

Alternatives to anti-Māori themes in news media

Theme 3 'Rights'

People are portrayed as if they are or should be entitled to do what they want, as long as they do not infringe on the rights of others. Māori rights are set up as affecting the rights of others, but Pākehā or 'our' rights are not seen to affect the rights of Māori.

How this is being said in the news

Rights, democracy, equality, level playing field, birthright, one law for all, property rights.

Examples

- 'Foreshore showdown looms as fear of Maori rights escalates'. *National Business Review*, Nov 5, 2010.
- 'Our laws hold that every New Zealander, irrespective of ethnic or cultural identity, enjoys equality in citizenship.' M. Cabiling, *NZ Herald* column, April 24, 2009.

What does this assume?

- Rights belong only to individuals.
- Rights always compete or conflict.
- One person's rights are limited by the rights of others.
- Rights, such as property rights, only exist if they are already provided for by government laws.

What does this do?

- Denies the role of the Treaty in setting out certain rights for Māori and non-Māori.
- Denies indigenous ways in which rights are established.
- Undermines the United Nation Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which New Zealand has signed.
- Pretends that New Zealand law or Western concepts of rights don't allow for group rights - when actually they can and do.

Other ways to talk about this

- Individual rights are only one of many ways of thinking about rights, even in Western thought.
- Rights can be collective, or belong to groups. This is true of New Zealand and international law, for corporations, unions and indigenous people.
- Rights can be negotiated.
- Māori rights are transmitted through whakapapa and guaranteed in te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Treaty rights apply to both Māori and non-Māori in different ways.

*Published in 2014 by
Kupu Taea: Media and te
Tiriti Project, Te Rōpū
Whāriki, Massey University
PO Box 6137, Wellesley St
Auckland, Aotearoa/New
Zealand*

*See [www.trc.org.nz/
theme-3-rights](http://www.trc.org.nz/theme-3-rights)*

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