

Nā Matt Calman

Te Reo Māori (level 4) ākongā at Ara/Te Pukenga ki Ōtautahi.

Tēnā koutou katoa e te iti, e te rahi kua eke mai nei kia whakanui Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori me te Manawa Reo, me te Māketete Māori.

I te taha o tōku pāpā

E heke ana ngā roimata ki runga a Maungatautari, nei rā te uri whakaheke o Tainui waka.

Ko ngā aumangea o te heketanga i Kāwhia, i pīrere atu rā ki ngā wai puahiri o Kapiti.

Ka timu te tai o Raukawa, ka heru te tai o Whakaraupō.

Ko Ngāi Tahu, ko Ngāti Raukawa, ko Ngāti Toa, ko Ngāti Koata, ko Ngāti Rārua ngā iwi.

Piki mai rā te hapū Ngāti Wheke me tō mātou maunga Te Poho o Tamatea Pōkai Whenua.

Ko Rāpaki, Ko Takapūwāhia, ko Wehi Wehi ngā marae.

E tangi atu ana ahau mō tōku kui, a Karoraina Meri Peneta, tōku kaitiaki kei tua o te ārai.

Moe mai rā e te tākerekere a Te Rauparaha nui.

Tō reo Rangatira, kua ngaro.

E mauria ana tō reo.

E mauria ana tō reo, kei kōnei, ki Ara.

Ko Matt Calman tōku ingoa

Kia kaha, Kia māia, Kia manawanui

Tīhei Mauriora!

Ko tēnei te Wiki o Te Reo Māori. Mā wai tō tātou reo rangatira, e toa? Māku? I whakatipu ahau ki Ōtautahi, i roto ki te ao Pakeha. E waru ōku tau i te wā mōhio he Māori au. I eke mai ahau ki Ara i tērā tau kia puritia te reo. Kua whakatipua tōku taha Māori ki kōnei. E manawanui ana ahau kia tū kaha ki te ao Māori, ki te ao Pākeha.

In this, Māori Language week, who will be a champion for our chiefly language? Me? I grew up in Christchurch in the Pākehā world. I didn't even know I was Māori till I was about 8 years old. I arrived at Ara last year to really ignite my language journey after decades of winging it on my own. It was a massive step for me to come to Te Puna Wānaka to study at 45 years old. Tūwhitia te hopo, mairangitia te angitū! Feel the fear and do it anyway! My Māori identity has been nourished here at Ara.

What I love about te ao Māori is that all the people big and small have a role to fill, and something to offer. Each person is important to the success or failure of the collective. It was fairly late in the day yesterday when the schedule for today's event was posted to our class's Messenger group. I was somewhat surprised to read my name in the Keynote speaker space. In brackets it read "Stan to confirm with Matt". Stan, our fearless leader at Te Puna Wānaka, is a very, very busy man, and 'no', Stan had not been in touch (though he maintains this was due to a clerical error not of his doing). I was actually committed to another Kaupapa, but I wanted to fulfil the role that was asked of me, and for once I had something I wanted to say.

No one who signs up to study te reo Māori does so lightly. Many of my classmates from this and last year have carried with them the heavy baggage of language trauma. We have grappled with our Māori identities most of our lives. Some of my colleagues have suffered upbringings blighted by not only not knowing their own language, but by stinging racism. We feel deeply the loss of the reo suffered by our grandparent's, and great grandparent's generations, the language ripped from their young throats. Alongside experiences so painful and horrific they no longer wanted to be Māori, and steered their children away from their culture. My own father left home at 19 to work in Hamilton in the 1950s and was told by his mother not to be Māori out there. So, he wasn't. When he told me when I was 8 that I – that we – were Māori he had no mātauranga of what that even meant to pass on to me because he didn't know anything. I've been trying to reconnect severed ties to my taha Māori all my

life. The responsibility to our tīpuna is heavy. But we are here because we want to change the situation. We want better for our children.

E pātai anō au ai, mā wai tō tātou reo rangatira, e toa? E harikoa ana ahau hei kanohi Māori mō Ara. Kei te pai. Engari, ānei tētahi wero ki ngā manukura me te tumuaki o Ara / Te Pukenga. Whakawātea te ara mō mātou. Kua e kati ngā kuaha o te mātauranga. I ask again who will be the champion of te reo Māori? I am happy to be one of the Māori faces of Ara, to stand at mihi whakatau and help greet visitors, to stand and haka for the graduates tomorrow at graduation. But I have a challenge for the leadership of Ara/ Te Pukenga. To clear the path for our te reo journey. Stop shutting doors, but rather open them.

When I arrived at Ara my life changed overnight, thanks to the support of my classmates, the incredible teachers and the tikanga Māori environment at our whare Te Mātauranga Māori, which was established by the sweat of many kaumatua who have passed whose photos proudly adorn its walls. I can't even imagine the challenges they faced to make this place a reality for us. Surely, we don't want to let them down.

I am now enrolled in te reo Māori level 4, and even in the last few months the improvement in my reo has been significant. But When I arrived last June to do level 3, I didn't realise I would graduate in December then wait more than 6 months for the next intake of level four to go ahead, the course deferred. I didn't appreciate the delivery of the courses that were being offered here was in any doubt. The pathway to level 5 next year is even less certain. And if it were to go ahead as a full-time option in 2024, after laying dormant for several years, I and my fellow ākonga face a more than tripling of our fees – a massive barrier to most. Gaining a basic understanding of te reo and tikanga is hugely valuable, but those who commit to Te Reo Māori to level 4 and beyond will be true champions of the reo. We will serve our communities, our institutions, and our whānau.

The waka was re-floated 51 years ago with the Māori Language Petition, spearheaded by 22-year-old Hana Te Hemara, Ngā Tamatoa, and the Te Reo Māori Society. Ordinary, yet extraordinary, people who stood up to those in power and said “We’re not happy with how Māori are being treated in Aotearoa, we deserve access to our language, and we’re no longer willing to accept the status quo!” How wonderful it is that in 2023 people from all

walks of life all over the motu are jumping aboard the Te Reo Māori waka. Yet I still feel like I'm fighting for access to my reo Rangatira.

My challenge is to the leadership of Ara / Te Pukenga to match our commitment and be true champions of te reo Māori. To strengthen the path of learners, rather than blocking it. Commit to the continuous delivery of the courses, allow our amazing Kaiako to deliver what they have created for us, entice the learners to flock back here by setting reasonable fees beyond level 4. Why not clear the path for us to be able to see our way to gain a degree here if we want to. Yes, we have a very steadfast few who have neared the end of their degrees currently, have done the mahi, and they are still jumping through hoops to reach their destination. The path of learning itself is hard enough, without questioning whether your course will go ahead or if there is even a viable pathway for you here. You could make Ara the place to go come to for reo ākongā from all round the country. The strides in my reo journey have been large, but my unrest is borne from the uncertainty ahead. I don't want the journey here to end. I want more. Just go somewhere else? Kāo! I came here! The connections I have made here are strong.

We deserve better.

Despite all the positives in my reo journey I have been feeling particularly conflicted. The mauri in Te Puna Wānaka has been disrupted and it needs to be restored. The problems are not new, and tōno have been made behind closed doors for some time. But the will to make the necessary changes seems to have been lacking. It seems no one is listening. Others may not be able to complain publicly, but I am not bound by anybody or anything to remain silent when those around me are suffering, when something is not tika. I have a vision for Te Reo Māori here.

To the leadership of Ara, what is your vision? Will you step up and become champions of te reo Māori? Ko tēnā te manawa ora - that is the hope.

Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā rā tātou katoa. Tuturu whakamāua kia tina! Tina! Haumi ē! Hui ē! Tāiki ē!