

Paper for Reo Strategy 2013 – submitted by Bernie O’Donnell, General Manager – Radio Waatea

The proposed new entity Te Maataawai formally includes iwi into the reo Strategy. I support the idea but qualify that with the view that the emphasis for the next decade should be to start convincing all New Zealanders that te reo Maori is their taonga as well.

The Maataawai model suggests there has been very little progress with the current strategies already in place and the inclusion of iwi will make a difference.

That’s interesting because iwi, in terms of a formal forum or structure have had minimal participation in Maori radio broadcasting. In fact most Maori radio stations started up without tribal support and it’s taken a while for the iwi structure to come aboard, if indeed they have at all.

For iwi it has never been a priority; in fact some of the historical milestones around Maori broadcasting over the past 20 – 30 years have occurred without iwi, who have not been present and at times have been seen to be indifferent, a very good example was the privy council court case led by pan tribal National Maori organisations, of which some of these we all seem hell-bent on excluding in future strategies.

Nga Kaiwhakapumau I Te Reo Maori, New Zealand Maori Council, Maori Women’s Welfare League, The Kohanga Reo movement, they were all there to fight the good fight for our language.

They came together for the greater good, which was to ensure the survival of te reo Maori.

About 5 years ago an initiative was trialed at Manukau Institute of Technology, where a broadcasting course specifically for advanced speakers of te reo Maori was offered, with the idea that these students upon graduating would then present themselves to the Maori broadcasting industry as the next wave of Maori language broadcasters. Radio Waatea was invited to the launch of this programme whereupon we took the opportunity to tell them that if they were going to train and teach these students about Māori broadcasting, then **Maori Broadcasting 101** should be about the whakapapa on how we got here, especially around the Privy Council decision that forced the government to provide resources for te reo Maori broadcasting, and more importantly students needed to learn about those people and organisations who collectively got all of us to this point.

We would expect that a proposed model such as Te Maataawai, would reflect iwi interests alongside Maori language and Maori advocacy interests equally.

Representation should be 4/5 split around iwi/interest group representation, not the 7/2 split suggested in the document that is weighted towards iwi.

The clear focus for the broadcasting sector (iwi radio) has always been te reo Maori. That’s not to say the industry hasn’t been without its problems.

Bilingualism within Maori broadcasting although raised quite freely now, without fear of reprisal from the staunchest of reo advocates was viewed as downright blasphemy just 10 years ago.

Organisations such as ours, Radio Waatea were accused of being sell-outs and worse kupapa to the language; because the view at the time was te reo Maori anake and nothing else mattered.

Te Reo Māori anake meant the funding model we were under didn't address the basic component of radio broadcasting that was a listening audience. Was anyone listening, and if you answered yes, for how long were they listening and at what time. To demonstrate a "**successful**" model stations were forced to ghettoise the language into the much hated reo programme blocks.

Growing and nurturing an audience didn't seem to matter.

We were measured by a quota system, which determined the more Maori language we broadcast the more successful we were deemed to be. No one asked the question, how many people are listening.

In fact audience numbers weren't a priority. It was all about the amount of hours we broadcast and that was viewed as a system for success. It really was about ticking boxes for our whanaunga who monitor everything in Wellington.

This is by no means an exercise in finger pointing and directing the blame at agencies like Te Mangai Paho and Te Puni Kokiri. For more than a decade a Radio Waatea led battle for bilingual broadcasting to be considered as a key strategy has been with other iwi stations.

We have chipped away at it, waiting for other "enlightened" stations to eventually come on board.

There will always be detractors but it's a view (bilingual broadcasting) that will contribute to the ultimate survival of the language.

For a long time Waatea struggled to find like – minded people or organisations, who shared our view. Last year Te Mangai Paho shared **its right shifted thinking approach** to Maori language broadcasting. We would like to acknowledge Professor Rawinia Higgins especially, a board member of Te Mangai Paho who engaged with iwi stations about their right shifted thinking strategy.

Radio Waatea enthusiastically embraces this view, not because it means we get to speak more English, it's because the strategy begins to identify non – Maori as a potential audience for Maori language broadcasting.

For the language to survive non Maori need to own it. Non Maori need to own it, they need to identify with it, and they need to feel they are stakeholders in te reo Maori to ensure its survival.

Right shifted thinking should be based on a formula that continues to include a meaningful Maori language quota while recognising an engaged, growing audience.

We don't have to have all the answers right now, but audience surveys, community engagement, and our commitment to engaging audiences should be the new benchmarks for success.

Right shifted thinking should be an opportunity to start using new terms and definitions that reflect our society right now. We should start looking at using new terms, in a formal capacity, terms like non Maori instead of the word pakeha.

Pakeha tends to refer to those of English European extraction and their first language is English and inevitably they're recognised as the "treaty" partner

The term Non Maori for now at least, refers to those who are Polynesian, Asian, Afrikaan, Latino's those where English is not their first language but who are in fact the new face of this country. In the next census we should conduct a survey on the state of the English Language; we might be surprised at how many say that English isn't their first language as most of us assume it would be.

My point here is, when we continue to highlight the health of the Maori language it's inevitably doom and gloom, and we're not really understanding or acknowledging the changing face of Aotearoa, and what's happening at flax roots level

Adopting the term non Maori allows us to refocus our efforts on working with new audiences or new communities and new challenges

In closing if there's a willingness from all New Zealanders to learn the haka Ka Mate because the All Blacks do it.

If there's willingness from non Maori to have a tamoko, if growing numbers of New Zealanders are singing the Maori version of God Defend New Zealand, then there's hope. It tells me that most citizens in this country are generally receptive to Maori language and the Maori world if they are allowed to be included.

That's probably the end point; any language that involves capturing the hearts and minds of all New Zealanders needs to be wholly inclusive, from our communities to government

Tihei Maurioa