

# WHAKATŌ TE PŪ HARAKEKE

## Embedding bicultural principles into a design process

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### Abstract

Aotearoa New Zealand is changing. The relationship between the inequities iwi Māori face and centuries of colonisation is clear. The need to address these inequities and the embedded colonial thinking that reinforces them in our society is more widely accepted. Nowhere is this need for change more acute than in education. The challenge of embedding bicultural principles into all aspects of education is a significant step in decolonising education. The practice of learning design and the design of frameworks that guide education rarely have a clear process to support a bicultural approach. This case study uses participant narratives to describe the development and delivery of a workshop to establish how bicultural principles will be embedded into the design of a sustainability strategic framework within an Aotearoa higher education context. This process can provide a starting point for a range of design processes to integrate bicultural principles more readily, thus supporting the decolonisation of education in Aotearoa.

### Keywords

ally, decolonisation, design, Tiriti

### Introduction

The government of Aotearoa New Zealand was founded on a treaty signed between the British

Crown and over 500 Māori leaders in 1840. The document had both a Māori language version (te Tiriti o Waitangi) and an English version (the

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Treaty of Waitangi). All but a few Māori signatories signed te Tiriti o Waitangi, rather than the English version. This is significant because there are fundamental differences in the meaning of the two different versions (Fletcher, 2022). The Waitangi Tribunal was established in 1975 to interpret these differences and determine whether actions of the Crown breach the promises made (Boast, 2016). While many of the claims against the Crown have centred on issues of land ownership, the third article of te Tiriti provides that the Crown agreed to give Māori the same rights and duties of citizenship as the people of England (Burns et al., 2024). This third article of te Tiriti emphasised the concept of equity or *ōritetaka* and is a concept core to this research.

Despite the popularist narrative of minority coalition politicians (RNZ News, 2024), there are some signals that Aotearoa is emerging into a time of greater understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the concept of *ōritetaka*. There is more widespread recognition of *tikaka* (customs), *mātauraka Māori* (traditional knowledge) and *te reo Māori* (language). These signals come from areas of health, education, politics, language revival and legal systems (“All Law Schools”, 2021; Education Gazette Editors, 2020; Local Electoral Amendment Act, 2021; Ministry of Health, 2020; New Zealand Parliament, 2017; O’Regan, 2018; Pirsoul, 2020). However, outcomes for Māori still trail behind in most social metrics (McIntosh & Workman, 2017; Reid et al., 2019; Stanley & Mihaere, 2019). Within education there is a substantial body of evidence that describes the changes in practice that can contribute to addressing these inequities (Bishop, 2003; Glynn, 2015; Hemara, 2000; Milne, 2013; Rātima et al., 2022). That evidence points to the need for a more bicultural approach in designing all aspects of the education system, from the design of individual lessons to the strategies that guide high-level decisions.

The practice of learning design and the design of education strategy has developed in a global context, where multiculturalism is often integrated through stakeholder engagement (Dalziel, 2015). However, multicultural globalisation does not reflect the bicultural context of Aotearoa as established by te Tiriti o Waitangi. *Mana whenua*, within the partnership principles of te Tiriti o Waitangi, are not positioned as other stakeholders, but rather as partners with *tino rakatirataka* (the right to self-determination) (Tuffin et al., 2004).

In the context of this research, Kāi Tahu are the *iwi* who are *mana whenua* of most of Te

Waipounamu (the South Island of New Zealand). This infers a need to develop both the design and the design process in partnership with Kāi Tahu from the beginning to the end.

This research presents a case study of the redesign of a strategic framework within an Aotearoa university. The first iteration of the framework lacked almost any sense of Tiriti partnership or biculturalism (University of Otago, 2017). This case study describes the process of designing and participating in a workshop to create a shared understanding of bicultural principles to guide the redesign of the framework.

The first section of this article provides some background to the theme of decolonising design. The methodology that has been adopted is then described. Subsequent sections provide background to the framework being redesigned, the development and provision of the workshop, reflections from participants, outcomes and then a final reflection on the process.

### Decolonising design

Before exploring the experience of designing and participating in a design workshop, it is useful to visit the existing research that informed the workshop. The workshop was referred to as a design workshop. One definition of design “is a process for creative problem solving” (IDEO, n.d.). Johansson-Sköldberg et al. (2013) identified two main discourses on design. One is described as *designerly thinking*, which is associated with the academic approach to the development of professional design practice and the reflection upon that practice as it relates to theory. The second is described as *design thinking*, as popularised by IDEO and Stanford d.school (Dam & Siang, 2018). Since the design process being explored in this article was informed by academic discourse and the co-creation of this article created significant reflection, this work better aligns with the *designerly thinking* discourse.

A significant aspect of the discourse around design relates to the extent to which the processes and approaches adopted can further embed systemic and long-term inequities:

To date, mainstream design discourse has been dominated by a focus on Anglocentric/Eurocentric ways of seeing, knowing, and acting in the world, with little attention being paid to alternative and marginalized discourses from the non Anglo-European sphere, or the nature and consequences of design-as-politics today. (Ahmed Ansari et al., 2016, p. 1)

This is in effect a form of colonisation by design. Freire (1998) spoke to the emancipatory values of challenging the systems put in place (deliberately or not) to maintain oppression. ‘Ilaiū Talei (2023) supported design praxis that is led by Indigenous values and concepts, providing specific examples in Aotearoa and the wider Pacific region. Ritchie (2017) referred to the design of research methods and the sentiment that in Aotearoa our methodologies need to be contextually responsive given the oppression and inequitable outcomes Māori face. L. T. Smith (2012) described what such a decolonising response might be: “Decolonization, once viewed as the formal process of handing over the instruments of government, is now recognized as a long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic and psychological divesting of colonial power” (p. 98).

Decolonisation of design has been addressed in many contexts around the world (Schultz et al., 2018). At this point, it is appropriate to speak to the separate but braided streams of practice of the ally and of the oppressed, specifically in the bicultural context of Aotearoa, Pākehā Tiriti allies and takata whenua.

In one stream there is a recurring theme of designers as allies (Hendrick & Young, 2017; Onafuwa, 2018). Neutrality can often be seen as a positive capability in a designer in order that the design output is shaped by the needs and beliefs of the end user, rather than the designer (Huppertz, 2015; Lu & Liu, 2011). However, as Freire (1985) asserted, “washing one’s hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral” (p. 122). To become an ally is not a charitable act: it “occurs in the context of being a good change agent; this is not something one does to help someone else or to help a group” (Kendall, 2012, p. 173). It is instead based on an alliance to address an issue rather than to offer help. This is what Jones and Jenkins (2008) referred to as working the hyphen of the indigene-coloniser or Māori-Pākehā relationship (where Pākehā refers to New Zealanders of European descent). Working as allies presents designers with “opportunities to de-link (decolonize) from our unsustainable present” (Onafuwa, 2018, p. 14).

In the other stream is the emancipatory design work of the oppressed or marginalised group. Within an urban design context, Barry and Agyeman (2020) referred to the need for this work to “begin within Indigenous peoples themselves and with the exercise of Indigenous futurities and Indigenous sovereignties” (p. 33).

The systems design mapping work of Schultz (2019) provides an example from an Australian Aboriginal context, where Aboriginal art is used in workshops facilitated by an Indigenous facilitator to make sense of social and economic systems. In the Aotearoa context, Kaupapa Māori design (Māori approach to design) is based on values and principles from a te ao Māori perspective and is conducted largely by and for Māori (Barnes, 2013; L. T. Smith, 2012). For example, Kake (2015) described the application of Te Aranga Māori Design Principles to urban design to create an environment that addresses the disproportionate levels of housing deprivation experienced by Māori. Te Morenga et al. (2018) provided an example of Kaupapa Māori design in a healthcare context to address inequities in healthcare outcomes. The use of te ao Māori design principles can signal a “reawakening of the Maori imagination that had been stifled and diminished by colonization processes” (G. H. Smith, 2003, p. 2).

When the braided streams of the ally’s work and the Kaupapa Māori meet and flow together, there is the opportunity for co-design of solutions to shared problems or visions—a flow through which diversity of worldviews creates a productive interaction in which, as Wahl (2016) stated, “design follows worldview and worldview follows design” (p. 131); a place where epistemic justice can be pursued (Snowden et al., 2021).

This mixed flow of co-design has been explored in the Aotearoa healthcare context (Mark & Hagen, 2020). While referring to design for disability, Labattaglia (2019) suggested that in Aotearoa “there is a considerable gap in the research literature and practice concerned with accessible co-design methods and approaches”. However, Hagen (2016) was able to recognise trends in co-design towards new types of design teams forming, placed-based approaches, increased cultural opportunities and focus on systems change.

The same considerations of epistemic justice and co-design was required when considering the methodology of this research as it was when considering the context of the research.

## Methodology

The colonisation by design described above is also an inherent methodological consideration for the design of this research. There is a long history of colonisation through epistemologically inappropriate research design, which is characterised by research on Indigenous populations that does not adequately recognise an Indigenous worldview (Drawson et al., 2017; Ryder et al.,

2020; L. T. Smith, 2012). In contrast, Kaupapa Māori research is situated as (mostly) by and for Māori (L. T. Smith, 2012). This research is focused on developing a workshop process intended to support the decolonisation of sustainability in a tertiary education institution in Aotearoa. It is not *on, by or for* Māori. It adopted a partnership model better described by the preposition *with*, from both a Māori and a Pākehā perspective. This approach aligns with the notion of partnership that has emerged from contemporary interpretation of te Tiriti o Waitangi (Bishop, 2003; Hudson & Russell, 2009; Jennings, 2004; Morrison, 2005). In recognition that much of the knowledge brought to this research has come from Kaupapa Māori research and mataraka Māori, the metaphor of he awa whiria (braided streams) proposed by Macfarlane et al. (2015) seems an appropriate description of our approach. The streams of Western and Indigenous approaches converge, diverge, run together and run in alliance towards the same destination and bridge cultural perspectives (Arago-Kemp & Hong, 2018; Hursthouse, 2019; Trewartha, 2020).

If this alliance-based research is to contribute to practice becoming more bicultural, an approach and method relevant to education practitioners is required. As an approach, pragmatism serves practitioners well in that it accepts the uncertainty and changing nature of findings, recognises the individual interpretation of meaning, accepts that inquiry and knowledge are social, supports learning based on experience, and is flexible enough to accommodate other paradigms (Ormerod, 2006). This accommodating influence of a pragmatic approach is advantageous given the diversity of perspectives, backgrounds, professions and academic disciplines involved. Participative research is seen as well aligned with both a pragmatic approach and diverse perspectives (Cook, 2012; Harney et al., 2016; Montoya & Kent, 2011).

Participative research is an umbrella term describing a range of methods in which those who could be considered subjects become involved as partners in the process of the enquiry, and their knowledge and capabilities are valued (Participation Research Cluster, Institute of Development Studies, n.d.). Participation may vary in extent and roles. These methods have emerged from social action research and emancipatory philosophy (Macaulay, 2016). Participative research has been used in a range of practice contexts, including architecture, public health, education, mental health, health and safety, community development, and sustainability (Allchin et al., 2020;

Carlson et al., 1998; Cusack et al., 2018; Katoppo & Sudradjat, 2015; Macaulay, 2016; Osterhold et al., 2007; Roberts et al., 2011; Ryan et al., 2022; Tadaki et al., 2021; Tangvald-Pedersen & Bongaardt, 2017). Therefore, participative methods are well aligned with the purpose and the practice context of this research.

Case study research methods have been applied in a similarly broad range of contexts, with the notable addition of its application to the examination of other research methods (Swanborn, 2010). Simons's (2009) definition of case studies relates well to the context of this research: "an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, program or system in a real-life context" (p. 21). Therefore, this research can be described as adopting a pragmatic professional practice approach to a participative case study method.

The combination of participatory and case study methods has been used in many contexts (Osterhold et al., 2007; Reilly, 2010; Roberts et al., 2011; Salloum et al., 2011; Vorley & Williams, 2015). There is a great deal of variation in the roles and extent to which subjects are involved in the design and process of the enquiry across these different contexts. In this research, there are three levels of participation. At the minimal level, participants were able to contribute to the generation of insights within the workshop and were invited to contribute to the analysis and production of this article. At an intermediate level, participants were able to provide feedback on the proposed design of the workshop, prepare and present sections of the workshop, and write specific sections of this article, as well as contribute to the analysis and production of this article more generally. At the highest level of involvement, the co-chairs of the group of participants led the design, delivery and writing of the article to provide scaffolding for the participation of others. This three-tiered model respects the expectation that in participative case studies "research partnerships and relationships will be characterised by equality, dialogue, mutual respect, inclusivity and collaboration" (Reilly, 2010, p. 3), while ensuring progress towards the overall objectives. The title of this article, "Whakatō te Pū Harakeke" (working together to plant out the flax), refers to this highly participative approach—a practice that had not only practical outcomes but also community and spiritual significance. The formation of the flax itself is symbolic of concepts of kinship and

working across generations (Metge, 1990; Pihama et al., 2019).

### Background

The University of Otago endorsed its first sustainability strategic framework in 2017. This framework was intended to guide the university through a significant sustainability transition from 2017 to 2021. The objectives of the framework were diverse and far reaching. They included an objective to “incorporate Māori and Pasifika knowledge and perspectives into the university’s approaches to its sustainability transition” (University of Otago, 2017, p. 3) and identified Kāi Tahu as one of many partners in advancing sustainability goals.

There was feedback from many staff that the 2017 framework did not adequately include or represent te ao Māori perspectives. To address this, when forming the advisory group to design a new iteration of the framework for 2022 and beyond, a takata whenua (Indigenous) co-chair was nominated (by the Office of Māori Development) as an equal lead in the design process alongside the university’s head of sustainability. A rapid review of the impact of the 2017 framework was conducted by the group. At that early point, it was clear that integrating te ao Māori principles into the process of designing the new framework needed to be addressed before any further work was conducted.

It was also seen that not all members of the advisory group had the same level of knowledge or comfort around tikaka and mātauraka Māori. The co-chairs (one Pākehā and one takata whenua) designed a workshop for the group so that there was more shared understanding and comfort.

### Designing the workshop

The design of the workshop was a shared and equal process. One co-chair brought facilitation and learning design experience. The other brought extensive governance and teaching experience from a te ao Māori perspective. The first requirement was that the workshop should provide concrete examples of Māori principles being embedded into practice. That practice needed to be relatable to all of the members of the advisory group. The group included professional staff (including an architect, wardens from residential colleges and a property service senior manager), researchers and lecturers across a range of disciplines, staff from the university’s strategic planning unit, and the staff of the Sustainability Office.

The workshop was structured as a series of short presentations in which members of the group shared examples of practice, followed by a discussion of what te ao Māori principles or values were apparent in that work. Table 1 shows the structure and time allocation for those sessions.

**TABLE 1** Programme for workshop

Time allocation	Topic
30 minutes	Karakia (scene setting with incantation), welcome and recap of previous session
30 minutes	Māori design principles in urban planning. Specific Kāi Tahu (the iwi or tribe of the area) examples. Presented by professor of geography specialising in Indigenous approaches to planning.
30 minutes	Multi-iwi consultation and integration of tikaka and mātauraka Māori into the design of a student residential college. Presented by Office of Māori Development and strategic architect.
20 minutes	Kaitiaki principles in an undergraduate online course on circular economy. Presented by course designer/coordinator.
20 minutes	Principles in action in the design of a postgraduate course on sustainability through a te ao Māori perspective (Oraka Taiao—Culture and Sustainability). Presented by the course designers (one Pākehā, one Māori).
20 minutes	Principles in action in a multidisciplinary research project focused on health and urban design (Te Ara Mua—Future Streets). Presented by researcher.
40 minutes	Which principles do we carry forward as a foundation for the design of the new framework? Presented by co-chairs.
5 minutes	Closing and karakia

### **The presenters' workshop experiences**

In this section we share personal narratives written by presenters at the workshop. These narratives are presented in the order in which the presentations took place.

#### ***Māori design principles in urban planning*** **(Professor Michelle Thompson-Fawcett)**

As someone who has worked in the sustainability space for 30 years, the release of the university's Sustainability Strategic Framework in 2017 was disappointing for me in many regards. Yes, it was good that the university was placing sustainability on its agenda. However, key elements of moving towards sustainability in an Aotearoa context were absent. In particular—and first in a cascading effect—the framework was not established in a manner that delivered on te Tiriti o Waitangi. It did not embrace partnership and the collaboration anticipated in a society in which there is meant to be co-existence of two tiriti partners. Second, it did not facilitate bicultural understandings and implementation of the notion of sustainability. And third, it presented a rather narrow conception of sustainability, highly focused on physical sustainability without due recognition of the necessity of interweaving that with, among other things, cultural, social, wellbeing, political, spiritual, metaphysical and just sustainabilities.

Therefore, when I was asked by the takata whenua co-chair of the advisory group for the 2022 and beyond iteration of the framework to join in a workshop intended to introduce te ao Māori principles into the designing of the new framework, I was pleased to contribute. This was an excellent opportunity to encourage the shift taking place in the university's sustainability work.

My first hurdle was thinking how to pitch my contribution to the mixed levels of understanding within the advisory group. When teaching on this topic of whakawhanaketanga toitū (sustainable development), I would normally spend several hours working through ngā uara (values) and case studies of Indigenous-led compared with collaborative partnership alternatives. But at the workshop I needed to condense that into half an hour. So it was a chance to whet appetites, inspire collaborative engagement with takata whenua and demonstrate the breadth of options that lay ahead, rather than anything more decisive. I cannot be sure if I achieved that, but I welcomed the start of such a conversation.

#### ***Mana whenua within the design process*** **(Megan Potiki)**

The university has been tasked with the design and building of a 450-bed residential college for students and it is to be named Te Rangihīroa, after the first Māori graduate from Otago University, who went on to have a stunning academic career. The naming of this building after a tupuna (ancestor) who hails from an iwi in the North Island (Ngāti Mutunga) is an added layer of complexity. The narrative and Māori values are twofold, with mana whenua (Kāi Tahu) and Ngāti Mutunga. Furthermore, we needed to embed the historical narrative about Ngāti Mutunga and the local iwi so it was genuinely understood by the Campus Development Division, the architects, the builders and other key groups. There were some bumps in the road as we started this challenging journey and talking past each other at times. However, we forged ahead and were able to come to a mutual understanding, comfortable that our iwi narrative was taken very seriously and reflected in the design and build. Therefore, the presentation of the Te Rangihīroa work between us (University Strategic Architect Gordon Roy and me) was straightforward as the groundwork was done in the previous years.

#### ***Tiriti allies within the design process*** **(Gordon Roy)**

I have been in the role of university strategic architect for almost four years and prior to that had practised as an architect in Edinburgh. As an architect, talking about design and process is fairly natural and I was happy to present to the group. What is perhaps less natural is a Scotsman, fairly new to the country, talking about the integration of Māori culture and values into a design process. The irony of the situation was not lost on the group. That said, the university has been trying to improve the integration of Māori culture through design over the last few years, and in some respects, the opportunity was somewhat easier for me being a newcomer with a willingness to learn and understand a new culture.

I had no preconceived idea as to how the workshop and future sessions were going to run, but felt comfortable about the presentation. What was perhaps more daunting was the analysis and dissection of the following discussions with the academic members of the group, which is not my natural territory. Overall, I was pleased to be able to contribute and advance the opportunity to better embed Māori cultural values into the university, through either process or design.

It was not immediately apparent at the workshop what the potential for this process was, and it was not until a couple of further sessions had been carried out that the concept and potential benefits became clearer. The wider benefits of the process for me still feel somewhat intangible and it will be interesting to view with hindsight how successful it has been. The process has the potential to assist with other workstreams in my sphere of influence, such as our Campus Master Plan, where it has the potential to fully embed Māori perspectives, rather than being merely a section within the plan.

***Principles in action in the design of a postgraduate course***  
(Professor Janet Stephenson)

The university's Centre for Sustainability, a research centre, had developed a proposal for a postgraduate paper, "Oranga Taiao: Culture and Sustainability". The intent of the paper was to bring mātauraka and social science perspectives to the challenges of transitioning to a sustainable future while maintaining wellbeing. The paper was intended for students in various postgraduate degrees in geography as well as certain degrees offered in other schools and divisions. The four-member core team developing the paper proposal consisted of two Māori academics, one Pākehā academic and one academic originally from Hawaii.

It was intended that the presentation at the workshop would be jointly given by one of the Māori academics and the Pākehā academic but due to clashes in schedules only the Pākehā academic was available. As the Pākehā academic, I reflected that this was a bit like "missing a limb" but did my best to describe the origins of this bicultural paper, the teamwork in developing the proposal, the engagement in developing it including with Kāi Tahu members, and how this resulted in the proposed bicultural content (bringing different knowledge systems together) and teaching methods (including being co-taught by the bicultural paper development team, out-of-classroom learning with non-academic Māori knowledge holders, and exercises in collaboration and communication). At the time of presenting at the workshop, the paper had not yet been considered by the academic committees involved in approving new papers but had wide support from a range of departments across many disciplines.

***Principles in action in research*** (Associate Professor Alex Macmillan)

As tangata Tiriti (a non-Indigenous person in Aotearoa by virtue of te Tiriti o Waitangi) and a public health researcher interested in linking environmental sustainability with human wellbeing and health equity, I am on a continuing journey embedding te Tiriti principles in my research practice. Relationships and responsibility are both required for a non-Māori researcher to pick up and put into practice Māori advice about research ethics, and to take action to fulfil our te Tiriti obligations. In public health, advocacy for policy and organisational change is a major part of the research we do—including advocacy to put what we have learnt from research into practice in the university's own operations.

I was really relieved to see that previous collective advocacy at the university level was paying off, and the process for revising the university's sustainability framework was going to be co-led by mana whenua, and build on "bicultural principles", centralising Māori knowledge. This linked to a number of conversations with the tangata Tiriti co-lead for the work, in which I problematised the wholesale adoption of the international Sustainable Development Goals as a framework for sustainability work in Aotearoa.

But it is always daunting to be asked to speak to non-Māori experiences of putting these ideas into practice—especially when Māori partners for potential co-presentation are based elsewhere, and therefore not able to be present. Proceeding cautiously, I needed to consider carefully the purpose of my contribution to the workshop, which I felt was to demonstrate that tangata Tiriti members of the group had some practical pathways themselves for putting principles into practice in urban design research. It also allowed me to demonstrate that tangata Tiriti members of the committee (like me) were committed partners to mana whenua and mataawaka members. Luckily for me, principles and a useful framework from te ao Māori were already covered in the workshop more appropriately by Professor Michelle Thompson-Fawcett. Having acknowledged influential Māori and Pākehā colleagues and co-investigators, and invoked my own ancestry and understandings of responsibility as a sustainability and health researcher, I was then able to use a research case study to show how we are realising the values, ethical guidance and frameworks. This included building on existing relationships to develop the research question, relationship development with mana whenua iwi in the research location,

co-design of a street change intervention using Te Aranga landscape design principles and having a strong thread of Kaupapa Māori research within the larger “Māori-centred” project. By ending with a newer endeavour to build a research centre on contemporary constitutional discussions and recommendations (Matike Mai report), I hoped to show an example of how they could be put into practice for institutions like the University of Otago.

At the time, I think the first purpose of the talk was met. Whether the second purpose was met is not up to me to decide. In evaluating whether the ideas presented feed through into the revised sustainability framework, I will be looking for commitments to holistic wellbeing and equity, as well as strong commitments and clear actions to uphold the articles of te Tiriti, including tino rangatiratanga.

### Next steps

The step after the workshop was for all participants to generate statements about a desired future state. This future state was set in 2030 and was to focus on observable characteristics of sustainability that were described in an active, first-person voice in the present tense. For example, in the notes one contributor suggested “our innovation systems are transdisciplinary, strongly linked to mātauraka Māori, community, industry and government”. Some scaffolding was provided so that the statements would address a wide range of aspects of sustainability. This scaffolding prompted thinking in areas of rakahau (research), whakahaere (operations), ako (learning and teaching) mana whakahaere (governance) and tūtakina whānui (wider engagement). Presenting the scaffolding in a table with columns for each area created some discomfort in that it might predetermine the final structure of the framework at a premature stage in the process and that it promoted siloed rather than integrated thinking. On the basis that the scaffolding would be deconstructed later and that statements could be repeated in several columns, the group agreed to progress.

Asynchronously aggregating all of the statements on one online document for a period of approximately three weeks produced around 200 future statements. Some were duplicated, some almost identical, some at a very high conceptual level and others at very specific operational level. The co-chairs synthesised some statements, deconstructed the siloes of the initial scaffolding and made one list of statements. Some statements were set aside as not relevant to this specific task.

An account was provided to the group of the changes and adaptation made. The list was then distributed by email to allow the group to provide any feedback before the next stage. Some minor edits were made based on that feedback.

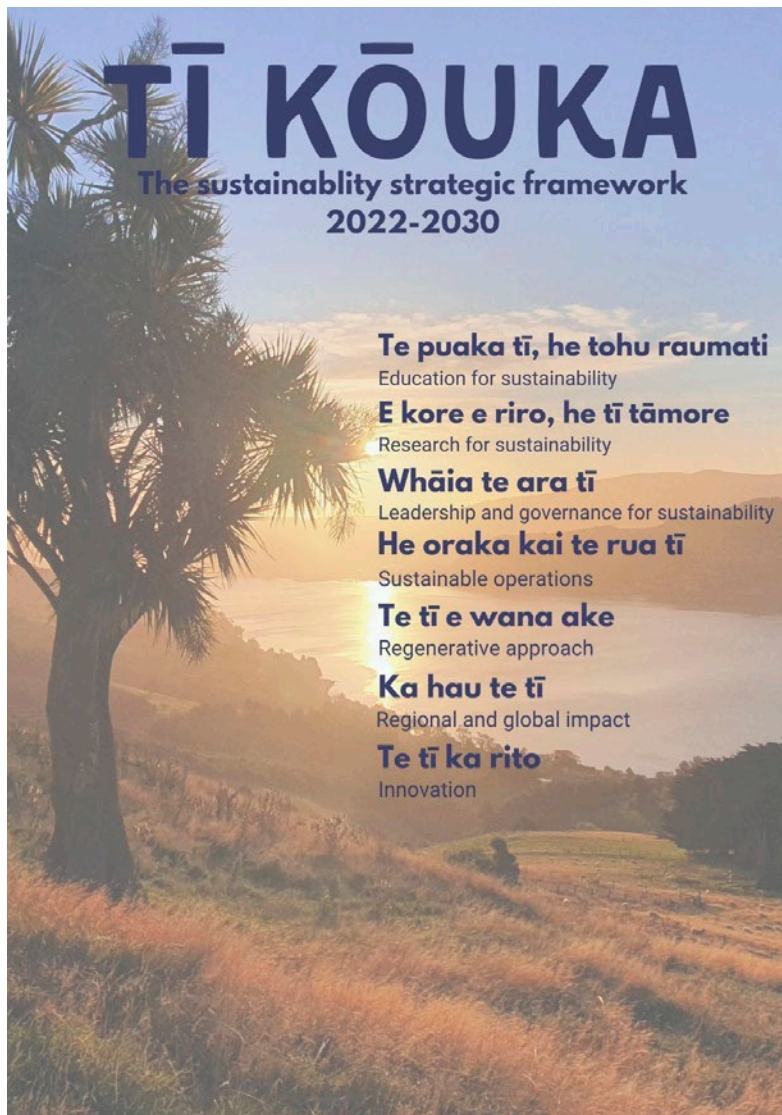
The plan for the next stage was that a typical design thinking process using Post-it notes to create affinity diagrams would be used to create a new structure (Dam & Siang, 2022). However, in discussion between the co-chairs was a concern that at this convergent point in the design process, there was a risk of the prevalent Western epistemology of the group overriding the intent to fully integrate a te ao Māori perspective despite the initial workshop (Chasanidou et al., 2015). To mitigate that risk, the co-chairs considered whether there was an existing structure from a Māori perspective that could be used instead. After consultation with whānau, the takata whenua co-chair suggested that Tī Kōuka (the cabbage tree) may provide an appropriate structure on which to base the new framework and to organise the future statements.

This was very much seen as equal parts gift and challenge by the Pākehā co-chair because it both provided inspiration and identified a deep deficit in their knowledge. This challenge demanded a deep dive into mātauraka (knowledge) and pūrākau (stories) that surround tī kōuka, before being comfortable to co-present the idea to the group. The metaphors and some of the stories connecting tī kōuka to sustainability were presented by the Pākehā co-chair with support from the takata whenua co-chair. This was an important step in demonstrating the work of tangata Tiriti as allies, rather than always expecting their Māori colleagues to carry that burden (Margaret, 2013).

Based on the proposed metaphorical link to tī kōuka, the group agreed to explore how to sort the future statements around attributes and whakataukī (proverbs) of the tree and its connection to the local iwi (Kāi Tahu). Figure 1 shows the high-level overview of the draft framework that emerged from this process. Below this overview level sits a level that unpacks the link between the statements in English and those in te reo Māori. Then below that level is the synthesis of the future statements organised under each of the headings.

At this draft stage, the framework was shared with local rūnaka (tribal council), university senior leaders and governance. Positive feedback was received on the format, process and content from all parties and minor adaptations made. The framework will be shared for consultation more widely across the university community before being finalised and then ratified. Sharing





**FIGURE 1** Overview of draft sustainability strategic framework  
(Image: Ray O'Brien, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons)

the development process will be an integral part of further consultation.

### Reflections on process

#### *Mana whenua perspective (Megan Potiki)*

As mana whenua (Kāi Tahu ki Ōtākou), I have witnessed our people graciously leaning into many processes over decades that have simply tagged on a few values or translated a word to Māori here and there. Therefore, being able to sit at the same table and start with our values and narratives addresses the historically unbalanced approach to these types of processes. Importantly, the process of working in partnership allowed for valuable discussion and learning, and this resulted in a more cohesive understanding.

#### *Tangata Tiriti perspective (Ray O'Brien)*

Establishing the co-chair partnership from the very beginning, choosing participants together, being open enough to challenge each other, and having complementary skills and knowledge were all vital in creating this enabling environment. Perhaps more importantly for me, the personal and professional growth that I experienced during this process has and will continue to have an ongoing impact on all my work.

As co-chair of the group, my key reflection on this process is how enabling it has been. It has provided me with knowledge and support to avoid what is sometimes referred to as Pākehā paralysis (Tolich & North, 2002). Indeed, rather than paralysis it put me in a position where the imperative to do the mahi (work) of drawing on

mātauraka Māori was on me. Recognition and validation of this action from my mana whenua co-chair is the only reason I was able to contribute in this way.

Throughout the reflections provided by workshop presenters, a feeling of vulnerability or imposter syndrome was apparent in both Māori and tauwiwi (non-Māori) presenters. For Māori, the vulnerability was because, yet again, they had been called up to represent Māori in a forum where their colleagues may not be ready to understand or act upon a different perspective. Tauwiwi experienced vulnerability was because of a concern that while their intentions were sound, they might misrepresent their Tiriti partners, or the authenticity of their engagement might be brought into question. This vulnerability or risk taking needed a safe place to happen—a place where it was clear that we all had shared objectives; a place we could experience being allies working in the same stream of work and thinking.

Being in that flow together demanded that we all did our share of the mahi. Whether that involved sharing work that had been done in the past that embodied te ao Māori values or doing the research at the time, we all demonstrated tangible commitment to getting the work done to reach our shared (or allied) objective. Smith refers to this as recognising the ringa raupā—the hands that have been hardened by work (Te Kai a te Rangatira, 2022).

## Conclusions

When the need for a design process that would actively decolonise an existing strategy became apparent, there was no clear model to follow. Through co-design, a process was established and adjusted responsively. A pragmatic approach to the participative case study method was adopted to capture that process from the experience of the participants.

Reflections on that process recognised the different but concurrent and interconnected flows of work and thinking that took place—the braided streams of work. Themes around the role of the Tiriti ally, the importance of establishing authentic partnership early in the process, vulnerability, the expectation of hard work on both sides of Te Tiriti, and the importance of shared goals emerged from the reflections.

The metaphor of working together to prepare the flax was central to describing this case study. That related to one framework, in one institution, in one treaty context, and therefore, it is unlikely that the process could be picked up wholesale and

applied to another context. Indeed, at least some of its utility comes from its strong link to place—to a specific stand of flax. However, the process as outlined does provide a start point for co-design, and a sharing of experiences that perhaps will normalise the vulnerability and reduce the paralysis that sometimes results.

It is a start, and that is enough, if you are prepared to get your ringa raupā!

## Glossary

Throughout this text the southern Kāi Tahu dialect of te reo Māori has been adopted as default. Where a concept or reference relates to another area an appropriate spelling has been adopted.

ako	learning and teaching
Aotearoa	Māori name for New Zealand
he awa whiria	braided streams
iwi	tribal kin group
kaitiaki	guardian, minder; custodian over natural resources
karakia	ritual chants, prayers
Kaupapa Māori	Māori approach, philosophical doctrine or methodology
mahi	work
mana whakahaere	governance
mana whenua	Māori who have genealogical and longstanding connection to the land they continue to occupy; the territorial rights or authority over tribal lands
mataawaka/ mātāwaka	kinship group
mātauraka Māori	traditional Māori knowledge (southern dialect)
ngā uara	values
Pākehā	New Zealander of European descent
pūrākau	story or legend
ōretetaka	equality or equity (southern dialect)
rakahau	research
ringa raupā	hands that have been hardened by work
rūnaka	tribal council (southern dialect)
takata whenua	the Indigenous people of the land (southern dialect)
tangata Tiriti	New Zealanders of non-Māori descent

tauīwi	non-Māori
te ao Māori	Māori worldview
te reo Māori	the Māori language
te Tiriti o Waitangi	the Treaty of Waitangi, New Zealand's founding document
Te Waipounamu	the South Island of New Zealand
tī kōuka	cabbage tree
tikaka	correct procedures or customs (southern dialect)
tino rakatirataka	self-determination (southern dialect)
tino rangatiratanga	self-determination
Tiriti	Referencing to te reo Māori version of the Treaty of Waitangi
tupuna	ancestor
tūtakina whānui	wider engagement
whakahaere	operations
whakatauki	proverb
Whakatō te pū harakeke	working together to plant out the flax
whakawhanaketanga toitū	sustainable development
whānau	family; nuclear/extended family

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