



## Nga Tapuwae

### After Waahi

The Waahi hui served as a catalyst for some of us at Nga Tapuwae. Our school has been run as a typical secondary school with the usual signs of 'tokenism'.

But we have Mira Szaszy as our Community Director, a Maori Studies Department of two and five other Maori staff. Thirty-five percent of our roll is Maori, eight percent is Pakeha, and the remainder Samoan, Cook Islanders, Niueans and Tongans, with a handful of Asian refugee pupils.

Visitors to the school are given an official Maori welcome if their status warrants it and taken to the marae (2 grotty prefabs) to see taha Maori.

The Waahi hui prompted the PPTA branch at N.T. to get as many members as possible there - we managed eight staff (five of these European) and twenty pupils from the 5th, 6th & 7th form. This group, on their return, prompted PPTA to ask for a one day hui for our staff to discuss the remits from Waahi and their application to Nga Tapuwae.

Many difficulties confronted the administration and what seemed simple to us was fraught with difficulties. Weren't we jumping the gun - they asked. The Department when approached, refused to give us a day for the hui and insisted we return to school on Monday, December 10 to compensate.

We, as a planning group, were not deterred. We met on the marae (admin. don't visit very often) and agreed our accountability was to the group. We quickly learnt never to approach the admin. alone - and never to commit the group without its consent. One of our difficulties was that admin. seemed to think that pakeha PR holders were spokespeople for the group, and as such, wielded power over Maori staff.

The hui went ahead on July 10th. All staff had had copies of the Waahi handouts and Hiwi Tauroa's booklet as pre-hui reading.

The Community Block was our venue and all organisation was in the hands of Maori staff who treated the area as a Marae for the day, with Maori protocol taking precedence. Many pakeha staff had their first experience of Marae procedure and were overwhelmed by this and Mira's clear and competent chairing of the day. The staff had been told that attendance was not compulsory, and four chose not to come. We were joined by Board members, 'Waahi' pupils and some parents.





Hiwi Tauroa and Pat Heremaia were guest speakers who opened up and debated basic taha Maori concepts. Discussions in workshops followed both addresses and all groups were chaired by Maori staff.

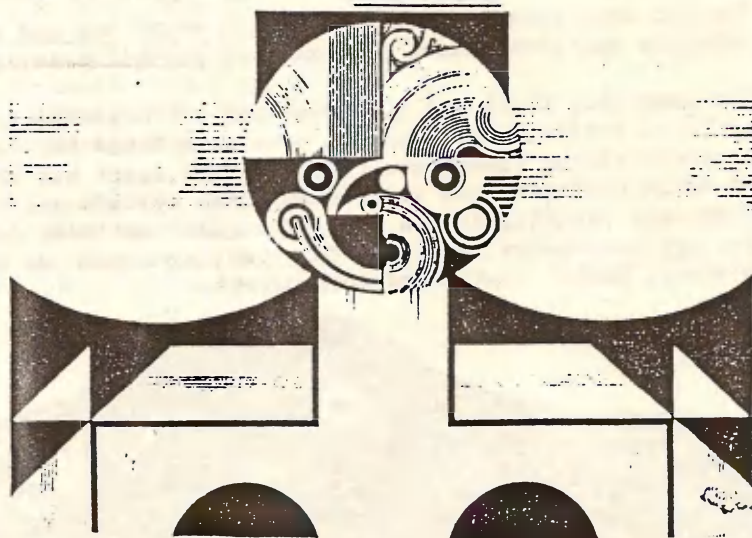
In the afternoon, Mira presented each group with eleven remits to vote on, and ordered us to record the voting. These covered the introduction of the Maori language in the Core Curriculum and aspects of school organisation according to taha Maori.

What emerged from most groups was a 6 to 1 vote in favour of 10 out of 11 remits. This evidence was of course later referred to by admin. as "people under pressure being persuaded". And of course the results were thrown back to the organising group - or rather the Maori staff - to "get their act together" and "to show how these can be implemented in the timetable."

So now in September we are still trying to have Maori as a compulsory subject for all third former Maori pupils in 1985. A compromise-for the Maori staff feel Maori for all third formers would be rejected.

What has emerged clearly is that if biculturalism is to happen we have to be in there with the Maori staff. We acknowledge that they're fighting against the system began 150 years ago. Our branch of PPTA has to now pick up the challenge thrown up by the Maori staff. We shall begin with the funding of the Marae (at the Maori staff's request). It's very interesting that our school has an excellent library, a new Auditorium, a community complex of great beauty, and two prefabs for the Marae. Perhaps a structural analysis course should be compulsory for all PPTA members, to reveal the extent of white racism in the education system.

Anne Jones



He iti ra, he iti mapihi pounamu.

I may be small, but I am of the best quality of greenstone

Maori proverb