An ode to Pink Floyd:
Chasing the magic of Māori and Iwi providers

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Over the past 10-12 years I’ve learned many lessons from Māori and Iwi providers about the services and programmes they are providing for their communities. Such lessons have also come from a number of colleagues I’ve worked with on various evaluation and research projects that have focussed on the work of Māori and Iwi providers. This paper is essentially a commentary on these lessons, with particular reference to the nature of contracting relationships between providers and Crown agencies. The research and evaluation work that is being drawn upon includes:

- Research with successful Māori and Iwi providers (2000-2002)
- Research on marginalisation (2003-04)
- Evaluation work with Māori and Iwi providers (1993-present)

To set the scene for this discussion I begin by briefly touching upon Kaupapa Māori as this has been the theoretical framework that has guided the research and evaluation work that informs this commentary. This is followed by an introduction to the context for the provision of services and programmes by Māori and Iwi providers. Then the commentary examines the changing nature of contracting relationship between Māori and Iwi providers and government agencies. Although rightly these relationships should be premised upon the Treaty of Waitangi, it is only in the past five years that government thinking has shifted to ‘partnership relationships’ and the like when engaging with Māori and Iwi providers. Following on from this I discuss three key issues that impact on contracting relationships: the clients of Māori and Iwi providers; the ‘magic’ of Māori and Iwi providers; and issues of interpretation and ownership. This paper then closes with some concluding remarks.

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3 Rather than seeking to speak on behalf of these providers and thereby re-present these lessons to you, this paper contains some of the essentials that I’ve drawn from these lessons that assist me in my work as an evaluator, researcher and trainer. The responsibility for what is contained here therefore rests with me, with a debt of gratitude to all those who have shared their knowledge, understandings and aspirations with me and those I’ve worked with.
Kaupapa Maori

Kaupapa Māori is literally ‘a Māori way’. Taki (1996:17) expands on this further in her consideration of the word ‘kaupapa’; namely that ‘kaupapa encapsulates…ground rules, customs, the right way of doing things’. The importance of te reo Māori within Kaupapa Māori is further reiterated by Graham Smith (1997) who writes that the Kaupapa Māori paradigm in education is founded on three themes: taking for granted our right to be Māori, ensuring the survival of te reo Māori me ōna tīkanga, and the central place occupied by our struggle to control our own cultural well-being. According to Smith (1995), Kaupapa Māori:

- Is related to ‘being Māori’,
- Is connected to Māori philosophy and principles,
- Takes for granted the validity and legitimacy of Māori,
- Takes for granted the importance of Māori language and culture, and
- Is concerned with the ‘struggle for autonomy over our own cultural well-being’

In other words, the core of Kaupapa Māori is the catch-cry: ‘to be Māori is normal’. Tied to this is the recognition that Māori worldviews, ways of knowing and matauranga Māori are valid and legitimate. Kaupapa Māori is about our right to operate within this context, within Aotearoa. ‘Knowing’ is therefore sourced within our own values and beliefs. In addition, this knowing is positioned within a reflexive cycle of being willing to evolve, grow and update our knowing (Henry & Pene, 2001). Thus, our ancestors existed within a research culture whereby knowledge was updated ‘as part of ongoing information management practices’ (Reid 1999:61). We are therefore not limited to merely responding to mainstream constructions of us, we can facilitate the revitalisation of traditional constructions as well as the formation of new constructions of what it means to be Māori within Aotearoa.

There is a growing theorisation and practice of Kaupapa Māori across, for example, education, health, justice and social services. Kaupapa Māori informs practice, research and policy within these disciplines and within mainstream (where Māori groups operate), Māori, and Iwi contexts.

Maori and Iwi Providers

Even though Māori and Iwi development, incorporating the provision of services and programmes to reduce Māori/non-Māori disparities, has always existed (Smith, 1995), the number of ‘flax roots’ initiatives has grown dramatically over the past 2-3 decades. This growth in the provision of ‘by Māori and Iwi, for Māori and Iwi’ services can be seen as one response to hapū, Iwi and Māori community dissatisfaction with mainstream services, including the perception that these mainstream services are responsible for maintaining Māori–non-Māori disparities rather than working actively to address them.

One of the things that may not have been working in the mainstream delivery of services is the “dominant, professional, and ‘expert’ driven service delivery model and system” (Ricks, Charlesworth, Bellefeuille & Field, 1999:xiii). Within this model
services respond to people as individuals in isolation from their families, communities and social context; with an emphasis on the assessment of individual pathology and deficits (ibid.). An example of this was highlighted by Maori service providers in the area of family violence (Te Puni Kokiri, 2000). These providers identified that the application of a mainstream framework to Maori family violence policy and services:

- Failed to recognise the negative impact of colonisation on whanau, hapu and Iwi;
- Endorsed interventions focused on concepts of individual harm, as opposed to whanau, hapu and Iwi development and well-being;
- Created barriers to flexibility within programme provision;
- Failed to recognise the importance of addressing issues such as systemic violence and the endemic nature and acceptance of family violence within communities;
- Failed to value prior learning amongst Maori providers; and
- Did not recognise the value of Maori methods and models.

This mainstream framework was therefore not working for Māori.

In recent research on Māori and Iwi provider success, many providers (of services across six different sectors including social services) described how their motivation for beginning their service was that which was not working (Pipi et al., 2003). For example, one social service provider stated:

‘We didn’t buy into existing social services programmes. We decided we would do our own needs analysis and use that as a launching pad’.

Māori and Iwi initiatives represent a struggle by Māori and Iwi to regain control over their own lives and deliver services that are more in tune with whānau, hapū, Iwi and Māori community needs and aspirations. Providers have told us that their dreams and goals revolve around tino rangatiratanga and mana motuhake. They are also motivated by their desire to improve conditions for Māori, with their effectiveness reflected in the positive changes they see in the attitudes and behaviour of individuals and their whānau (Pipi et al., 2003).

Many government agencies are now recognising the importance of Māori and Iwi providers. A 2000 Te Puni Kokiri report on Māori providers, for example, stated that:

‘Māori providers have an important role to play in Māori development. They contribute in two ways. Firstly, they are well placed to deliver appropriate and effective services to iwi, hapū, whānau and Māori communities… Secondly, the development of Māori provider organisations contributes to the building the capacity of iwi, hapū and whānau and Māori communities.’

We know from the community development literature that community-based groups and organisations may be better placed to deliver appropriate services to their community because their value-base is the same as the community’s value-base and because they are in-touch with the needs of their community. In addition, these groups
and organisations are often led by ‘catalytic people’; that is, people who are capable leaders who are committed to social change (Newman, 2001). However, as Connell, Kubisch, Schorr & Weiss (1995) point out, building community development through provider development remains a complex issue. There are, for example, factors inherent in communities that community groups and organisations may not be able to change (e.g., racism, economic depression). For this reason other stakeholders, in particular regional and central government, also have an important role to play in community development.

Within this context Kaupapa Māori research and evaluation with Māori and Iwi providers encompasses a multitude of ideas that are sourced within what it means to be Māori:

- We recognise that Māori and iwi providers often do not start out with a grand plan for service provision. Often providers are responding to the needs in their community that continue to go unmet by mainstream service providers.
- That the services and programmes provided by Māori and iwi providers are intimately connected to who they are as Māori; to their philosophies and beliefs.
- That Māori and iwi providers often have dual accountabilities - at the same time as they are accountable to a funder for outputs and outcomes, they are also accountable to their community.
- That Māori and iwi providers are striving for self-determination.
- That the greatest asset Māori and iwi providers have is their leaders (kaumatua and CEOs), their staff, and their community.
- That, although out of their control, the external environment (including political, historical, social, legal and economic factors) often impacts largely on the work providers do and the goals they wish to achieve.

Evaluation is therefore about ‘capturing’ what providers are trying to do, including their motivations, their goals, and their understandings of how their programme or service provides something that their community needs and wants to be involved with. This is important as the role of evaluation is often to document whether or not the outcomes contracted for by a funder are being achieved by a provider. An in-depth understanding of the context in which providers are working can, in turn, both mediate expectations and provide a platform for partnering relationships between providers and funders.

**Outputs + Outcomes + Relationships**

The growth in the Māori and Iwi provider sector has been accompanied by a maturation of the Crown’s conception of what its engagement with Māori and Iwi providers should entail. The culmination of this, to date, has been an acknowledgement of the importance of the Crown’s relationship with Māori and Iwi providers. According to one agency key informant in the Māori and Iwi provider

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4 This section has been informed by the contributions of Vera Keefe to the Māori and Iwi Provider Success research (Pipi et al., 2003).
success research (cf. Pipi et al., 2003): ‘Our research has shown us that the relationship outcome is just as important as the task focus’. A key factor in this has been the relatively recent notion of a ‘partnership relationship’ between Crown agencies and Māori and Iwi providers. A ‘partnership relationship’ is an addition to more standard contractual requirements of outputs and outcomes. These latter requirements, and their definition with the Public Finance Act (PFA) 1989, have often been the only drivers of evaluation work up until recently.

The Public Finance Act (PFA) 1989 is one of ‘four major statutes that establish the legislative framework for the public sector financial management system’ (New Zealand Treasury Website, www.treasury.govt.nz). As stated on the Treasury website, ‘the driving principle of the Public Finance Act is a shift of focus from what departments consume to what they produce. Hence, budgeting and reporting is on an output basis rather than relying solely on information relating to how outputs are produced. Departments were made responsible for outputs (the good and services they produce) while Ministers were made responsible for selecting the output mix to achieve government outcomes (desired goals)’.

The Act therefore introduced a bureaucratic terminology, including ‘outputs’ and ‘outcomes’. As defined by the Act, “outputs” –

(a) means good or services that are supplied by a department, Crown entity, Office of Parliament, or other person or body; and

(b) includes goods or services that a department, Crown entity, Office of Parliament, or other person or body has agreed or contracted to supply on a contingent basis, but that have not been supplied.

An “outcome” –

(a) means a state or condition of society, the economy, or the environment; and

(b) includes a change in that state or condition.

Following the Act, contracts between Māori and Iwi providers and Crown agencies were premised on this requirement to be accountable for how funded services and programmes resulted in both outputs and outcomes. As an evaluator in the 1990s this often meant that my initial evaluation work with providers was formulating a programme logic that connected their goals and activities to their desired outputs and outcomes, within the context of their contract. Although many providers ‘knew’ what was needed within their communities, they were often at a loss to re-create this knowing within the evaluation frameworks that were acceptable to the Crown agencies that funded them.⁵

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⁵ Later in our evaluation and research work we adopted the notion of ‘critical friend’. A critical friend in this context is someone who walks alongside providers and asks them about the ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘why’s of their programme or service. A critical friend also offers providers objective feedback, based on their observations and the evaluation findings. It has been the our experience that this is an important, and often unacknowledged, role of Māori evaluators.
In addition, the agencies themselves often did not have the capacity or capability to assist Māori and Iwi providers in articulating their goals and how they would achieve them, and/or to understand how these goals fitted with what the agency itself was trying to achieve (Pipi et al., 2003). Comfort for these agencies was most often found when the providers were able to use the terminology that the agency representatives recognised. As an agency informant in the Māori and Iwi provider success research said:

‘…whenever I go there they talk our language so they use our jargon back to us and that has a sense of, it comforts people in this organisation, they use the same words we use’.

For some time the onus was therefore on Māori and Iwi providers to explain themselves in the language of the Crown. The long sought after independence of these providers was therefore at risk of being compromised because hopes and dreams needed to be translated into non-Māori jargon (also see section below, ‘Understanding vs. Owning’).

There was a turn for the better in 2000/01 when the newly elected Labour government funded capacity building initiatives across several government agencies, with the specific intent of building the capacity of Māori and Iwi providers. The government defined capacity building as ‘a process that seeks to strengthen the ability of whānau, hapū, iwi, Māori organisations and Māori communities to build the strategies, systems, structures and skills that they need to control their own development and achieve their own objectives’ (also see below, ‘Achieving outcomes: theorising social change’). In addition, a capacity building newsletter (undated) defined capacity building as ‘a “whole-of-government” initiative involving almost all agencies working together to respond appropriately and effectively to the needs of whānau, hapū, iwi, Māori organisations and Māori communities’.

Most importantly, perhaps, for Māori and Iwi providers was that this initiative also signalled the Crown’s desire for a change from a contracting relationship between government agencies and providers to a ‘partnership relationship’. Arrangements and agreements between Māori and Iwi providers and Crown agencies were now to reflect and support the partnership relationship sought by the Crown.

The principle of partnership is one of the three principles of the Treaty of Waitangi emerging from the Royal Commission on Social Policy. The other principles are participation and protection. The interpretation of partnership by the Courts and the Waitangi Tribunal therefore provides a very good insight into what a ‘partnership relationship’ between the Crown and Māori and Iwi providers might look like:

‘The Court of Appeal has referred to the Treaty relationship as “akin to a partnership”, and therefore uses the concept as an analogy, emphasizing a duty on the parties to act reasonably, honourably, and in good faith. The Waitangi Tribunal has also emphasized the obligation on both parties to act reasonably, honourably, and in good faith, but derives these duties from the principle of reciprocity and the principle of mutual benefit’ (Te Puni Kokiri, 2001:77).
In the Tribunal’s view of the principle of reciprocity ‘the Crown is obliged to respect Māori autonomy as far as practicable, that is, Māori authority and rights to manage their own policies, resources and affairs according to their own preferences’ (Te Puni Kokiri, 2001:81). The move toward a partnership relationship therefore put some of the onus back on Crown agencies to engage more fully with Māori and Iwi providers; perhaps to even try and understand what these providers are trying to achieve so that their ambitions and goals might be better supported and facilitated by the Crown.

The remainder of this paper is devoted to a discussion of three aspects of providers’ work: who they work with; the outcomes they achieve; and how to describe what it is they do. The purpose is to try and understand some of the issues and tensions that exist for Māori and Iwi providers in order to aid understanding of both their context and their work.

In the diagram below, a programme or service offered by a Māori or Iwi provider is conceptualised as a change mechanism (i.e., a prism) that alters the people who encounter it in a multitude of different ways. Sometimes these alterations are small and sometimes they are dramatic. As an evaluator my task is often to document these outcomes – be they planned or serendipitous – and to posit how they are linked to the activities undertaken by the provider. The journey I document is often also about how providers reach out and engage with participants; what they do with participants once they have engaged with them; and what happens to participants as a result of that engagement. This is what I have learned.
Several reports from government agencies and non-governmental organisations have highlighted disparities between Māori and non-Māori, with Māori worse off on measures ranging from educational achievement to morbidity and mortality to treatment within the justice system to poverty. And yet for all we know about the statistics and the deprivation, do Crown agencies really understand what is happening to the people?

I recall a housing seminar in the mid-1990s at which a senior policy analyst spoke about his recent trip to a rural community on the east coast of the North Island. He was aghast at the appalling condition of many of the houses occupied by Māori, so much so that his trip was more like a journey of discovery that he was keen to share with an American housing expert (who he was sure would be able to offer some solutions). He had also brought photos of these houses back to Wellington so that he could show his colleagues because he knew that they simply would not believe him. And yet this was a man who was influential in policy formation for the very people whose circumstances he was out-of-touch with. Would he and his agency be able to enter into an honourable and reasonable partnership relationship with a Māori or Iwi provider working to assist whānau within their community to gain an acceptable standard of housing?

Similarly, I would argue that one of the lessons learned from the last four years of Crown agency capacity building with Māori and Iwi providers is for needs analysis. There is probably little doubt that when the capacity building initiative was introduced by the New Zealand government in 2000 it was needed by whānau, hapū, iwi and Māori communities. However this knowledge about an overarching need was not then backed up by more intensive needs analyses among rōpū prior to the establishment of policy, funding criteria, and the roll out of funding.

Such needs analyses (as opposed to a journey of discovery) would recognise that Māori and Iwi providers are all too often engaging with a client base that is more marginalised and disenfranchised than the client base seen by most mainstream agencies and service providers. In addition, Māori and Iwi providers are often providing services and programmes to Māori clients who other, mainstream, agencies have not been successful with. If Māori and Iwi providers are going to be appropriately positioned within their ‘market’ then there needs to be an understanding of what this market is. Without such an understanding any relationship between providers and Crown agencies will be premised on false starting points and unrealistic expectations.
Achieving outcomes: theorising social change

Theorising social change is about developing an understanding of Māori explanatory pathways – what needs to happen first before other outcomes can be achieved; how do outcomes build upon one another; how can these building blocks be stacked upon one another so that long term goals and visions stand the best chance of being achieved; and, how long will this take?

The 1999 publication ‘Te Utunga i te Wero: Meeting the Challenge’, produced by Skill New Zealand, reported on several innovative Māori skills training enterprises. The General Manager, Max Kerr, wrote that the challenge for providers is to design courses that can rekindle interest in learning and inspire the confidence to achieve. Kerr believed that for many Māori learners, what was required was a reconnection to culture through Te Reo, Tikanga and whakapapa.

This report was a good case example of how the short-term outcomes Māori and Iwi providers achieve are often about building the cultural esteem and knowledge of individuals and whānau. It is on the top of such outcomes that the outcomes of Crown agencies can be achieved; for example, employment, enterprise, education. If there is little knowledge or understanding of the importance of such short-term outcomes (e.g., cultural esteem) and their link to longer-term outcomes then there is a risk that important building blocks in providers’ work will be overlooked and/or undervalued. It is also possible that providers that, in the time-span of their contracts, only achieve these short-term outcomes will be seen as unsuccessful by funders, in spite of the short-term outcomes being appropriate in terms of their community’s starting place and needs. As a counter to this risk Mayne (1999) argues that the sensible use of performance measures by funding agencies and providers is within a culture that focuses on ‘results that matter to citizens’.

Contractual timeframes are also an important issue. All too often providers are expected to achieve major outcomes within two or three years of being funded as this is considered to be the ‘long-term’. However this is only the short-term and so only short-term outcomes should be expected. The long-term is four to six years and, likewise, impacts (i.e., the social changes a provider is working to create) should not be expected until at least 7-10 years after a providers’ activities and/or services are well underway within a community (W.K. Kellog Foundation, 1998). This is important to recognise if expectations are going to be properly managed within a partnership relationship.

Māori and Iwi providers often ‘know’ these things by virtue of being part of the community they are serving; namely: where their community is at, what needs to happen first, and how long it will take to gain a foothold for longer-term changes. The challenge for them, and for evaluators assisting them, is to make this ‘knowing’ explicit. To do so providers need time for self-reflection and the capability and capacity for collecting and analysing performance-related evidence. Funding agencies can assist in this by funding capacity building, allowing time in contracts for self-development, and facilitating providers’ access to intermediaries (e.g., researchers,
contractors; both internal and external to the agency) who can offer assistance in this task (also see below, ‘What Māori and Iwi providers do: understanding vs. owning).

As stated above, this knowing is contextualised within providers’ operating environment (legal, social, political, economic, etc.) and it is essential to recognise the role played by this environment in facilitating or hindering a providers’ achievement of outcomes. Part of the Crown agencies responsibility within a partnership relationship may well be to try and mediate some of these external elements so that the best possible environment is created for providers.

What Māori and Iwi providers do: understanding vs. owning

Two issues that Māori and Iwi providers have raised from their side of a partnership relationship are: how far do they go in terms of explaining what they do in language that the Crown will understand?, and how do they protect their intellectual property if and when they do successfully explain the work that they do? Both issues need to be addressed within the context of a partnership relationship that upholds and supports Māori development.

The Māori and Iwi provider success research (Pipi et al., 2003) found only limited capacity and capability within Crown agencies to engage in partnership relationships. This was for at least two reasons: the limited number of Māori staff in an agency, and the burden placed on Māori staff members to take care of the agency’s ‘Māori business’. It was as if having Māori staff somehow gave an agency a tick in its ‘Māori responsiveness’ box. Yet because of this limited capacity, Māori and Iwi providers often remain in the position of having to translate what they do into a language that can be easily understood and digested by an agency. This does not uphold Māori autonomy or build a partnership relationship (cf. Te Puni Kokiri, 2001). Rather the capacity and capability of Crown agencies should be such that they are able to understand what providers are hoping to achieve, how they are hoping to achieve it, and how small achievements build to become big achievements.

Within such Crown agency understandings of what Māori and Iwi providers do there also needs to be a respect for the intellectual property of Māori and Iwi providers; in other words, understanding does not confer ownership. This can be difficult when an agency has contracted an evaluation of a particular provider. One of the key elements of evaluation work is often to find out what is happening and why so that a successful programme can be replicated at other sites. Apart from issues related to autonomy and the differences across Māori communities and Iwi, this approach is not reasonable if the intellectual property rights of Māori and Iwi providers are to be respected.

Even so, the shift from a competitive funding environment to one that is more relationship oriented has meant that Māori and Iwi providers are becoming more willing to share what they are doing with one another. This will lead to learning and provider development as well as, I suspect, new understandings that what they once guarded fiercely as their intellectual property (and therefore their competitive
advantage in securing contracts) is quite similar to what other providers have found works for their communities. It is this sharing that will form a strong basis for providers to enter into a partnering relationship with the Crown.

Concluding remarks

Before I close I wanted to offer some slightly more personal opinions about how to proceed from here so that ‘partnership relationships’ between Māori and Iwi providers and Crown agencies become more of a reality:

- Crown agencies are cautious about risk as they are accountable for public money. This becomes an issue when Māori and Iwi providers are required to over-manage this risk via different compliance timetables for each agency they interact with (e.g., monitoring reports). Inter-agency coordination, alongside more universal monitoring and reporting requirements, would go a long way to removing this burden on Māori and Iwi providers.

- Similarly, interagency coordination of contracts and relationships with the same Māori or Iwi provider, as in some existing MoUs, would ease the burden of relationship building at the provider end. Instead of having to interact with multiple agencies on a one-to-one basis, a provider might interact with a consortium of agencies.

- In a risk-averse environment there is no learning to be gained from false starts and failures as these are perceived to put contracts and agencies at risk. However, in a partnership relationship that supports honest and open communication providers and agencies stand a better chance of managing risk; that is, learning from small failings and avoiding big failings through joint problem-solving (cf. Cram, 2004).

- Intermediaries are often invaluable bridges between Crown agencies and Māori and Iwi providers. These intermediaries may, for example, be a team within an agency and/or an external advocate for Māori and Iwi providers (e.g., national body, Iwi runanga). Intermediaries can assist with communications and the identification of potential risks; and they can also facilitate trust and honesty between parties.

- An agency being either ‘hands off’ or ‘hands on’ is not conducive to a partnership relationship. There has to be a middle ground that allows an agency to be accountable to Cabinet for its spending and at the same time allows for the independence of Māori and Iwi providers.

- Similarly, Māori and Iwi providers should not expect that ‘independence’ is about being left alone to just get on with it. Providers who accept Crown funding need to have an understanding of and respect for the accountabilities that the funding agency has for its spending.

- In my experience there are numerous evaluation reports on the work of Māori and Iwi providers. These reports not only inform Crown agencies about how providers are doing and what outcomes they are achieving; they often also discuss how the relationship between the provider and the agency could be more supportive of the provider’s work. There is a pressing need to learn from these evaluations so that the same mistakes are not repeated because we have no ‘case history’ of what works and what doesn’t work within these relationships.
Similarly, I think the time is right to look at what ‘best practice’ in partnership relationships is; to begin to talk with Māori and Iwi providers as well as Crown agencies about what works for them within such relationships. In this way, expectations can be made explicit and ‘what works’ can be applied more generically, rather than being partially dependent upon good will and capacity on both sides.

Finally, the conclusion to this paper is a reiteration that indigenous development is firmly tied to self-determination. Reconciliation Australia (2002:4), for example, argue that ‘there is compelling evidence that sustained and measurable improvements in the social and economic well-being of Indigenous people only occurs when real decision-making power is vested in their communities’. Similarly, in the eyes of Māori at least, Tino Rangatiratanga and the Treaty of Waitangi are essential components of Māori development (Durie, 1994a,b, 2000). It is from this basis that Māori and Iwi providers will enter into partnership relationships with the Crown and its agencies. That is, a relationship that is, by its nature, fair, honest, reasonable and conducted in good faith. When this happens we might realise a vision of Māori development such as that proffered by Māori Land Court Chief Judge Joe Williams:

“……my uri would still speak our language, they would still know and practice our tribal lore, and they would still, in a manner which makes sense to them in their time, draw spiritual strength from our lands, mountains and rivers. And, in addition to all of that, I would want them to be healthy, wealthy and wise.”

Kia ora koutou.

References


6 At the Māori Development in a Global Society Conference, held at Te Pūtahi-ā-Toi, School of Māori Studies, Massey University, 4-6 July 2000. Papers have been published in two volumes of He Pukenga Kōrero.


