

Keynote — Tangata Tiriti Perspectives 1

facilitated by Ruth DeSouza

Hannah Ho Wai Ling

Hannah currently lives and works in Te Whanganui a Tara, organising and facilitating Queer and Transgender Youth groups, as well as doing education on homo/transphobia and racism awareness in schools, and with adults who work with youth.

Respects to Ranginui above, Papatuanuku who nurtures and sustains, and their children forever more. Respects also to mana whenua and the life force of this area. Warm greetings to all of our ancestors here with us today, who walk with us always. Greetings also to this beautiful whareniui.

Our ancestors are from Southern China, and we have been in Malaysia for about two to five generations. Mum and Dad came to Aotearoa in the 70s, and had me, my brother and my two sisters.

I came across the Treaty in a meaningful way when I moved into this house with seven people. A group of mainly Pākehā used to meet in our lounge sometimes. I asked one of the guys what their group was all about. He said, 'As Pākehā, we are allowed to be here in Aotearoa because we signed the Treaty, so that means we have to honour it.' That got me thinking, 'Am I allowed to be here? I'm not Pākehā. Where do me and my family fit in?'

Starting to learn about the Treaty meant learning about 'Kiwi' culture, about British/Anglo colonisation. It meant learning about the multitude of injustices and grievances against tangata whenua by white culture and power. Some markers of those cultures were the myth of egalitarianism and the need to hide and forget history, especially ancestral homelands and migration stories. It shone the light on the Pākehā society I'd always lived in, and how it operates.

Learning about the Treaty meant learning about the effects, on-going and past, of colonisation on indigenous people, descendants of colonial settlers, and non-white tauiwi. I learnt that what white/Pākehā culture has done, and still does, is try to mediate terms of belonging, identity and relations around the Treaty, and between tangata whenua and non-Pākehā tauiwi.

How the Treaty relates to the Chinese experience has been mediated and filtered through white/Pākehā

manipulation and white/Pākehā cultures. Trying to be a 'Kiwi' in Aotearoa often includes markers such as internal racism and assimilation. There is the white set-up of the 'model minority', which aids white dominance and indigenous oppression by entrenching and perpetuating racist, bigoted prejudices and stereotypes. There is the media bias against non-white people, particularly tangata whenua, the old divide and conquer tactic, and the propping up of Pākehā/white myths.

The other dynamic that complicates or clouds Chinese interaction with Treaty understandings is language – with its connotations of multiculturalism and biculturalism. This highlights the need for an inclusive language in State policy terminology — one not subject to the whims of political footbaling.

Speaking as a tauiwi Chinese person interested in social justice, the Treaty can be seen as a tool of justice. We need to look past white/Pākehā manipulation, and use it to reflect upon history and local injustices located in a global context.

It can be used to draw links and highlight power structures that need to change. And looked to for its spirit of generosity and potential.

Ruth DeSouza

Ruth De Souza is co-ordinator of Auckland University of Technology's Asian and Migrant Health Research Centre.

Keynote — Tangata Tiriti Perspectives 2

facilitated by Ruth DeSouza

Grant Powell

Since 1992 Grant has specialised in Treaty of Waitangi claims and Māori issues litigation. He has acted, and continues to act, for claimants through all stages of the Treaty claims and settlement process including the preparation and presentation of claims before the Waitangi Tribunal, working with claimants to resolve mandating cross-claim issues, negotiating with the Crown and local government to resolve claim issues and actively working to promote education on Treaty of Waitangi and Māori issues.

As well as Treaty claims Grant has had a wide background in civil litigation, particularly in relation to Māori issues and the interpretation of Te Ture Whenua Māori Act 1993. Key cases include the Marlborough Sounds foreshore and seabed case from its inception in 1996, cases testing the Māori protection provisions contained in the State-Owned Enterprises Act 1986 and Resource Management Act 1991 and a test case on partition provisions in Te Ture Whenua Māori. Grant is currently providing advice and representation to a number of groups on Territorial Customary rights orders and Customary rights orders available under the Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004 and participated actively in the recent review of the Act .

Grant is also frequently involved in the legislative reform process through the preparation and delivery of submissions to Select Committees on proposed legislation affecting Māori, including the Foreshore and Seabed, Supreme Court, Local Government, Principles of the Treaty Deletion, and RMA (Simplifying and Streamlining) Bills.

Grant shared his personal journey in this work. In discussing the settlements process he emphasised that the process needs to have integrity and must be fair otherwise settlements will be revisited. Time is required and the process must be got right.

Eventually the lawyers will go therefore other Pākehā must walk with Māori.

Ruth DeSouza

Ruth De Souza is co-ordinator of Auckland University of Technology's Asian and Migrant Health Research Centre.

Peta Si'ulepa

Peta 's parents migrated to Auckland from Western Samoa in the 50s during a time of economic boom when peoples from the Pacific Islands were encouraged to come and work in New Zealand in the forestry and manufacturing sectors, meat works and factories.

At the same time, Pacific peoples saw the opportunities in the land of milk and honey as a way to support their extended families in the Islands and in the new land to educate their children to gain good jobs to support the family.

Peta, like other Pacific New Zealand-born and educated of her generation, grew up alongside urban Māori and Pacific activists at the time when Ngā Tamatoa pushed for the survival and promotion of Māori language and the return of Māori land – and as part of the Polynesian Panthers exposed the institutional racism in the way Pacific “overstayers” were targeted and treated by the New Zealand Government.

With this backdrop, in the 70s Peta along with other Pacific activists worked closely with Māori and Pākehā advocating for honouring the Treaty of Waitangi, returning Bastion Point to Ngāti Whatua and promoting Te Reo Māori – and of course the “Dawn Raids”.....

Peta went to live and work in Samoa from 1984 to 1997 where she did a range of things, including becoming the first appointed National Executive Director and setting up the YWCA of Western and American Samoa. She also worked in the commercial division of Samoa's national carrier Polynesian Airlines, and as Executive secretary for two cabinet Ministers.

Peta currently works at Waitakere City Council's Strategic Planning Unit in the Economic Development Strategy Team with a focus on Pacific Economic Development, supporting Māori Economic Development and community economic development.

Peta shared her journey in relation to the Treaty. When she arrived in New Zealand she was told not to mix with Māori. The government immigration policy had severed the relationship between Māori and the Pacific. They had no connection with the land here or at home and were rootless people, which impacted on their sense of identity. Peta talked about Pacific Islands' peoples' responsibility to the Treaty relationship. Pacific peoples and Māori are acknowledging tuakana - teina relationships and the responsibility of Māori to look after Pacific peoples.

We must reciprocate with Māori, to give back, to educate our own.