

Te Ohaakii a Hine – National Network Ending Sexual Violence Together (TOAH-NNEST)

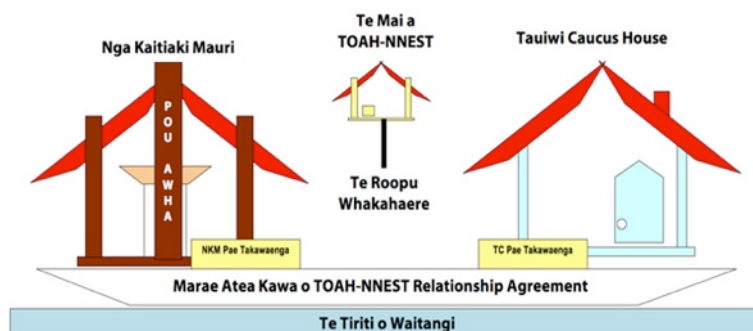


Te Ohaakii a Hine – National Network Ending Sexual Violence Together (TOAH-NNEST) is the national network of NGOs and individual specialists providing services for sexual violence prevention and intervention.

TOAH-NNEST has a structure based on Te Tiriti o Waitangi¹, with two whare or houses:

- Ngā Kaitiaki Mauri (all specialist sexual violence services from a kaupapa and tikanga Māori worldview)
- Tauwi Caucus (all specialist sexual violence services from Tauwi worldviews)

The whare work together on common issues, as well as autonomously in keeping with their own worldviews and priorities. When they work with the same people, e.g. Government Ministers and officials, they provide complementary perspectives.



Members of Ngā Kaitiaki Mauri and the Tauwi Caucus were interviewed separately for this case study. Both interviews offer advice to organisations considering embarking on a two whare governance model. They reinforce the primacy of relationships, and the effort required to sustain those relationships.

Ngā Kaitiaki Mauri members share their understandings of the Treaty relationship. They raise some of the challenges of working across different worldviews and the need for Tauwi to increase their understanding of Māori worldviews in order to better engage in Treaty based relationships.

Tauwi Caucus members reflect on the necessity of engaging with the Treaty. They emphasise that applying the Treaty at the organisational level requires both power-sharing structures and the involvement of skilled people with a commitment to Treaty relationships.

¹ For more detail on the structure see: <http://toah-nnest.org.nz/about-us/te-tiriti-o-waitangi>

TOAH-NNEST NGĀ KAITIAKI MAURI

The two whare Treaty relationship

We are each working in our own communities, and the kaupapa of sexual violence is quite heavy, so when we come together as TOAH-NNEST it is to support each other and move forward. The key point in Treaty relationships is how we work, and walk together. There have been lots of ups and downs along the way on this journey, personalities and so forth, but that is all part of a relationship. It is about getting to know each other and getting to know how we think, because Māori and Tauwi whakaaro is different. It is recognising and accepting that. Our Tauwi people have accepted that, but whether they fully understand the differences is another thing. How we meet and work together is different for Ngā Kaitiaki Mauri and the Tauwi Caucus, we have different rules in our two houses. It is about how we put that together – how do we energise each other and support each other in our work?

One of the most critical parts of the Treaty is relationship. When we focus on partnership, without thinking about relationship, it makes the way we work together more difficult. There are complex issues that we have to consider and that is more possible if we think about relationship. Talking about relationship makes talking about equity more possible.

When they signed the Treaty, the rangatira were looking forward. The option was how do we keep going forward together. Now the Crown wants to opt out of the Treaty but it is not an option for us, this is an agreement that our rangatira laid down for us. We are committed to fulfilling it because they signed it. I don't think Tauwi or the Crown have an understanding of what that means.

We have a responsibility. It is an agreement for each and every one of us and the generations yet to come. If we can't set the platform for Treaty relationships and walk it, then it looks like a big joke to the generation yet to come.

The two whare structure gives the possibility for both worldviews to be in the forefront rather than one being behind the other. The foundation for that is the [relationship agreement](#).²

We've probably all worked in organisations that have tried to be bicultural. In the end our experience has been that rather than being partners alongside each other we have just become another subgroup under Pākehā authority and worldview, and bit by bit our kaupapa Māori way of working has been diminished so we can no longer call it that. The two house relationship needs to happen at every level, or otherwise we will only ever get what our Tauwi colleagues say we can have.

Our Tauwi colleagues have been good, with a fairly high level of consistency, in engaging with government. In general, government want to speak to one voice. Our Tauwi colleagues are usually the ones who have been contacted, and they have said, "We will only come with our Māori colleagues." That has been really critical to us, otherwise many times our voice would have been invisible.

In a recent parliamentary review of funding for sexual violence services, to even name Māori as a significant group that need resourcing became really fraught. We were being referred to 'other groups'. Those are some of the difficulties we have, and when you know that Māori are twice as likely to be abused, it is appalling that we can't name Māori as a specific group, let alone as a Treaty partner.

When we are meeting with the Government officials they always say, "Until you explain what kaupapa Māori is..." It gets frustrating at times. It is easy for Tauwi to explain their models.

² See: <http://toah-nnest.org.nz/~toahnnest/images/pdfs/TeTiritiRelationship.pdf>

It is frustrating but we wouldn't be having the conversation if we didn't have the two whare structure that puts us in the forefront alongside Tauwiwi colleagues. It means those with power over resources are confronted with the conversation because the structure makes that possible.

Whanaungatanga and intention

A lot of our non-Māori friends and colleagues use Māori words to express themselves much more than a couple of decades ago, but when it comes to intellectual ideas and psychological theory it is devoid of anything Māori.

Simple terminologies which are part of our culture are misunderstood. For example, 'Aroha' it isn't just about love – Aro ki te Hā o te tangata (Pay heed to the dignity of people), aro means the forefront, hā refers to the breath of the person we are engaging with. When we are facing each other your breath and mine are uniting, like in this conversation now. It is more than love, it is the importance of connecting with each other. It is the significance of te taha wairua and that is often lacking in terms of a wholistic (whole) understanding of te reo Māori me ōna tikanga and the concepts we use.

When we talk about Treaty relationship we are actually talking about whanaungatanga, which is complex. If both sides of the table understood what whanaungatanga is, just like we understand Western models, then we would have a deeper understanding. Therefore, it is important for our Tauwiwi partners to learn and seek out mātauranga Māori to fully understand the partner relationship we have together especially with te reo Māori.

If we are looking at whanaungatanga, once you get to embrace that you realise that whanaungatanga doesn't stand on its own and you come back to our pūrākau which was around the relationship between the male essence and female essence and our take pū (pūtaka) or principles. I think we have all been incredibly courageous to have engaged in this journey and still be engaged in it. It is about intention.

Our intention keeps us going, we can see the light at the end of the tunnel, we just have to get there together. It is an intention to find a way forward together that honours both worldviews. That is my understanding of our relationship agreement. We just have to keep going, even at times when it's frustrating, we are not being heard, or are misinterpreted, or we have hurt others' feelings. There have been times when our Tauwiwi colleagues have wanted to walk away from the relationship because it has become too difficult. I don't think it is ever going to be easy. Because we have got two different worldviews there is always going to be that rubbing up against one another.

Related to intention and commitment is choice. It is not an option to pull out and stop doing this work. The field we work in is about abuse. Because of our connections with the people we work with, they are our blood relatives, if we walk away from the work we deny our whānau, so there is no option here. Our whakapapa gets affected by it, I've got 90,000 cousins in the North, so it limits my options. There is an option from a Tauwiwi perspective. The only option for us is how do we move forward? I am in this because our race depends on us to pass on this mahi and this whakaaro so they can continue to do well and be safe and address the issues around sexual violence. I have to continue to develop and get these relationships right to do that.

The need for Pākehā learning

Speaking from a tāne perspective, the majority of the abuse that occurs in our sector is by men, and sometimes I feel the mamae, the hurt, of that, as I'm part of that culture. So I have had to go through an education of what it is to be a tāne. When there are conversations about abuse by men, I acknowledge it but recognise it is not for me to hold on to. It has taken some time to do that. I have to understand the

power I have as a man. Putting aside being Māori, in New Zealand being a man gives me automatic power. Knowing I have this power, how am I going to use that to empower our wāhine? One of the ways of doing that is understanding what it means to be a tāne. Part of the issue is that Tauwi don't understand their history enough to remove themselves from it.

Pākehā have a growing sense of identity, it isn't strong but it is growing. We have found that people who come here from other countries and have a strong sense of who they are often have a greater understanding of our culture and of cultural difference. So one thing for Pākehā to do is to know their own identity and be secure about that. As Māori we have lived in a dominant Pākehā culture all our lives. Most of us have been through a Tauwi education system and we know a Pākehā worldview back to front. We would say to Pākehā, "Get a grip on what a Māori worldview is, immerse yourself in it, learn about it. We can't do it for you, it is too tiring to do that. Go to a Treaty workshop but don't stop there, let that be a catalyst not a finishing point. Look to some steps to grow your understanding."

Sometimes I want to be quite blunt and say go and get your degree in Māori and then come and have the conversation with me so we have got somewhere to start. But really it is about how we manaaki Tauwi in that.

Manaakitanga

One of the issues that regularly comes up with Tauwi when we are sitting around the table talking about cultural issues, and Māori are expressing their reality, is that Tauwi feel like it is their fault. Part of the relationship is helping our Tauwi colleagues not to take responsibility for all of the issues that have happened in the past but for them to take responsibility and understand the impacts of the decisions they are making in the present day. So how do they stop marginalising? That is a difficult conversation to have if Tauwi don't know they are marginalising.

Tauwi views are very individualistic and often it is about moving forward and forgetting there is a wider group of people that you have to take into account. For Māori, whether we like it or not, we have always worked collectively. You have to work together.

I think of the war at Ruapekapeka, a battle between the English and Māori. The kōrero passed down about that was that Māori were saddened because the British left their men in the field to rot and die. Even though they were warring with us, our people picked them up and laid them beside their men. Māori cared for those who were killed and wounded, and some of the wounded ended up becoming part of the whānau in the North.

Ngā Kaitiaki Mauri does a lot of looking after, I am not blaming our Tauwi colleagues for us doing that, but at this stage our colleagues should actually know if they are perpetuating harm and be robust enough and far enough along in their journey that we don't need to be looking after them. While I say we can't always look after Tauwi, we can't ever not look after Tauwi because that is manaakitanga.

Manaaki is an important concept within our way of thinking. Take that kupu, break it down, mana/aki. "Akiaki te mana o te tangata" and each other to move forward, me anga whakamua tātou katoa (lets all move forward together). It is a philosophy, a principle of looking after each other, whether that be people you have just fought with, our whānau, or our Tauwi neighbours.

There have been times in TOAH-NNEST when people have said, "Let's go our separate ways." Ngā Kaitiaki Mauri have held on strongly to the relationship, but within the Tauwi Caucus there have been some who have been stalwarts for the relationship as well.

Taiwi colleagues have also maintained the commitment to Ngā Kaitiaki Mauri's voice being heard by government, and that has been really powerful in itself. I ask myself why am I still there, and it is because of the belief that we can do it together. It is the journey itself that keeps me going. We have our moments when we're just going to divorce them, and then in the end we know it can't happen.

Enacting the relationship

The relationship agreement is really pivotal. Yet we still need to have a conversation about how we enact that relationship agreement when it comes down to particular conflicts and differences. Where are the appropriate levels of accountability? That needs to be fleshed out more.

Everytime we meet as Māori we do whakawhānaungatanga. It's not just a nice check in, it is about your ngākau, your manawa, how are we doing? Before we do anything we do that pōwhiri process. At our marae some people wanted to move the fence two metres and people fought for years over it. In the end they came together, they had the pōwhiri and whakawhānaungatanga and that took two hours, and then they sorted out the fence in no time. Through whakawhānaungatanga they were reminded of who they were, the mana of who they were, their love for each other. The fence wasn't the issue, the issue was the relationship.

That has happened often within TOAH-NNEST. Once when we did a restorative justice process and Taiwi laid out how it was going to work and then the kaumatua said, "You are on my marae and this is how we are going to do it because you will have a different conversation after that." And it was different.

Some of the lenses we use as Māori help us stay in the room. For example, you have CEOs of mainstream agencies and you have practitioners, but when we sit around the table we are talking rangatira ki rangatira – there is a concept of mana in that. We don't see the roles as important. What is important is that we are rangatira in our field. If we look at rangatiratanga, ranga means the weaving, the weaving together of the tira haere, of the people. So we sit together at the same level. Shifting from thinking of them as CEO of their agency to rangatira shifts me internally – it requires me to talk and work in ways that are respectful and that support each other.

Reflections and advice

The Taiwi worldview of governance and management doesn't really work well for us as Māori, and that's difficult. How as governance do we manaaki our staff? How do we hold those concepts of whanaungatanga and rangatiratanga?

The two house, the bicultural model, is about working back to where we were pre-Treaty. It is like a reverse continuum. The difficulty with the two house approach is the focus of "You do it this way and I do it that way," so we keep conflicting at times. When things get difficult, the default position is to say, "That is a Māori worldview," and there is an assumption that it is just for Māori. That misses the point. Māori are going to Taiwi services, so Taiwi need to engage with that Māori worldview. I don't think our country is ready for it yet, but ideally there should only be one house and it should have a strong influence from Māori in that house.

Or it should be a Māori house with an influence from Taiwi.

I would encourage organisations considering a two house model, and say, "Go in with your eyes wide open. Don't go in expecting it is going to be a smooth experience. Expect that friction will be part of the honing and polishing, and don't be afraid of it, embrace it." We've always said a crisis is a great opportunity. It is the same with differences and conflicts - use that energy to create something that takes you forward together. You might not be able to see how we are getting somewhere, you might not understand it, but

we are going to get there with you. There needs to be some trust in the other party. Each will meander in their own way, but we are heading in the same direction.

In the end the relationship is worth the struggle. One of my colleagues has said to me, “I am the Treaty of Waitangi, within me is both Māori and Pākehā.” For us to not engage in the relationship is to not be a whole person.

We learn as we go along. The key question in the future will be “What did we learn from that relationship?”



TOAH-NNEST TAUWI CAUCUS

The two whare/house model

It was about a two year process between the initial call to establish a national organisation and having a steering group comprised of Māori and Tauwi membership dedicated to moving forward in a Treaty-based model. There were critical people and decisions along the way, for example: deciding that our first national coordinator would be Māori; and having Moana Jackson, along with skilled people within the organisation, to develop the organisation’s structure.

We have a two whare structure with the Pae Takawaenga – the overall governance body of the national network, which has representatives from each whare – in between. Te Roopu Whakahaere is the formal trust structure. One of the intentions of the structure is to minimise the restrictions imposed by Pākehā colonising law on Māori. Fundamental to the structure is that each house is self-determining in terms of how it operates. Within the Tauwi whare we voted for a formal structure and became an incorporated society. There are tensions in the two whare structure, in terms of accountability, which we have to keep working on. The model is not magic, but it is a clear, ‘put your money where your mouth is’ effort. It is a dynamic, living model, which keeps evolving. There isn’t a set formula for organisational Treaty relationships, we have just forged a way of doing this particular relationship. The universal aspect of these relationships is power-sharing and partnering with Tangata Whenua, but we cannot tell other organisations “This is the way to do it” as each organisation has to work out its own way.

Tauwi engagement in Treaty relationships

You can’t run social services in New Zealand without engaging with the Treaty. The nature of our work in relation to ending sexual violence means we have to engage. There are common understandings around the dynamics of sexual violence and the dynamics of colonisation: Both are about power and control.

Some of the motivation for engagement comes from being a clinician working with Māori whānau. You know you don’t have the skills they need, you know they need to be with a kaupapa Māori service that can provide the cultural supports to allow the necessary healing to occur. We need to support kaupapa Māori services because as Tauwi there is no way we can do some of the work that is needed.

Working in relationship with Māori at an organisational level, I see so much racism, which makes the commitment to the relationship self perpetuating. For example, at times in external meetings Māori speak and are not listened to at all, and then I speak and am listened to. Or in other contexts only Māori are asked for the evidence base for what they did. The battles that Māori constantly face with the government arise out of the power Tauwi hold. Knowing racism happens in our communities every day across every context and wanting to change that is why we sit around this table. That reinforces the commitment to the relationship.

Enacting Treaty relationships

It is a fine thing to have an academic understanding of the theory; enacting Treaty relationships is a lot more complex. Even if you start with a well informed group, when you begin to enact this type of approach you have all sorts of disputes because people have different ideas about what it looks like. It can be hard work but you deal with that because it is about relationships. When we have different views we come back to our organisation's mission and focus and remind each other of what we are here for. There is a shared commitment to ending sexual violence. That core focus and passion for change allows us to stand side by side in relationship against the challenges.

While we have a shared mission, Tauwi and Tangata Whenua have different ways of seeing how the mission will happen. For example, from a Tauwi perspective we focus on changing individuals' behaviour. We work with individuals or organisations to do that. From a Tangata Whenua perspective the focus is whānau, hapū, iwi, which leads to a different way of working with sexual violence. That is a tension, and that tension is at the heart of the Treaty relationship. If we as an organisation can work with the tension of working differently but together then we can hope for change – but if we can't do that internally we can't expect to trigger that transformational change externally.

It is like any relationship, it is fraught and it needs nurturing and commitment. It takes a lot of effort, time and energy. Building trust is critical. One of the ways that happened for us was through the Taskforce for Action on Sexual Violence. We were non-negotiable with the government in that process that we would only meet with them with both Māori and Tauwi representatives present – we would not engage with the government other than together. That really helped to cement a basis of relationship between Ngā Kaitiaki Mauri and the Tauwi house. The way in which you bring disparate people together is through doing a piece of work together – the Taskforce was an example of undertaking a sustained big piece of work collectively.

Using consensus and the collectivism approaches are important. Even though the constitution has the option for majority vote, we have only used that once or twice. We have at times made agreements to have external guidance in our work to support our ability to work in relationship.

Tauwi roles in relationship

Part of our role is to create the space for Māori in Pākehā systems. If we achieve that, then we need to remember it is not for us to occupy that space. At times, we have felt pressure from public service staff to not work in a two whare way, because from their perspective it is too difficult to deal with us. We have to have the strength of commitment to stand up to that and explain that there is a reason for doing it this way.

That can cause friction within the organisation as there is a continuum of where individuals and agencies are at in relation to this journey. We are an under-resourced sector and there are times when Tauwi just can't marry up the complexities of the Treaty relationship approach with efforts to deliver on the ground. Part of our role as Tauwi Executive members is to address racism and the impacts of colonisation, and to build a shared knowledge as Tauwi of how to work alongside Tangata Whenua.

Member organisations across the country have a range of different relationships. Some have a Māori caucus internally, some are bi-cultural, others are Tauwi but support by-Māori-for-Māori services. Everyone does what they have grown to do within their own community setting, based on what is available and their belief system. TOAH-NNEST doesn't monitor that. We don't go out and tell others this is what they should do, we just model working within a Treaty-based structure.

Critical factors in the journey

The involvement of outstanding individuals has been critical to our journey. People who hold goodwill through thick and thin, who communicate well and always try and understand the other. People with the attributes to make the relationships work – qualities like generosity and respect. Not being angry or defensive, just speaking the truth.

There is a consciousness in the Tauwi Executive that what we do impacts Māori even if we don't intend it to – our position is not neutral. For example, if we organise ourselves in portfolios and Ngā Kaitiaki Mauri do not, there are implications for engaging with the media as there are not equivalent Tauwi and Māori position to speak on issues. That can be difficult. We've got our agenda to progress, but we have to maintain awareness of our actions not having a negative impact on Māori.

The relationship agreement, which was developed at the time of the setting up the Trust and the constitution, is our pinnacle document. It is like a marriage agreement. It grounds us and tells us what to do if we get into trouble. The division of resources is also critical, that it is 50/50 without Māori having to ask for that.

Reflection and advice

If other organisations are wondering what to do about the Treaty I'd say, "You need to start, you are way past needing to start, get walking." If you don't know where to start, begin by asking "Who are our natural Māori partners in this work?" If you don't have any, then consider who they should be. You can get academically caught in the Treaty but it is actually about embodying the relationship and just getting on with.

It is important to stay in relationship and not back away when it gets hard. Speak your truth with respect and heart and spirit. You get knocked down again and again in this work because we are never going to get it right but you just keep going. We need to have a personal as well as an organisational commitment to being in relationship. A commitment to say, "I messed up. I am sorry. Can I have another try at that?"

This journey is really challenging but it is totally enriching. There is no end point to it, we just have to take the next step and then the next step. There is no getting off the journey because we live in Aotearoa, so we just have to keep walking with each other.