

Media Statement

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Te Mātāwai announces inaugural leadership

Te Mātāwai - the new body set up to lead te reo Māori revitalisation on behalf of iwi and Māori - has elected Waihoroi Shortland as chair and Mereana Selby as deputy chair to head the establishment phase of the new organisation over the next six months.

Mr Shortland, a renowned Māori language advocate, is the representative appointed by the cluster of iwi from Te Tai Tokerau. Ms Selby is Te Tumuaki (Chief Executive) at Te Wānanga o Raukawa and was appointed to Te Mātāwai by the education Te Reo Tūkutuku (Māori language stakeholder) cluster.

Te Mātāwai has been holding its inaugural meeting in Ōtaki this week.

Waihoroi Shortland says the hui was invigorating and productive and had made real progress on work needed to establish the foundation upon which the relationship between Māori and the Crown can work together to breathe new life into Māori language initiatives.

“Kua takoto te papa, me tīmata ngā mahi - the foundation is down, the work can begin,” he said.

“It was an amazing experience to observe the myriad of skill sets Māoridom had assembled at the board table each driven by a passion for te reo.

“More opportunities for people across society at every level to begin their individual or collective journey to Māori language actualisation is the challenge the Minister of Māori Development has laid before us and we have accepted.

“We have put in place working groups who by the end of the year lead to the appointment of a Chief Executive Officer, negotiate a purchase agreement with the Minister, and set up the inaugural Rūnanga Reo (an executive group of board members) who will engage directly with responsible cabinet ministers, to plan a strategic way forward for te reo Māori initiatives.”

Mr Shortland said the board had deliberately set the two appointments to cover the establishment of the board over the next six months to allow it time to assess the broader responsibilities that come with the positions announced today.

“We may be a new organisation with much to do ahead of us, but we can move forward knowing that the future survival of the language relies on us all - the Crown and Māori - coming up with the means to change the Māori language landscape,” he said.

“Work on that shared vision begins with our inaugural meeting with Government Ministers at the end of next month,” said Mr Shortland.

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