

15 July 2008



**Te Puni Kōkiri**  
REALISING MĀORI POTENTIAL

## **Closing the Gaps – Lessons from New Zealand**

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To

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# Evolution of Māori Affairs Policy

1989

## *Te Urupare Rangapū*

Partnership Response, devolution of service provision to Māori authorities

# Evolution of Māori Affairs Policy

1991

## ***Ka Awatea* - mainstreaming policy**

Mainstream agencies charged with delivery of services to Māori, Ministry of Māori Development established with policy and monitoring roles.

# Closing the Gaps

1999

## *Closing the Gaps*

# Closing the Gaps

- Arose from discharge of monitoring role, through a comparative analysis of social and economic outcomes experienced by Māori vis-à-vis the rest of New Zealand
- Report showed that Māori experienced significantly poorer outcomes than the rest of the population
- Findings of this report embraced by incoming administration, which launched Closing the Gaps as its Māori Affairs policy platform

# Closing the Gaps

- **The early policy platform:**
  - Improved and coordinated approach from mainstream
  - Māori communities have a part to play, and included a community capacity building dimension
  - Enhanced the Ministry's monitoring role

# Closing the Gaps

- **What it meant from a policy perspective:**
  - Shift to equality of outcome
- **But in practice:**
  - Heavily programmatic response
  - Focus on activity rather than outcome
  - Enhanced monitoring role created a compliance focus across the state sector

# What we learned

- **Indicators never tell the full story**
  - We measured what we could, which wasn't what we should
  - Gaps didn't close
  - Changes in outcome indicators occur over a longer timeframe than politics!



# What we learned

- **From the community capacity building dimension:**
  - Communities are best placed to understand their local issues and develop localised solutions
  - Indigenous organisations are well placed to deliver services to their constituents
  - Capacity building focus on strengthening governance, management and ensuring transparency and accountability for delivery of taxpayer funded services

# What we learned

- **From a deficit based approach:**
  - Can become a self fulfilling prophecy
  - Can constrain policy thinking to relative rather than optimal gains
  - Does generate negative public perceptions about the value of the population group to the population
  - Did create political fuel

# The tide of public opinion

- Political capital – “race based policies”
- Government initiated review on all “race based spending” to ensure was anchored in need
- Re-branding of Closing the Gaps to more general approach of reducing social inequalities

# Moving the mindset

- From the negative perceptions that arose from the deficit based approach to Closing the Gaps
- To recognising that Māori success is essential to New Zealand's success
- And that Māori must be able to succeed as Māori

# The next policy step

- **Realising Māori Potential, anchored in:**
  - Cultural distinctiveness
  - Capability
  - Aspiration
- **Māori succeeding as Māori**

# Realising Māori potential

- **In practice is a platform for:**
  - Policy led options for better understanding and progressing Māori aspirations
  - Enhancing the Crown-Māori relationship, including for example explicit recognition of Māori as capable and aspirational (rather than underperforming), changing how we engage
  - Government and Māori investment in opportunities
  - Reshaping public opinion.

# What has been achieved

- **Across the life span of the Ministry:**
  - Significant growth of the Māori asset base
  - Positive shifts across most indicators of well-being (although Māori still do not achieve the same level of outcome as non-Māori)
  - Diverse, active and capable Māori organisations, involved in all levels of policy, service delivery and Māori development
  - Settlement of historical grievances, and associated gains in the quality of the Crown-Māori relationship
  - And.....

# What has been achieved

Māori are now in the mainstream of political, economic and cultural thinking in New Zealand