...When you greet people, I feel safe because I’m behind you, yes, if I was to greet people I would just cry, but I can cry quietly behind you”.

Hinekahukura went on to elaborate further on the role of kuia and their relationship to the kaumātua on the marae,

*The role of the kuia within tangi is about providing the balance. The kuia will provide the balance every time. When a kuia is asked to do a maioha [Translation: a speech from the heart] for instance, she will say no or she will say yes. If she says it may be because she wants to say something about that person who has died and no-one has said anything about that. But she may say no, someone else will do it. But, the kuia will sit behind the kaumātua that has been designated by the family to make decisions for them.*

Hinekahukura extended further on the role of the kuia within tangi and the support that they offer to the whānau pani,

*The kuia has to make sure that the whānau pani is fed. Sometimes, she will bring the kai to the whānau pani, depending on how they are feeling themselves. The kuia will say to them, he pai ana me noho koutou ki konei [Translation: it is ok if you want to stay here with the tūpāpaku]. If the whānau pani are close to the person that has died they might stay there and say ‘no I don’t want to go’ so the water and the food is brought to them, and it is the kuia that does that.*

The role of the kuia could also include ensuring that people are positioned in culturally determined locations, such as the whānau pani seated to the right hand side of the tūpāpaku and relatives on the left hand side. Kuia may also enact the placement of taonga in the immediate vicinity of the tūpāpaku, which may vary considerably both within and across Iwi and hapū. Hinekahukura explained that within our hapū photos of female relatives are always placed at the front of the tūpāpaku,

*You always put a woman in the front, because she does the karanga and that is the first karanga that you actually admit, you karanga to her to accept the body, so its nearly always the mother or a partner, usually the mother or the grandmother that’s put in the front, and its seen by everybody that the women is always in the front, that’s what I’ve been told, but everyone to their own, to their own whakaaro.*

Hinekahukura explained that photos of female relatives are not hung up but rather placed near the ground. Hinekahukura explained that this signifies, “... that a woman is the *whare tangata* (translation: the builder of nations, within her womb) *ae* and she stays near *Papatūānuku*, *ae*, grounded always”. Hinekahukura noted that the role of the *kuia* is often not associated with formal speaking during ritual encounters, “...Sometimes she does not have to speak, but sometimes you do have to speak. When words are spoken, they are only told once and if it is not taken then that is fine, *ki a koutou* [Translation: that is fine], but the *kuia* will then stand back”.

In supporting the *whānau pani*, part of that role might include providing cultural guidance to ensure that appropriate actions and behaviour were displayed. Hinekahukura recalled a tangi that she attended where one of the children of the deceased took upon the role of collecting *koha* [donation] that was presented during *powhiri*. Upon seeing this, Hinekahukura immediately thought to herself, “...I’ll have to talk to him somehow or another, to talk with him so it will be safe for him to hear it, and for me to say it”. Hinekahukura found such a moment and stated to the son, “*hemokai ana koe?*”[Translation: are you hungry?] the son immediately knew what Hinekahukura was referring to, that the children of the *tūpāpaku* should not assume such a role as it might appear that they are being ‘greedy’ and taking the *koha* for their own personal gain. Such actions, whether unintentional or not, disrespects the intent of the *koha* which is very important. *Koha* is put forth to meet the costs of the tangi, included significant costs incurred by the *marae* in hosting the tangi. Hinekahukura noted that the process of *koha* may be misinterpreted by *Pākehā*,

*And that is a role that is mistaken by Pākehā for instance. They may perceive that koha to coming to them personally. It may well be, but [the whānau pani] should not visually go and collect it. That is almost saying, “Thank you very much but I will keep it”. The intent is really more important.*

Hinekahukura also noted that most visitors to tangi will stay for the duration. If not, a *koha* is often placed within the kitchen or to the *paepae*

to compensate for absence. Hinekahukura emphasised that it is considered disrespectful to only attend the final day of the tangi.

Hinekahukura noted that increasingly individuals may be married several times and these relationships may need to be acknowledged within tangihanga,

*You may have tensions between two marriages and it is dependent upon the second marriage as to whether the first marriage is allowed to be part of the grieving. I think that is the role of the kuia as well, to find that balance and to allow the second wife to grieve, but also to consider the first marriage.*

Hinekahukura went on to describe what occurred when her Pākehā husband died, who at that time she was divorced from. Their children decided that their father would lie in state at one of their homes and Hinekahukura went to visit him and sat beside him. One of Hinekahukura's daughter's remarked that it was appropriate for her to sit beside her husband, even though they had been divorced. Hinekahukura recalled how she responded to her daughter's comment, "...I said to her "well this is my role, to be beside him. He waited until I came before he died and so I have got to honour him as well".

Drawing on her own experience of what might have been a somewhat difficult situation, re-existing difficulties within whānau can emerge within tangihanga as Hinekahukura would explain,

*So there is that relationship that you have to either honour or dishonour, depending how you two were, if you were not very good with each other, it makes it difficult for the rest of the people that is where the kuia comes in.*

Hinekahukura explained the role of the kuia should difficulties emerge amongst the bereaved community, "...the kuia is a mediator, she is a balancer and she is the pou, ae. Quite often when you talk to the kaumātua about a difficulty they say "well, did you talk to did you ask the kuia?".



***Kuia: Horoia Te Kanohi o Te Pouara***

Hinekahukura described a ritual performed by the kuia which was taught to her by her mother,

*...after the burial when the whānau pani comes home or back to the marae, kuia will quietly go along and wash the face of the pouaru, that is to brush all the tears away from her. The ritual symbolically says to the pouaru “you are free now, I will help you to free your grief by washing your face and washing the tears away”. The ritual is a form of freedom that the kuia gives to the pouaru. But, it is a ritual that has been forgotten, it is called ‘Horoia Te Kanohi o Te Pouara’ [Translation: Cleansing the face of the widow]. Ae, it is the cleansing of the tears, a part of the process that has been going on through the tangi. The tangi has allowed the pouaru to cry beside that pouaru, to allow that person the express grief, but now that the tūpāpaku is buried, it is time to look at the new world.*

Hinekahukura noted the ceremony seeks to support the female pouaru beyond the death of her partner, particularly with respect to their children,

*The ritual encourages the pouaru to look to her children as the gifts that her husband has brought to them... The ritual clears the tears away so that she can see her children, the children are much more important now. The woman has the nurturing role within the whānau; she is the pou tokomanawa [Translation: She is the heart/central person in the family]. When a woman is deprived of her partner, she has to be the man as well within the family so her pou tokomanawa is really quite strong. The ritual symbolises a strengthening of the pou tokomanawa but it is not one that is really talked about.*

Hinekahukura explained that the ritual is one that is conducted by women for woman. Hinekahukura recalled how her own mother had explained this aspect to her,

*...My mother told me “Your role is to make sure you wash the woman’s face”. I asked my mother “What about the man’s face mum?” and my mother replied “It does not matter about the man, he will go his own way, but the woman will always stay with the children”.*

Hinekahukura explained that the ritual seeks to support the pouaru and assist her not to “...pine” for her partner. Hinekahukura noted that in some instances the pouaru has pinned so much for their deceased partner that they have died soon after, seemingly of a broken heart. Hinekahukura went on to explain that by utilising ancient rituals and the wisdom of the ancestors can enable moving forward,

*.. We look back to go forward and that is why we say we go back. That is what I see as a lived experience, yes. I have done that, I have done that, I have washed peoples’ faces. Sometimes they have surprised me and they have given me a surprised look and said ‘why did you do that for?’ And I have just said ‘I just want to wipe the tears away, so that you can see your children’, “oh, thank you”. They are thinking of their children during the grief, but sometimes while the tūpāpaku is there, there is nothing else that matters, than their grief. It is hard to see forward, to see that other picture, which is the forward one, until after everything is done.*

In highlighting the use of this ritual, Hinekahukura pointed to other ritual events that also function to support the bereaved to move forward,

*... The hura kōhatu [ritual unveiling of headstone] is the real time when the kuia takes the widow’s grief wear off. It is the kuia that does it, she takes that all off and says to the widow “You are free now, go and find yourself a man. Not only that, but the widow has done what is expected of her to do, that is to grieve for a year. She has grieved for long enough to merit looking at her own children and looking for a new partner. Sometimes, a new partner is not even thought about, but the most important thing is to look forward, to the children and what happens to them.*

## **Bicultural Bereavement Conflict**

I asked Hinekahukura for her thoughts on Māori and Pākehā bicultural bereavement, particularly those cases where the tūpāpaku has been contested, or as the media has often reported, when a ‘body snatching’ has occurred,

*...this ‘body snatching’ idea is not so much a body snatching but a form of protection against leaving the body alone, we have never left the body alone, it is always with people who understand him, who honour him or who think highly of that person, whether it is a woman or a man.*

Hinekahukura gave her thoughts on considerations that should occur within bicultural bereavement processes. Hinekahukura emphasised that both parties have a responsibility to consider the needs and ideals of the other,

*well, if the person who had died was the Māori, the Pākehā partner should allow the Māori to express their grief, express their thoughts about what should happen, but then it is up to the Māori to think about the Pākehā as well and say ‘what are your thoughts?’*

Hinekahukura felt that such considerations could be difficult in light of some of the cultural values associated with death across Māori and Pākehā particularly in around the value placed on extended kinship relationship and the obligations that are attached to these,

*...In Māoridom, we consider children as the treasures; in fact they are more than money. That is the richness within the whānau. Whereas with the Pākehā, it is more money orientated, if there is a distance that they have to travel, the Pākehā is looking at the cost. However, the Māori does not look at the cost; the cost will be done, somehow. The cost is nothing to what that person feels, even though that other person is now dead.*

Another cultural aspect presented by Hinekahukura concerned the consideration of spiritual elements within decision making processes.

Hinekahukura suggested that Pākehā within bicultural bereavement process can find such considerations difficult to understand,

*It can be very, very difficult for a person who is grieving to find that there is a wairua that she has never considered, “That person is dead now, so what are you talking about all we want to do is to give him a burial and a burial plot”. All that sort of thing, and she cannot see the wood for the trees. That is the grief that we as kuia have to balance.*

Hinekahukura suggested that Pākehā may seek the easiest way of arranging funerary processes which may conflict with the desires of Māori which seek to acknowledge or account for their spiritual beliefs,

*It is very difficult when a Pākehā is quite decided about the kaupapa, “I do not know what you are all worrying about, we are looking at the easiest way of doing things”. However, the easiest way is not always the way that the wairua actually talks to you about what should happen.*

Hinekahukura shared her reflections from a hui that she participated in recently where the korero considered how bereavement decision-making is influenced by the concepts of ūkaipō, wairuatanga and tūrangawaewae [translation; ūkaipō: where the person’s placenta is buried or birthplace; wairuatanga: spiritual belongingness; tūrangawaewae: the place where one can stand, their birth place and burial place of placenta],

*...They said to me, “What is the difference between ūkaipō and wairuatanga?” I said to them, “Wairuatanga you can talk and talk and talk to them [to the deceased ancestors]. Ūkaipōtanga is the whenua that a person is born on to and the Tūrangawaewae is that, but what a person has. They said to me “A person should be brought back to that Tūrangawaewae. There is a push for you to take them back to their birth mat, because, that is the takapou wharanui [the birth mat, birth place, placenta burial place and where one’s spirit became viable] and that is the ūkaipōtanga”. I said to them, “Yes,*

*but by the same token, there is also that other side, the rangatiratanga”.*

In highlighting concepts of ūkaipōtanga and rangatiratanga, Hinekahukura emphasised that equal consideration needs to be given to these aspects within bereavement processes. Hinekahukura noted that in some instances people may ignore the importance of ūkaipōtanga, either because they do not understand it or are ignorant of it. Hinekahukura cautioned against this, as she felt that it could have implications that may result further on the track.

In illuminating some of the distinct cultural values that may enter into bicultural bereavement negotiations, it can be hard for both parties to appreciate the perspectives of others,

*“... It is very hard to make things seen by both parties, her side as well as his side, his side is wanting to take him home and her side is looking at the cost”. However, it is very important that the two sides hear each other. There has to be some active hearing. But not only to hear each other but to do each other’s wishes respectfully.*

I asked Hinekahukura if she had any final advice for bicultural whānau,

*I think both cultures need to look at death as the finalising of everything. We do not usually die because we have made the decision to die. The gods give and the gods take. So it is for us to honour what the gods have done and to honour each other. It is very important that we honour each other.*

Reflecting upon the nature of our discussions, I asked Hinekahukura if she had any comment upon the risk of karanga aitua through the course of the research, Hinekahukura was emphatic in her response,

*I think that it is important to discuss anything and everything, whatever happens. Because, it is those things left unsaid that can sit inside people. I do not want to be in position where I will have to say, “I did not say anything”.*

## **Significant Contributions**

Through lived experiences, Hinekahukura reflects on some of the distinct ways in which death is conceptualised and responded to across Māori and Pākehā cultural worlds. Hinekahukura illuminates some of the key values expressed within tangi, including those that seek to fulfil therapeutic, relational, practical and spiritual functions. Hinekahukura considers some of the key roles assigned and assumed by the tūpāpaku, whānau pani, pouaru and bereaved communities within tangi. Hinekahukura's narrative allows us to imagine some of the potential pathways by which bicultural whānau could draw upon the resources from two cultural worlds. Critically, Hinekahukura suggests points within decision- making and negotiation process that may support resolution of emergent issues. These include the development of compromises that support the bereaved and concerned communities through the acknowledgement of connections and maintenance of relationships across places, spaces and time.

## **Chapter 13: Haupai Puke, Kuia**

As outlined in the previous chapter, as female cultural elders, kuia assume important roles within tangihanga, including the enactment of rituals and the offering of support and guidance for the bereaved. This chapter presents a series of discussions with Haupai Puke, a well-known kuia, cultural expert and academic.

### **Expert Contributor: Haupai Puke**

Haupai is affiliated to Waikato, Maniapoto, Ngāti Porou and Ngāti Whakaue Iwi. She has served on accreditation panels and advisory boards focussed on Māori education and has been an influential advocate for Te Reo Māori, Māori Arts, and Māori language broadcasting. Haupai has recently retired from a senior lectureship in the School of Māori and Pacific Development at the University of Waikato. Haupai remains active on marae committees, hapū representation, Land Trusts and District Council regional committees, as well as the Māori Advisory Committee of the Environmental Protection Authority, which is concerned with coastal areas and sea burials.

Haupai was a valued contributor to wānanga and symposia held by the Tangi Research Programme, as a kuia actively engaged in processes, protocols and values expressed at tangihanga. She has lived experience as a member of Māori and Pākehā bicultural whānau and acknowledges this as one of the reasons for contributing to the research. I first encountered Haupai Puke as the lecturer for an undergraduate Māori language paper and was impressed by her frank and yet gentle approach and her obvious manaakitanga. Haupai welcomed, guided, and challenged us in the supportive environment she created in her classroom. Although I had met Haupai on other occasions, in our first interview we clarified the close relationships between our whānau. Haupai shared recollections of attending tangihanga for members of my extended whānau. With introductions made and connections acknowledged, our formal discussions began.

## **Kuia and Kaumātua: Cultural and Ritual Experts**

Haupai described some of the traditional gender roles in tangihanga rituals and referred to the writings of Hinekahukura Barrett-Aranui,

*...the keepers of the ancestral house learn and actively protect the house, the protocols of their marae, and their Iwi's honour. Each gender has a separate role; the roles are intertwined to allow each the rights and privileges of carrying out their duties and responsibilities. In carrying out their duties, each reflects the pride, and status of his or her gender. At all times they acknowledge each other's efforts in making their visitors, and their own people feel at home (Barrett-Aranui, 1999, p. unpagged).*

Haupai also emphasised that ideally, male and female elder roles should be complementary,

*I think when it comes to the front of the house, both men and women have a say about what is going to happen. However, the women have their job to do and the men have their job to do.*

The collaborative efforts of the male and female roles ultimately fulfil cultural values and customs through ritual and practical enactments. For kuia, one specialised role is kaikaranga. Hinekahukura Barrett-Aranui provides an evocative description of this role,

*The kuia's voice is the first to be heard as she sends her call to the visitors [manuwhiri]. She has the ability to reach into the emotional depths of each one. Her poignant voice pierces the heart, her words of compassion read the soul, and she envelopes the people with a mantle of affection. She has learnt well, how to use the genealogies and literature from within the meeting house, to begin the process of bonding [within pōhiri] (Barrett-Aranui, 1999, p. unpagged)*

Haupai endorsed Hinekahukura's commentary,

*For me personally, and for all kaikaranga, at tangihanga especially, the role of a kaikaranga is to connect Te Ao*



*Mārama with Te Ao Wairua [Translation: The natural world with the spiritual world]. The leadership in a sense eventuates because it is the woman's voice through the karanga, which is the first heard.*

Both kuia confirm that the role of kuia and kaikaranga carries significant responsibilities that are clearly defined. Such boundaries do not necessarily preclude members of either gender from assuming an overall leadership role. Haupai recalled instances where kaikaranga have enacted a clear leadership role, reflecting their tuākana status within a whānau or superior knowledge of tikanga. In the following sections, Haupai shares some of her own background, providing context for the perspectives and experiences offered. Some of the complexities of Māori and Pākehā bicultural whānau are described through personal reflections of bereavement.

### **Contributor's Bicultural Whānau**

Haupai was born to a Māori mother and Pākehā father. Her mother was raised on her whānau farm, “...*My father actually worked for my mother's people [on the farm] and I like that story [laughter]*”. Haupai's paternal family had emigrated from Bohemia in Eastern Europe during the 1870s, as part of the government resettlement programme following the New Zealand Land Wars. Haupai acknowledged her paternal family,

*My [paternal] great-grandfather is buried in the Catholic cemetery at Ohaupō; sometimes I stop off there to say “hello”. They were Bohemians and they settled there [in Ohaupō]. My grandfather joined the militia and bought land...between Pirongia and Te Awamutu.*

Haupai's parents married and raised ten children at the whānau farm located, “...*on the slopes of Pirongia Mountain*”. However, economic pressures resulted in the sale of the farm and the whānau relocated for employment and education opportunities.

These transitions were difficult, but the whānau were supported by their maternal grandfather, who lived with them following the death of his beloved wife, “... *[My grandfather] lived with us for 28 years...He was our*

*nana, our cook and our babysitter. He was the carer of the family; he was the glue between the 'bricks' of our family*". Haupai's parents worked extremely hard to support their whānau and through their efforts, were able to send many of their children to boarding school. Haupai refused this opportunity; she did not want to leave her grandfather, with whom she was extremely close. After excelling at the local college, she enrolled at the University of Auckland, but it was very difficult to leave her grandfather. Haupai successfully completed her Masters of Arts in German and a post-graduate diploma in teaching. She went to Berlin to work as a teacher of English, before being offered a position with the American Army as a German-English interpreter. Haupai travelled extensively through Europe before receiving word that her beloved grandfather was unwell. Without hesitation, Haupai returned home.

Within two months of her return, Haupai's grandfather died, "*...When my grandfather passed away, I thought that he had waited until I came back you see*". Haupai was devastated. The news of his death spread throughout the community and people began to arrive to pay their respects. She struggled with having to share the bereavement with others, particularly with those she saw as less connected to her grandfather. Haupai challenged her father and asked him, "*... what are all those people doing here?*" Haupai's father admonished her attitude, "*...It is not just about you, you know. It is about Grandpa, and Grandpa belongs to other people, not just to you.*" Haupai reflected back on her attitude at this time, "*So, that was me just being silly*". The close relationship between Haupai and her grandfather was acknowledged within the tangi, which was a point of contention for other family members.

Haupai's mother selected whānau members to be pallbearers during the tangi, including Haupai's newly wedded husband. At that time, only males could undertake the role. Haupai felt this gesture acknowledged the special relationship between Haupai and her grandfather. However, it also meant that another whānau member, who was close to the grandfather, was unable to be a pallbearer. This member expressed their wish to be a pallbearer, but

Haupai's mother denied the request. Haupai expressed her understanding of how that whānau member felt,

*I am not sure if [the whānau member] ever forgave my mother for that decision. He could not see why [the role was given] to a grandson- in- law that our grandfather had only known for a short time. This man was a stranger and yet was he made a pallbearer. However, I think [the decision was made] out of respect for me.*

Following her grandfather's tangi, Haupai decided to remain in New Zealand and resumed her engagement with her marae, alongside her parents who were actively involved. Haupai began teaching at nearby high schools, where she met her second husband with whom she has been married for 31 years. Haupai was eventually offered a position at the University of Waikato, where she worked for 25 years prior to taking retirement. Haupai settled amongst her husband's people and nearby marae but is also an active member of her own Iwi, hapū and marae.

## **Bicultural Bereavement Experiences**

Haupai's first experience of issues raised in a Māori and Pākehā bicultural bereavement occurred following the death of her mother,

*I remember my father saying, "Mum is going to [Public Cemetery]". We all totally disagreed with him, but we had to give in. [Our father's] wish was based on being able to be close to her. [Our father] wanted to be able to go and visit her easily, without worrying about access through someone else's property. However, our grandfather was already buried in a family urupā, which was where we wanted her to go.*

This whānau urupā is only accessible through a privately owned farm, requiring negotiation with the landowner. Haupai recalled an instance with another similar urupā, where the landowner withdrew access consent due to farm property being interfered with. Haupai noted that such situations are rare and behaviour that could jeopardise access to urupā are most certainly forbidden. Such situations create uncertainty and sometimes

resentment, and on-going access to landlocked urupā needs careful negotiation. Haupai's father was therefore emphatic that his wife should be buried at a public cemetery, so that the family could visit her with ease. Although Haupai understood her father's concerns regarding ease of access, she vehemently disagreed with his decision,

*I was totally against her being buried there, but my father just told me to shut [it], that I had too much to say. He said that he would do what he wanted. Although I was against the decision, I did not want to argue with him and upset him, because he had a heart condition.*

Haupai knew that wherever her mother was interred, she would visit her regularly. She explained her objection,

*I remember feeling quite hurt about that, that mum should be buried in a Pākehā cemetery. That was really my objection, that it was a Pākehā cemetery.*

Haupai's father argued his case further, explaining that he would eventually be buried next to his wife in the adjoining plot, so the whānau eventually conceded. Just over a year later, he entered into another relationship. Haupai felt upset about this, particularly in light of the burial decision concerning her mother. As Haupai reflected on that burial location, she expressed her belief in cultural practices of exhumation and the return of remains to ancestral tribal lands. She recalled instances where there had been some dispute over burial locations and whānau had undertaken exhumation and repatriation of the tūpāpaku. I shared with Haupai issues concerning my grandmother Arona's burial away from her tribal homelands and asked for her thoughts on the relationship between tribal homeland burials and strengthening bonds that encourage descendants to return, Haupai observed,

*It does have an impact. I think it is a good reason why people are buried in family cemeteries, especially [near] your marae. In Pirongia, people come a long way to bring their loved one home. You hear them saying "Oh, he is now with his sister" or "He is now*

*lying next to his moko and the moko is lying next to the tūpuna". You can hear the happiness in their voices.*

Haupai noted that within urupā, others with shared genealogies surround the interred members, with those visiting urupā similarly connected. In contrast, family members buried in public cemeteries may be spread out through the location, intermingled with 'strangers'.

## **Cultural Connections: Home and Away**

Intermarriage between Māori and Pākehā has continued amongst Haupai's whānau, "... [Cultural] intermarriage that introduced biculturalism into our whānau was in my parents' generation. It also occurred in their children's generation, my generation. It has continued through the next generation, my children's generation". Some of her siblings emigrated to their partner's countries to raise their own children. Haupai described how her overseas whānau express their connection to New Zealand,

*...My nephews and nieces overseas love coming back, knowing that they have family in New Zealand is very precious to them. Some of my nieces have retained the name 'Papesch' to keep that connection... keeping my father's name. My nephews and nieces all acknowledge that they have Māori blood in them. That surfaces in various ways, to a greater or lesser degree.*

Haupai described the strong engagement with Te Ao Māori of those living here,

*We three sisters are close and we live handy to one another. We three married Māori husbands and we are all strong in our Māori side; we have all got children that speak Te Reo Māori. We live it, we live marae-style, and we live kapa haka [Māori cultural performance]. It has gone on to our, not all of our children, but it is going to be passed on through us three in particular.*

Drawing on the diverse lifestyles of her whānau, Haupai discussed some of the impacts living outside of tribal homelands can have on the transmission of culture,

*In a sense, it is a sad indictment, ten children and the tikanga Māori, Te Reo Māori has only carried through three children. However, two [children] passed away early, so maybe not ten, but eight children. However, it is still less than fifty per cent [of the whānau]. There are various reasons for why that has happened.*

In the following section, Haupai describes the enactment of cultural values and mourning processes within unfamiliar contexts, including overseas, illustrating issues that may emerge in negotiating bereavement across cultural worlds.

### **Familiar Ways in Unfamiliar Worlds**

Some years ago, one of Haupai's brothers died suddenly. He was 32, and had settled in Australia. Several members of the whānau made immediate travel arrangements. They had expectations,

*...we thought that we would be able to have our brother at his home. That the lounge would be arranged and available, that we would be able to be close to him, sleep in the same room as him and be able to touch him. We imagined all of that, as it was our first experience. No- one was there beforehand to say "This is what will actually happen".*

On arrival, the whānau were advised that the tūpāpaku would remain in the funeral home, due to the region's hot climate. They would not be able to follow appropriate Māori mourning practices, like maintaining a constant vigil over the tūpāpaku. Instead, their time was restricted to booked 'viewing' appointments. This was extremely distressing for the whānau,

*That was our first experience of not being able to [be with the tūpāpaku]. We could go in and see him, but it was what Pākehā term 'viewing'. You see that term used in the death notices, viewing will take place between these times and you may view at a certain locality. However, not being able to get close to the body, being introduced to a 'viewing' was traumatic. We cried when we knew we could not be with him, be close with him.*

Haupai felt unable to intervene in the situation as she elaborates,

*I was in my 30s but had experienced quite a few tangi. Apart from the tangi of my grandfather, mother and youngest brother, where we were kiri mate [immediately bereaved], my experience was mainly in the kitchen or helping with whatever was needed for the whole tangi function to go through. [My role] had been more of a supportive role; it had not been a leading role.*

The whānau booked as many ‘viewing’ appointments as possible and spent what time they could with the tūpāpaku. Although unable to keep constant vigil, they enacted such closeness during allocated times, “...*It did not mean that we could not do some of those things when we went into the viewing room. We were able to, and we did, touch his face and give him a kiss. But that was all*”. On the morning of the funeral service, the whānau discussed which members would accompany the tūpāpaku in the hearse. They were advised that regulations prohibited anyone other than funerary professionals to travel in the hearse. Haupai described how difficult it was for the whānau to be prohibited from enacting cultural practice,

*...it was hard to understand that there were limitations on what you could do in regards to mourning in a different country, in a foreign country. We had to abide by those regulations, for whatever reason that they had been put in place. That was the first time I realised that culture, our culture, had to give way to the rules of the land. It was non-negotiable, in other words we had no choice. In a sense, we were angry, but it was really frustration at not being able to do anything.*

Haupai’s perspective expresses her cultural orientation as Māori and specific expectations founded on this orientation. She clarified that although living overseas, her brother had retained cultural practices,

*... [My brother’s] best friends were Māori, his wife was Australian but they were Māori. We had been over there on holiday many a time and he played the guitar, sang songs like ‘Me He Manu Rere’ and other well-known songs. They had hāngī and things like that.*

*In fact, I think that one of the attractions for my sister-in-law was my brother's [cultural] background. In those days, the Aussie girls came over to get themselves a Māori boyfriend [laughter]. Then of course, he went back there to live.*

Although Haupai felt frustrated and powerless against the restrictive foreign regulations, she was aware that her widowed sister-in-law was in a similar position and did not want to burden her,

*... [My sister-in-law] was a very sympathetic person and very hospitable. You realise that it is hard enough for her, without landing your concerns or what you wanted on top of her own grieving process, so you just hold it inside you.*

Although many years have passed, this experience left a last impression. Haupai contrasted this experience to a more recent bereavement. The husband of one of Haupai's older sisters died in Australia. Haupai and a large whānau contingent travelled to support their sister and aunt. Haupai explained that her sister had spent many years away from the whānau and married an English man, raising their now adult children overseas. Haupai was aware that they would have limited understandings of cultural responses to death, because of living so far away. Some may have witnessed tikanga Māori but were unfamiliar with underlying values and rationale. However, she noted that tikanga Māori practice can be supported through guidance from more knowledgeable others.

On arrival in Australia, their immediate focus was their deceased brother-in-law and uncle. Haupai's previous experience of foreign regulations anticipated the need to book 'viewing' appointments, and somewhat lessened the impact. The whānau booked the last appointments each day, gaining extra time with the tūpāpaku. Haupai surveyed the funeral chapel, seeing the coffin on a stage-type platform, with the seating set back from the stage. She advised the whānau, "... 'We are not all going to be sitting back and gawking at him like that; we are going to be there with him'. They emphatically agreed, expressing their wish to be close to the tūpāpaku. They rearranged the room, the coffin lid was removed and Haupai laid a 'Black



Watch' tartan shawl over the tūpāpaku. Haupai outlined the ritual process to her whānau,

*“... We will have karakia [incantation, prayer], we will have a mihi and anyone who wants to mihi can. We will sing waiata [songs] and anybody can get up to say whatever they want to say. We will do what we want to do”, which is what happened.*

Haupai was disappointed that the son of the deceased did not participate; excusing himself to stay home with his wife and children. Haupai became aware that her widowed sister seemed uncertain about her role and offered support and guidance,

*...My oldest sister had not really been brought up in tikanga and she seemed to be sort of flitting here and flitting there. I more or less directed her, ‘You can sit up there by your husband; you do not have to sit back there on those seats. You sit up there and I will sit up there with you. If you want to talk to him, talk to him, if you want to touch him and straighten his tie, do it. Do not worry that anyone else is looking at you and saying ‘what is she doing?’ You just do it’.*

During the time the whānau spent with the tūpāpaku, Haupai felt that her sister became more comfortable and importantly, had opportunities to grieve, as a widow,

*...I think when we were able to do that [my sister] sort of relaxed and felt more at ease with the situation. I had not really [seen] her cry yet, aside from when we first got there and when she rung to say that he had passed away. I felt she was bottling up things inside her or still feeling it hard to believe he had actually gone.*

Haupai also felt that their mourning processes supported others to express their grief,

*...My brother- in- law’s best friend was also English; he was able to cry, to let that out and really cry. Part of that was the singing, which was so lovely, it really was. That is the therapeutic side of what tikanga Māori is all about.*

As Haupai's point emphasises, tikanga Māori encompasses a range of functions, including the facilitation of grief. On the day before the funeral service, Haupai advised the whānau,

*... 'Tomorrow is the funeral service, we are taking uncle to the church and then he [will] be cremated. Tomorrow, when we come again, anybody who wants to say something to Uncle can, [speaking] will not just be restricted to the men. After that, we need to close his coffin so the next time we see him that has been done'. What I was suggesting was similar to a pō mihi [night of greetings] or pō whakamutunga [final night].*

She effectively created an opportunity for all the bereaved to say farewell to their whanaunga [relative] prior to the funeral. Despite the foreign context, Haupai was able to develop processes that reflected elements of tangi and her role in this process was instructive, encouraging and supportive of the bereaved. Although Haupai guided her whānau through these processes, she did not want to assume a full leadership role. Haupai's brother-in-law had made arrangements prior to his death,

*...My brother- in- law was aware of his impending death and had designated his two sons and a nephew to sort things out. We left it to be that way. I did not, although I could have, interfere. In retrospect, I should have looked after my sister's interests a bit better than what I did. I felt that she was lost a little bit in all of that.*

Haupai clearly respected her brother- in- law's wishes, but suspected,

*...Even though he had nominated his sons and a nephew as the executors of his will, I think my brother- in- law knew I would be there. [My brother-in-law] had confidence in me, 'She will make sure things happen'. I had always been close with my brother-in-law and my sister. I had often stayed with them. I think there was that aspect to it.*

Haupai understood there were different levels of cultural understanding amongst the whānau; those from New Zealand would know "...what should

*happen and how things should be*". They would not need guidance, but there could be times Haupai would need to ensure enactments reflected her brother-in-law's wishes. Haupai noted, "...*I was perfectly calm that my brother- in- law would be happy with what we did, I really did*". Central to this point was the support for her widowed sister,

*I felt that my sister [needed support], as I had not really seen her mourn and yet they were a close [couple]. I think in a sense, sometimes just telling my sister what to do was part of lessening her load... it saved her from having to make decisions when she was not certain about what to do.*

However, there was still a need for the widow to participate in the decision-making processes. The executors told the whānau that the deceased wished to be cremated, "...*that was really hard for us as a family to hear that, he wanted to be cremated and that was what was going to happen*". Haupai understood that her brother-in-law was Pākehā and cremation was practiced in his spiritual faith. She was uncomfortable with this and worried how the broader whānau would respond, questioning the executors accordingly,

*... 'Why are you cremating him?' 'Because, that is what he wanted? So, are you going to do what he wants? Did you always do what he wanted? Did you listen to him all the time? I do not think so, and yet you are going to cremate him?'*

The executors responded that they did not consider there to be any other option. Haupai felt that she could have elaborated further on her concerns, but remained silent,

*I never ever said to [the executors], 'When nana died did you hear any kōrero [talk] about her being burnt? When granddad died, did you hear us talking about cremation? No you did not and you know what an unveiling is? It is all about knowing that they lay there inside Papatūānuku'. None of that came out, none of that was spoken, at least not by me.*

Although Haupai was disturbed by the cremation decision and challenged it accordingly, what she found most difficult was the lack of discussion with the broader whānau,

*The challenge was given, but it was never asked of us, 'Is this the right thing to do?' Or 'Do Māori cremate?' It still gives me shivers down my spine now. We were a little bit more accepting out of our respect for our brother-in-law. We loved him very much and he had looked after our sister all these years. If that is what he wanted, then we cannot disagree. But, actually, we do disagree.*

Despite these concerns, he was cremated. This was hard for the broader whānau, particularly due to, "...*horrifying stories*" they had heard about 'behind the scenes' in crematoria. Haupai reiterated, "...*the thought of it just worried me for a long, long time*", and further emphasised for her that cremation accorded a lack of finality for the bereaved in their grieving process. In contrast, Haupai considered that witnessing the burial of a loved one assisted greatly with acceptance of the death.

After the service, people were invited back to a local sports club for "*sammies*". Accustomed to the ritual feast of kai hākari [ceremonial feast] following tangi, Haupai was shocked to discover that the catering was indeed just sandwiches. She kept thinking of how her now deceased brother-in-law would have reacted to the sparse supply of food, "... *he would be throwing a fit*", as he was a renowned cook who enjoyed generously catering for whānau events. Haupai suspected that her brother-in-law may have left instructions for 'sandwiches', meaning light supper; however this had been taken literally. In the context of tangi, the final kai hākari is a significant cultural occasion, which formally marks the conclusion of the mourning rituals. Kai hākari replenish the bereaved, and transitions them back to mundane activity. It also expresses the cultural value of manaakitanga, through appropriate hospitality,

*We felt embarrassed for the guests that came from far away. We were just embarrassed that was all we offered, it was just sandwiches... I am sure they must have been hungry. It is that sort*

*of manaakitanga right to the very end, that you just you cannot help, it is just rather ingrained in you... That part of it, the kai hākari has another [meaning] as well.*

Haupai had assumed that the catering would reflect the significance of the occasion and regretted not checking these arrangements. Although other members of the whānau honoured the occasion by performing waiata, Haupai could not bring herself to do so, due to how she was feeling. She acknowledged her expectations were based on her cultural orientation as Māori, but also expressed honour and respect for the deceased and his place in their whānau,

*...It was not about “This is tikanga” but for me it was doing what I felt was right for him, even though he was not Māori. He was always very respectful of tikanga Māori...What we really wanted to give, was a good ‘send-off’ as people put it, for our brother-in-law and uncle.*

There was one aspect of this experience she found particularly upsetting. She overheard a conversation between her nephew (whose father had died) and his Vietnamese wife, which seemed dismissive of the whānau cultural practices,

*...I heard my nephew explaining to [his wife], ‘Oh if you do not feel like staying you can go home. There is just a lot of sitting around and talking. I do not know what for, it is all very tiring’.*

Haupai was annoyed by these comments, but tried to understand their various reasons. She was aware that her nephew’s wife observed cultural mourning practises that included cremation soon after death, sometimes on the same day. In comparison, the whānau processes may have seemed protracted. Haupai also realised that her nephew had limited exposure to Te Ao Māori,

*I appreciated the fact that [my nephew’s] time on marae and at tangihanga, had been only within the family. My nephew may not remember what happened during these tangihanga. I think he was*

*more thinking about his wife's customs rather than saying to her, 'Well this is what we do'. My nephew did not feel confident enough to say that.*

Despite how she felt, Haupai recognised the tensions of negotiating different cultural and religious beliefs in bicultural relationships. The nephew and wife had been absent from parts of the tangi, citing the need to take care of their small children, whom they did not allow to attend the mourning processes. Haupai found this difficult to understand and elaborated further on children's participation in tangi,

*...In this day and age, at a marae, you get children right beside the coffin. I would encourage that so our children know what death looks like and what happens...With every death in our family, our moko have been there and have needed to be there. That is allowed and the moko are even allowed to touch [the tūpāpaku]. I think that it is a good thing.*

As the anniversary of her brother-in-law's death approached, Haupai was contacted by her nephew who asked how the whānau could commemorate the occasion. Haupai reassured him there was time flexibility and could be arranged when the whānau was ready. She explained that such commemorations serve to provide a sense of closure for the bereaved. Haupai's discomfort with cremation resurfaced as she realised her experiences of commemorative events had only occurred at burial locations. She was unsure how they might be enacted with cremains. Haupai asked her nephew what was intended for the cremains and was advised that they were to be divided and interred in three separate locations. She found this suggestion more abhorrent than the initial decision of cremation,

*'I beg your pardon! I beg your pardon! What are you talking about?!... I said 'oh well, whose got his head?' [Laughter] Where is his nono [backside] going to be?' [Laughter] I said it like that to make it sound ridiculous so they would stop and think, 'Is this the right thing to do?'*

Haupai clearly struggled with the cremation, but reiterated respect for her brother-in-law's wishes and spiritual faith. However, the division of ashes was not at the deceased's request, "...*They had decided that amongst themselves. It was not something that had been put in [my brother-in-law's] will or that he had told anybody*".

With some trepidation, Haupai and whānau members arranged to attend the unveiling ceremony. Haupai considered those roles need to support cultural mourning practises, "*I asked one of my nephews who mōhio ana ki te kōrero Māori [Translation: knows how to speak the Māori language], I asked him "Would you please do the karakia?" Haupai asked another nephew, "Can you mihi to everybody and thank the person who is doing the karakia to fulfil that side of things?"* As the whānau arrived at the cemetery columbarium, they gathered to discuss the proceedings, which were similar to those enacted on marae. She explained that the manuwhiri would be 'called on' by the hau kāinga. The manuwhiri would then respond and enter into the ceremonial space. Haupai assumed the role of kaikaranga [the woman who makes the ceremonial welcoming call] representing the hau kāinga as she had attended the tangi, and asked her niece to be the kaikaranga for the manuwhiri. Her niece was curious about where to stand as the kaikaranga; Haupai indicated the brick columbarium, where her uncle's ashes had been placed. The niece joined the rest of the whānau, ready to respond to Haupai's karanga [ceremonial chant of summons] welcoming them into the space. Haupai began her karanga and realised in her niece's response that,

*Somehow, [my niece] did not know he had been cremated, this poor girl! So she walked them in, this poor girl. It was the most beautiful karanga I have ever heard, tears streaming down her face. Kāore au e mōhio ana ko koe tēna [Translation: I did not know that was you there] ... All this come out of her.*

Haupai felt some responsibility for her niece's shock and regretted not fully briefing her prior to the ceremony, assuming that she knew about the cremation. Haupai expressed compassion and respect for the role her niece took on, despite her distress,

*... This poor girl, it just blew her away. She handled it really well, but it was just a sheer shock to her. However, I guess when you have a role to fulfil, like karanga, you let your feelings out but you still carry on with the job because it is all part of the kawa, or part of the process. I really admire her for that, but that was a dreadful situation for her to endure. [She said] “Kāore au e mōhio ana ko koe tēnā. Kāore koe ki reira kei roto i tō whaea” [Translation: I did not know it was you there. You are not there within [Papatūānuku] Mother Earth].*

The memorial ceremony concluded and Haupai and other members of the whānau returned home to New Zealand. On reflection, Haupai described aspects that could have improved the process. She thought the executors could have held more discussions with the whānau through their decision-making, and give more consideration to her brother-in-law’s final wishes. They could be accorded respect not necessarily viewed as determinative. Such considerations might provide the opportunity to raise other options, ultimately supporting the grieving processes of the bereaved collectively.

### **Different Coloured Tears: Tangihanga and Funerals**

In the experiences described, there were opportunities for the whānau to incorporate some cultural practices into the funerary processes. However, Haupai noted that has not always been her experience with funerals. She recalled situations where she has wanted to participate according to Māori mourning practices, but could not. Haupai expressed difficulty with limited or absent opportunities to speak during funeral services. Haupai recalled one occasion where one of her siblings spoke as a whānau representative during a service, allowing clarification of relationships to the deceased and a sense of inclusion,

*...sometimes when you go to a Pākehā funeral, you may be the only Māori people there. People look at you as if to say ‘What are you doing here?’ We have had this happen to us [as a whānau] and we have had to say, “We are part of Uncle’s family”. That is not my cousins and aunties, who know who we are, but their friends. I may*



*be a bit sensitive about that, but we do get the feeling that people are looking at you as though to say “Where do you come from?”*

Haupai shared her impression that Catholic based funerals have begun to introduce customs inspired by pōwhiri, where attendees are encouraged to greet others seated nearby. However, such practises differ from pōwhiri, which ensure that all attendee’s harirū, or shake hands, and have other opportunities to acknowledge others. Haupai described Pākehā participation within tangi,

*I can think of Pākehā people that come to [name-deleted] marae. However, I would say they are not strangers to marae and protocol. If they want to know more, they will ask, but at the right time, which is not usually right there and then, but later on...Usually with Pākehā, people who are uncomfortable with being on the marae but want to pay their respects to the deceased will come on the last day and only on that day. However, if they have connections to the whānau, they may come sooner. Pākehā usually know that there is going to be karanga to bring them on to the marae and a service where they may not understand the language. Some are comfortable enough to come, just be a part of it and join in. When it is time to enter the wharenuī, they know to take their shoes off. When it is time to harirū, they will be in the line.*

I asked Haupai whether the role of kuia extended to specifically guiding Pākehā through tangi processes,

*I believe that Pākehā should be involved in the tikanga, but I would not step out of my comfort zone to guide them, [like] going and sitting with them and explaining everything. However, I might say to them, ‘Come around this way’... ‘You need to sit back there not up here’... things like that. You do not embarrass anybody; you may nod or smile to reassure them they are doing the right thing. You do not let them bumble through so they are making mistakes through ignorance. You can whisper something in English so they understand what they need to do.*

Haupai clarified that the role of kuia encompasses varied responsibilities, including tangi rituals and formalities, and event management processes,

*I do not put myself in the role of guiding others because I am simply too busy. Making sure my side of things is right, that we are doing things right, liaising with other people, [making sure] are people are where they should be.*

Haupai noted that some kuia explain cultural processes to Pākehā, but such efforts are often focussed on upholding tikanga,

*... Some kuia might be more forthcoming with what certain tikanga means. However, where they do, there is no love lost. Their attitude is more or less 'When you come [to marae] you do as we do'. That is not intended to be rude; it is just the way it is on marae.*

Throughout her experiences, Haupai has not witnessed severe bicultural bereavement conflict and suggested points that may have negated this,

*I have met situations where the spouse [of the deceased] has been Pākehā, but there has not been any conflict. [The spouse] has accepted what is taking place. I guess the couple had discussed things already and that is the reason why it has been accepted. Alternatively, the spouse may be accustomed to being on a marae, or more so, familiar with tikanga and that is why there is no issue.*

As Haupai suggests, discussions around final wishes and prior cultural engagement may be supportive factors. Haupai recalled an example of a Pākehā wife widowed by the death of her Māori husband. He did not often participate in formal events at his marae and had limited Te Reo, but made significant contributions in other ways. His tangi was held at his home in accordance with his wishes, and the widow fully supported the tangi processes at their home. Haupai noted the widow's engagement with the marae community had developed familiarity and respect for tikanga. As news of the death reached the marae community, they began to arrive at the whānau home to assist with preparations. Haupai described some of the arrangements,

*... There were two kuia on either side [of the tūpāpaku]. So there were kuia there who were kaikaranga, there was always somebody there in the house to greet whoever come in. The protocols of a tangihanga I believe were [there].*

The open plan layout of the home created difficulties in separating the mourning practices around the tūpāpaku and the catering activities in the kitchen. However, those in attendance accepted that at least the food preparation was occurring in a separate, albeit close area. The spaces were clearly delineated. The lounge area was relatively small, which meant that the tūpāpaku remained on the coffin bier, instead of being placed on the floor,

*...In a sense that was ok, the space was quite small so there was not room to have mattresses out. Instead, we had seats so more people could come in to the room rather than have mattresses. There were quite a few elderly there [who needed that space for mobility].*

Despite these variations, people eventually became relaxed. As visitors arrived at the home, the processes were more formal like the ritual encounter of pōwhiri. The widow shared an intimate conversation with Haupai, confiding that being physically close to the tūpāpaku comforted her within her grief. The widow relayed that she had brought the coffin into their bedroom each night so that she could sleep beside her husband. Haupai understood the intent,

*...She felt quite good about doing that, she was not apologising, but really just telling me how she was dealing [with her grief]. She did not mind telling me because she knew that I would understand, I would not throw my arms up in horror and say “No! You are not supposed to do that! You are supposed to go beside him, you should not move him!” After all, he had actually died in that bedroom. I guess she wanted to share her side of things and how she was coping with the situation. She was quite happy to have him lying in state, to have the rituals when people arrived to pay their respects, in a really formal, but informal atmosphere.*

Tangi within a private home present some challenges with tikanga, resolved by negotiation and acceptance. Haupai emphasised that the facilitating factor was the knowledge that those participating were fulfilling what the deceased wanted,

*[The tangi arrangements] were following [the deceased's] wishes and that was important. No one was going to say, "He needs to be at the marae" because then [conflict would occur]. No one was going to takahi [trample] on his mana, because his word was his mana. That was his word- that he was to stay at home and [the widow] was fulfilling that wish.*

Haupai also noted that the deceased had chosen to be cremated, which she respected.

### **Te Ao Hurihuri: The Changing World**

While tangi within a foreign context may require particular strategies, the complexities of the modern world can also affect cultural mourning practises on 'home' soil. New challenges and dynamics enter in the fray, requiring consideration, flexibility and sometimes-innovative responses. Intercultural marriage and emigration may bring negotiations across cultural worlds, geographical locations and religious/spiritual beliefs. Other diversities include different relationships, understandings and value placed upon cultural worlds to which people affiliate. Other challenges include work commitments, childcare and financial capacities. For some, limited engagement with tribal homelands means few opportunities to develop cultural knowledge and understanding. Iwi and hapū groups are founded on shared genealogical connections, but also engaged relationships that influence how members understand and participate in cultural processes. Amongst marae communities, kuia and kaumātua assume key roles in ensuring that tikanga is observed. Within tangi, they offer cultural guidance and support for the whānau pani and others. Opportunities may also arise to enhance the cultural understandings of tribal members, including those who live outside tribal homelands.

Haupai described another bicultural tangi that illustrated these points. In this example, a tribal member had married a Pākehā woman from another country and the couple had several children. Haupai comments,

*...The children had not really been brought up on the marae, but they were still part of a very large family whose Māori side was strong. There were not many within the family that could speak Te Reo, but cultural practices were still there.*

The father of the whānau died and his tūpāpaku was returned to the marae. His older sister assumed the role of kuia within the tangi and shared with Haupai,

*This kuia said to me, “Well I suggested to the children that they should be part of the decision- making as to what happens to their father but that I would explain to them what I thought should happen, that I would like certain things to happen, according to Māori protocol. I did not say to them they could make all their own decisions, but I suggested to them, “This would be nice and this would be nice”. That was how she put it.*

### **From the ‘Back’ to the ‘Front’: Understanding through Engagement**

Although the deceased had not been active on the marae, his children expressed interest in learning more about Te Ao Māori. The kuia provided the children with opportunities to engage in many aspects of the tangi, supporting their cultural learning and engagement. She encouraged the children, if they felt the need to have a break from the tangi formalities to go into the kitchen to assist with preparations. The kuia explained to Haupai that, “...*I want them to know what it is like to be working [on the marae]*”. The kuia was aware that the children had participated in cultural processes as observers, rather than actively engaged in all facets of the marae. Haupai remarked to the kuia,

*‘Oh, that was a really good thing to do Aunty because you gave them the choice of deciding when they could leave their father’s side.*

*When they did leave, there was something else for them to do which would make them feel useful. It gave them a choice of being with their father, but also there in the kitchen. Then they were doing what they could to make things go smoothly so that visitors could come and pay their respects’.*

In this way, the kuia supported the children’s participation in the myriad of aspects in tangi, some of which were unfamiliar to them. The whānau had lived far from the tribal homelands, inhibiting their participation on the marae. The kuia provided a reprieve from formalities, encouraging them to assist with ‘behind the scenes’ tasks, extending their practical and cultural learning. Haupai noted that the Pākehā widow respectfully acknowledged her husband and children’s cultural identity as Māori. Haupai commented further,

*[The children] took the kuia’s suggestions on board. But, it was also the way the kuia did that, she let them know what she thought was the right thing to do, which was to be beside and spend as much time with their dad as possible. The kuia made sure that there was always someone beside them, especially when visitors came. [The children would] come back [from the kitchen], they [were who] the visitors would want to connect with, the living. [The kuia] was pleased with them; they had really stepped up to the mark. That was her whanaunga lying in state and the kuia would do all she could for him and part of that was guiding his children. I thought that was nice, the way she put things and even the way she explained it to me.*

The kuia offered clarity and direction to the bereaved children, and their cultural confidence grew accordingly.

In the previous exemplar, it is possible that the kuia’s close relationship to the whānau pani influenced her want and efforts in guiding her kin. In turn, the whānau pani considered and accepted the cultural guidance offered. Haupai described a similar approach she undertakes,

*... They are actually the whānau pani, you are not. You may be whanaunga but you are not actually kiri mate. For me, [my*

*approach with the whānau pani] is always in the tone of 'You are in charge, I am here to help and this is how I can help'.*

She emphasised that such use of diplomacy expresses understanding and compassion towards the grieving whānau,

*... In the end, it is about understanding you have a whānau that is in sorrow. You are there to comfort them, you are not there to cause a fuss or create animosity.*

Haupai elaborated on how people respond to death and grief,

*... People grieve in different ways. While we may readily shed tears, other people may hold them back. That does not mean to say they are not grieving to the same extent as you are. You have to understand that about the grieving process.*

As Haupai's comments indicate, approaching the whānau pani with diplomacy and manaakitanga provides an appropriate and compassionate way of guiding them. One can suggest rather than demand, so that options are more readily received. Haupai also felt that it was important to clearly explain rationale, so whānau understand options and their implications,

*...it is always of matter of discussing, especially with someone of the family, of the whānau pani. Tikanga should always be discussed rather than demanded. You are always trying to give the reason [for the tikanga]. In the sense of discussing, it is a matter of saying why you think things should happen in a particular way or suggesting options to the whānau. [You might say to the whānau pani], 'I have seen this happen, but if that is not ok with you then you could do this instead'.*

Although explaining the rationale behind options is important, Haupai observed it is not always possible. Where the whānau pani have limited cultural understandings, explanations can be very difficult. Some tikanga Māori encompass complex levels of meaning, not immediately apparent or easily understood. For example, the use of korowai within tangi rituals provides a strong cultural reference, but also deeper meaning,

*...I think the wish is that those visuals show tikanga Māori and that is very important. They can connect even though they may not understand some of the deeper meanings behind them, they connect with that.*

Sometimes, cultural meanings are not discussed. Haupai indicated some tikanga are deeply spiritual, including those that express intangible concepts, such as those of mana and tapu. These notions are extremely difficult to explain to others without prior knowledge of Te Ao Māori. She acknowledged occasions when she has been unhappy with tangi arrangements but decided at the time not to disclose these feelings, or waited for a more appropriate time. Haupai emphasised the importance of knowing one's place in cultural processes, where she is a manuwhiri, or a visitor, she would not intervene, even when tikanga is not being observed. Whereas, on her home marae, the degree of involvement and ability to intervene are evident. If approached for advice, Haupai endeavours to provide the best guidance possible. Such requests do require an awareness of the knowledge and guiding role of kuia and kaumātua.

### **Tikanga: Preservation and Innovation**

Haupai's narrative includes instances where tikanga was adapted in response to particular circumstances. However, she drew a clear distinction between tikanga that could be flexible and those that should be preserved,

*I think there are some tikanga that have to be observed and there are probably other tikanga where you can make allowances even though it is not maintaining tikanga, but you can make allowances.*

I asked Haupai to explain the importance of upholding tikanga, particularly within the context of tangi,

*... [Upholding tikanga] is keeping the integrity of marae. Otherwise, you may as well hire the local hall if you just want to all gather at one place at one time. I think people understand there is protocol on a marae and they do have a choice [whether to utilise marae].*



Whānau pani have the choice to enact tangi at marae or consider other options, though for some the marae may be the only option. Haupai noted her belief that the marae should “...*always be the first port of call*”, but decisions to use other locations will be respected. Tangi rituals may also take place across both home and marae locations. Such decisions may reflect economic factors or the need for the marae to get ready. Other factors could be delays due to the processes required by funerary professionals or coronial agencies.

### **Compromises: Tribal Connections and Lived Relationships**

Haupai noted that bereavement rituals across different locations could provide a compromise acknowledging both lived relationships and genealogical connections. She recalled the death of a tribal member who lived and raised his whānau far away from his tribal homelands. On hearing of the death, the marae community anticipated he would be returned to the marae, like siblings who had pre-deceased him. The whānau pani were advised the marae would be at their disposal, whilst others travelled to support the whānau and assist with the return of the tūpāpaku. The whānau pani gathered with the travelling kin to discuss the arrangements. The deceased had left specific instructions for his tangi to occur in the district he had lived and raised his family. He also chose cremation, with his cremains to be returned to the whānau urupā. Haupai described the response,

*... [The deceased] had already passed on his wishes and the [whānau pani] would retain those wishes. [The marae community] was comforted by the fact his ashes would go back, he would be with his brothers and sisters, and other members of the family were buried there. [The marae community] were ok with that, knowing it was the right thing to do. He would come back to the family cemetery, they would always know where to find him and that would be reason for the [whānau pani] to come back [to the marae].*

Eventually, the marae community would organise a kawē mate ritual to inter the ashes and the bond between the whānau pani and marae would be

maintained. Haupai expressed her understanding of the final wishes of the deceased, who lived away for over forty years, establishing a life and family there. Haupai explained her awareness of these points clarified the decisions made. However, she reiterated that some tikanga practices are integral to tangi, and should be preserved and observed accordingly,

*Although there can be flexibility with some things, other [aspects] are important; never leaving the tūpāpaku, and the karanga to accompany them wherever they move. I am also totally against having family speaking on the day of the funeral service. There is a time set aside especially for whānau on the night before. There is also a need for whānau meetings with the marae people, which is a courtesy. That is the time to thank the whole hapū for their manaakitanga. Those practices need to happen.*

The tikanga described are by no means an exhaustive list. These tikanga may also reflect specific hapū and Iwi perspectives, which are interpreted and prioritised variably by other hapū and Iwi. Haupai elaborated further on the tikanga highlighted, including constant and collective vigil over the tūpāpaku, asserting the tūpāpaku should never be left alone. Such practices support the bereaved to remain close to the tūpāpaku, and provide opportunities to grieve and express what is considered respectful treatment of the tūpāpaku. Haupai could only recall one occasion where this tikanga was not maintained, but with careful planning, need not occur. Being with the tūpāpaku is the central role of whānau pani. The whānau pani may leave for brief comfort stops or meals, while others take their place, such as ringawera [kitchen workers], or kin that are more distant. The co-ordination of vigil maintains tikanga and affords all the grieving community time with the tūpāpaku. The tūpāpaku and their location are considered immensely sacred and tapu and any movement of the tūpāpaku requires accompanying rituals,

*...Because the tūpāpaku is tapu, their movement from one place to another affects that place. What I was told was everything that happens to that tūpāpaku, you karanga it. It is not just to the tūpāpaku, but what is happening with that moment and the spaces*

*that are involved... The tapu of the tūpāpaku is retained or maintained through your karanga... Within your karanga, you will bless the tūpāpaku. It is the tūpāpaku that is greeting the visitors; the house is too but only as that is where the tūpāpaku is lying. Within the role of kaikaranga, you are there for the bereaved and you are there for the tūpāpaku. You are there to accompany [the tūpāpaku], you are their friend.*

It is a protective role, a responsibility to the deceased and an understanding of the transition, physical and spiritual, that is taking place.

Haupai also stressed that the whānau pani should not speak formally within tangihanga. She explained,

*I have seen it happen where children have got up to speak about their mother. The next moment you have a ‘tangi-fest’, the children just standing there bawling their eyes out and everybody is feeling for them. I get angry and tell people “Do not do that! Who agreed for the children to stand up and talk about their mother?”... You should never put [the whānau pani] in that situation. I have noticed that custom changing and the funeral service can become a time for the close family to speak. I really think that should not happen, it is too tender for them to bare their soul in that way.*

Haupai explained her perspective was informed by personal experience, particularly the tangi for her beloved grandfather, where she was asked to speak,

*I could only manage a few words and then I just sat down, I was not going to say anymore. I felt it was cruel to ask me to get up and say something, but everybody wanted to hear from me because I was his pet. However, I did not want to.*

Haupai emphasises other opportunities for the whānau pani to speak, such as the pō whakamutunga, or night preceding the burial, when intimate memories are shared in a more informal space. If the whānau pani want to raise issues in the formal process, a kaumātua should do this on their behalf.

Haupai acknowledged that the fulfilment of tikanga could be challenging against the pressures of the modern world,

*...The fulfilment of tikanga is a real issue because of a lack of numbers, especially home people... I am not sure whether it is because the same level of commitment is not there. I think that at marae you will get commitment from people, after all you are all related. If you do not live that far away, you go to the marae and help, regardless of whether you had a close relationship to that family or not. Now, our marae people live in other places, and work in other places, and it is hard.*

Some marae may face significant challenges in the decreasing number of tribal members who are able to fulfil the role of hau kāinga. Some of these challenges can be mediated, with the sharing of roles assumed by individuals in times past,

*You might not be able to be there until the next day, and someone else will take on that role on other days. You may have to spread yourself out because the numbers are not as great as in previous times. It can be hard to find people to make the commitment right at the start, to help with all the preparation work. Some people may only get there by the funeral day.*

Haupai felt that for the most part, her marae have successfully navigated the fulfilment of tikanga, which was especially important with tangi,

*Fortunately, even though our numbers are few and we do not live right next door to the marae, I think we manage. I think tikanga is important to fulfil according to the type of hui, especially so for tangihanga. We extend ourselves in order to fulfil the tikanga.*

Tribal members can extend themselves to fulfil tikanga, through liaison and negotiation with others, working as a collective to fulfil roles in marae events. Haupai described a roster system, which specified the availability and responsibilities of members. She contrasted this to earlier times,

*...The moment somebody passed away, the hapū gathered at the marae. Everybody lived close to the marae, so you would bake a cake or gather some kai together quickly and take it. You might be there almost all day before the tūpāpaku arrived. I can remember being part of that, you just stopped everything, as things had to be done and you had to get there. That was all to spare the whānau pani having to do anything, it was a way of saying “You don’t worry about anything, just worry about taking care of yourselves. Getting yourselves sorted and getting ready”.*

Despite some of the best efforts described, there may be occasions where traditional protocols are adapted to achieve some measure of tikanga. Haupai recalled an occasion where a whānau pani wanted to visit a marae with a tūpāpaku, recognising their connection to the marae. Due to work commitments and travel requirements, the hau kāinga were unable to receive them. The whānau pani were given the option to proceed with their visit and enact at least their side of the rituals. By telephone, they were given detailed instructions on how to take the tūpāpaku onto the marae, undertake karakia, waiata and make informal speeches. Haupai comments,

*You have given them advice and go through the ritual with them; you hope they carry it out as best as they possibly can. However, knowing that it is not actually fulfilling the role of the home people, because there should still be someone there to receive the tūpāpaku. However, because of the physical situation [of people] being some distance away and having work commitments, that is not always possible. Therefore, either you organise for someone else you can rely on [to be there] or you keep that conversation going for as long as it needs to happen.*

Following such arranged visits, there may be a need to follow up with others to gauge whether the correct enactments took place,

*... We have had quite a few instances like that happen...It is long distance organising and not the best procedure but it can work. It is trying to fulfil tikanga, and being guided about what can happen.*

*Then that is passed onto people you know you can rely on. Then [it is a matter of] checking up afterwards so that you know that everything went all right, otherwise you will have to work out how to deal with it.*

In this instance, the necessary rituals were conducted and all parties were satisfied. Importantly, the whānau pani were afforded the opportunity to bring the tūpāpaku onto the marae. Haupai acknowledged that such arrangements are not ideal, but allow the whānau pani to acknowledge their connection, which would otherwise not be possible.

### **Responses to New Practices**

Haupai reflected further on changes noted within her lifetime, including introduced practices. She described where the transportation of tūpāpaku for burial includes detours to places frequented by the deceased. Although she understood the importance of such places, she wondered whether this prolonged the burial and final farewell. Haupai emphasised that she was not against such practices but they presented an example of the changing nature of tangihanga,

*.. Those sorts of changes you know are happening. You may not be against it, but it is different practices being introduced. Some of these changes, you just have to take in your stride, as they do not actually interfere with the main aspects of a tangihanga. It is just something new or different. I may not want that for [my tangi] though, but if somebody else thinks [it is a good idea], well that is fine.*

Haupai discussed other changes including the role of children. In an earlier example, Haupai described the beneficial nature of involving children, with the development of children's understanding of tangi as important for both children and the broader whānau. Haupai described her own childhood experiences,

*I think because of [the tūpāpaku] being too tapu, that sense of tapuness was still prevalent, in the 1950s and 1960s even. It was not*

*the practice for children to be allowed to get close to the tūpāpaku in that environment... Therefore, there is a difference in the twenty first century, with children being at tangihanga and being allowed close to the tūpāpaku.*

Haupai noted similar restrictions upon adult contact with tūpāpaku during the era described,

*...Once upon a time you were not even supposed to touch the tūpāpaku. These days, people will kiss and want to touch the tūpāpaku. However, you were never allowed to do that in times past. We were taught that you do not touch the tūpāpaku, that they are too tapu to the living. The only ones who touched them were those who dressed the tūpāpaku, but that was different.*

Haupai recalled that her first direct contact with a tūpāpaku occurred during the tangi for her beloved grandfather,

*I was really close to my grandfather and probably the first one that I actually touched because of being so close to him. I do not think I ever left his side...I guess after that it seemed normal to be touching the tūpāpaku, if you felt that way inclined and it was someone really close to you.*

Alongside new practices, there is also potential for the revival of customs not so readily practised. Haupai described the return of the practice of Māori burying children's whenua/pito [placenta] with Papatūānuku. Haupai suggested this practice is being increasingly appropriated by non-Māori.

From her perspective as a kuia, I asked Haupai about the role of funerary professionals within cultural processes of tangihanga. Although tangihanga include gendered roles, Haupai felt that there was some acceptance with engaging with either male or female funerary professionals. In any case, there is a need for professionals to consult with whānau regarding their preferences in relation to gender or culture. She also noted the need for awareness that some professional practices can interfere with aspects of

tangi. For example, coffin trolleys used for transportation of tūpāpaku can constrain the close proximity sought within vigils over the tūpāpaku. Haupai has witnessed kuia instructing funerary professionals to remove such equipment for this reason.

### **Cremation: Past, Present and Future**

The practice of cremation is controversial within Te Ao Māori, revealed in the opposition and discomfort revealed in Haupai's experiences. There is some diversity amongst Māori perspectives upon cremation, with some hapū recalling ancestral cases of cremation, enacted for a variety of reasons. Haupai relayed a conversation with Tom Roa regarding cremation,

*...We have a tupuna who instructed her son- in- law to strew her ashes over the land, so that the mana would remain there. I thought that was fabulous in the moment he said that. I thought about another tupuna Tūwhakairiora, he had the same thing happen with him, his body was burnt. I thought to myself, [cremation] was not unknown amongst our people, but it was not [common]. [Cremation] did happen, but it was not a [regular] practice because it was still more about the ashes ka whakahokia ki te whenua [Translation: the ashes being returned to the land]*

In contemporary times, cremation is a common practice for Pākehā and has been an option for some Māori, but it can provoke distress and potential conflict within whānau. Given Haupai's encounters, she sought out other's perspectives of the implications of cremation upon tikanga and accompanying rituals, voiced through her question, “...what do you do when there is no tūpāpaku?” Amongst those Haupai canvassed, one kuia reported a single encounter with cremains in tangi, with ritual enactments mirroring those initiated with tūpāpaku. One kaumātua recalled an instance where,

*...the person that was doing the whaikōrero was walking backwards and forwards and in between, he would turn and say “Kāore he tūpāpaku, kāore he kāwhena kei reira” [translation:*



*there is no body and no coffin] and it slowly dawned on them; oh, it is just a little box, and what that meant.*

Another kaumātua stated his refusal to whaikōrero within tangi for cremains, explaining that it was “...not in him to do it”. As Haupai outlined some of the perspectives of cultural elders upon cremation, she noted issues with legislation pertaining to cremated remains. During a consultation forum held by the New Zealand Law Commission in relation to Burial and Cremation, Haupai was advised that cremains are not legally classified as bodily remains. Haupai stated that regardless of the perspectives held, cremated remains are indeed bodily remains. Haupai summarised her overall thoughts on the issue of cremation,

*...I had heard of some urupā where they will not allow ashes to be buried or brought back and deposited there, for some reason. For me, I have to accept that we have ancestral stories where [cremation] occurred but we also live in our day- to- day, where it is about Papatūānuku, and the earth. That is the norm, but there are always exceptions for whatever reason, to the norm.*

Haupai also acknowledged modern pressures on land resources could prompt changes,

*...Māori may have to turn to cremation simply because of the fact that with many urupā, there is no space there. Urupā are placed in a reserve and the land has been set aside specifically for that purpose. Otherwise, you will have to find another place, within a block of land that could be used as an urupā. In such conversations, there has been a sense that cremation might be the way to go. However, I could not and that is my position on the issue. I could never, ever accept [cremation]. I still have this perception of the need to have ‘earth to earth and dust to dust’, in my head.*

Haupai recalled a request received by a Māori Land Committee from a Pākehā member of the community, the widow of a Pākehā man who had a close relationship to the land wanting to scatter his ashes there. There was considerable discussion, with one committee member stating that the

request should be denied, as the scattering of ashes would convert the land into an urupā. This particular perspective swayed the committee, who denied the request. Haupai reflected further,

*...but in fact, [the land] was already an urupā. If we had thought about [the land's] history more carefully [it was an ancient battlefield], we would have realised this point. There is no difference really, the ashes are already there, and the bones are already there. We did not talk about that at the time. We got a shock and thought 'Oh it is going to become an urupā and will be treated as an urupā'. However, if we had thought about it more at the time, we would have realised that it had already been used as an urupā. Our tūpuna left those lands and never returned to live there.*

Haupai expressed her regret over the decision-making process and felt that another outcome could have resulted,

*... We felt for the widow and we respected the fact her husband had lived there on that land for many years, and the family were great guardians of the land. I thought about it afterwards and I think none of us thought deeply about why we had that attitude toward the request or why we said no. I guess some of the reason was there was a cemetery nearby the widow could have taken the ashes to. However, of course the widow wanted to return him back to the land he had grown up on. That is a Māori feeling, rather than go to the Pākehā cemetery; we want to return to our ūkaipō. I have thought about that situation and I have never felt good about the fact we refused her. I think to return him back to the land was the right thing to do, even if it was ashes, but that would have been all right.*

Many years later, Haupai enquired discretely about the widow's reaction and learned that the family had buried the cremains there in secret. Haupai's earlier comment clearly indicates her empathy for the Pākehā family and their want to acknowledge a geographical connection. She emphasised the value upon retaining connections to burial places of whānau

members, especially those located outside of tribal homelands, and recalled instances of whānau pilgrimages to locate such burial sites, bringing home photos of sites to share with other whānau members. Such acts of remembering can provide a tangible and visual connection to those whānau buried far from tribal homelands.

### **Final wishes**

I asked Haupai for her perspectives upon issues raised within bicultural bereavement conflict. I shared Coroner Wallace Bain's suggestion that preemptive discussions amongst whānau regarding final wishes may prevent bereavement conflict. Haupai shared some of the on-going discussions with her husband regarding their respective final wishes. Haupai noted the tension between married couples wanting to be buried together or returning to their own ūkaipō. From a cultural perspective, engaging in such conversations may be difficult; however, there was a need to consider such aspects,

*I think it is an issue because we have a law imposed upon us and we need to consider that, as Māori and we need to think about. Some preparations need to be made, but I do not know whether it should be talked about, because we do not like to talk about it. I am practical and might do something about it, like arranging my plot or other practical aspects I could do while I am still alive. These may assist your whānau, so they do not have to be worried because decisions have already been made. I think that should happen, because we are now so dispersed from our whānau land, otherwise there would be no question about it.*

### **Bicultural Bereavement Conflict Interventions**

Haupai and I spoke about issues that have emerged in severe cases of bicultural bereavement conflict, where the courts have deliberated over the deceased's cultural orientation with respect to their lifestyle and degree of engagement and/or identification as Māori. Haupai queried such deliberations and their outcomes, "So, how much of your culture makes up

*your identity? Does it all have to contribute? How do you measure that?"* She drew on her own whānau as an example, "...My brother had been away from home for 36 years. Although we had a Pākehā father and a Māori mother, we never stop thinking of ourselves as Māori, and being Māori". Although bicultural whānau may face complex bereavement decisions, these should ideally consider the bereaved collectively, rather than singular views or authority. For instance, the deceased's wishes are important, but should not be vested with ultimate authority and alternate options may be preferable. If the wishes of the deceased are supported by members of the whānau pani, a more robust argument is then presented. Similarly, there is need to support the pouaru [widow/widower] within their grief; but this does not necessarily extend to having ultimate authority. Haupai emphasises that collective decision-making processes by whānau were important, even when this could conflict with others. Haupai voiced her support for whānau, whose collective decisions result in the uplifting of tūpāpaku without amicable agreement from others,

*My opinion is in support of such actions, if a family is strong enough and united enough. United in that it is not just one person, but a group that decides that is what should happen. I am in support of that, knowing such practices are a practice of tikanga that have happened as far back in the past as I know.*

Haupai elaborated that when negotiations involve different Iwi, tikanga stipulates that discussions need to continue until an agreement is reached and/or concessions made. She imagined that if she was engaged with a situation of bicultural bereavement conflict, she might try to concede to important others such as the pouaru, if she felt it would support their grieving process. However, she emphasised that she would not hesitate to reject options, if she felt strongly about an alternative.

*Even with the wishes of [the deceased], it would not worry me to say, "No, I do not care what he has said" but likewise, I might not interfere if the pouaru has agreed with things. Because really, the pouaru is the most important person, because they have to go on*

*living. However, it goes back to what I said before, yes, there is tikanga but you try to resolve the tikanga as best as you can.*

I raised the suggestion put forward by the Law Commission regarding a hierarchy of the authority of individuals to assist with bereavement decision-making processes and resolving conflict. Haupai rejected the idea and emphasised the cultural importance of returning to tribal birthplace and homelands,

*...Personally, I want to go home. Although I also want to be with [my husband], I know he will not want to be buried with me. Home is where you go. The home I am talking about is the home where I grew up. Through life you move, you grow up and move from one place to another. You call it home all right, but it is not. Home is about your ūkaipō and your tūrangawaewae. That is where your whenua is buried and where you make your mark.*

Haupai's comment acknowledges the link to tribal homelands expressed through the ritualization of birth and death. She queried whether this was considered in court deliberations over severe cases of bicultural bereavement conflict. She explained that the burial of birth whenua marks that location as a cultural and spiritual 'home', to which that person will return following their death. There is a need to understanding such rituals and their meanings, particularly as Haupai described a return of this practice.

### **Mediating conflict alternatives**

I outlined to Haupai the suggestion made by Coroner Bain, that Coronial Services might be well placed to offer mediation within bereavement conflict and she offered her thoughts,

*...The suggestion would be ideal if there were people trained in mediating and importantly, have a good understanding of different cultures. They would need to be of a mind to come to a good solution whereby everybody is walking away satisfied as best as they possibly could be with the outcome. That would be ideal. There may*

*not be more cases like those others, but there could be and we should be prepared. [Coroner Bain's] suggestion sounds good and it is certainly better than not having anything in place.*

## **Significant Contributions**

Within tangihanga, the role of kuia, or leading female elder, encompasses a diverse and complex range of responsibilities as described. Haupai's narrative identifies some of the cultural values and practices that she considers to be integral within responses to death and grief. These also require an increasing awareness of cross-cultural and transnational realities, in both location and practice. Haupai's perspectives reveal some of the tensions between upholding traditional cultural practices within contemporary, and sometimes unfamiliar, worlds. As a respected practitioner, Haupai's extensive experience shows the ways forward with compassion, wisdom and consciousness of change.

## **Chapter 14: Nick Tūwhangai, Cultural Elder**

As emphasised within the preceding chapters, cultural elders assume pivotal roles within cultural rituals and processes, including that of tangihanga. The following chapter presents interviews with Nick Tūwhangai, who I describe as a cultural elder.

### **Expert Contributor: Nick Tūwhangai**

Nick is affiliated to Ngāti Maniapoto and Waikato Iwi and lives beside his paternal marae, where he has significant responsibilities. Nick has had considerable engagement with cultural understandings and responses to death and grief within Te Ao Māori. Nick has also engaged in processes surrounding death and grief that have required negotiation across Māori and Pākehā cultural worlds. His knowledge and experience has been recognised by media outlets, particularly Māori Television, who have sought his views on a range of topics, including the subject of death. Nick was a co-author within research that explored the grief experiences of Māori men in relation to Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (Edwards et al., 2009).

In the aforementioned research, Nick commented upon participation in tangihanga being facilitated by relationships with tribal homelands and people (Edwards et al., 2009). These shared connections and histories are suggested as a “...emotionally powerful support framework for grief expression and reconciliation (Edwards et al., 2009, p. 134). Within tangihanga, grief is communally expressed and shared which ultimately supports the attainment of *mauri tau*, which is described as “...a state of being at ease, being at peace, a calmness of spirit, body, and mind (Edwards et al., 2009, p. 134). Nick has worked within a number of programmes and initiatives that seek to support whānau and communities. Particularly salient within Nick’s endeavours is the aspiration to establish, develop and maintain connectedness between whānau, hapū and their tribal homelands.

I first encountered Nick and his wife Linda during a noho marae that I attended at Nick's paternal marae, Mokai Kāinga. This was part of the Tikanga Marae course facilitated by Hinekahukura Aranui-Barrett. During the course of the weekend, I listened to Nick and Hinekahukura discuss a range of topics, including the negotiation of bicultural bereavement. Nick articulated several key issues surrounding bereavement conflict drawn from his experiences. Given the nature of these conversations, Nick was someone that I very much wanted to interview for my research. However, I did not feel it appropriate to ask Nick during the noho, as we were engaged in another kaupapa at that time. I had fond memories of the noho, particularly as I performed my first karanga there, under the guidance of Hinekahukura, Nick and Linda. Subsequently, I asked Hinekahukura for guidance on an appropriate way to approach Nick, and she suggested writing him a letter and including details of my whakapapa.

I wrote to Nick introducing myself and outlining my whakapapa connections to Hinekahukura and (as I discovered during that noho marae) his wife Linda. Linda's mother Kelly was a close cousin to my grandmother Arona and Kelly was part of the roopu that presented a tono for Arona to be returned to her tribal homelands following her death. Within my letter to Nick, I outlined the kaupapa of my research, enclosed an information sheet and asked Nick if he would consider being interviewed for my research as a key informant. I hoped for a reply. Early on the morning on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March 2015, I received a phone call from Nick. Nick stated that he had some experience with bereavement conflict and situations with contested bodies. Nick expressed his interest in participating in the research, but stated that he would need to clarify some aspects before agreeing. What followed was a conversation where the research roles become somewhat reversed, I as the researcher became the interviewee. From the brief time I had spent in Nick's company, I had anticipated that this may occur and was somewhat prepared.

Nick sought clarifications upon my personal perspective on the topic and what I considered to be the purpose of the research. Nick emphasised that if the research was ultimately supportive of the current legislative approach



to bicultural bereavement conflict, he would respectfully decline my invitation. I knew instinctively that any claim of complete neutrality upon the topic would draw the conversation to a quick close. Rather, I needed to demonstrate integrity as a researcher, and be both honest and revealing in relation to my perspective and aspirations for the research.

I outlined to Nick some of the issues that had emerged in the research thus far and named those who had already contributed to the research. Nick noted his familiarity with some of those mentioned. I detailed the concerns raised within the Tangi Research Programme's submission in response to the Law Commission's review of Burial and Cremation legislation. In particular, I reiterated the concern that some of the options presented were culturally bound within a Pākehā world view. I described my perspective that there was a lack of understanding of Māori perspectives upon bicultural bereavement, particularly in relation to tonono. I emphasised my discomfort with the term 'body-snatching' as it minimised and/or ignored the passion, intent and long term implications arising within situations of contested bodies.

I also explained to Nick that alongside the academic process of the research, I hoped to better understand the decisions and outcomes that resulted from the tonono presented for the return of my grandmother to her tribal homeland following her death. I noted that Nick's late mother-in-law, Kelly was part of the roopu who presented the tonono and she was so upset that the tonono was rejected that she left immediately and did not attend the tangi. I spoke of my personal view that this decision had an impact upon the connection between subsequent generations and our tribal homelands. I emphasised the desire amongst some of my whānau to find ways to re-engage and 'return home'. As our conversation neared its end, Nick agreed to meet with me to discuss the research further.

### **Culture and Community: Affiliations and Roles**

As our discussions began, I reiterated to Nick that I sought his perspectives and experiences as a kaumātua. However, Nick expressed that he was uncomfortable within being assigned that specific title,

*Before we start, I will just tell you this, I am not a kaumātua and I have never professed to be one. [Some of those responsibilities] just fell on me after everyone died and there was only my wife and I left here. I mean I have become a bit older and I suppose [some] people [may] see it that way.*

Nick offered further clarification upon this point, as he explained his perspective that the title of kaumātua relates more to being appointed as a representative of others, rather than reflecting one's age,

*I have never believed that age is what makes you a kaumātua. I say that a kaumātua is one when your family says "We have got nobody; you have to be our kaumātua". I saw this case where the kaumātua of all these people was a young boy. This boy was the only one, who could speak Māori, and so everybody stepped back and let him be their kaumātua and they all supported him. That is what made me say it is not about your age, it is when your whānau come together and they have got no-one and they turn around and say "Ko koe te kaumātua o te whānau"[Translation: "You are the elder of the family" ].*

I asked Nick whether he would be more comfortable with an alternative title of 'cultural expert' and his response was swift and emphatic,

*No! No! I am not the expert of anything; I am just the same as everyone else. When you are talking about experts, I suppose you are talking about people like Tom Roa who have [university degrees] and all of that.*

Nick suggested that I took time to consider how best to describe his role and I perceived his discomfort with the aforementioned titles as a reflection of his humility. In line with Nick's definition of these titles, he has been appointed as a representative in ways similar to that of a kaumātua. Although Nick may not consider himself a cultural expert, it would appear that others perceive him in this way and have sought his perspectives accordingly. Nick holds cultural knowledge and skills similar to that of an elder and leader.

## **Cultural learning: Around the breakfast table**

To provide some context to his perspectives and experiences, Nick provided some details about his whakapapa and biographical background,

*I was born at a place called Karaka, by the Whātāpaka marae. My mother was of Ngāti Wairere, Ngāti Tamaoho and all of them. My dad was Ngāti Hikairo, Ngāti somebody else and everybody else.*

Nick commenced his schooling in Kāwhia prior to the whānau moving for work opportunities. In his earlier comment, he suggested that the title of ‘cultural expert’ was more fitting of those with academic qualifications. In contrast, Nick described his cultural learning as occurring at home under his father’s tutelage,

*... I am not trying to ride on my Dad’s back or fill his shoes but there are a lot of things that he talked to me about and we just talked. [My Dad] was man that got up early in the mornings and he would start talking, we would have a cup of tea and he would start talking. I had to grab the first piece of paper I could find, I have written stuff on ‘The Herald [newspaper] around the edges. Because you cannot say “Hang on until I have got a piece of paper”, you have got to start writing straight away.*

Nick’s comments depict a somewhat humble learning environment around the breakfast table with his father. However, what Nick does not emphasise directly is who his father was and the depth of knowledge that he held. Nick’s father was Hēnare Tūwhangai, one of Tainui’s most revered leaders (Tahana, 2009b). Hēnare Tūwhangai was known as an esteemed and skilled tohunga, and the loss of his expertise was lamented upon his death (Mead, 2003). Hēnare Tūwhangai was assigned key roles within Kīngitanga, including that of spokesman for King Korokī and the subsequent Queen Te Atairangi Kaahu (McLean, 2004). He travelled the world, performing the whaikawa blessing rituals for traditional art exhibitions, as well as New Zealand consulate openings in the U.S.A and Europe. Hēnare Tūwhangai was awarded a Queen’s Service Medal for Community Service in 1981 and an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Waikato in 1983. At his

graduation dinner at Tūrangawaewae Marae, he quietly mentioned that he could recite or chant over 800 traditional songs. Thus, it is conceivable that the knowledge that Hēnare Tūwhangai shared with his son over the breakfast table was of remarkable depth and breadth.

Nick eventually met and married Linda and the couple moved further afield for employment. Nick pursued a variety of career options before being offered a position with the Justice Department in Ōtorohonga and Te Kūiti. Through his role, Nick became aware of some of the issues facing whānau and he established support initiatives, including a kapa haka cultural group, a youth centre and drug and alcohol counselling programmes. Throughout this period, Nick returned regularly to Kāwhia to help his father at Mokai Kāinga Marae, including with the construction of a whare kai. When Nick initially left Kāwhia following his marriage, he was emphatic that he would never return to reside there. However, a series of serendipitous events would see the couple return to Kāwhia permanently. Although Nick had ‘officially’ retired, he continued with his work amongst the community. Nick established the Kāwhia Kai Festival, which gained international attention as an iconic indigenous event. Although this event celebrates traditional Māori food, it also seeks to provide opportunities for cultural connectedness and reconnection

Once the Kāwhia Kai Festival was well established, Nick left to focus upon other endeavours. Nick became the Project Co-ordinator of the restoration of the Kāwhia Methodist Memorial church, which was built by his wife’s grandfather, Pihohaua Hikuroa. At the completion of the project, Nick had envisaged being able to spend more time at home,

*I decided it was time I stayed home, because we are both starting to get on a bit. But, I have not managed to do that so far. People like you come along, others come along and so you spend your time doing that. So that is where we are today.*

As Nick’s comment suggests, his knowledge and experience is actively sought by others and he continues to gift his time willingly. Nick engages in a diverse range of roles, both at his marae and within the broader

community. Due to the relative isolation of Kāwhia, there had been occasions where the marae was unable to procure a religious minister to officiate during tangihanga. During the church restoration project, Nick discussed with the minister involved the order of services for tangihanga and unveiling rites. The information obtained provided Nick with an outline of services, which he could perform in the absence of a religious minister. Nick noted that this was not a role that he necessarily wanted, but arose out of the need for an alternative option.

Nick initially considered the role in relation to his marae, but he began to receive requests from others to facilitate burial rites including Pākehā and those whose spiritual beliefs are secular. Nick expressed the want to facilitate services that reflect the deceased and bereaved. Nick shared an experience that has informed his facilitation approach, where he attended a funeral for someone of a foreign culture. The entire funeral was performed in a foreign language and Nick was unable to understand the service and wondered why he had attended. Nick compared his experience to how others might feel in a similarly foreign situation, “*I wonder if Pākehā feel that same way at tangi?*” In light of this experience, Nick facilitates services bilingually to account for the needs of both Māori and Pākehā,

*...I realise and I try and do both [languages] because it is mostly Europeans that cannot understand [Te Reo], although there is some Māori that cannot understand it either. So, I just take a service in a way that is as much half and half [of English and Te Reo] as I can.*

Alongside Nick’s involvement with his community, he has an integral role at his paternal marae. Although Nick participated at Mokai Kāinga throughout his life, there was a particular point at which he was assigned significant responsibilities there,

*...What happened was that my Dad and his sisters, who were the ones who ran the marae, they were getting on and everything had sort of become stagnant. I thought that someone had to stick their neck out and say something, so I did just that. They had a meeting*

*and said “Yes, right oh Nick, from now on, kei a koe te korero” [translation: “You do the talking”].*

Nick outlined some of the contemporary challenges that face marae communities, which may have few whānau living nearby and others may only visit occasionally. Marae require active engagement and time investment in order to maintain its cultural, spiritual, physical and practical functions. The physical maintenance and upkeep of the marae alone may be difficult to manage by a small group of readily available hau kāinga,

*We are the only ones here; we are the ones doing the work. Whenever I have a meeting, the family might come and say “We need to do this and we need this”. [I reply to them] “When you are ready to come and do the work, or else keep quiet”. Well what do you do? There are always plenty of people who will tell you what to do, but no-one will come and do it. So, that is really my role, to try and keep that in line.*

In light of these issues, Nick described the establishment of a ‘Whānau Day’ at the marae which provides opportunities for whānau to maintain connections to the marae and each other and observes similar principles to the poukai of the Kīngitanga movement,

*We have what we call a ‘Whānau Day’ every year. It is based on the similar principles as a poukai, but is our mini poukai for the same kaupapa. It gives us the opportunity for the whānau to come together. After we have had a kai, we have a meeting like they do at a poukai. But we have had those for twenty years and no-one has brought up a take [issue] yet.*

Poukai was an innovation established for several reasons, including opportunities for tribal members to return to their marae. Alongside opportunities for cultural connectedness, there is also space to discuss matters relevant to the marae and hapū.

Nick noted that Mokai Kāinga is often called upon to host many different groups of visitors, who may not necessarily affiliate to the marae and hapū.

Nick described that Mokai Kāinga is being called upon increasingly for tangihanga by those who are not direct descendants of the marae,

*...We have a lot of other groups now wanting to bring their mate over here and have their tangi at Mokai and I do not know why that is. We have had quite a few this year that are not of our families. It is either that we have done something right or there is something going on, but I am not sure what it is.*

Nick has enquired with some of these groups regarding their wish to conduct tangi at Mokai Kāinga and some have cited significant maintenance issues at their home marae. Such comments indicate other marae are encountering some of the operational challenges described by Nick. He described the cultural and practical conditions attached to booking the marae,

*I just tell them right at the start that this is what it will cost and I expect the place to be left the way they found it. That has been working well and people are starting to understand how we work. The other thing I say on this marae is that I do not know what your tikanga is there, but here it is the tikanga of Mokai Kāinga and it is no different from anywhere else, it is just straightforward and simple.*

Given the limited workforce available to the marae, visitors must be self-catering but are hosted and supported by Nick and Linda during their stay,

*... I will go wash dishes, which we do not mind because it is something to do while you are there. [The marae] is like your home, you do not have visitors at your home and walk out and leave them there. We always go over [to the marae] as the tangata whenua to be with them. Then they will have a hakari and we will have the privilege of sitting at the top table [laughter]. That is the way they do it, they will invite us over to have tea with them. We go over [to the marae] all the time because anything can go wrong.*

For the most part, the hosting of visitors at Mokai Kāinga runs smoothly. However, Nick noted some issues that have arisen where the tikanga of Mokai Kāinga has prevailed over that of the visitors. Nick recalled one occasion where they readied the marae to host a group from a particular religious denomination. Following the church groups' arrival at the marae, they had re-arranged the marae to facilitate sleeping arrangements that segregated genders amongst the group. Nick spoke with the church group and stated that they had upset the kuia of the marae and disregarded the preparations made for their stay. Nick explained that upon marae, males and females are not separated but share the space of the wharenuī. The visitors explained that their arrangements reflected protocols adhered to within their church group. Nick responded with a reminder that their customs were their business; however their stay at the marae was conditional upon respect and observance of the tikanga of Mokai Kāinga.

### **Negotiations, Conflict and Resolution**

As Nick's narrative exemplifies, he is an actively engaged member of cultural and geographical communities. Unexpectedly, he has been drawn into roles that might be otherwise unfulfilled within his community. Nick presented exemplary cases that required delicate considerations and negotiations across individuals, whānau, hapū and cultural authorities, in the experience of bereavement conflict. He reflected on the respective tangihanga for his mother and father. Although Nick's whānau had settled at Kāwhia near his father's marae, Nick's mother had expressed the wish to return to her own marae in the event of her death. However, upon his mother's death, Nick was aware of his father's wish for his wife to remain in Kāwhia. Nick's mother's people laid a tono for their whanaunga to be returned to her marae. Nick responded to the tono by stating that she would remain in Kāwhia. Although Nick's mother's people accepted his response at this time, it remained a source of distress for them. The issue was raised many years later by Nick's maternal aunt, who expressed how heartbroken she was that her brother-in-law had not returned his wife to her tribal home. Nick explained to his aunt that it was not his father who had formally expressed



the wish for his wife to remain in Kāwhia; but Nick who had responded to the tono laid by his mother's people,

*“Aunty, the two uncles [laid the tono] and I just got up and told them [no]. They should have told me to sit down and shut up, but they did not. They just said ‘Oh well, ok’ and they went home. I was disappointed when they went home, because that was what [my mother] had always told me, that she wanted to go [home to be buried]”.*

As Nick's discussions depict, decisions related to burial places may have to consider competing claims presented by different bereaved individuals and groups connected to the deceased. Nick's comment suggests his expectation that his response to the tono was not determinative and that the negotiations should have continued. As Nick's maternal aunt expressed, burial decisions enforced by the living can have long term impacts upon those concerned.

Some of these issues would similarly emerge within the negotiations that accompanied the death of Nick's father, Hēnare Tūwhangai. Nick's father died suddenly whilst away on a trip and Nick made immediate travel arrangements to be with his father. Upon his departure, Nick left his wife with specific instructions that expressed awareness that a tono would be presented for his father, *“... Get the marae ready. It does not matter what anyone says, [my father] is coming back to Mokai Kāinga”*. He made the necessary arrangements to transport his father's tūpāpaku home and phoned his wife for confirmation. Linda advised him that Te Arikinui Te Atairangi Kaahu had requested that his tūpāpaku be brought to Tūrangawaewae Marae. Te Arikinui Te Atairangi Kaahu was the paramount Chief of Waikato-Tainui, the 6<sup>th</sup> heir in the line of Pōtatau Te Wherowhero, and the leader of the Kīngitanga Movement. Linda queried what Nick would do in light of this request and he confirmed that he would take his father's tūpāpaku to Tūrangawaewae Marae. Linda reminded Nick of his initial instructions, *“...but you said it does not matter what anyone says, it does not matter who rings, you bring him back home”*. Nick's reply

expressed his respect for the authority of Te Arikinui Te Atairangi Kaahu, “...she is not just anyone, and I cannot go against that”.

As requested by Te Arikinui Te Atairangi Kaahu, Nick’s father arrived at Tūrangawaewae and the tangi commenced. During the proceedings, Te Arikinui Te Atairangi Kaahu beckoned Nick over to her and they began to discuss final arrangements for the tangi, including the date of burial. Te Arikinui Te Atairangi Kaahu offered suggestions which took into account the magnitude of the tangi and numbers of those who would want an opportunity to pay their respects to Hēnare Tūwhangai. With the burial date agreed upon, Nick expressed his wish regarding the burial location to Te Ariki Te Atairangi Kaahu,

*... “Look I want to talk to you and I am not going to beat around the bush. I would like to take [my father] back to Kāwhia to bury him”. [Te Ariki Te Atairangi Kaahu] says “Hang on a minute, when so-and- so died they took him past Taupiri and took him back to his marae. So, I will tell you what Nick...” she says -and I think ‘Oh! Here goes’-, “...The funeral will be on Wednesday and at half past one you can take him to get buried at Mokai Kāinga”.*

Nick was surprised by Te Ariki Te Atairangi Kaahu’s response and acknowledged that it was under her grace that the request could be fulfilled. Nick explained how he would have responded if Te Ariki Te Atairangi Kaahu had insisted upon the burial of his father at Taupiri,

*I would have respected her words because we had always believed all through our life that he was not [just] our father, because he was the peoples’ man. He was the Queen’s spokesperson and the King before her. But when [the Queen] gave him back to us, I was so pleased to bring him home.*

Te Ariki Te Atairangi Kaahu had placed a condition upon acceptance of Nick’s request, that he would make an announcement on Tainui Radio regarding the arrangements. When Nick relayed the arrangements to members of his whānau, some of them highlighted the potential for conflict and enquired about whose authority had made these determinations. Nick

stated that the decisions were his own and members of his whānau emphasised their concerns. Following the radio announcement, Nick informed the elders upon the paepae of the arrangements, who queried Nick about whose authority had those arrangements been made. Nick remained discrete about his earlier discussion with Te Ariki Te Ataairangi Kaahu and reiterated his full responsibility for the decision made.

As foreseen by both members of Nick's whānau and elders upon the paepae, tensions began to arise amongst attendees at the tangi in relation to how the burial decisions had been arrived at. Nick described some of the comments of others in this regard, *"...that boy is the same as his father, never puts anything on the marae to discuss it. He just makes up his mind", Yes, that is me*". As this comment suggests, some believed that the arrangements needed to be discussed more broadly prior to being finalised. Although Nick was initially prepared to bear the brunt of the emerging tensions, he eventually became frustrated with the situation.

Nick began to prepare himself to make an announcement that would inform others of the authority which supported the decision made *"...If you all want an argument, that is the Queen over there, you go and argue with her"*. However, as Nick was about to do so Te Ariki Te Ataairangi Kaahu beckoned him over, *"...She [said to me] "Whatever you do, do not say anything but at half past one on Wednesday you just come, pick him up and take him home"*. Nick thanked Te Ariki Te Ataairangi Kaahu for her guidance and turned his attention to co-ordinating these processes with his whānau. The service finished slightly early and Nick directed his whānau to go and uplift the coffin from the whare mate [house of mourning]. However, one of the elders of Tūrangawaewae Marae intervened, *"Nick you leave him alone. It is not half past one yet, he is not yours yet... we are carrying him out of here, not you"*. Nick recalled how he felt about this,

*...You know I felt so happy to be told off and I really did feel happy to be told off. I had realised that I had overstepped the mark. You know how when some people get told off they [get defensive]. But, I was pleased that I got told because they were right and I was wrong. I was that excited to get him out that I never thought.*

At the stated time, the coffin was carried out into the hearse and custody of the tūpāpaku was formally assigned to Nick and Mokai Kāinga Marae. Immediately following Te Ariki Te Ataairangi Kaahu's permission regarding the burial, Nick had sent his younger nieces and nephews home to prepare the marae in his stead. Nick recognised that the task before his younger whānau members was beset with time pressures and without the guidance of their elders; he instructed them to do the best that they could in the circumstances. Nick described what he found when they returned to the marae with his father's tūpāpaku,

*...they had the marae all decorated with greenery they had the [gravesite] dug and the kai cooked. I saw then that my nieces and nephews were capable of doing everything. I just tried to help them and to keep them going.*

As Nick's comment notes, his whānau rose to the occasion with their efforts, which expressed their deep regard for their koroua. This point also highlights the transmission of culture across generations, which enabled the younger generation to step into the roles of their elders in their absence.

Nick's commentary upon the negotiations that occurred following the death of his mother and father respectively depict the complexity of bereavement decision-making. Deciding between competing claims and burial place options for the deceased was a difficult task and one which had lasting impacts upon members of the whānau. Within the tangi for his father, Nick was required to present his wish to return his father to his tribal homeland, which conflicted with the desire at Tūrangawaewae to acknowledge the status of the deceased with burial at an alternate and significant location. Although Nick was supported by a figure of considerable authority, this situation required diplomacy, delicacy, discretion and a degree of confidence from Nick to enable the outcome sought to occur. It is possible that Nick took full responsibility for the decision made, conscious of his status as part of the whānau pani.

The outcome sought by Nick was supported by the knowledge that the marae community at Mokai Kāinga would respond accordingly. Nick raised

some of the issues that can occur when there is uncertainty about where a tangi will be held. Although some uncertainty is anticipated, this can have significant impacts upon the practicalities associated with enacting tangihanga. Nick spoke of occasions where the whānau pani had agreed upon a particular marae to host the tangi, only for the decided location to change several times. Although weighing the various connections and their claims to the deceased can be difficult, once selected a marae will immediately immobilise the practical tasks and resources necessary to host tangi. If the decided location subsequently changes, the initially selected marae may have already invested considerable time and resources. With Nick's emphasis on the challenges already facing day- to- day operations of marae, wasted time and resources may come at a premium.

### **Rationalising Cremation within a Māori Process**

As Nick's children grew into adulthood, some of them decided to establish lives overseas. Nick and Linda were particularly worried about a daughter's decision to do so, as she had a medical condition. Although Nick and Linda supported their daughter's wish to live overseas, they were concerned about her wellbeing and other implications,

*...I thought if something happened to my daughter over [seas] and we could not afford to get her home, I would get my family over there to get her cremated and bring her ashes home. I would rather have the ashes, than nothing at all.*

Nick's concern inspired an idea which would support the primary concern of returning deceased whānau members for interment in the marae urupā. His idea sought to provide a means of repatriation that would otherwise be financially impossible. Nick's idea was to construct a large stone within their urupā for the purpose of holding cremated ashes. Nick anticipated resistance to his suggestion, as the practice of cremation is perceived by some within Te Ao Māori as controversial. Nick went to the elders of Mokai Kāinga to discuss the idea. The elders became very upset and reminded him that their ancestors had been emphatic that there would be no more cremations amongst their people. Nick recalled his response,

*I said to them, “Hang on, have a think about everything they told us. One of the things that they told us, that I think is very important, is while they were alive, they were the bosses. But they also said to us, once they are gone, Kei a koutou nga korero [translation: you will all have the say] , and now [those elders] have gone.*

Nick elaborated further on this point as he contrasted the world in which their ancestors lived to that of the contemporary world,

*I look at everything in perspective and the way that our ancestors lived and the way we live today are so vastly different. When our ancestors travelled, they walked. When our children travel, they hop on a plane [in the morning] and they are in England at night.*

Modern technologies have facilitated opportunities that were unavailable and probably unimaginable to previous generations. Responses to new opportunities in line with cultural beliefs and practice can only really be considered and addressed within the context in which they emerge. Nick offered the elders the key rationale under which he proposed the cremation rock,

*And I said [to the elders] that if [our whānau overseas] got into trouble, had an accident and died, could they afford to go and get them to bring them home or were they just going to leave them to be buried [overseas]?*

Nick campaigned his proposal for quite some time until it was eventually accepted and the rock was erected within the urupā. Soon thereafter, Nick received a request to utilise the cremation rock following the intended cremation of a whānaunga, who had died suddenly in Aotearoa, but some distance from the marae. Nick denied the request and asked for the tūpāpaku to be brought back to the marae and interred within the urupā. When Nick’s response to the request was queried he clarified the intended purpose of the cremation rock,

*I said to them, “It is only for an emergency and always remember that”. [My whānaunga replied], “Well, if that is the case, you will*

*never get anyone in [the cremation rock]”. And I said “You know, I hope that in my lifetime I never see anyone in [the cremation rock]. Then I will know that we never had an emergency. I did not build the rock to fill it; I built it in the case of an emergency”. There are only ten spaces in the [cremation rock] and it might be one hundred years without anyone in it and I think that is a good thing.*

Once the cremation rock was erected, it was decided that it could also be used to memorialise the names and details of whānau buried away from Mokai Kāinga. Although Nick emphasised the importance of whānau being returned to their ūkaipō, he acknowledged that this is not always possible. Where whānau members are buried elsewhere, the bereaved are invited to bring a small plaque upon which the details of the deceased and their burial location can be recorded,

*In the future, people from younger generations might say “Oh that is my great grandmother and she was buried [elsewhere] and we are going to look for her headstone”. I hope for them that the gravestone is there and that they will find it. The [cremation rock] will be more like a whakapapa, although there are ten spaces [for cremated ashes]; there is all the rest of the room to put as many plaques as will fit. That may bring the family to where their loved ones are buried, so the descendants can find their tupuna wherever they are [buried].*

Nick noted that the installation of plaques upon the rock has been incorporated into kawe mate rituals, which convey the spirit of the deceased to significant places. The secondary function of the rock provides a physical memorial for deceased whānau and affirms their connection to their ūkaipō and tribal homelands, in the event of interment elsewhere. Thus the rock also functions as a memorial archive, where genealogical and burial details can be recorded and accessible to future generations as Nick described, “So, the whole thing will be more like a whakapapa”. Nick emphasised that he did not wholeheartedly accept the use of cremation and expressed some concerns about this practise, querying the safeguards against cremated remains being cross-contaminated by others. Nick also noted concerns over

the division of cremated remains by family members for different forms of disposal. Despite these concerns, he explained that the memorial rock provide a way to return and/or memorialise deceased whānau members, in light of the realities and challenges presented by the modern world.

### **Tono: Acknowledging Tikanga and preserving relationships**

Threaded throughout Nick's discussions were experiences of tono processes that laid claim for whānau and hapū members and their return to tribal homelands for burial. Nick's descriptions of tono highlighted the intent to acknowledge practises of tikanga, alongside the preservation of relationships,

*I go in there to see what is the best that I can get for everyone, not just for me but for the situation that we have in front of us. You have a family who are grieving, I am not grieving but I am trying to uphold tikanga.*

The presentation of tono can convey the very real intent to lay claim to a tūpāpaku. However, Nick emphasised tono as a practise of tikanga which expresses honour and concern for the deceased and their genealogical relationships. Nick suggested that it is the expression of the aforementioned aspects that are paramount, rather than the outcome decided,

*I do not [present tono] with no knowledge about [the situation]. In some of those cases, [the deceased] might have been a person who was bloody useless, but they are still whānau and they are a still a person. I will then do the best I can without winning the case and then everybody is happy. I have had [the bereaved] paying their respects to me for going to ask [for the tūpāpaku] and putting the argument up. I have just done what I have always been told, "You must go and ask. You must go and try to get the body". Then at least they cannot say you did not care.*



Although Nick saw his role within the presentation of tono as upholding tikanga, he stressed the importance of preserving relationships through the process,

*I have gone to get a lot of bodies and I have always walked out still friends with everybody. You win some and you lose some. But you can get some people that go into those situations and they walk out as enemies and that is really sad.*

In those instances where a tono was eventually accepted, I asked Nick to describe what it was about his approach that supported a successful outcome. Nick highlighted the way in which the tono was delivered as a key factor,

*...I suppose that is because I have put the kaupapa down as clear as I can, I have told them who has sent me here to get him... They know I have come because Dad has said so, but I say "Aunty so- and- so has asked me to come and take him home". They say "Alright, we will be there in the morning".*

Nick's comment signals the importance of clearly communicating the rationale underlying the tono. Nick's approach also suggests the use of diplomacy, where tono are presented as a request rather as a demand by a strong authority figure like his father or similar tribal patriarchs. Nick extended on this point, as he described the conduct of others who attempt to negotiate solely through the use of authority and dismiss others' perspectives in the process. Nick noted that such an approach is likely to upset people and exacerbate conflict further.

Nick emphasised that throughout his engagement with tono negotiations, he endeavours to consider others and their respective points of view,

*...I go in and put myself in their situation and try and come out with a compromise that is good for both of us. I have had times when the old people have said "Nick, go and get that body". So, I go and say "I have come here because of this, this and this". Yet, they will say "We will be there in the morning with the body". So I go back to the*

*[old people] and say “Yes, they are bringing him tomorrow morning”. “Oh, ka pai” they say, and then get ready for him the next morning.*

Nick’s comment underlines a degree of flexibility within his approach and the want to consider alternatives that may facilitate a compromise that accounts for the ideals of all those involved. Nick stated that entering into negotiations with alternatives in mind was something that he learnt from his father,

*...that was an art I used to hear with my dad, he would say things but there was always a ‘Plan B’, do not say anything without a ‘Plan B’. It is like what I am saying when we ask for bodies, if we do not get it, kia tau te rangimarie [translation: Let it still be in peace]. Just because you did not get that one, it does not mean it is the end of the world. You also need to respect what others do.*

### **Tono and bicultural bereavement**

Nick’s previous commentary highlights some of the cultural values expressed through tonono and approaches that may support considerate and supportive negotiations. In elaboration of these points, Nick outlined an exemplar case of bicultural bereavement which illustrated the presentation and negotiation of tonono within the context of bicultural bereavement. A member of Nick’s extended whānau, who was married to a Pākehā man, died suddenly and he was instructed by the marae elders to present a tonono for her return to the marae. Upon his arrival, Nick formally presented the tonono to the elders there, who rejected his claim. Nick detailed the close genealogical relationships with the deceased, which surprised the elders who were unaware of the whakapapa. Given the new information at hand, the elders responded that the tonono presented by Nick was in fact right. Nick clarified his intent in presenting the tonono and his confidence in the support of his whānau, regardless of the outcome,

*...I said to them that I did not go to be ‘right’. I just went to uphold the teachings of my father. I did not necessarily want to have a tangi at Mokai Kāinga. I went to uphold the mana of my family. I am*

*prepared if they say “Yes, you can take her”, I do not go there and say these things and if they throw it on me I cannot do it. I am prepared because I know my family will come home to support me; they know why I do these things.*

The elders accepted Nick’s tono and informed the Pākehā widower of what had been agreed. Nick was somewhat surprised when the Pākehā widower arose and formally addressed him,

*I could see [the Pākehā widower] was virtually heartbroken. [The elders] must have told him that there was no way to stop me. So, I think he was at the stage of the last ditch attempt. You could see that [his emotion] was not just crocodile tears... because all his children dove up to grab their father [in support] and they were all crying.*

Although Nick felt considerable compassion towards the whānau pani, he began to explain to the Pākehā widower that he would be returning the tūpāpaku to Mokai Kāinga, “...I am sorry, but this is what is going to happen”. The Pākehā widower implored Nick to consider their request to leave the tūpāpaku there, explaining that it was the wish of his now deceased wife. Nick was swayed by the Pākehā widower’s response,

*[The Pākehā widower] says to me, “Nick would you...” and because he spoke like that, to me that was honour. [The Pākehā widower] had shown honour to me by asking, not trying to tell me [what would happen] like the others did and so what do you do? You cannot just say, “I am sorry for you, but to hell with you”.*

Given Nick’s compassion for the whānau pani, their expression of honour for him and his approach to tono, Nick began to reconsider the tono. After some quick and careful consideration, Nick offered a compromise to the Pākehā widower, “...You carry out your wife’s wishes. All I want is for you to kawe the mate back to the marae. Then we can mihi [the deceased] properly at the marae”. I asked Nick further about his willingness to consider alternative options and the compromise that he sought, “...It was about honouring the marae, bringing her [spirit] home here but taking [her tūpāpaku] away. [The compromise] was us both getting what I

*thought should be right*". Nick explained that the initial tono presented was an expression of care and honour for his deceased whanaunga. Nick's subsequent negotiations upheld not only the mana of his whānau, but also the mana of the Pākehā widower,

*[I was] upholding the mana of my whānau, but also upholding [the Pākehā widower's mana] too, to keep him and not to pull him down. I did not go to pull someone down; I went to express my view. I would have brought her [to Mokai Kāinga] if I'd had to, but hoping at the same time that they would not agree. That family still thank me for what I did and they have come to realise what [the tono] was about. I have said to them that I was sorry and that I was not trying to exert authority, but [presenting the tono] was just my upbringing and respect for mana. If we had not [presented the tono] that family could have turned around and said "Where in the bloody hell are those Tūwhangais"? They never came!*

Nick's approach as described supported the preservation of relationships between the whānau pani and the deceased's tribal home and peoples. In the aforementioned exemplar, Nick was able to negotiate a compromise that accounted for the needs and on-going relationships amongst a bereaved community. Yet as high profile cases of bicultural bereavement conflict indicate, such positive outcomes are not always possible. Nick outlined a range of issues and aspects that may impact upon bicultural bereavement conflict, alongside potential resolution pathways.

### **Negotiating Culture: Within Life**

Nick suggested that within intimate relationships between Māori and Pākehā, understanding each other's cultural world is an important consideration. Through the development of cultural understandings, individuals may have the opportunity to understand future implications and negotiate agreements within their lifetime. Nick emphasised education and development of cultural awareness as a key aspect that could prevent bicultural bereavement conflict. Nick acknowledged that educating people around these issues could be particularly difficult. However, engaging in

such processes during life, may mediate the potential of conflict eventuating subsequent to the death of a partner. The expression of compassion for others is also a significant aspect.

## **Understanding Culture: Within Worlds**

One of the difficulties in sharing understandings across cultural worlds is that it requires some degree of understanding held by individuals in respect to their own culture. Nick shared an observation that tikanga is often not taught within whānau,

*... That is the thing, a lot [of whānau] do not teach their families that this is what you should do or this is the tikanga about anything, any sort of tikanga. They should do some [teaching about tikanga]. It is a sad thing that is happening today.*

Nick pointed to some of the significant and successive changes that have occurred within Te Ao Māori. Although the Māori cultural ‘renaissance’ has placed considerable emphasis upon Te Reo Māori, Nick stated that there has not been sufficient focus upon the teaching of tikanga,

*[Māori] have gone through a lot of changes, particularly when you look at the language and everything else. I have been talking to [Māori educators] and saying to them, “You are wasting your time teaching the language, teach the tikanga”. There is a lot of tikanga that needs to be taught, how can we get over that? How do we find a resolution to that? How can we teach it? Are we too late to teach it?*

Nick suggested that such issues can have bearing upon the way that whānau understand and respond to situations in ways that uphold tikanga. I asked Nick to describe how he would guide whānau who were engaged in a situation of bicultural bereavement conflict,

*I would explain to them the tikanga, like I have been talking to you about, and how my father explained it to me. I take what I can out of [tikanga] and I will think about it and I might say “I can agree*

*with that". But if I do not agree with something, I will say "No, this is how I am going to do it".*

Nick's comment reveals his ability to consider and employ tikanga depending upon the situation and issues at hand. However, Nick's confidence in this regard is supported by a comprehensive wealth of knowledge and experience that lends him the ability to do so.

Nick and I briefly discussed some of the high profile cases of bicultural bereavement conflict. Nick commented that although such cases are relatively rare, the degree of conflict can be quite severe and require delicate and considered negotiations. Nick supported the view that clear communication processes that support understanding are key within mediating conflict,

*I know what is going on, and it might not happen often but when it does happen, it is really nasty. If we can avoid that, but I really do not know how you do that. For me, it is about talking about it. I think a lot of the problem is that people do not explain things as clearly as they should do.*

Nick elaborated further on this point as he reflected back on some of his experiences with negotiating bereavement conflict. Nick suggested that the bereavement conflict may become unresolved or exacerbated through inadequate communication processes,

*I have been in those situations and I have been very lucky to be able to come and talk about [the issues] and have it sorted out. I believe that is where the problem is.*

Nick identified some of the key aspects of tikanga that may enter into bereavement negotiations and suggested how these might best be communicated to facilitate understandings. As underlined within the experiences previously shared by Nick, tikanga asserts the importance of ensuring that deceased whānau are brought back to their ūkaipō and tribal homelands. The presentation of tono conveys this aspect, alongside concepts of mana, respect, honour and acknowledgement of connections. I

asked Nick to imagine himself engaged in a situation where the widow/er expressed the wish to bury the deceased in a location other than their tribal homelands. Nick suggested that he would argue strongly for the return of the deceased to their ūkaipō. If negotiations reached an impasse, Nick might concede to the widow/er's expressed wish. However, Nick would attach a condition to encourage awareness of the long term implications that may arise,

*There is a need to explain what might happen later, "You can take [the deceased] and bury them, but if you ever re-marry, we will come and exhume them and take them home again". What will you have gained from that? ...if you could talk about it sensibly and make [the widow/er] realise that the [deceased] will be buried a long way from home and if they get married again, we will return to take [the deceased] home.*

As Nick's comment suggests, the presentation of *tono* expresses the cultural responsibility held by the whānau to honour the deceased and return them to be cared for by living and ancestral communities within their ūkaipō. In the event that a widow/er asserts the want to bury the deceased elsewhere, they are assigned the responsibility previously described for their lifetime. This would also prevent the widow/er from remarrying, as it would compromise their assigned responsibility. If such responsibility was not maintained, the whānau would feel compelled to exhume the deceased to be returned to their ūkaipō where they would be 'looked after' by whānau and hapū. Nick felt that if these issues could be explained to a widow/er, they might have a better understanding of decisions and their implications within bereavement and beyond,

*... That is the big thing about this [topic]; you can talk about ūkaipō but what about later on? What is there? If the widow is young, 9 times out 10 they are going to find another partner, who could be of a different culture altogether. Now is that husband going to let the widow go back and be buried with their first husband? So where will the widow go? Why did you take someone away to a strange land and bury them there? I think if we could overcome that, we*

*would not have a lot of these [cases of bicultural bereavement conflict]. We need to discuss [these issues] instead of being hell-bent on not giving in or using the law to its full force.*

From Nick's perspective, if a widow/er conceded to the return of the deceased to their ūkaipō, this would affirm relationships including the widow/er's place within the whānau,

*...Because [the widow/widower] brought the [deceased] back here, they would always be welcome to come and stay and be by their [deceased husband/wife]. After the huritau [anniversary of death], if the [widow/widower] ever wants to marry again [they] are free to go and get married. That does not mean if you get re-married you are not free to come back. It would never be like that, they will still be part of the whānau.*

Nick acknowledged that the role of a widow/er is one that needs to be respected, regardless of any interpersonal or bereavement related conflict. The role of a widow/er is further emphasised where the union has produced children who become part of the whānau, hapū and Iwi. To ignore the place of a parent within the broader whānau denies their contribution to whakapapa and contravenes the immense value placed upon genealogical relationships. Nick was emphatic that whakapapa remains unchanged by either death or divorce, *"She would still be the mother of our mokopuna. Because I am not going to have my children have no mother, as they would have no whakapapa"*. Nick expressed his deep regard and respect for the role of women.

Nick is a strong advocate for the cultural imperative of returning deceased loved ones to their ūkaipō. However, Nick's approach to bereavement negotiations expresses the want to consider others and their needs. Accompanying such considerations is a degree of flexibility that supports the development of compromises and concessions. Nick highlighted flexibility as a supportive factor within negotiating bereavement conflict,

*...If everybody would think the same way as me, we would not have a problem. It is just that there are people that are set in their ways*



*and they are not going to budge. There is no way you can make them budge so you are going to have problem.*

Nick reiterated the perspective that conflict can arise where clear and comprehensive discussions and negotiations have not taken place. Alternatively, conflict can also arise where individuals remain unwavering in respect to their own preferred outcome. Nick noted that some individuals may turn to the authority of the law as a means of supporting their agenda.

### **Cultural LORE and the LAW**

Nick was emphatic that legal intervention is not an effective or appropriate pathway to address bicultural bereavement conflict.

*... It is sad when the law has to come in then and overrule tikanga. I think that is my biggest concern is about law, trampling tikanga, saying 'No, this is what the law says'... I do not believe that the courts are the right place for [bicultural bereavement conflict]. Because, the courts will look at law, and ignore the cultural lore. I do not know how you can marry that up. I think that the only way to do that is have a panel of people that they can call on to look at these things.*

I asked for Nick for his perspective upon the suggestion put forth by Coroner Wallace Bain regarding an extension of jurisdiction to mediate bereavement conflict. Nick noted that due to his personal experiences with Coroner Bain, he would be agreeable to Coroner Bain as an individual, mediating such cases. However, Nick qualified this point, noting that Coroner Bain is one individual amongst many other coroners who might mediate bereavement conflict. Nick's comment signals the potential for variance amongst individual coroners and their approach and cultural understandings, through which issues could arise. Furthermore, Nick emphasised that Coronial Services are a government department and his concerns of tikanga being "...trampled" over in favour of the law, may still occur.

Nick and I discussed some of the proposed changes put forth by the Law Commission review upon burial and cremation in New Zealand. Nick

suggested that he would only be agreeable to legislative amendment if it incorporated authority for Māori over their own bereavement processes,

*... If they want to write up a new law, as long as it spells out in that law in the event of death of [a Māori], then this is what will happen and you will respect that. However, you are not going to get that, you will never get that.*

Given Nick's perspective that such legal authority is unlikely to be vested with Māori, he revisited his earlier suggestion of a panel for mediating bicultural bereavement conflict,

*I see no other way, apart from having a group that may go in to try and mediate, perhaps along similar lines to how I handle such situations. This is trying to come out with a win- win situation, with all parties shaking hands and being able to have a cup of tea again next year, and later on; so preserving the relationships.*

Nick highlighted that such an approach would require all parties to be willing to listen, understand the views of others and consider compromises accordingly. Nick was adamant that informal mediation processes are preferable to legal intervention, particularly as the latter is culturally biased,

*...that is how I would always like to see things done and keep the law out of it. I do not see a place for the law in this. We know that the law will win in the end and if it means trampling over tikanga then they are going to do that. I would rather keep the law out of it, because that way we both preserve our mana, and our tikanga. Because the law is always going to be administered by Europeans and that is going to override everything else. I do believe that the law is not the place to settle these things. I really believe that because we may then have disputes that go on forever and a day.*

Nick suggested that in times past, there had been little legal intervention within tangi processes, yet with the advent of Māori and Pākehā relationships this has become a significant issue. As Nick noted “...it is the law that has problems with the lore not Māori”. Nick expressed his concern

that the issues that have arisen within bicultural bereavement need to be addressed, “*We need to do something about it, and we need to change but how we do it? I really do not know*”. Nick pointed to preventative measures for bicultural bereavement conflict, which included raising awareness of culture and pre-emptive discussions within Māori and Pākehā bicultural whānau,

*...if we could do something to satisfy everybody and satisfy the lawmakers. Māori have these views and if those are made widely known, then people who want to get into [Māori and Pākehā bicultural] relationships really need to start to think about that. I am not saying we do not want [Māori and Pākehā] to marry, but they need to be aware of what they could possibly be getting themselves into. I suppose those are also issues for [people from different] religions to also consider.*

Nick’s discussions contribute several suggestions for increasing understandings of negotiating conflict and developing resolutions within bicultural bereavement. However, Nick was careful to emphasise that he did not know the solution to these issues. Although Nick spoke positively about my research endeavour, he made an important observation regarding the limited ability of the research to develop solutions,

*...You can talk all day to individuals and they will always have a view. But, when all those individuals get together to discuss the issues amongst themselves and express their views to each other, then that may change some of the thinking of those individuals. If you could do that and come out with some suggestions or a set of rules from the collective, then we might start to get something.*

As Nick astutely signals, the research has presented the views, perspectives and experiences of individuals. However, Nick suggested that collaborative discussions between those who participated in the research and others may hold considerable potential,

*... I would be very interested to see what the outcome [of the research is], but I would really like to participate in a group*

*discussion with others. If those that you have interviewed could all get together and have a group discussion, some of us may change our minds about what we have said. I would be quite happy to come along to something like that, express my views and listen to other views. I might think to myself “I have been doing things wrong all the way along”. We might come out of such a discussion with everybody agreeing and saying “Here is an answer”. I do not have the answers, but with a group of people, we could talk that out and may be come up with a solution.*

## **Significant Contributions**

Nick’s discussions highlight some of the contemporary challenges facing marae communities and development of measures to sustain the cultural, spiritual and practical functions of marae. Critical within this narrative is the emphasis upon the relational function of marae, which becomes a nucleus for connections across people, places, spaces and time. Nick’s discussions explain concepts of tikanga and some of the tensions within their interpretation in contemporary contexts and realities. Nick presents examples which suggest innovative pathways in which tikanga can be responsive and ultimately affirm and maintain connections between people, places and spaces. Nick’s approach embodies a want to consider the perspectives of others, particularly the grieving whānau pani. Nick’s approach allows us to imagine possible bereavement decision- making processes that consider tikanga, the perspectives of negotiating parties and the development of compromises. One of the critical insights offered by Nick highlights the limitations of the research and methodology employed to develop a definitive solution to bicultural bereavement conflict. As Nick rightly noted, the research sought and documented individual perspectives, understandings and insights. However, he suggested that within collective and collaborative discussions a potential solution to bicultural bereavement conflict is more likely to be found.

## Chapter 15: Discussion

The key contributions made by each case study have been identified and described in the preceding sections. Each case is a unique narrative and presents different patterns and perspectives on mourning, conflict negotiation and resolution. The whānau cases are deeply detailed and transport the reader into the intimate preparations by whānau to appropriately farewell one of their own, and to honour a life remembered. Throughout the bereavement experience, we see the important role of culture as the bereaved reach for the comfort of the familiar for assurance during a time of upheaval and rupture. It is through culture that we have developed expert roles like funeral directors and coroners, and functional spaces like marae and urupā. All are culturally determined. They are institutions and patterns made for us by preceding generations, as we will do the same for those to come.

In bicultural whānau living in a world of choices, culture provides many possibilities. The obvious sources of culture for bicultural whānau are Māori and Pākehā. But there are also blends of both, and the options afforded by an increasingly technological world. As some of the case studies describe, cell phones, 'Skype', 'Facebook' have almost super-ceded the traditional newspaper death notice and speed of death communications. Customised funeral sheets with photographs of the deceased alongside the order of service and songs to be sung are lovingly designed to be significant keepsakes. Funeral homes are mostly a stop on the way to somewhere else like a family home, church or marae. Cremation presents a different way to be interred with a loved one already past. It can also delay the return of the deceased to the urupā when affected by time, constraints or geographic distance.

What we do together and to each other and the value and meaning we derive from such relationships is what forms the fabric of culture, forever in a state of responsiveness and change. Because of this, it is difficult to identify the definitive pathways bicultural whānau use to navigate through bereavement and grief. It is death itself which anchors us to what needs to be done. Here,

I return to the pragmatics of bereavement. A death occurs. It causes a disturbance with and between people including the deceased. A related community gathers to support the bereaved, and to mourn, memorialise and assist the spirit on its way. A body is disposed of. The living are returned to daily life. These are the realities and tasks to be addressed, and, along the way should emerge a sense of satisfaction that the right things have been done. This is where complications can arise. What one person or group might consider right and meaningful may mean something else to another, giving rise to perplexing moments, offence or conflict. These concerns are where I now turn my attention. In so doing, I leave behind a deeper discussion of the aspects of interest inherent in the case studies to focus my analysis on conflict, processes of negotiation and pathways to resolution, which is the significant purpose of my research. The case studies stand as narratives in their own right and offer much to be examined, and will become the substance of journal publications and conference papers which I have already begun to write and present (see Appendix K).

In this chapter, I discuss domains of conflict, processes of negotiation and pathways to resolution within bicultural bereavement and present a conceptual framework to ease understanding and to make patterns clear. The framework presents a *pou tokomanawa* which references the centre ridge pole of a *whareniui*. It symbolizes strength and direction, something to lean on and draw strength from, an anchor in times of turmoil providing a touchstone for clarity. The principles of the Treaty of Waitangi are woven into this *pou tokomanawa* as guides for identifying, understanding and potentially resolving sources of conflict thereby restoring balance and harmonious relationships. The framework is particularly unique in that it is one that has emerged from within New Zealand's own bicultural society. I have brought together Māori and Pākehā perspectives in ways that reflect the relational ideals of equality, respect and collaboration for mutually beneficial outcomes. With little or no research previously conducted upon the topic of interest, the current study offers a significant contribution towards a dialogical space that will be, and needs to be, on-going. The chapter concludes with a discussion of areas for future research.

## **Contributors to Conflict**

As a critical line of enquiry, the research sought to understand how conflict emerges within bicultural bereavement. The contributing case studies emphasised the fundamental point that people, relationships and cultural worlds are complex, dynamic and diverse. Within the landscape of grief, many emotions may arise, including sadness, relief, regret, frustration, anger, confusion, uncertainty, anxiety and sometimes shock. Although such emotional states are understandable and perhaps anticipated, they have considerable bearing on what happens next, and how that happens.

Across the case studies were many forms and expressions of conflict, which can be located within particular domains. Exploring these assist to understand the nature of the conflict at hand. Such domains of conflict do not form discrete categories and sometimes, conflict is stretched across multiple domains. Within the current research I identified five primary domains of conflict: a) intrapersonal conflict; b) interpersonal conflict; c) intragroup conflict; d) intergroup conflict and e) authority conflict. I elaborate these domains below.

### **Intrapersonal conflict**

Sometimes conflict arises and spills over into relationships amongst the bereaved, but at other times, is contained in the hearts and minds of individuals. There are differences between a person in conflict, where issues are felt internally, and people in conflict, where issues are expressed with others. Although intrapersonal conflict can result from engagement with others, it manifests within an individual's experience and may not be readily apparent to others (Tillett & French, 2005). Given that I asked contributors of self-narrative their experiences, it should come as no surprise that most of the conflict experienced by them was located within the intrapersonal domain. They spoke of how conflict gave rise to feelings of distress, anger, confusion and sometimes, exclusion. For a variety of reasons, these feelings were not expressed directly to others, but certainly had negative impacts on their bereavement experience, and sometimes relationships with others. As Graeme's case illustrated, grief and moving through the extraordinary

experience that bereavement is sometimes compromised the ability of individuals to comprehend information and remember important details. Grief also affected the way that individuals engaged and communicated with others, including their ability to empathise, understand and co-operate. Without exception, the expert contributors affirmed that grief and its impacts can exacerbate or contribute towards conflict across all domains.

### **Interpersonal conflict**

Interpersonal conflict concerns that which is located between two or more individuals (Lewicki, Saunders, & Barry, 2015). Although much of the conflict described by whānau contributors was felt intrapersonally, it often stemmed from and was related to engagement with others. Teah provided an example of this through her experience of being asked not to enter into the tribal burial ground due to being pregnant. Although Teah respected the protective nature of the request, it was a conflict that she dealt with personally and negotiated on her own. Although it invoked feelings of exclusion, the conflict was hers internally. The whānau case studies illustrated the complex dynamics within relationships, which can include multiple marriages/partnerships, divorce/breakups, 'blended'/'unblended' families, adoption, step-children/step parents, and estrangement. For some, pre-existing dynamics in relationships impacted their engagement with bereavement and had a particular bearing on the way that individuals related, considered or even trusted others. The expert contributors understood and anticipated the emergence of such issues. Those contributors in cultural and professional roles were not strangers to conflict and were able to described approaches and processes to prevent and/or mediate interpersonal conflict.

### **Intragroup conflict**

Intragroup conflict is located amongst a group of people who want or are obligated to have some form of an on-going relationship and of necessity are required to co-operate with each other (Tillett & French, 2006). In this domain, conflict affects the group's ability to make decisions, work constructively, resolve differences and achieve goals effectively (Lewicki,



Saunders & Barry, 2015). In a bereaved community, there is usually some degree of pre-existing relationships held amongst the bereaved. Although the bereaved may have different views on what these relationships mean, there is some duty to co-operate with others to progress mourning and death rituals. Co-operation includes the designation of roles amongst the bereaved, agreeing on what is considered to be proper treatment of the deceased, how and where the deceased is to be mourned and by whom, the method of disposal and the like. In the case studies, where bereavement decisions, negotiations and enactments failed to acknowledge or account for the various needs, wants and ideals of the bereaved community, conflict often emerged. This was particularly so when negotiations were individually focused, and excluded or inhibited consideration of the individual and/or cultural needs of others. Intragroup conflict can manifest in a variety of ways, including arguments, refusal to engage with others, withdrawal from processes, threats of action or the use of authority to intervene in matters. For the most part, these types of conflicts did not emerge directly in the research, but must be acknowledged as some of the more extreme outcomes that can result.

### **Intergroup conflict**

Intergroup conflict is located between two or more groups and may be difficult to distinguish between that of intragroup conflict (Tillett & French, 2006). When conflict is located in an intergroup domain, it is particularly intricate and complex to resolve (Tillett & French, 2006). Within bicultural whānau, different cultural worlds are engaged and negotiated within life and through the processes that accompany the death of loved one. These intercultural relationships do not occur within a vacuum but are located within particular socio-cultural and political contexts. These points similarly emerged in Harré's (1966) seminal study of Māori and Pākehā bicultural whānau reviewed in *Chapter 1: Introduction*. Threaded throughout the case studies in the current research, were manifestations of colonisation, assimilation and marginalisation enacted against Māori. Prejudicial attitudes held by Pākehā towards Māori were evident in the adverse reactions some extended kin had to bicultural intimate relations.

For those contributors who identified as being Māori, experiences of injustice and grievances could lead to distrust of the Pākehā world, including legislative structures prevailing in New Zealand.

Within bicultural kinship groups, members may have opportunities to engage with, participate in and develop understandings of 'other' cultural worlds. In Harré's (1966) study of bicultural whānau, limited engagement with or adjustment to a partner's cultural world could have negative impacts upon intercultural relationships. What was most apparent within the case studies is that the negotiation of different cultural worlds through bereavement begins within lives shared prior to death. Respect for differences, acknowledgement of commonalities, being open-minded, accommodating and adapting to 'other' ways have emerged as supportive and positive approaches to bicultural relationships, within this research and other related works (c.f Harré, 1966; Archie, 2005). However, negative prejudicial views or assumptions of cultural superiority held by members of one cultural world, could inhibit their ability or want to engage with other cultural groups. These were particular contributors to conflict, that within bicultural relationships could emerge across many domains of conflict.

Where bereaved individuals had not actively engaged with other cultural worlds, participating in unfamiliar mourning processes and rituals was often disorientating and confusing, and brought feelings of exclusion for some. This particularly the case for Graeme, where tangi rituals and language were largely unfamiliar and he experienced feelings of exclusion. Such experiences of uncertainty can heighten levels of anxiety and stress arousal, lessening the ability to process complex information and consider others (Gudykunst, 2004). Lack of understanding, acknowledgement and/or respect for different cultural responses to death was a significant contributor towards conflict. Harré (1966) noted that where one partner in a bicultural relationship expected the other to relinquish their cultural orientations, marriage dissolution could often result.

As illustrated across the findings chapters, the emergence of cultural conflict within bereavement can constrain mourning processes, complicate grief experiences and ultimately impact negatively on relationships amongst the

living. With apparent differences across Māori and Pākehā death modes; there is considerable potential for conflict to emerge. Although several distinctions can be made across the death modes of these cultural worlds, decisions related to burial locations was a significant and common site of conflict. As the cultural experts affirmed, the burial of tribal members within their tribal homelands is a cultural and spiritual imperative and responsibility (c.f Sinclair, 1990; Nikora et al., 2013; Edwards et al., 2009). As described in *Chapter 1: Introduction*, these beliefs carry cultural, relational and spiritual functions that ultimately seek to secure continuity of relationships amongst living and ancestral communities. Such strongly held cultural beliefs can conflict with individual preferences for burial locations that afford ease of access, for example, in public cemeteries close to where the bereaved reside. Several of the contributors emphasised the need for increased awareness of this particular issue and the long term implications that may result. Where burial of the deceased takes place outside of tribal homelands, those who sought that option are assumed to also take on the responsibilities and duty of care for the deceased, for the remainder of their lifetime. Should the tribal community concerned perceive that the responsibility has been compromised in any way, including through re-marriage or re-location, they may seek to exhume and return the deceased to their tribal homeland. These issues were exemplified in Charles's case, where his wife's whānau expressed an enduring desire for their tribal member to be exhumed and returned for burial in her tribal urupā. In pursuing his life, Charles was considering moving to another location, but the idea of leaving Anahera 'alone' was a significant source of distress for him.

Within bicultural bereavement, intergroup conflict and/or distress can also emerge in relation to the option to cremate versus that of burial. Although the practice of cremation is common amongst Pākehā, there continue to be Māori who hold reservations or objections to the practice. Some cultural experts noted exemplars of ancestors who had been cremated in specific circumstances thereby creating a precedent and justification for cremation. They resolved the challenge of finding a balance between preserving traditional ways and responding to contemporary realities. Through deep

knowledge of culture and the intent and function of practises, cultural experts can develop innovative pathways through which to translate traditional ways in a modern world.

### **Authority conflict**

Issues of power and authority, particularly when these are not distributed equally across individuals and groups, are an important factor within conflict and its resolution (Tillett & French, 2006). For some of the contributors, imbalances of power and/or authority contributed to experiences of conflict and distress. Much of the literature surrounding conflict resolution often assumes a degree of equivalence in the power relationships between parties (Tillett & French, 2006). As some of the contributors experiences illustrate, this is not always the case. The vesting of authority within particular roles, institutions and regulatory frameworks may inadvertently exclude the participation of certain individuals and groups. This was certainly the case for Huia (Whānau contributor) with respect to her stepmother, Haupai Puke's (Kuia) descriptions of enacting tangi within a foreign country and some of the cases outlined by Coroner Bain, where regulatory frameworks and the authority assigned to an executor impeded the enactment of mourning practices sought by them, shifting the focus of their bereavement away from the deceased and on to the conflict experienced.

Within the New Zealand context, there are legislative 'grey' areas that complicate and sometimes even exacerbate bicultural bereavement conflict. Coroner Bain, Beth Richards (Funeral Director) and Huia (Whānau contributor) all identified issues surrounding the legal authority assigned to executors, which can support the interests of an individual, rather than the bereaved collectively. Determinative processes, such as those put before the courts, may be necessary within some situations of conflict. However, these processes present a less than ideal means of resolving conflict. Although court systems are perceived by some as negating power imbalances through ensuring all are equal before the law, in practise this is not always the case (Tillett & French, 2006). As several of the contributors noted here, the New Zealand legislative and judicial system is predominately founded upon

British colonial and Pākehā concepts, values and processes. Where approaches to conflict resolution, including those of the courts, are embedded within a particular cultural worldview, their ability to understand and adequately address conflict between cultural groups is often limited (Brigg & Bleiker, 2011). Furthermore, where parties in conflict have or want some form of an on-going relationship, this is unlikely to be nurtured through the litigation process (Tillett & French, 2006). It is also highly likely that conflict that does end up in court has at its foundation matters of concern that sit outside of the bereavement process, for example, contests over the deceased's estate.

The explicit intent of this research was the pursuit of insights and understandings that could ideally prevent bicultural bereavement conflict from occurring, or escalating. In this respect, one of the most significant contributions of this research is the identification of negotiation approaches and strategies that can mediate conflict and develop pathways to its resolution. Some of these strategies have already been touched on in the preceding sections above, but I now turn my attention in a more focused way to consider these matters.

## **Negotiating Conflict and Compromise**

As previously outlined in *Chapter 1: Introduction*, I have drawn significantly on the principles from Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi and on the more general principles of conflict resolution within the international literature. In doing so, I foreground a uniquely bicultural and New Zealand-specific framework for conflict resolution. The Treaty provides a foundation on which Māori and Pākehā relationships can be constructed and engaged and conflicts can be acknowledged, mediated and ideally, resolved. One of the most salient aspects of The Treaty is its facility to consider and be applied across time; past, present and future. The Treaty of Waitangi and its principles are built on a fundamental relationship of care and compassion between parties and those things they hold as precious. These may include land and places, people and relationships, histories and futures and language and culture. In entering into intimate relationships with others, there are similar assumptions of care and protection, and in its

contemporary form and application the Treaty of Waitangi, in some respects, represents the prenuptial agreement. Such agreements detail those things that are ‘mine’, those that are ‘yours’, those we will share, and more importantly, how we will treat respectfully with each other when times get rough. Integral to the contract, and indeed the Treaty of Waitangi is the notion of partnership, that parties to a relationship will act in good faith and to the mutual benefit of each other. These ideals make the resolution of arising conflict possible.

Although the Treaty presents a useful and relevant framework for understanding conflict negotiation and resolution, the process of discussing past hurts and injustices can be a deeply painful one. Yet, coming to a clearer understanding of history and the actions of respective parties to that history can result in a more compassionate understanding of the groups and individuals involved allowing for peaceful resolutions to emerge. Such is not possible when hearts and minds are closed to hearing about injustices. Within the Pākehā world, Treaty discussions can constitute a confusing and sometimes threatening topic incurring awkward silence or fevered denial by some. The backlash from other Pākehā felt by Andrew Judd, mayor of New Plymouth, who campaigned for the need as a nation to engage in difficult conversations to acknowledge histories of injustice, dominance and marginalisation is an example of this (Radio New Zealand, 2016). Dialogue requires an open and compassionate attitude towards the experiences of all in the process to make enduring resolutions possible and for people to move into the future free of the burden of injustice.

The following table serves to simplify the presentation of my analysis of conflict, processes of negotiation and pathways to resolution. I have used the Treaty principles to anchor the detail and complexity of the case studies and organise concepts and insights that are resolution and relationship focused. The Treaty principles sectioned into related clusters of principles. Within each cluster, the principles operate dynamically, each informing the other. I have listed and defined each principle in the first column. In the second and third columns I have drawn exemplars from the cases studies to

show the nature of bicultural resolutions, or conversely, how unresolved conflict may manifest and some of the impacts thereof.

**Table 4. Te Tiriti/The Treaty Conflict Resolution Conceptual Framework**

<b><i>Principle</i></b>	<b><i>Positive exemplar of bicultural partnership</i></b>	<b><i>Negative exemplar of bicultural partnership</i></b>
<b><i>Relative Authority</i></b>		
<i>Rangatiratanga</i> – Indigenous control, self- management and self-determination	Aspiration for Māori to retain self-determination over bereavement processes concerning tribal members ( <i>Nick Tūwhangai, Elder</i> )	Prioritisation of Pākehā concepts, values and processes expressed through law ( <i>Nick Tūwhangai, Elder</i> )
<i>Kāwanatanga</i> – Governance role that incorporates principles of protection, mutual benefit and consultation.	Governance policy and practise that incorporate and protect cultural needs, development of compromises and consultative relationships with tribal leaders ( <i>Coroner Bain</i> )	Legal intervention over bicultural bereavement conflict prioritises LAW over [cultural] LORE ( <i>Nick Tūwhangai, Elder; Coroner Bain</i> )
<b><i>Partnership</i></b>		
<i>Active Protection</i> – People in positions of authority actively protect interests of others to the fullest extent possible	Enactment of authority balanced by meeting needs of bereaved, observance of cultural values and processes ( <i>Nick Tūwhangai, Elder; Tom Roa, Kaumātua; and Coroner Bain</i> )	Authority of individual enacted with no consideration/consultation in relation to the needs of others bereaved ( <i>Huia; Haupai Puke, Kuia</i> )
<i>Fiduciary Relationship</i> – Where authority of one party affects interests of other, authority must act in way that protects interests of other.	See <i>Kāwanatanga</i>	See <i>Kāwanatanga</i>
<i>Consultation</i> – People with decision-making power actively seek out and include other parties in processes.	<i>Coroner Bain</i> (Government authority) remains open to advice from cultural elders and experts.	Legal and other authorities ignore or change arrangements wanted or agreed to by others ( <i>Huia; Tom Roa, Kaumātua and Coroner Wallace Bain</i> ).



<b>Principle</b>	<b>Positive exemplar of bicultural partnership</b>	<b>Negative exemplar of bicultural partnership</b>
<i>Partnership – Relationship of equals.</i>	Imagining a better process to facilitate needs of all the bereaved through a - “... <i>Genuine, equitable, equal partnership</i> ” ( <i>Huia</i> )	Absolute authority of executor over and above wishes of deceased and other bereaved members ( <i>Huia; Coroner Bain; Beth, Funeral director</i> )
<b>Guiding relationships and engagements</b>		
<i>Equality – People and groups positioned as being equal in status, rights and opportunities</i>	The enactment of different death rituals across multiple settings, representing and acknowledging the needs of different bereaved groups ( <i>Graeme; Kaea &amp; Teah</i> )	Legislative and contractual issues that prioritise the authority of executor(s) and/or client over bereavement processes ( <i>Huia; Beth Richards, Funeral Director and Coroner Bain</i> )
<i>Co-operation – A commitment to work together</i>	A whānau in severe conflict committed to sitting with each other to find a solution ( <i>Beth Richards, Funeral Director; Coroner Bain</i> )	Executor secretly removed body for cremation disallowing whānau access to deceased and opportunity to grieve and mourn ( <i>Coroner Bain</i> )
<i>Participation – Ensures individual and group participation in decision-making processes over matters of interest and concern.</i>	Practises that encourage and support individuals and groups to participate in and contribute towards bereavement decisions ( <i>Beth Richards, Funeral Director; Coroner Bain; Reverend Poata; Tom Roa, Kaumātua; Nick Tūwhangai, Elder; Haupai Puke, Kuia; Hinekahukura Barrett-Aranui, Kuia</i> )	Exclusion of individuals/groups from decision-making processes ( <i>Huia; Kaea &amp; Teah; Coroner Bain; Tom Roa, Kaumātua; Haupai Puke, Kuia</i> )
<i>Mutual respect – People are cognisant and respectful of each other, their needs, wants, feelings and aspirations</i>	Charles respected the cultural needs and practises of his deceased wife’s whānau ( <i>Charles</i> ). Teah respected the spiritual beliefs of her husband’s culture even when these meant she was excluded from entering the tribal burial ground ( <i>Teah</i> )	Funeral directors failing to treat with tūpāpaku in ways considered culturally respectful by the bereaved ( <i>Huia</i> ).
<i>Good faith – That parties will act in the best interests of each other.</i>	That parties will hold to negotiated promises made – continued participation of whānau in Iwi responsibilities ( <i>Nick Tūwhangai, Elder</i> ).	Service held in a language that Graeme could not understand ( <i>Graeme</i> )

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Positive exemplar of bicultural partnership</b>	<b>Negative exemplar of bicultural partnership</b>
<i>Honour</i> – Regard parties with respect, fulfilment of obligations and agreements made in respect to others.	Engaging in and supporting decision-making processes that honour bereaved individuals and groups and deceased ( <i>Beth Richards, Funeral Director; Coroner Bain; Reverend Poata; Tom Roa, Kaumātua; Haupai Puke, Kuia; Hinekahukura Barrett-Aranui, Kuia and Nick Tūwhangai, Elder</i> )	Disregarding/disrespecting others through decision-making processes and outcomes enacted ( <i>Huia</i> )
<i>Trust</i> – Belief in the reliability and honesty of parties and that their actions are without the intent to harm others.	Importance of bereavement decision-making and negotiations commencing from a place of trust ( <i>Reverend Poata</i> )	Actions that suggest unreliability and dishonesty of individuals with outcomes that are harmful for others ( <i>Huia</i> )
<b>Positive outcomes</b>		
<i>Compromise</i> – People make concessions for the greater good	Graeme agreed to return his wife to her Iwi homelands. Charles mourned his wife at home but in the form of a tangi ( <i>Graeme, Charles</i> )	Huia’s step mother directed the exclusion of Māori aspects or practices at the funeral ( <i>Huia</i> ).
<i>Mutual benefit</i> – Outcomes are mutually beneficial (win/win)	Visits paid to both biological and whangai marae creating opportunities for reconciliation ( <i>Kaea &amp; Teah</i> ) Bicultural decision making in which all parties explain the mutual benefits of proposed options ( <i>Reverend Poata</i> )	Funeral and death rites delayed significantly to allow unrelated step-son to complete work contract ( <i>Huia</i> ).
<b>Addressing grievances</b>		
<i>Redress</i> – Remedy or compensation for a wrong or grievance.	Formal complaint lodged against funeral director acknowledged and apology received to satisfaction of complainant ( <i>Huia</i> )	Legally recognised authority of executor and absence of mediation mechanism left whānau denied access to tūpāpaku with no room for recourse ( <i>Coroner Bain</i> )

In applying the theoretical framework offered by the Treaty and its principles against critical contributions offered by the case studies, several key insights emerge. The table above identifies both positive and negative exemplars of conflict amongst the bereaved and at the same time guides attention to potential causes, that is, those areas to be worked on by the bereaved and parties to a conflict. There is a need to work together in partnership to achieve mutually agreeable outcomes, that accord respect, trust and honour. Where there is a desire to do so, answers can be found. Conversely, when compassion wanes so too do those things that make partnerships possible.

### **Negotiating Partnerships**

Within most, if not all, relationships, some form of conflict is inevitable (Gudykunst, 2004; Oetzel, 2009). Conflict can bring both positive and negative outcomes, which is largely dependent on how it is managed and resolved (Oetzel, 2009). Positive outcomes can include new understandings and personal growth (Oetzel, 2009; Gudykunst, 2004); whereas negative outcomes can damage individuals and their relationships (Oetzel, 2009). Bicultural whānau are formed by people of different ethnicities entering into partnership. They include two people in intimate relationship and their extended kinship groups and cultural worlds to which they affiliate.

In bicultural partnerships, the quality of the relationship is enhanced when individuals express support for each other and value their respective cultural worlds (Oetzel, 2009). This requires awareness of one's own culture, values and practises and awareness of and respect for what these mean for others (Samovar et al., 2007). Learning about other cultural worlds is best facilitated through *participation, mutual respect and encounter* (Gudykunst, 2004; Bleiker & Brigg, 2011). This might also include education through vicarious means like taking a course in cultural customs and traditions or language. It requires genuine and concerted effort to be open to new ways of thinking, being and doing (Bleiker & Brigg, 2011). Encountering new and unfamiliar cultural worlds can bring discomfort, disorientation and sometimes conflict. Yet as Murray Parkes et al (1997)

affirm, such encounters can bring new understandings and connections, alongside processes of change inspired by ‘other’ ways of doing and being.

Within the spirit of partnership, is the need to ensure balance between the authority and status of the respective parties. Although the Treaty suggests that Māori retained *rangatiratanga*, or self-determination, this has become an aspirational, rather than realised principle. It is something continually worked towards in daily and political life and resides in a dynamic relationship with the principle of *kāwanatanga* or governance. It is a power dynamic that requires a consciousness of equality, fairness and justice. There were both positive and negative examples of where this dynamic manifested in the bereavement processes, for example, when those with assumed executive power exercised their privilege without concern for others. Coroner Bain also presented an exemplar of how governing policy and practise can through *compromises* and *consultation* with tribal leaders, facilitate and protect the interests of parties. However, as Nick Tūwhangai, elder, emphasised, legal intervention within bicultural bereavement conflict prioritises Pākehā concepts, values and processes. As Huia (whānau contributor) imagined, facilitating the needs of all the bereaved could occur through a “...*genuine, equitable, equal partnership*”.

### **Negotiating Participation**

Love and relationships matter. Death and bereavement matter. When these experiences matter to us, we similarly want to know that *we* matter. Being acknowledged, recognised and endorsed is one of the most fundamental human needs (Gudykunst, 2009). Having opportunities to participate and be acknowledged within bereavement processes was a primary need expressed in the research. Where negotiations and enactments accounted for these ideals, the outcomes could be therapeutic, healing and sometimes transformational. Conversely, where individuals and groups had limited or no opportunities to participate in practices that made the most sense to them, the challenges presented by death and grief were greatly increased (Murray Parkes et al., 1997). Participation and acknowledgement was facilitated by processes that incorporated active protection of the interests of others and a commitment to the need for consultation and co-operation.

Implicit within such processes, were approaches that embodied good faith, honour, respect and trust. In a similar vein, Tillett & French (2009) suggest that effective conflict negotiations are those founded in approaches that are positive, honest and relationship-enhancing.

Coroner Bain highlighted the Māori cultural practice of *tono* as a potential model that exemplified participative negotiation processes within bereavement. When supported by adequate allowances of time and the involvement of experienced representatives, Coroner Bain suggested *tono* as an appropriate process. Within *tono* negotiations, space can be created for the expression of views held by both individuals and groups, which are afforded opportunities to participate and be acknowledged accordingly. Following the deliberations of those engaged, responses will ideally express respect and acknowledgement of others and offer a considered rationale for the determinations made. Ideas can be put, withdrawn or renegotiated without offence intended or taken. The process and outcomes described ultimately affirm the ideal of maintaining relationships, between both the living and dead.

The complexities of grief, bereavement, kinship groups and relationships emphasise the need for support and guidance within bereavement processes. When these complexities are overlaid with differing cultural values and beliefs, the need for experienced, knowledgeable and sensitive support becomes even more imperative. What was most notable across the expert perspectives was their ability to understand other ways and realities, even when these differed considerably from their own (Murray Parkes et.al, 1997). Significant here was not only astute self-awareness but demonstrated abilities of consultation; active listening and perspective-taking, where they actively sought to hear and understand the arguments presented by respective parties to a conflict. The ability to recognise the perspectives of others is a critical element within effective communication across cultural worlds (Gudykunst, 2004). Salient also, was recognition of the diversity of needs both within and across individuals and groups (Murray Parkes et.al, 1997). Through co-operation with individuals and groups in ways that are respectful, the experts variously illustrated their undertaking to satisfy the

needs of the bereaved collectively, to the best of their abilities and scope of practise.

Although the majority of the expert contributors affirmed that the prevention of conflict was most ideal, this was not always possible. Instead, the expert contributors employed approaches and strategies that attempted to negotiate and/or mediate conflict. The context of bicultural bereavement demands the need for diplomacy, calmness, courtesy and compassion towards others. As Rev Tom Poata repeatedly asserted, taking a mannered approach to encounters is the least that one can do. As previously indicated, awareness and sensitivity of individual and cultural needs was a critical resource. Process is important, sometimes more so than the outcomes sought.

### **Negotiating protection**

The Treaty and its principles incorporate a promise for active protection of Māori as peoples, individuals and their properties and culture. At a broader and structural level within New Zealand, this remains an area that still requires much consideration and development to be fully realised. Such protection can only be observed and maintained by structures and institutions vested with authority along with a genuine commitment by citizens to this objective. As many of the expert contributors were acutely aware, much of New Zealand's legal system leaves little room to protect and preserve cultural lore. Certainly, legal summaries of high profile cases of bicultural bereavement conflict illustrate this point. However, some of the expert contributors described practises that expressed some intent of active protection of Māori people and culture. Coroner Bain presented an excellent example of this, where he actively campaigned for coronial policies to incorporate important and protective considerations of Māori people and their death modes. Coroner Bain also integrated such endeavours within his coronial role and practise. Graeme also provided an exemplar of cultural fusions and compromises created in the unveiling ceremony for his wife, which was bicultural in nature and function.

## **Negotiating Outcomes**

Most if not all of the expert contributors described their approach to negotiating outcomes as focussed on the development of solutions that resolved rather than perpetuated conflict. In this respect, these contributors attended to the 'big picture' and 'future' context and on developing mutually beneficial outcomes. When difficulties or conflict emerged, these experts often developed collaborative and innovative pathways to resolution in ways that supported the preservation of relationships as similarly noted by Tillett & French (2009). Particularly salient in this regard were the cultural experts who drew on deep knowledge of cultural practises and their functions, to find answers that applied key cultural values. These included Haupai Puke's descriptions of endeavours to fulfil cultural values and traditional practises in unfamiliar and sometimes foreign environments. These included home rather marae environments and those that were located in other countries. Nick Tūwhangai also presented an exemplar of prioritising the importance of bringing whānau home for interment in tribal urupā in ways that account for spiritual, cultural, practical and financial demands.

Resolution methods are most effective where approaches are adaptive, flexible and collaborative (Tillett & French, 2009). Where parties are able to consider issues as mutual problems for which 'win-win' solutions or mutually beneficial outcomes are sought, the potential for these to occur is greatly increased (Gudykunst, 2004). Nick Tūwhangai (Elder) explicitly identified flexibility within his approach to negotiations, which sought the development of win-win outcomes for the bereaved collectively, rather than achieving his initially preferred outcome which was the return of his tribal member for burial in their tribal homeland. Instead, he negotiated for the return of living descendants and an on-going commitment from them to participate in the affairs of the Iwi. As Tom Roa, (Kaumātua) emphasised, where processes attend to manaaki, or respect, generosity and care for the tūpāpaku and bereaved alike, resolution and relationship focussed outcomes can result. Reverend Poata shared an extremely important reminder that the death of a loved one presents the living with a 'blank canvas' upon which outcomes can be 'painted', a reminder that bereavement

is a creative opportunity to fashion an experience that is satisfying, right and just.

## **Preventing Conflict**

In reflecting back on their experiences, the whānau contributors recognised that some of their experiences of conflict may have been avoided or mediated. Many of these reflections were also supported and extended upon through the expert perspectives. In the nature, function and spirit of partnership, developing understandings of and between those parties engaged constitutes a respectful, open minded and pragmatic approach. How well or to what degree, the bereaved negotiated different cultural worlds within life, impacted on what happened following the death of a loved one. For those who actively engaged with other cultural worlds, the understandings developed provided an important resource within bereavement. For some, this meant they were able to anticipate the needs of others and potential issues that could emerge. Accordingly, many were able to respond and acknowledge these appropriately and effectively. Within their own experiences, understanding other cultural practises and values increased their participation, comfort and overall satisfaction. These points were particularly illustrated by Charles and Teah (Whānau contributors), who through their lived experiences and accumulated wisdom were able to understand and mediate bereavement situations that had the potential to escalate into severe conflict.

One of the key preventative measures signalled within some of the case studies concerned the need for conversations about death, within life. Although such conversations may be difficult, there are particular advantages of doing so. Huia (Whānau contributor) emphasised that there is some individual responsibility to consider and discuss preferences related to bereavement and ritual options with others. Individuals are able to give living voice to their preferences, offer explanations and perhaps negotiate these with those who will ultimately determine and enact their wishes. Such opportunities allow for negotiations to occur without the complexities and demands of grief and bereavement. In a similar vein, Coroner Bain and Beth Richards (Funeral Director) emphasised the need for increased awareness



of the ultimate authority assigned to executors. In the executor role, individuals can override all other preferences including any specified by a deceased in a last will and testament. The ability, capacity, integrity and possible state of mind of those they appoint as executors and in particular, their capacity to fulfil their role within bereavement needs careful consideration. Coroner Bain also suggested that this should include an executor's cultural orientation, knowledge and experience particularly if these will be called upon within bereavement negotiations.

The insights gathered within the case studies certainly indicate some areas that can prevent, mediate and negotiate conflict towards positive and mutually beneficial outcomes. As emphasised throughout this thesis, preventative and mediation measures against conflict, particularly those negotiated within whānau, constitute the most optimal approach. Future research endeavours within this domain can further develop understandings of these approaches and their application. As the final two sections of this chapter, the following outlines limitations of the research and future areas for exploration.

## **Limitations**

The research encompasses specific limitations that have been considered in more depth within *Chapter 2: Research Context and Method*. In summary, the research is reliant upon single-case studies, which constrain any ability to generalise across to broader populations. However, the rich and in-depth insights offered respectively and collectively by the contributors certainly advocate for the usefulness of such an approach in this research. Similarly, the cultural perspectives of the kaumātua, kuia and elder contributors and myself are embedded within our shared tribal identities as Ngāti Maniapoto. These perspectives do not necessarily reflect the perspectives of Ngāti Maniapoto collectively, nor that of Māori collectively. There were also individual and organisational perspectives such as the Police, which were not incorporated within the research, presenting a gap that could be accounted for within future explorations of the topic. As Nick Tūwhangai (Elder) suggested, exploring the perspectives and experiences of individuals is a valuable endeavour. However, solutions are more likely to be found

within collaborative discussions amongst interested, knowledgeable and concerned others.

## **Future Areas for Exploration**

With very little research conducted upon bicultural bereavement and indeed bereavement more generally within New Zealand, there is considerable scope for future areas of exploration. Admittedly, the current study has taken somewhat of a 'broad brush' approach through the topic of interest and related domains. Exploring experiences of bereavement through multiple perspectives presents one interesting line of enquiry; however there are several ethical issues in doing so, as mentioned in *Chapter 2: Research Context and Method*. Cross-cultural concepts and responses related to bereavement and grief within New Zealand is a particular area that demands scholarly attention. The multiplicity of concepts and responses to death within cultures also presents an exciting area for future endeavours. In particular, there has been little research that explores the substantial offerings of Te Ao Māori in developing ways in which to blend and merge individual, relational, group and worldviews. My research has found that the blending of such practices are well advanced in practice but has failed to attract scholarly attention. Although the research touched upon meaning making and sense making within bereavement, this is an exciting area for further investigation, particularly in light of the growing international interest in this area. Although I remain invested in the topic of bicultural bereavement even within these final hours, if I was to begin again I may have chosen to explore the notion of enduring relationships. The contributors descriptions of forming enduring relationships with their deceased loved ones was a fascinating and inspiring topic that deserves far more attention than I was able to justifiably give within this research.

As a concluding remark, I would like to reiterate a comment made by Coroner Bain that described what he considered to be the ideal outcome arising from bicultural bereavement conflict,

*... A good outcome is for there to be something finite determined, for views to be heard, and heard in a way that is proper and respectful.*

*Those views need to be given consideration and a decision made so that the family can all move on. That has been done on marae for years and certainly all those that I witnessed on marae in Maniapoto have been done very respectfully.*

As with others, Coroner Bain provides an exemplar of not only developing understandings of ‘other’ cultural worlds, but the possibilities of being inspired by ‘new’ ways of thinking, being and doing. Alongside the love and affection experienced within bicultural relationships, engaging with other cultural worlds can bring richness, interest and exciting new opportunities into our lives.

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## **Appendix A. Prequel: Our Stories, My Story**

As a researcher engaged in work calling on ethnographic and auto-ethnographic methods, I am the primary ‘instrument’ through which the research was gathered and interpreted. Woven through the thesis are attempts to make explicit ways in which my own context, experiences and perspectives have inevitably influenced the research. The data collected included my own reflexive and reflective accounts of engaging with the topic, within and beyond the research. In the following section, I outline my cultural and ancestral histories to position myself within the research and contributing communities. These narratives articulate my Māori and Pākehā kinships, including negotiations between these cultural worlds, which sometimes had harsh outcomes. They provide exemplars of concepts intrinsically linked to the research, cross-cultural histories, identities, relationships and bereavement. I share excerpts from my research journal, which describe my own reflections and meaning-making processes with whānau and family bereavements. This prequel also provides space to consider the sensitive complexities of exploring death and grief.

### **My Story**

I embarked on the research through an interest in bicultural identities, as I belong to a whānau/family that is configured by both Māori and Pākehā identities. I was born to a Pākehā mother and a father of Māori and Pākehā descent during the late 1970’s. My parents divorced when I was very young and I would not have contact with my paternal whānau until early adulthood. I grew up in a Pākehā family in a low-socio economic suburb in the Waikato. Te Ao Māori remained largely a foreign world to me through childhood. I was aware of my Māori ancestry, but came to know that in the Pākehā world, this was not always viewed positively. Reunion with my paternal whānau and ‘other’ cultural world was a fabulously fraught process. In retrospect, my taha Māori has always resonated within me. It has called to me.

In resuming contact with my whānau, I have been determined to listen, learn and engage with Te Ao Māori. As a ‘new entrant’ into Te Ao Māori, I am still but a pēpi, a baby. Through actions and words, I have transgressed tikanga and misunderstood cultural values, memories of which still brings colour to my cheeks! Alongside others, I have engaged in connective activities that gather our whānau together, strengthen our connections and our sense of being *Māori*. These have included hui, pōwhiri, wānanga, all many of rituals and processes at marae, urupā and wāhi tapu. I have taken heed of the whakataukī, “*E, kua e ako marae*”- loosely translated as “*Do not begin to learn in public*”. My cultural learning has been located in my own whānau, hapū and Iwi, often in the sanctity of our tribal homelands. This has symbolically and literally propelled me into a new and foreign world starkly different from the one in which I was raised. These experiences have sometimes been awkward and confronting, but also enlightening and fulfilling. In order to engage, I have thrust myself into unfamiliar situations, where I have not known what to do and where the primary language eludes me. As I embarked upon the research, I perceived gaps in my cultural understandings as a disadvantage. However, my position of ‘not-knowing’ meant that I actively sought understanding and experience with fresh eyes, questioning the mundane and taken for granted.

I remember the first tangi I attended vividly. My uncle Sonny Barrett died in Taumarunui where he had established a life beside his wife’s Hinewai Barrett (nee Topine) marae. ‘Barrett’, as she called him was known for his hard work ethic and slightly gruff manner. I knew him best for welcoming me back into the whānau and frank conversations whilst scoffing tuatua’s over the kitchen table. Along with my grief, I found parts of Uncle Sonny’s tangi confusing and overwhelming. Language, rituals and songs I did not understand. The constant vigil and expressive mourning and number of mourners. I loved the last night before we buried Uncle Sonny in Hinewai’s whānau urupā, right behind his ‘man’ shed. I remember being shocked but amused at the open, honest and often hilarious recalling of Uncle Sonny. His exploits, his sharp wit and stubbornness. But most of all, his immense love and affection for his extended whānau.

In connecting more with my whānau I have attended many tangihanga and hura kōhatu. I have come to relish opportunities to assist as ringawera, where I have ‘warmed’ my hands over the embers of ahi kā. These moments have engaged me in cultural learning, where I began to understand the complexities of marae processes, including substantial ‘behind the scenes’ tasks that support the more formal and visible processes that occur ‘front of house’. Most of all, it is a way to honour those who have died and offer support for the bereaved, to be part of the tangi, to be part of something very special. Tangi can be complex and large-scale events that require considerable contributions of time, resources, guidance and support. I have assisted as ringawera in tangi that have catered for over 400 people and have been astounded by carefully co-ordinated and seamless processes of doing so. I have been inspired by and benefited from key functions of tangi, unhurried and successive opportunities to grieve and affirm connections with the broader bereaved community.

My engagement across Māori and Pākehā worlds has challenged and reshaped my sense of cultural identity; I have felt ‘caught’ between two cultural worlds and not necessarily always accepted by either. Common with others of bicultural descent, my physical appearance is culturally ambiguous at best and often brings the assumption that I am Pākehā. My cultural physicality can create challenges in engaging with the cultural worlds to which I belong, affording both advantage and disadvantage. In ‘passing’ as Pākehā I have enjoyed privileges and status afforded by this cultural world, an aspect I have been aware of since childhood. I have also witnessed overt racism and prejudice towards Māori, voiced by others who assume that I am Pākehā and am unlikely to be offended. My appearance has created barriers to accessing Te Ao Māori; I have experienced what it is like to be Pākehā within the Māori world. I have become familiar with the narratives of colonisation, assimilation and oppression upon my peoples, and I have wept.

I have experienced a gamut of death rituals, including those I would describe as Pākehā funerals, Māori tangihanga, and tangi for Pākehā and funerals for Māori. I have witnessed bereavement negotiations and conflict,

including the cultural process of *tono*. I have reflected upon contrasts and commonalities between Māori and Pākehā concepts and responses to death and grief. These manifest in a diversity of ways, developing and strengthening supportive relations amongst the bereaved, alongside opportunities to learn ‘other’ ways of responding to death. Less ideal manifestations can include conflict, cultural distress, perceived and actual exclusion, offense and even occasionally, disgust. Death and grief are every day experiences that will inevitably be thrust upon our lives. I was certainly not outside of grief’s reach through the research, where I mourned the death of loved ones. As I explored, considered and wrote about grief, I also experienced it in a very real sense. I describe some of the tensions of being bereaved and researching the topic in following journal excerpt,

*Experiencing grief whilst conducting research upon the topic brings with it an aporia- the tension between two demands. Competing voices rally across the divide, the division between the researcher who observes from distance and the person who grieves. These tears, these very real tears are washing away any vestiges of the ‘objective’ researcher. Yet I am compelled to reflect and write, to cry and mourn. The ‘researcher’ remains, but becomes one with the ‘person’, the grieving and emotion-washed person. (Research journal entry, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2012).*

Here I reflect on notions of objectivity and detachment prioritized by my discipline, as they collide with the lived reality of experiencing grief as I explored the topic.

### **Kilt and Kākahu: Our Stories**

Born of kilt and kākahu, the genealogies of my whānau/family are woven with bicultural threads, with foundations planted within Scotland and Polynesia. My fertile imagination traces links of commonality between their histories of life, love and loyalty to kin and tribal lands. Their stories are united in loss of ancestral lands by the force of a common aggressor – Colonial Britain. My forebears endured hardship but also demonstrated resilience and sometimes, rebellion. Their histories bear scars of

colonisation, confiscation of tribal lands and damage to cultural social structures. A critical point of commonality would eventually bring two cultures together, setting forth for a new land. Whether prompted by curiosity or sheer need, in different eras and locales, my Māori and Pākehā ancestors departed from their respective homelands to embark on expeditions to a strange and foreign land, Aotearoa/New Zealand.

## **Tōku Whānau**

As is the experience for countless Māori, colonisation, assimilation and urbanisation have left indelible marks upon the histories and contemporary lives of my whānau. We descend from two well-known whakapapa lines within Maniapoto, the Davis and Barrett whānau. As these names indicate, the foundations of my whakapapa are based on intimate relationships between Māori and Pākehā. Nathaniel Barrett emigrated from England upon a whaling ship and settled in Kāwhia, where he became the schoolmaster of the nearby mission school. In 1849, Nathaniel married Caroline Te Maawe, Reverend John Whitely (who was later killed during the hostilities between Pākehā settlers and Māori) presided over the wedding, consented to by Chief Takerei (Barrett, 1986). The couple went on to have seven children, including my great-great grandfather, Rōpata Barrett.

In Kāwhia, as was occurring throughout the Waikato, increasing dissidence between Pākehā settlers and Māori mounted as the New Zealand Land Wars were about to ensue. Tensions cleaved through Māori and Pākehā intimate relationships, as my great-grandfather, Hēnare Barrett and his sister Pani Aranui recall,

*When the time of the wars came, our Barrett tupuna had to leave the Kāwhia area, along with all other Pākehā. This was for their own safety. Our tupuna decided to take the two oldest boys, Rōpata and Te Murunga with him. He expected to be able to return when things had settled down. On the first night of their departure, they were approached by two Māori men. They said that they had brought some pigs with them for his journey. Would he let the two boys come and help them bring the pigs up to the old man's camp*



*site? Nathaniel agreed, and the two boys started down the track. As they progressed, they were encircled by others who joined the party on the track. They realised that something was up and attempted to escape. But they were no match for the warriors. They were gathered up and returned to their mother's people. Thomas [Te Murunga] was particularly upset as he preferred the better clothing available with his father, so the story goes." p.10 (Barrett, 1986)*

The poignancy of this narrative is startling, the separation of husband from wife, of father from children, within the of context cross-cultural conflict. Nathaniel was not reunited with his wife or children; whānau research later discovered Nathaniel's burial in a pauper's grave in Melbourne, Australia. Nathaniel's children were industrious and instilled a strong work ethic in their own children. As his father, Rōpata and grandfather Nathaniel before him, Hēnare inherited a strong work ethic, leaving school early to pursue work and eventually became self-employed. Against the backdrop of the on-going assimilation of his peoples, Hēnare was reluctant to engage with Te Ao Māori until much later in his life (although accounts of this differ). As the First World War erupted, he enlisted in the war effort (and lied about his age in order to be eligible!). Hēnare hoped to join the Artillery, but his doctor persuaded him to join the Māori Pioneer Battalion, where he would be "*...among his own people*" (whānau communication). He served in Passchendaele, the Somme and Belgium before returning to his family farm at the end of the war.

Shortly after Hēnare's return, he married Tahipapa Davis, the daughter of Hurihia Te Puaha Kiriini of Waitomo and Hone Reweti. Hone Reweti was the eldest son of a Māori and Pākehā couple, Merekaimanu Patene and Edward Telford Davis. Hone's father Edward and Uncle Charles engaged with Te Ao Māori, becoming proficient in Te Reo Māori. Edward and Charles were appointed Native Interpreters for the Colonial Native office. Edward married Merekaimanu and raised a large family and Charles dedicated his life to work amongst Māori. Initially Charles worked for the Crown, assisting with the Treaty of Waitangi and being appointed Chief Translator. However, he grew disillusioned with Crown treatment of Māori,

leaving his appointment in 1857. Charles wrote prolifically for publications such as *Te Karere Māori*, *Te Waka o Te Iwi* and *Te Whetū o te Tau*, expressing his belief that Māori needed to be informed with urgency regarding settler and government agendas (Ward, 2012). Charles was arrested for writing, printing and circulating seditious document, but was acquitted. Cast as contradictory individual, Davis's writings embody a determined belief in a bicultural future of New Zealand, a unique view amongst his contemporaries (Ward, 2012).

In the early years of their marriage, Hēnare and Tahipapa befriended Tahupōtiki Wiremu Rātana and became supporters of the Rātana religious movement. The first of three children, my grandmother Arona was born at Rātana Pa (under a full moon, hence her name). Her mother, Tahipapa, was a staunch proponent of Te Reo Māori and refused to speak English to the continual annoyance of local Pākehā shopkeepers with whom she shopped. Tahipapa ensured that Te Reo Māori was the first language of her children, including my grandmother Arona, who by all accounts was a beautiful native speaker. Arona married a Pākehā man and went on to have nine children. They spent time her tribal homelands before moving away for work opportunities. The family would returned to her tribal home and kin for holidays and significant events, my father recalled one such occasion,

*[My grand uncle] was chair of the First World War Māori Battalion and chaired the first Māori council for some years. In travelling around with him, I got to meet King Korokī, on the side of the road outside of Tūrangawaewae. As a young child, my perception of our king was that he would be sitting on his throne all garnished up, but he was not. [King Korokī] was in a checked woollen work shirt, big baggy corduroy pants and he looked like just another older Māori guy, who my uncle stopped to korero Māori with. As we drove off, I said, "Who was that man, Uncle?" and he said, "Well, that's your king, boy"- I blown away by that!*

Although Arona and her children enjoyed times in their tribal lands, they were perhaps not as engaged with the broader hapū and Iwi, and eventually settled in Thames. As the children grew into their teenage years, Arona

engaged actively with Te Ao Māori, supporting the efforts of a local Thames hapū as they reclaimed confiscated tribal lands, upon which a native school had been built.



**Figure 6. My Grandmother: Arona Stewart (nee' Barrett)**

Sending shockwaves that reverberated through my whānau for years to come, Arona died suddenly, leaving behind nine children aged between 10 and 27 years old. Her father Hēnare travelled to be with his grandchildren, followed closely by Maniapoto relatives. They laid a tonō before Arona's children, for their mother to be returned to a whānau urupā, buried with her mother and grandmother. However, Arona's children were adamant that she would be buried at the nearby public cemetery. The local hapū with whom Arona had worked presented another tonō to the whānau, for Arona to be taken to their marae, Matai Whetū, where they would honour her as the first tūpāpaku to be laid in the newly built whareniui. Their tonō acknowledged Arona's contributions and a distant genealogical connection with her. Discussions amongst the whānau pani ensued and with much reluctance, Hēnare accepted his grandchildren's decision for Arona to be taken to Matai Whetū and then buried at the nearby public cemetery. One of Arona's close cousins, our Aunty Kelly, was devastated by the outcome

and left immediately without attending her beloved cousin's tangi. Strong emotions underlie her withdrawal, stressing the belief that Arona should be returned to her tribal home to be honoured and interred amongst her ancestors. One of Arona's children shared with me personal reflections on the decisions and implications arising from Arona's death,

*... The trouble was that Mum died too young and was just beginning to reconnect with her Māori side. We were so young and made the decision based on what we knew at that time. If Mum had lived longer, we would have understood the wider implications of that decision. I believe we might have let her go back to Waitomo.*

With respect, I understand decisions that were made but wonder if the return of my grandmother to her whānau urupā would have created purpose for Arona's descendants to similarly return 'home'. The decision also set a precedent that saw those whose deaths followed buried away from whānau urupā. Without calls to return to our tribal home, I perceive the connections of my whānau to marae, hapū and Iwi have been compromised. Myself and others now find ourselves 'taking the long way home', reconnecting with our marae, hapū and Iwi through gatherings like noho marae, whānau reunions, wānanga, Māori Land Court hearings, and more intimate processes of tangi and hura kōhatu. At a whānau reunion in Waitomo, a local kuia noted the whakapapa lineage number upon my name badge and began to cry, *"Oh my beautiful cousin Arona! Her mokopuna, you have come home! We have been waiting for you!"*

## **My Family**

My maternal ancestors hailed from Scotland's west coast, eking out a life in clan homelands under harsh colonial rule. The colonisation of Scotland left little financial or geographical security and some of my ancestors supplemented farming income with covert whisky distilling. My great-grandmother and great-grandfather grew dissatisfied with the ruling social conditions in Scotland, embarking for New Zealand in the early 1900's. Elizabeth McSporran and Duncan McMillan were married upon these shores and found work farming in Takapau, Hawkes Bay. The couple

eventually ‘won’ farmland through a government ballot, ‘reallocating’ indigenous lands to the settler population, perhaps through dubious Crown actions. The compilation of pioneer women’s stories, “A New Earth”, recounts Elizabeth’s arrival here,

*The new life was strange and bewildering. Accustomed to the chatter of a team of dairy workers, Lizzie found the loneliness of a country farmhouse almost frightening. Letters from home were long in coming and only made her more homesick. (National Council of Women of New Zealand, 1975, p. 69).*

The couple worked tirelessly to support their three children in the new home, encountering a range of significant challenges. The continued support of a clan and kin network of settlers was integral to the family’s survival through one of the most severe droughts in memory and the arrival of the Great Depression (National Council of Women of New Zealand, 1975). Despite their endeavours, they eventually lost the farm. They were bolstered by their staunch Presbyterian faith, with Duncan an elder at the local church. On his death, the funeral procession took route down the main street, where shopkeepers shut their doors as a mark of respect for one of the earliest Pākehā in Takapau. “A New Earth” offers a poignant summary of Elizabeth’s life,

*What does one say of such a life? Endowed with few gifts, yet commanding respect wherever she went, her greatest strength was in her determination, displayed only when driven by force of circumstance. Faith was her guiding star, independence and security her goal. All the world she needed-her husband, family and home. Her own summary would have been terse and to the point, “Och, I only did my best” (National Council of Women of New Zealand, 1975, p. 69).*

Duncan and Elizabeth’s daughter (and my grandmother), Flora McMillan married John MacDonald Johnston and the couple raised their children amidst several relocations for work, with little room to call any particular place ‘home’. The three generations preceding me began to consider burial

impractical, instead utilising cremation, which was exclusively adhered to. Cremains were scattered in different locations, those significant or sometimes convenient. Over time, knowledge of these locations was blurred and in some instances, the locations themselves underwent physical changes. Our family archive includes a poignant 'memento mori', a circulated letter describing the scattering of cremains belonging to my mother's dear cousin Scott, who died tragically in his youth. Following family tradition, Scott served in the Royal New Zealand Navy and was a keen and experienced sea diver. The letter is written by the Reverend John.W.Walton, who officiated over the scattering of the cremains,

*...At your request we have carried out what you wished as regards to Scott...It was pouring with rain and a very cold wind blowing but we assembled on the stern and I used a flag I had in Germany as a Prisoner of War Padre, to drape a box on the hatch cover. With a few short prayers and all saying the Lord's Prayer, Scott was able to make the dive he had always wanted to and his ashes were scattered above the wreck. Near the shore is a half- submerged rock, which the Club have named Congdon Rock, whilst that won't appear on any maps, it will forever remain such for the members of the club... I hope all this will meet with your approval and may I say what a privilege it has been to be of assistance to you in this time of sorrow.*

Although I understand the pragmatism that inserted cremation practise into our responses to death, I have reflected on some of the implications that resulted. Since childhood, I have been insatiably curious about my ancestors. Yet, amongst my maternal family, there are no physical memorial sites where we can remember and mourn them. With no marker of their final 'departure point', 'resting place' or 'last post' on this earth, they are simply gone. Through my research, I gained more understanding of death responses in my family. Our Scottish heritage and Presbyterian faith are noted for private, pragmatic and 'fuss-free' responses to death. Children are shielded from participating in or indeed witnessing death rituals, explaining why I would not attend a funeral until well into adulthood.

At my first funeral, I was struck by stark differences to experiences of tangi. The funeral service for my adored maternal grandfather was seemingly too short to allow me opportunities to both grieve and connect with the similarly bereaved. My memories of the funeral are muddled by profound grief, which was concentrated in the short time frame offered by the funeral service. I was mostly too distraught to engage fully with other family members, leaving me regretful. At his request, my grandfather's coffin was closed and I looked curiously at the glossy veneer surface, not quite believing it contained my grandfather. I felt detached from any visceral, tangible 'proof' that my grandfather was indeed dead. Following the service, we left my grandfather in the hall and gathered for the ubiquitous cups of tea and sandwiches. My mind wandered continually to the hall, to my grandfather, dead and now 'alone'. As we began to leave, I stopped in shock outside the hall, in front of me the hearse with my grandfather's casket inside. I drifted unbidden to the hearse, knowing this was the closest I would come to my grandfather's body. What happened next forms my most searing memory of the funeral. I watched my brother exit the hall and stop abruptly by the hearse, just as I had done moments before. Without a word spoken, we stood by the hearse, held each other desperately and I cried in way that I hope to never experience again.

As a family, we attended the 'private cremation', a ceremony I had read within death notices that piqued my curiosity, seemingly shrouded in mystery. We arrived at the crematorium and sat listening to elevator type music, unsure and awkward about what we were meant to be doing. Against the front wall, my grandfather's coffin sat hemmed in by voluminous curtains. After a short period, an automatic pulley system initiated and the curtains moved across the coffin until they closed. I sat there perplexed, I supposed the closing of the curtains symbolised the end of my grandfather's funeral, and life. Yet, I could still see glimmers of the coffin behind the curtain. I expected that we were meant to leave, allowing the crematorium staff to get on with the next task, my grandfather's cremation. We duly left. In my mind, this curious process had provided an awkward attempt of symbolising 'closure'. Mournfully unsatisfied, I felt the want for more time to affirm physical separation from my grandfather, more time to remember

his integral role in my life and more time with my bereaved family. For me, it was not, and perhaps could never be, enough. I still mourn his loss keenly.

Several years later whilst en route to Wellington with my cousin Teia, it occurred to me that we would be travelling through the town where grandfather had spent the latter years of life. My grandfather's ashes had been scattered by his widow, from a second marriage, and I was unaware of where this had taken place. After a quick flurry of phone calls, I learnt my grandfather's ashes had been scattered at the ANZAC memorial in this town. Given his military background, it seemed apt that my opportunity to visit the memorial fell upon ANZAC day. The local Returned Service Association Club was full to capacity when I called in to ask for directions to the memorial. Arriving at the memorial, I alighted swiftly from the vehicle and was somewhat surprised by the depth of grief that erupted from me. I stood on the memorial and wept copiously.

I looked about at the recently re-constructed memorial space and knew that my grandfather's cremains had been disturbed, reconstituted in new mortar or possibly even removed. Yet, the memorial symbolised the only tangible place where I could commemorate his death, a space that marked his physical departure from this world and my world. The following photograph was taken during our visit, my sunglasses offer some disguise for a face that is wet with tears.





**Figure 7. Lest We Forget: Kei Warewaretia**

We were soon joined by some young boys who traced the words on the memorial and asked me “What does ‘Lest We Forget’ mean?” Struck by the irony of the question, we offered an explanation and left the memorial.

## **Conclusion**

My research title, *Different Coloured Tears*, sprung from a moment of reflection upon the mourning practises held to within my whānau and family respectively. The metaphor evokes a critical point that emerged in the research, despite the universal experience of death, it provokes responses that are understood and enacted differently. In outlining my personal, cultural and ancestral histories, I position myself in the research and articulate intimate experiences within and across Māori and Pākehā worlds. In doing so, I sought to emphasise the interaction between my own experiences, perspectives, and engagement with the research. Intimate experiences of Māori and Pākehā cultural worlds lent me insight and understanding, but did not shield me from challenges of being immersed in the topic domain. I listened, read and wrote about grief, but also felt its very

real impacts as I mourned the death of significant loved ones. I held to and was inspired by knowledge of what ultimately brings grief into our lives; love, relationships and connections. The grief that enters into our life worlds may remain with us, but so too does love shared, expressed and felt. It is these things that can endure beyond those tears shed.

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# Appendix B. Information Sheet



## **Different Coloured Tears: Perspectives on Bicultural Tangihanga and Bereavement.**

### **Tangi Research Programme**

Māori and Psychology Research Unit

University of Waikato

### **Information Sheet**

**Name of Researcher:** Kiri Edge, PhD Researcher

**Tangihanga Research Programme Leaders:** Professor Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora, & Dr Tess Moeke-Maxwell.

**Research Supervisors:** Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora (PGS Chief Supervisor); Professor Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (PGS Supervisor); Dr. Neville Robertson (PGS Supervisor)

*Do you belong to a whānau/family that includes the two life ways of Māori and Pākehā? Have you experienced a significant bereavement in your whānau/family that required some sensitivity to the different ways that Māori and Pākehā conduct funeral/tangi rituals? If you have had these experiences, we would like to talk with you about how you went about making choices and decisions during the funeral/tangi that you were part of.*

### **What is the Study about?**

You are being invited to take part in a study about the experiences of people who belong to a whānau/family that is both Pākehā and Māori. We are interested in exploring how Māori and Pākehā identities influence the process of bereavement and grief following the death of a significant loved

one. This research aims to develop an understanding of the overlaps and exchanges between Māori and Pākehā worlds as experienced by you during a tangi/ funeral. This research will focus upon the choices, fusions created and the pathways that people establish in mourning, grieving, and moving on with their lives.

You have been asked to take part in this study because you have identified yourself as belonging to a whānau/family that is both Māori and Pākehā and have experienced the death of a significant loved one at some point during your life. We hope to talk to people from a wide range of age groups and backgrounds with both males and females so that we can gain different perspectives and experiences. Unfortunately, it may not be possible to interview everyone that would like to be involved in this research. If we need to limit the numbers of people, we will select people that differ from each other in gender, age, and/or backgrounds.

As this is a very sensitive topic, we will also carefully consider each potential participant to make sure that taking part in this research will not potentially cause any emotional distress.

### **Who is collecting the information and conducting the study?**

I am a doctoral student from the Department of Psychology at the University of Waikato. I will be supervised by Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora; Professor Ngahuia Te Awekotuku and Dr. Neville Robertson (PGS Supervisor).

This project is also part of the larger Tangi Research Programme being conducted the Māori and Psychology Research Unit, University of Waikato. The Tangi Research Programme is an academic research study upon traditional and contemporary Māori cultural practices associated with dying, death and bereavement. This research sits alongside a wide range of research topics including *Palliative care of Māori and Their Whānau*, *Rangatahi experiences of Tangihanga* and *Children's understandings of Tangihanga*. There are some contact details for the principle researchers at

the bottom of this information sheet. You are welcome to make contact with them if you have any questions regarding this research.

## **What will I be asked to do?**

With your permission, I would like you to take part in an interview with me and possibly one of my University Supervisors. This interview will be arranged for at a time and venue that suits you. The interview should take approximately an hour, depending on what you would like to discuss with me. You are welcome to have any others present during the interview (i.e. spouse, friend or whānau/family members). We would like to explore with you the following topics but would encourage you to tell your story in the way that makes best sense to you.

- **The life of the person who died** – here we are interested in building a cultural picture and life narrative of the person who died, and of those immediately bereaved.
- **Prior funeral/tangi arrangements and understandings** – expressed wishes made with respect to their funeral/tangi.
- **The funeral/tangi** – what happened between the time of death to the point of burial / cremation? What were the considerations, challenges, and things that helped?
- **Looking back on what happened** – if things were to be done differently, what would change and why?
- **Looking forward and memorialising** – having had the experience of the funeral/tangi, what are/were there any particular considerations given to unveiling/memorial events?

Following the interview, we may telephone you for further information or ask for a second interview to follow up on things we may have missed in the first interview. The things you tell us in these conversations will also be incorporated into the interview summary report.

## **What will happen with my information?**

The interview(s) will be audio taped and we may take written notes during these. You may also want to show other things to us like special objects or images. From these things, we will develop a summary report of the interview(s) organised around the themes noted above. The summary report will include comments around issues arising, negotiation processes, resolution strategies, derived meanings, and outcomes. We will return the report to you for comment, amendment, or withdrawal of information. You will be asked to return your summary with any comments within two weeks of receiving it. If there are changes to be made, a revised summary report will be resent to you. Once the summary report is completed, you will be asked to sign a *Summary Report Deposit form*. This form will confirm that you are happy with the final summary report and give your permission for it to be used in the research. The summary report from your interview will be added to reports of interviews we do with others to see where there are similarities or differences in experiences.

Any information you might provide will be kept completely confidential and I will discuss you ways in which we can make sure that your details are kept anonymous. We can change any identifying names, places etc. Any information you provide will be stored in a secure archive throughout the research process. As I am part of a larger research project, information you provide may be made available to other members of the research team. This access will be under the strict supervision of Professor Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora, and Dr Tess Moeke-Maxwell. All the information will be treated with the utmost respect and sensitivity, and will be kept confidential to the Tangi Research Programme. You will not be directly identified in *any* circumstances.

Ultimately, the information that you provide to me will form part of my doctoral thesis. As part of the doctoral thesis, I am required to submit the final doctoral thesis to the University of Waikato. This will eventually be published on the University of Waikato Research Commons. The public can access this website. I will advise you how you can access the thesis if you would like to do so.

## **How will this benefit you?**

This research will increase our understanding of the experiences and responses that whānau/ families have to bereavement and grief and moving forward with their lives. In New Zealand, this is some literature available upon people with bicultural identity. However, there appears to be little information that explores this concerning bereavement and grief processes. Central to this topic is the rebuilding of identity (personal, social and cultural) without the presence and contact enjoyed prior to the death of a loved one. This study may provide knowledge about healthy choices, processes, and outcomes including negotiating conflict, perspective, and practice.

## **What are my rights and what can I expect from the researcher?**

You can:

- Ask questions at any point during the study.
- Ask for the audio recorder to be turned off any point during the interview.
- Decline to answer any specific questions.
- Withdraw from the research at any point during or after the interview.
- At any time during the research project ask to have the information you have provided changed if incorrect, added to or ask to have information removed.
- Expect to receive a summary of the final report and be given details of how to access the full report.
- Contact myself or my supervisors if you have any concerns, questions or would like further information about the study.
- Expect that the information you provide will be kept confidential and any identifying names or details are removed or disguised so that people will not recognise you in what has been written.

- Expect that information you provide will be kept in secure storage during the study and once the study is completed the audio recordings and transcripts (written records of the audio recordings) will be deleted and/or destroyed.

### **Contact Details**

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# Appendix C. Researcher Consent Form



## Different Coloured Tears: Perspectives on Bicultural Tangihanga and Bereavement.

### *Tangi Research Programme*

Māori and Psychology Research Unit  
University of Waikato

## CONSENT FORM

RESEARCHER'S COPY

**Name of Researcher:** Kiri Edge (PhD candidate)

**Tangi Research Programme Leaders:** Prof Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora & Dr Tess Moeke-Maxwell.

**Name of Supervisors:** Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora (PGS Chief Supervisor); Professor Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (PGS Supervisor); Dr. Neville Robertson (PGS Supervisor)

I have received an information sheet about this research project or the researcher has explained the study to me. I have had the chance to ask any questions and discuss my participation with other people. Any questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this research project and I understand that I may withdraw at any time. If I have any concerns about this project, I may contact the convenor of the Research and Ethics Committee (Dr Lewis Bizo, phone: xxxxxxxx extn xxxx, email [lbizo@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:lbizo@waikato.ac.nz)) or the Pro-Vice Chancellor Māori of the University of Waikato (Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith, xxxxxxxx extn xxxx, email [tuhiwai@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:tuhiwai@waikato.ac.nz)).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix D. Contributor Consent Form



## Different Coloured Tears: Perspectives on Bicultural Tangihanga and Bereavement.

### Tangi Research Programme

Māori and Psychology Research Unit  
University of Waikato

## CONSENT FORM

PARTICIPANT'S COPY

**Name of Researcher:** Kiri Edge (PhD candidate)

**Tangi Research Programme Leaders:** Prof Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora & Dr Tess Moeke-Maxwell.

**Name of Supervisors:** Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora (PGS Chief Supervisor); Professor Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (PGS Supervisor); Dr. Neville Robertson (PGS Supervisor)

I have received an information sheet about this research project or the researcher has explained the study to me. I have had the chance to ask any questions and discuss my participation with other people. Any questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this research project and I understand that I may withdraw at any time. If I have any concerns about this project, I may contact the convenor of the Research and Ethics Committee (Dr Lewis Bizo, phone: xxxxxxxx extn xxxx, email [lbizo@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:lbizo@waikato.ac.nz)) or the Pro-Vice Chancellor Māori of the University of Waikato (Professor Linda Tuhiwai Smith, xxxxxxxx extn xxxx, email [tuhiwai@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:tuhiwai@waikato.ac.nz)).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix E. Contributor Summary Report Deposit Form



## Different Coloured Tears: Perspectives on Bicultural Tangihanga and Bereavement.

### *Tangi Research Programme*

Māori and Psychology Research Unit  
University of Waikato

## Summary Report Deposit Form

PARTICIPANT COPY

**Name of Researcher:** Kiri Edge (PhD candidate)

**Tangi Research Programme Leaders:** Prof Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora & Dr Tess Moeke-Maxwell.

**Name of Supervisors:** Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora (PGS Chief Supervisor); Professor Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (PGS Supervisor); Dr. Neville Robertson (PGS Supervisor)

I have received a summary report of my interview. I have had an opportunity to make comment, suggest revisions or to have information withdrawn. I consent to the summary report of my interview becoming part of this study.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix F. Researcher Summary Deposit Form



## Different Coloured Tears: Perspectives on Bicultural Tangihanga and Bereavement.

### *Tangi Research Programme*

Māori and Psychology Research Unit  
University of Waikato

## Summary Report Deposit Form

RESEARCHER COPY

**Name of Researcher:** Kiri Edge (PhD candidate)

**Tangi Research Programme Leaders:** Prof Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora & Dr Tess Moeke-Maxwell.

**Name of Supervisors:** Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora (PGS Chief Supervisor); Professor Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (PGS Supervisor); Dr Neville Robertson (PGS Supervisor)

I have received a summary report of my interview. I have had an opportunity to make comment, suggest revisions or to have information withdrawn. I consent to the summary report of my interview becoming part of this study.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix G. Non-Anonymous Summary Report Deposit Form



## Different Coloured Tears: Perspectives on Bicultural Tangihanga and Bereavement.

### *Tangi Research Programme*

Māori and Psychology Research Unit  
University of Waikato

## Summary Report Deposit Form

RESEARCHER'S COPY

**Name of Researcher:** Kiri Edge (PhD candidate)

**Tangi Research Programme Leaders:** Prof Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora & Dr Tess Moeke-Maxwell.

**Name of Supervisors:** Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora (PGS Chief Supervisor); Professor Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (PGS Supervisor); Dr Neville Robertson (PGS Supervisor)

I have had an opportunity to make comment, suggest revisions or to have information withdrawn. I consent to the summary report of my interview becoming part of this study. As a participant in the above noted research, I have been informed of my right to be anonymous. However, I have specifically chosen for my real name to be disclosed in publications/presentations accompanying the research.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix H. Expert Information Sheet



## Different Coloured Tears: Perspectives on Bicultural Tangihanga and Bereavement.

### Tangi Research Programme

### Māori and Psychology Research Unit

### School of Māori & Pacific Development

### University of Waikato

<b>Expert and Professionals Information Sheet</b>
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**Name of Researcher:** Kiri Edge (PhD candidate)

**Tangihanga Research Programme Leaders:** Professor Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora, & Dr Tess Moeke-Maxwell.

**Research Supervisors:** Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora (PGS Chief Supervisor); Professor Ngahuia Te Awekotuku (PGS Supervisor); Dr. Neville Robertson (PGS Supervisor)

*Whānau/families that include both Māori and Pākehā cultures number significantly in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This study is exploring how Māori and Pākehā bicultural whānau experience and respond to bereavement. The research is being conducted amongst two groups of people. Firstly, with individuals who belong to Māori and Pākehā bicultural whānau and their personal experiences of bereavement. Secondly, these whānau/families engage with a range of individuals and organisations in expert and/or professional roles. Marae representatives, kaumātua and kuia, funeral directors, religious ministers and in some cases, coroners may play important roles in supporting and mediating bereavement processes for bicultural whānau.*

## **What is the Study about?**

You are being invited to take part in a study about the bereavement experiences of people who belong to a whānau/family that is both Pākehā and Māori. We are interested in exploring how Māori and Pākehā bicultural whānau/families negotiate choices, cultural worlds, rituals and meanings within deciding, organising and enacting the funeral/tangi for a loved one. This research will focus upon negotiation, conflict and resolution processes. The research aims to contribute to understanding Māori and Pākehā bicultural bereavement and identify strategies that may support these whānau/families through bereavement.

You have been asked to take part in this study because you have been identified as being connected to a professional and/or expert role in the area of funerals/tangi. We hope to talk to people from a range of roles that include marae representatives, kaumātua, kuia, funeral directors, celebrants, religious ministers and coroners, so that we can gain different perspectives and experiences. Unfortunately, it may not be possible to interview everyone that would like to be involved in this research. If we need to limit the numbers of people, we will select people that differ from each other in terms of the roles or positions that they hold.

## **Who is collecting the information and conducting the study?**

I am PhD candidate from the Māori & Psychology Research Unit University of Waikato. I will be supervised by Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora; Professor Ngahuia Te Awekotuku and Dr Neville Robertson.

This project is part of the larger Tangi Research Programme being conducted in collaboration between the Māori and Psychology Research Unit and the School of Māori and Pacific Development based at University of Waikato. The Tangi Research Programme is an academic research study upon traditional and contemporary Māori cultural practices associated with dying, death and bereavement. This research sits alongside a wide range of research topics including *Palliative care of Māori and Their Whānau*,

*Rangatahi experiences of Tangihanga and Children's understandings of Tangihanga.* There are some contact details for the principle researchers at the bottom of this information sheet. You are welcome to make contact with them if you have any questions regarding this research.

## **What will I be asked to do?**

With your permission, I would like you to take part in an interview or series of interviews with me and possibly one of my University Supervisors. This interview will be arranged for at a time and venue that suits you. The interview should take approximately an hour, depending on what you would like to discuss with me. You are welcome to have any others present during the interview. We would like to explore with you the following topics but would encourage you to share your knowledge and experiences in the way that makes best sense to you.

- **Role/Position and the organisation/entity concerned.** Describe the role or position that you hold and the organisation or entity that you belong to.
- **Role within bicultural bereavement processes.** Describe the specific role(s) or processes that you may be involved in, in terms of bicultural bereavement processes.
- **Knowledge, Perspectives and Experiences of bicultural bereavement.** Share your knowledge, perspectives and/or experiences of bicultural bereavement processes gained through your roles/positions in bicultural bereavement events. This may include conflict, negotiation, resolution processes and resources, constraints, protocols or legal issues that may impact on bicultural bereavement processes.
- **Further comments, issues or suggestions.** Any other aspects, issues or suggestions that may help us to understand bicultural bereavement and supporting whānau/families through this process.



Following the interview, we may telephone you for further information or ask for a second interview to follow up on things we may have missed in the first interview. The things you tell us in these conversations will also be incorporated into the interview summary report

### **What will happen with my information?**

The interview(s) will be audio taped and we may take written notes during these. From these things, we will develop a summary report of the interview(s) organised around the themes noted above. We will return the report to you for comment, amendment, or withdrawal of information. You will be asked to return your summary with any comments within two weeks of receiving it. If there are changes to be made, a revised summary report will be resent to you. Once the summary report is completed, you will be asked to sign a *Summary Report Deposit* form. This form will confirm that you are happy with the final summary report and give your permission for it to be used in the research. The summary report from your interview will be added to reports of interviews we do with others to see where there are similarities or differences in experiences.

Any information you might provide will be kept completely confidential and I will discuss you ways in which we can make sure that your details are kept anonymous. We can change any identifying names, places etc. However, it will be necessary to provide a brief description of the specific role that you play in bereavement events e.g. ‘marae representative’ ‘funeral director’, to give some background to the information provided. Any information you provide will be stored in a secure archive throughout the research process. As I am part of a larger research project, information you provide may be made available to other members of the research team. This access will be under the strict supervision of Professor Ngahuia Te Awekotuku, Associate Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora, and Dr Tess Moeke-Maxwell. All the information will be treated with the utmost respect and sensitivity, and will be kept confidential to the “Tangi Research Programme.” You will not be directly identified in *any* circumstances. If you would like to be specifically identified in the research, we will need your written consent to do so.

Ultimately, the information that you provide to me will form part of my Doctoral Thesis. As part of the Doctoral Thesis, I am required to submit the final Doctoral Thesis to the University of Waikato. This will eventually be published on the University of Waikato Research Commons. The public can access this website. I will advise you how you can access the Doctoral Thesis if you would like to do so. I am also able to provide you with a summary of the Doctoral Thesis.

### **How will this benefit you?**

In participating in this study, you will have to opportunity to present your knowledge, experiences and perspectives and provide information to others about different roles/positions that play a part in bicultural bereavement events. The research will increase our understanding of the experiences and responses that Māori and Pākehā bicultural whānau/ families have to bereavement and grief and moving forward with their lives. There is currently little or no research on this topic. The research will explore personal experiences of individuals alongside professional and expert perspectives. This will extend the understandings and provide insights and strategies for supporting Māori and Pākehā bicultural whānau/families through bereavement. Such outcomes may potentially inform policy and practise that impact on bereavement processes undertaken by Māori and Pākehā bicultural whānau/families.

### **What are my rights and what can I expect from the researcher?**

You can:

- Ask questions at any point during the study.
- Ask for the audio recorder to be turned off any point during the interview.
- Decline to answer any specific questions.
- Withdraw from the research at any point during or after the interview.

- At any time during the research project ask to have the information you have provided changed if incorrect, added to or ask to have information removed.
- Expect to receive a summary of the final report and be given details on how to access the full report.
- Contact myself or my supervisors if you have any concerns, questions or would like further information about the study.
- Expect that the information you provide will be kept confidential and identifying names or details are removed or disguised so that people will not recognise you in what has been written.
- Expect that information you provide will be kept in secure storage during the study and once the study is completed the audio recordings and transcripts (written records of the audio recordings) will be deleted and/or destroyed.

### **Contact Details**

Kiri Edge

Department of Psychology

University of Waikato

Private Bag 3105

Hamilton

Email: [ke8@students.waikato.ac.nz](mailto:ke8@students.waikato.ac.nz). Telephone: [deleted]

Professor Linda Waimarie Nikora

Department of Psychology

University of Waikato

Private Bag 3105

Hamilton

Email: [psyc2046@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:psyc2046@waikato.ac.nz). Telephone: [deleted]

# Appendix I. Coroner Wallace Bain's Paper

## Background Paper "Body Snatching"

1. The issues surrounding custom and the rules of tikaanga in Maori burial and the rights to the body have been highlighted recently by the Court of Appeal in the Takamore case.
2. That Court of Appeal judgement is very comprehensive. The Court found that the partner Ms Clarke was the Executrix of the Will and Mr Takamore had directed his body be buried. It also found that the family of Mr Takamore had taken his body unlawfully and that Ms Clarke was entitled to the possession of his body as the Executrix.
3. The argument that Maori custom was recognised as part of the Common Law but was to prevail was rejected and the test of reasonableness was not met. This was primarily because the family had used force to take the body and had no agreement.
4. The Court concluded that the modern approach to Customary Law was to integrate that into the Common Law relating to burial. Those indigenous practices can then be taken into account when decisions are made and if a consensus is not reached then the Executor has the final decision. The Court was very clear that the family of Mr Takamore had no legal authority at all to take his body.
5. However, the Court also recognised that an Executor should facilitate culturally appropriate processes for discussion and negotiation amongst the whanau as to the place of burial.
6. There have been a number of cases in more recent times of disputes about where a body should be buried and in some cases physically snatching the body and sometimes having it buried against the wishes of others and against Court Orders. The Takamore case is "classic" because a family took a body without authority, a High Court Injunction to

prevent the burial was ignored, their appeal process has found that what they did in taking the body was unlawful.

7. The body now has to be exhumed.
8. But there is the case in 2010 concerning the Osborne family. The children were found dead in Melbourne and the mother had to fight to have the bodies returned. The Coroner there had jurisdiction and ruled the bodies had to be returned to the mother and the former partner was not entitled to them.
9. In 2008 there was a case of Mrs Ngahooro in Hamilton whose body was snatched from the back of a hearse adjacent to the funeral home where the service was to be held shortly thereafter. It was snatched by an estranged daughter who the mother had made clear she did not want to see prior to death. Mrs Ngahooro was pakeha but she had been married to a Maori man.
10. The daughter who snatched the body was stopped by Police on the outskirts of Hamilton and there was a negotiation for an hour. The Police reached the view that they could not intervene and allowed the body to be taken to Taumaranui. In the end after considerable television publicity every night on the news and terrible stress on the family the arrangement was reached whereby she was finally buried in the Hamilton cemetery with all the family present which was the original intention.
11. There is the case also of Lisa Marshaii-McMenamin whose body was snatched from a Lower Hutt funeral home by her biological father and taken to Ruatoria. Despite a High Court Order the body was buried there. This was despite a wish from the deceased that she wished to be cremated in Lower Hutt. By the time the High Court Order was made for the body to be returned to Lower Hutt she had already been buried and again there was criticism for the Police for not having intervened. At that point the Police apparently had a view that it was a Civil matter, there was no property in a body and they could not intervene.

12. However, the Law is clear in that there is property in the casket or shroud in which the body is kept and also any clothes and it is theft to take them.

There was another occasion in 2008 where in Invercargill there was a dispute between whanau about wanting to claim the body for burial back in the North Island. The body was buried and the South Island whanau placed a tree across the grave to prevent it being taken.

13. Body snatching and disputes over a body is not unique to Maori. Issues occur in families where one maybe Maori and the other Pakeha and there are also recorded incidences of disputes between Pakeha over a body.
14. There was another case in 2008 of Ujdur. This was a Maori man and a Pakeha wife. The central issue here was not body snatching but the wife was the Executor of the Will having control of the body and preventing the Maori family from accessing or viewing the body, not allowing them to farewell their brother, sister or son, not advising where the body was and then having the body cremated. That was a situation where the body was under the control of the Coroner until such time as the Coroner was Statutorily bound to release it to the Executor widow and it was at that point that access was denied.
15. The Ujdur decision addressed all of this area about Maori customary practices concerning death, access to a body and the issues surrounding body snatching. The Findings proposed a Law change which would overcome all of these concerns. This was done after consulting widely with Maori leaders.
16. It is also noted that the then Cabinet Minister Jim Anderton called for Law change and asked for the matter to be referred to the Law Commission.
17. The Law Commission is currently conducting a review of the Burial and Cremation Act and as part of its Terms of Reference it is looking

at the care and custody of the body and will be addressing these issues.

18. The Ujdur Findings said the Amendment of the Coroners Act provides quick and easy and no cost solutions. The problem at the moment is that only 20% of deaths in New Zealand have to be reported to Coroners. Most of these situations of "body snatching" arise where the Coroner is not involved. Then it is over to the Executor or those who have possession of the body to determine matters and that is when arguments can arise. But when Coroners have a death reported to them, then they have by Law exclusive jurisdiction and the right to custody of the body and they determine when and to whom the body is released.
19. The Coroner also has the statutory power to give directions about the removal, viewing and touching of the body.
20. The simple Amendment proposed in Ujdur was to Amend the Coroners Act so that families could get speedy resolution to family disputes over where a body was to be buried and to whom it was to be released. The decision makes it clear that : a). Coroners are highly trained and deal with matters surrounding death.
  - b). They deal with these types of disputes in respect of the 20% that are reported to them. Quite often there are arguments between families of all races about who is entitled to the release of the body, custody and control, burial or cremation.
  - c) Coroners resolve the matters because at all times they have the custody of the body.
21. Disputes about custody of the body and burial go back centuries with Maori and it has been resolved in accordance with customs and protocol. It has been very rare indeed that the body has been "snatched" and the disputes take place on the Marae with the body there.

22. The Ujdur proposal was that any member of the public, a funeral director or Police Officer should be able to report a death to a Coroner at any time if there appeared to be a dispute over custody or burial. The Coroner then could Judicially consider the exercise of a discretion and take possession of that body immediately and resolve the dispute. The Coroner in the Coroner's Court has wide powers as Judges and can apply the Summary of Proceedings Act. Coroners are skilled at family mediation and in reaching resolution in all matters associated with death.
23. The Ujdur decision said it was very demeaning for families, and in particular Maori customary practices, for these matters concerning arguments over the body to be debated in a public manner and reported all over the news media.
24. Whilst in Parliament the Progressive Party Leader Jim Anderton called for clearer procedures to be put in place or spell out what happens to the person after death. Since the Takamore case he has been reported "as having laughed at New Zealand Legal system for 'passing the buck', on a woman's long battle to retrieve the stolen body of her dead husband".
25. Mr Anderton said the Law needs to stop family disputes after burials and he felt the Courts were passing the buck by continually sending it back to the families even though they were making orders which were not enforced.
26. It now appears that these situations were not rare and were becoming more common although there a very few that involve actual physically taking the body. In the 20% of cases that are reported to Coroners, there are often disputes about a number of issues including who was entitled to the custody and the release of the body.
27. Although the High Court has Jurisdiction on application and expertise to resolve an issue as can be seen in the Takamore case, it is a long winded and time consuming and very costly process. This Takamore case epitomises the position. The widow had to get an urgent



injunction from the High Court to prevent the burial and this was ignored. Then she had to go to the High Court and have a full hearing and receive a judgement in her favour. This was ignored. The matter then proceeded to the Court of Appeal and that has been a very lengthy and costly process. She now has been reaffirmed as having entitlement to the body absolutely and

those that took it have been held to have acted unlawfully as indeed they were by the High Court. Yet she still has not had the body returned. The cost to her must have been enormous, not only in monetary terms must in emotional terms.

28. Any reform needs to provide a simple and inexpensive process determined by a Judicial Officer who is highly trained in dealing with all matters associated with death. It needs to preserve the privacy and dignity for families, keep them out of the media and get a relatively instant resolution. Reform does not prevent Maori following their traditional customary practices on the Marae where in effect the more family members that put forward proposals and arguments to take the body for burial the more respect is accorded to the dead person. That is a long standing traditional practice and that practice can continue. It is only if there can be no agreement and there is attempt to take the body by force, stealth or otherwise, that an amendment giving power to Coroners would then apply.

November  
2011

Dr Wallace  
Bain

## **Appendix J. Hinekahukura Aranui- Barrett's Paper**

*-Tangihanga and Pakeha Burials.*

*By Hinekahukura Barrett-Aranui*

*A multitude of differences are noted when we analyse how Maori and Pakeha process through the death and burial procedures. This dissertation attempts to look at several of these to clearly define some of those differences.*

*The first activity is the death of the person and how it is dealt with. For Maori it is a release of emotions and a letting go of, or giving permission to the dying so that the person is able to let go of the living. For the deceased it is essential to have whanau and friends surround him/her so that s/he is not alone during that important time of stepping into the unknown. Often the hands of the person is held and there is a prayer or karakia that is chanted to allow the person to let go. Although this activity is done by Pakeha, with prayers and an anointing by a priest, more often, there is just a small group or just the parents or close relative to see the person take his/her last breath. For Maori the wailing and emotional expressions start at the very time the person takes the last breath. Crying and farewells are said by the whanau and everyone is allowed the freedom to express emotional grief. This can take a couple of hours or more, depending on the closeness of whanau members. For Pakeha there is almost an*

*immediate decision to prepare the body for despatch into the morgue.*

*While the whanau is expressing their grief, there is a move to discuss what will happen next, where the body will lie in state, and how long the tangihanga will take place. All this is discussed before the body is moved anywhere, so that members will know who will be coming from long distances, and who will stay with the body so that it is never alone. The fear that the body can be taken away by a member not present is always in their minds; so a person or persons are designated to make sure that the next activities are conducted safely and with dignity. The body is never left to lie alone. In fact the body is now tapu and must be respected at all times. The whanau is present and will conduct the body's cleaning and dressing, and will take the body to a marae or to the person's home before the marae. Pakeha would have designated a funeral attendant to deal with everything and usually leaves them to deal with the body's cleaning and dressing before leaving the body in the parlour until such time as it is collected for burial.*

*From that time on, the procedures are definitely different. At the marae, close whanau and friends come to pay their respects. On entry, or at the powhiri, stories are told of their link to the deceased . Whether they are linked by bloodlines or work systems or friendships they are told and there are no holds barred. Both anger and sorrow is expressed by everyone who enters the marae. Whakapapa is always the*

*opening gambit and this helps people to see where each whanau is linked, or each person is inter-related to the deceased, The stories can be funny or sad, but they are told. There are tears and laughter shared by all. In fact from the time the deceased arrives at the marae, the poroporoaki are expressed. For most of the visitors, they stay until the burial takes place. If not a koha is placed either in the kitchen or on the paepae to compensate for their absence. It is usual for everyone to make sure they come before the burial day. It is not good manners to leave the visit for the last day.*

*While the deceased body lies in the funeral parlour for Pakeha, people are able to visit the parlour for them to say their last farewells. Depending on the closeness of the family, sometimes someone sits with the body in solitude. It is not until the burial time that large masses of people will attend and listen to one or two people say their poroporoaki or whatever. So family does not always know who has attended and what their relationship was to their loved one.*

*The burial itself is another procedure that maybe different. The hole is dug by whanau members or someone close who knows where the body will lie. There is a separate meal for these guys and they are given a separate time for their meals and the burial itself, and they are respected for the task they will undertake. When the service is over the people stay until the hole is filled in by the same guys. The whanau pretty up the grave site before they come back to the hakari on the marae. As far as Pakeha is concerned they are*

*paying for the burial and so after the church service and the coffin is lowered into place, the whanau may say a few words but fundamentally the show is over and the people are asked to come back to the church for a cup of tea. It is at this point that often people will approach strangers and ask where they fit into the family or the workplace. It seems a roundabout way of dealing with relationships etc.*

*For Maori the grieving is not over. A year from that time there is an unveiling of a gravestone or memorial stone that the whanau will plan and execute. Depending on the status of the deceased it could be a large or small affair. But this will happen, as this is an opportunity for the whanau to say thank you to the people who gave so much in the way of awhi, aroha manaaki and tautoko. For the Pakeha a card is sufficient to express their thanks to the people. There is an economic difference, but the values felt by people at the Maori Tangihanga cannot be assessed by monetary means. It is really a very valued exercise that will not be forgotten by Maori because there is mana in all of that, and the heartfelt values cannot be measured.*

*As was mentioned earlier there are definite differences in the procedures of tangihanga and burials. I will relate what happened to me when my own mother died in her home in Mokau. She wanted to die with her whanau at home around her. They were not all there, but the ones she wanted were around her. We discussed procedures from then and settled that she was to lie in state where she wanted to be, and that*

*was in Piopio at Mokaukohunui Marae. But there were lots of things we had to do first and foremost. We respected the fact we needed to let the Police and district nurse know, and that was done straight away. Then we had to have her prepared by a funeral director for her last journey on Papatuanuku. She had died on the Sunday evening, a cousin offered her station-wagon and we took her out Monday morning through the front door. We had to call in to see her doctor for the death certificate before we went to Te Kuiti to the funeral director there. So the journey home started for her in Mokau. We collected the death certificate and proceeded to Te Kuiti not knowing that she was to direct our journey. All through that journey we stopped and started about five times. Each time it was at a place where she could see a familiar marae or landmark. Each time I we stopped I talked to her about the different people who had lived at those places. It was not until we were close to Te Kuiti that she made us stop at a very awkward place. No matter what my husband would o the car would not move. There were no marae available and we wondered what message she was giving us. Then the realisation came that she had always stated that she did not want to lie on the Te Kuiti Marae. She had her reasons and I was to later realise what that was After the talk we had together she allowed us to go forward. On arriving in Te Kuiti she paid her respects to Tokanganui-a noho the Te Kuiti Marae then we went to the funeral director. Preparation time was going to take a while so I took my father away to another whanau member to rest and prepare himself for the next few*

*days. On the way we were stopped by a kaumatua fro the Te Kuiti Marae, asking for Mum's presence to be at the Marae. My mother had taught me well. My reply was.*

*"She had always come to Te Kuiti for any of the tangi held there, now it is Ngati Rora's turn to come to hers."*

*The words seem to roll out without my thinking and I knew that this was what my mother was preparing me for. The kaumatua respected my plea and stated that they would be at Mokaukohunui in the morning. True to his word Ngati Rora came with a huge group. This allowed the immediate whanau to gather on the Monday and prepare for the visitors who would attend. On the journey to her marae we had no stoppages. The car went smoothly back to Piopio until we arrived at the gate to the marae. She stalled us in the middle of the road, and in hindsight I believe she wanted to know if her son was coming to help me. Yes he was following the cortege that was taking my mother home to her beloved marae.*

*In discussing the state of the car the owner stated that her car had never behaved like that before, so even though a person dies, the learning and teaching still carries on for the people that matter. Her tangihanga was huge and the people came from all over the country. She had nurtured many people and they came to pay their respects to a person who had provided them with aroha, awhi, manaaki and tautoko; the very same values that help us all to survive the vagaries*

*of life. I have a lot to be thankful for, she teaches me still to be quiet and humble, to listen and consider, to watch and learn from people around me.*

*To reflect on the reasons why the deceased is never allowed to lie alone, I can only relate something that happened to me when a nephew died in Kaingaroa. This nephew had married here and had fathered children who provided him with precious mokopuna. He was born in Te Kuiti and was brought up with his brothers and sister in Piopio; but he had left at 15 years of age, to find a job in Kaingaroa and had lived there for some time now, almost forty years. As an aged aunt I was asked to accompany the whanau to his tangi. There are certain duties expected from kaumatua such as I, so I called on another whanau member to accompany me.*

*On the journey I expressed a concern that had bothered me since hearing about this tangi. This person should come home to his parent's urupa and perhaps our marae in Napinapi; how do we approach that, and what do we do about his family? As we talked I could almost hear my mother say to me,*

*“Be careful now, do not forget about the family who has nurtured him for so long.”*

*So we arrived all together at his home where he was taken to before his arrival at the local marae. It was near dark and we were welcomed by his own family. From the time we*



*arrived until late into the night, there was a steady stream of people who came to visit and stay. The house was large but soon the house needed to stretch some more. This was a good sign for him, but not so good for me. The whanau knew that I had come early to consider taking him home to his parents, and already the passage for me was being blocked by family and friends. That was OK by me, because I knew that he was being treated like a rangatira here by people who respected and knew him well. If I was to take him home to Piopio, would he have been treated like a rangatira by people who had not seen him for so long? These are the things that weighed our decision to leave him be amongst the people who respected and honoured his journey to the tuupuna on the other side. Even when we took him to the marae, the ladies who held vigil would remind the young people not to leave him alone as I was there, and I would take him away if there was any show of disrespect. The old people knew and they respected our presence throughout the tangi. The follow-up for that was a visit by the wife and children to a tangi in Piopio the following year to bring his spirit back to his parents lying there at Arapae. That was the kawē mate that was kept and honoured by the people who cared for him all those years. It is the reason why there is such a thing as “body snatching”. If a deceased is not cared for properly and with dignity, one can only condone the efforts of whanau who want to take the deceased home where it is honoured and cared for. So if one is in a Maori tangi situation one needs to follow the protocols set. The consequences can be very distasteful.*

*I do not know of any procedure like this that would happen in the Pakeha world. Even in death the body of a deceased is treated with the respect of a rangatira.*

## Appendix K. Presentations and Publications

- 2015 Edge, K (2015, July). *Reflecting Back and Moving Forward: More than 'Ethics', More than 'Participants', More than 'Research'*. Paper presented at Te Waka Rangahau Hinengaro Research Seminar. Massey University, Auckland.
- 2014 Edge, K (2014, November) *Research Outcomes from the Tangi Research Programme and Different Coloured Tears doctoral study*. Paper presented at Ngapae O Te Maramatānga IRAP Seminar. Langham Conference Centre, Auckland.
- 2014 Edge, K (2014, November). *Different Coloured Tears: Whānau, Expert and Professional Perspectives of Bicultural Bereavement-a doctoral study in progress*. Paper presented at the Māori and Psychology Research Unit Scholarship Symposium. University of Waikato, Hamilton.
- 2013 Edge, K. (2013). Different Coloured Tears: Bicultural Bereavement-a Study. *Psychology Aotearoa*, 5(1), 64-67.
- 2013 Edge, K (2013). *NZ Law Commission Burial and Cremation Law Review: The Treaty in Practice...or is it?* Guest Lecture for PSYC575: Psychological Applications of the Treaty of Waitangi. University of Waikato, Hamilton.
- 2013 Nikora, L. W., Edge, K., & Te Awekotuku, N. (2013). *Colouring our Tears - Whose complexions and complexities prevail? A discussion of mixed heritage death rituals in Aotearoa / New Zealand*. Paper presented at the Critical Ethnic Studies Conference, 19-22 September, University of Illinois, Chicago, IL, USA.
- 2012 Nikora, L.W., Te Awekotuku, N., & Edge, K. (2012, November). *Bereavement, conflict and contest: When the personal becomes*

- professional*. Paper presented at the 2012 Contemporary Ethnography across the Disciplines Conference, the University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand.
- 2011 McRae, K.O. & Edge, K.(2011). *Death, Dying and Bereavement in Aotearoa*. Guest Lecture for PSYC102: Social & Development Psychology. University of Waikato, Hamilton.
- 2011 Edge, K., Nikora, L.W., Moeke-Maxwell, T. (2011, 28 June). *Different Coloured Tears: Moving Forward and Reflecting Back*. Paper presented at the Death Down Under Inaugural conference, The University of Sydney Australia.
- 2011 Edge, K., Nikora, L.W., Moeke-Maxwell, T. (2011, 14 April). *Different Coloured Tears: Moving Forward and Reflecting Back*. Paper presented at the Faculty of Arts & Social Science Kīngitanga Day Programme, The University of Waikato.
- 2011 Edge, K., Nikora, L. W., & Rua, M. (2011). Different Coloured Tears: dual cultural identity and Tangihanga. *MAI Review* (1), 1-16.
- 2011 Edge, K (2011). *Bicultural Bereavement Research Methodologies*. Guest lecture for Professor Ngahuia Te Awekotuku in TIKA509-10A: Te Mahi Rangahau: Māori and Pasifika Research Methods and Issues. A Postgraduate course in the School of Māori and Pacific Development. University of Waikato.
- 2010 Edge, K. (2010). *Dual Cultural identity and Tangihanga: Conflict, Resolution, and Unexpected Outcomes*. Māori & Psychology Research Unit, School of Psychology, University of Waikato. Summer Research Internship.
- 2010 Jacob, J., Edge, K., & Topperwien, K. (2010, 11 November). *Tangi Research Programme, Faculty of Arts & Social Science Student Panel Presentation*. Paper presented at the Death Studies in Aotearoa/New Zealand Symposium, The University of Waikato.

- 2010 Edge, K., Nikora, L. W., & Rua, M. (2010, 6-9 June). *Dual cultural identity and tangihanga: Conflict, resolution and unexpected outcomes*. Paper presented at the Nga Pae o te Maramatānga 4th International Indigenous Conference: Mātauranga Taketake: Traditional Knowledge, The University of Auckland.
- 2010 Edge, K., & Nikora, L. W. (2010). *Different coloured tears: dual cultural identity and Tangihanga*. Directed study Tangi Research Programme Working Paper no.2. Hamilton: The Māori & Psychology Research Unit. URL: <http://hdl.handle.net/10289/4237>