

BECOMING COMMUNITY and KA AWATEA THE ROLE OF THE CCANZ AND MEMBER CHURCHES

During 1991, the CCANZ Public Issues Group studied the Ka Awatea report.

The following material is not a policy statement but rather an introduction to further discussion.

The basis for a just society in Aotearoa is the recognition of the Maori people as tangata whenua. Under the Treaty of Waitangi, we recognise our responsibility in building a truly bi-cultural partnership.

We recognise our responsibility to assist in working out relationships with Pacific peoples within the Conference of Churches in Aotearoa, and to work towards an understanding of Aotearoa as a Pacific nation.

Out of this commitment, Unit I aims to facilitate reflection and action which will stimulate the growth of an inclusive community in the Conference of Churches, the Churches and society by:

- finding practical ways of ensuring full participation in the whole life of the Conference of Churches for those, for example, laity - especially youth and women, who in the past have had little access to the decision making of church bodies.
- being committed and accountable to the marginalised in our society, seeking ways to ensure that their voices are heard and that they have ready access to material and political resources.
- helping the Conference of Churches and the member churches take action to enable both church and society to identify and remove racism, sexism and other fundamental forms of injustice.

Background

Ka Awatea is a report prepared by three Maori people, Denese Henare, Mary Anne Thompson and Leith Comer at the request of Winston Peters (when Minister of Maori Affairs). It differs from many previous reports and policy documents such as Te Urupare Rangapu (Labour's devolution report) in that it has not been processed by government or their civil servants.

Given the roles of government (Kawanatanga) and the Maori people (tino rangatiratanga) described in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, the source and process of production of reports like **Ka Awatea** is of great importance.

The Public Issues Group wrote to the Minister of Maori Affairs, Doug Kidd expressing the following concerns:

..... Given that our starting point is to endorse the principle of Maori autonomy and self-determination (tino rangatiratanga) we must respond to reports and policies at two levels. We must support the demand for a fair deal within the present structures for Maori, as we do for unemployed, for widows and orphans. We must also say and continue to say loudly that the present structures are fundamentally unjust and that we support the changes that are necessary for Maori people to exercise tino rangatiratanga as guaranteed in te Tiriti o Waitangi.

In light of this stated position the Public Issues group is asking what is the present status of Ka Awatea.

How are the proposed changes in the Ka Awatea report being addressed? We have noted the following statement in Ka Awatea, *"Ultimately, Treaty based policy to fulfill protection of Tino Rangatiratanga requires recognition and commitment by Crown to ensuring the Maori have a secure and distinct place in New Zealand society."*(page 38)

What progress is being made by the Crown in implementing this policy?

In his response to the Public Issues Group Mr Kidd said:

As you will be aware Cabinet endorsed and approved:

- *the creation of a Ministry of Maori Development to advise Government on general Maori concerns and more specifically on education, health, training and economic development:*

- *that another of the prime roles of the Ministry would be to find ways for Maori to have better access to services provided by the mainstream government agencies and that pilot programmes be established and tested to examine how well mainstream services are delivered to Maori*

Recently I introduced the ministry of Maori Development Bill in Parliament which will establish the new Ministry on 1 January 1992 to replace both the Iwi Transition Agency and Manatu Maori.

Public submissions to the Bill closed on 11 November 1991 and it has now passed its third reading.

The Chief Executive Designate of the new Ministry is Mr Wira Gardiner. He and an establishment unit have made considerable progress on planning and deciding the structure, location and staffing requirements of the new Ministry.

At a central level the new Ministry will be policy based with the aim of creating an environment to assist Maori to improve their financial, social and political position. It will check how private and public sector organisations help or hinder Maori development and advise Maori on how to best gain access to mainstream resources.

At a regional level the new Ministry will monitor the performance of mainstream agencies in relation to Maori need, implement lead projections as formulated by the Ministry's policy arm, administer all the Iwi Transition Agency's programmes until they are phased out or transferred in 1992 and administer the Maori Trust Office services.

As senior staff are appointed to new positions a far more detailed planning schedule of policy formulation and implementation will be undertaken. Until then progress continues on working through the Ministry's corporate mission statement, outputs to government and budgetary matters.

I thank you for your letter and hope the progress report above sufficiently answers your query.