

Maori unity's fragile future



PHOTO: NZ HERALD

by Qiane Corfield

Speculation has begun about the role the new Maori King, Tuheitia Paki, will have to play if he wants to carry on his mother's work.

Many believe he will have a big job ahead if he tries to continue uniting Maori and help lead them into the future.

But the consensus appears to be: give him time.

Maori Affairs Minister Parekura Horomia believes Dame Te Atairangikaahu had a huge impact on people's lives and that King Tuheitia just needs to get used to his new position.

"Clearly Dame Te Ata raised the profile of the Kingitanga and the new king will have to find his place in his own way and will need to be given time to do that," he says.

During Te Atairangikaahu's funeral, a vast number of people paid their respects to the Maori Queen, putting protest, opposition and politics aside.

AUT University history professor Paul Moon believes the funeral was a positive portrayal of the Maori community. The coverage was a good opportunity to show the "good side" of Maori, after the recent coverage over the death of the Kahui twins.

He says it was good to see people coming together voluntarily to work behind the scenes but believes there are bigger issues in New Zealand and the harmony will soon end.

"It is very seldom that you get a unity like that seen at the funeral, but this is not going to make much of an impact on race relations.

"The divisions are still there. Not all iwi acknowledged [Te Atairangikaahu] as their Queen and this disunity needs to be worked through."

The Kingitanga movement was established in 1858 when

Maori selected their first king to unite the tribes of Aotearoa as they struggled to maintain land ownership amid an invasion of European settlers.

The idea that iwi unity will not last in today's society is not supported by Isaac Rakena, of Waikato.

He says that although it was a very sad loss, Te Arikini's passing was what Maori needed to reunite for the common goal of becoming an economic force, and believes the Kingitanga will still be successful.

"It will still play an integral role in the continued effort to unite Maori and improve the general growth and progress of our people," he says.

"The hope is that, through our new king, Maori will still have close association with the people whom Te Atairangikaahu made relationships with throughout the world."

The media coverage of Te Atairangikaahu's funeral is predicted to aid the Kingitanga movement and bring it to the forefront of race relations and political debate.

The producer of the TVNZ Maori news programme *Te Karere*, Moari Stafford, says the funeral will "go down in history".

"Live broadcasts went all across New Zealand and it was streamed to the world," he says.

"Before this, people were not aware of the Kingitanga or what Te Arikini had done. The coverage showed that she has forged a pathway for Maori to move forward."

Stafford agrees that the

Kingitanga is still an important aspect of Maori society and believes King Tuheitia will have a lot of work to do.

But, he says, Kingitanga isn't for everyone.

"It isn't something you force onto people. You either believe it or you don't. It will only survive behind the strength and support of people."

Stafford notes that the recent media coverage of King Tuheitia in the crowd of a rugby match is a good way of portraying him to the youth of today and may strengthen his relationship with younger people.

According to Rakena, the biggest challenge King Tuheitia will face is gaining acceptance from today's youth.

"I don't think he'll have any problem with his own people supporting him," he says.

"I think with his many advisers he could potentially become a king embraced by the many."

The general consensus among many Maori is that King Tuheitia just needs time to settle into his new role and, according to Rakena, when he does, he will be as influential as his mother.

"The Kingitanga is the people, as Te Atairangikaahu said, and our king is the preserver of that taonga."

Maori monarchs

1858-60	— King Potatau Te Wherowhero
1860-94	— King Matutaera Tawhiao
1894-1912	— King Mahuta
1912-33	— King Te Rata
1933-66	— King Koroki
1966-2006	— Queen Te Atairangikaahu
2006-	— King Tuheitia Paki

BRIGHT FUTURE? Maori still have many issues to resolve.

Kohanga reo style stalling in schools

By Claire Starkey

The number of children attending kohanga reo is on the rise, but Maori resources in primary schools which enable them to continue this learning style are limited in some areas.

There are 58 official kohanga reo schools in Auckland City, but in July 2005 there were only 12 full immersion primary schools and 11 with units attached to them to further this style of learning.

Richmond Rd School in Ponsonby houses a full-immersion unit and has had a 60 per cent increase in the unit's numbers over the last five years.

The unit caters for years 0-6 and principal Hayley Read is predicting it will be at its full capacity in the near future.

Most of the students come from the associated kohanga reo, which is also on-site. "We rely on our kohanga reo for numbers," says Read.

Of the 80 pupils attending, between 10 and 20 per cent of them are Pakeha whose parents

want their children to be bilingual.

Read says the balance of learning in both Maori and English means that when the children go into high-school they are still achieving at a good level. "And they know who they are, which is the most important thing."

Former kohanga reo teacher Kitea Tipuna says kohanga reo is less segmented in its learning style and will teach a variety of skills under one topic.

This means that kohanga reo students who go into mainstream education have to adapt their style of learning, he says.

University student Casey Kaa attended kohanga reo, and then went on to an English speaking primary school because no immersion units were available in her area. This had a negative effect on her te reo fluency, she says.

"When I went to primary, I was fluent in Maori but they take you back to the basics, like colours and numbers, so everyone can learn. Then at high

school they teach you the colours again, and then at university they teach again. You don't get a chance to further what you know," she says.

The 2001 census mirrors this loss of language – it showed a steady decline in language proficiency from primary school level to the 25 – 34 age group.

Kohanga reo has been steadily rising in popularity since being recognised in 1982. Since then, approximately 60,000 people have graduated from the programme.

Te Kohanga Reo National Trust accredits the upsurge to a deliberate decision of Maori people dedicating themselves to keeping the language alive.

"Maori history is very important to them, far more than knowing their basic facts and proper grammar," says Kaa.

Te kohanga reo is taught solely in te reo and is based on the principles of whakamana (empowerment), kotahitanga (holistic development), whanau tangata (family and community) and nga hononga (relationships).



PHOTO: HELEN TWOSE

KOHANGA REO STYLE KIDS: Casey Kaa says history is important.