

Alternatives to anti-Māori themes in news media

Theme 2 'One people'

In this negative theme, 'New Zealanders' are described as a single people who should all be treated the same. This is usually a response to attempts by Maori for recognition as tangata whenua.

How this is being said in the news

Kiwi, New Zealander, one people, equal treatment, we are all the same; no one group should have preference, we are a multicultural society, we are all immigrants.

Examples

- 'Maori have a special place in New Zealand, but that specialness should not be allowed to undermine the sanctity of the simple equality of all New Zealanders living together.' P. Goldsmith, *NZ Herald* column, April 2009.
- 'The justification for the Maori seats is now gone. It is a move that will signify one country, one people'. *Timaru Herald* editorial, Feb 7, 2003.
- 'Beaches for all'. *Otago Daily Times* front page headline, Aug 19, 2003.

What does this assume?

- Equality means treating everyone the same.
- Cultural or racial differences are divisive, not real, or do not matter.
- Indigenous status and the Treaty are irrelevant.
- Majority rule is the only fair and just way to make decisions.

What does this do?

- Supports Pākehā (ie. majority) control of most important decisions.
- Tells Māori that they should assimilate.
- Removes ethnicity from the discussion as irrelevant.
- Undermines the Treaty.

Other ways to talk about this

- Acknowledge the place of tangata whenua and the Treaty relationship.
- Given the imbalances arising from colonisation, we may need to treat people differently to get more equal outcomes. This is provided for in New Zealand law anyway, for a range of different groups who are historically disadvantaged.
- Pākehā are one cultural group among many.

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See [www.trc.org.nz/
theme-2-one-people](http://www.trc.org.nz/theme-2-one-people)

Submit your own examples of this theme in the media and suggest your alternatives. Suggestions will be moderated and uploaded to the site.